

2024

Supported Transitions – Parent Pack



*Transition is a process,
not an event.*



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Introduction

In Early Years settings, children go through many transitions including starting at the setting, moving on to a new activity, changing rooms or moving to a new setting. Effective transitions are important for all children and planning for these transitions is fundamental to effective early years practice.

The resources provided in this pack are to assist parents and carers of children in Early Years to support a smooth transition into a new setting.

The following principles are appropriate for all transition preparations whether the documents from the pack are used or not:

- To promote effective communication between the setting, parents and other people involved with the child.
- To promote fact finding about a child's needs, interests and any specific details that will help them to settle into the setting.
- To prompt discussion about changes to the environment/routines where needed.
- To ensure the child's and parent/carers views are in evidence in the planning for a child's transition into the setting.

The benchmark of good transition is providing children with certainty and clarity. It is normal for children to feel some worry during periods of uncertainty, even when the change or transition they are experiencing is a positive one. In a complex and changeable world, we are able to support children by providing them with structured, supported opportunities to process these changes.

With this in mind we have created the following toolkit of information and resources in order to provide parents and carers with support to help their children manage change. These resources have primarily been developed to support transition between educational settings. However, the materials can be edited and then used to support children experiencing any form of transition including: changing classes, changing teachers or returning to school following an extended absence. The resources are designed to be delivered by either parent/carers as well as professionals.

Important considerations before you begin:

- Nurture a "being worried is normal" approach. We all have worries and we can support each other to cope with and overcome them.
- Acknowledge that everyone experiences uncertainty at times of change. Having questions and concerns is normal.

- Work on creating a positive atmosphere for your child, and encourage them to identify their strengths while also acknowledging what they may find difficult and build more realistic expectations of themselves.
- Most transitional issues are related to fear of the unknown; planning and using problem solving approaches is the best way to overcome any anxieties they may have.

A word about worry; Anxiety is a feeling of worry or unease about something with an uncertain outcome. In a world with a great deal of uncertainty, anxiety is a common reaction of children and adults to situations we may find ourselves in. Your child is not alone in this and neither are you. Stress occurs when demand outweighs PERCEIVED ability to cope. The best way to overcome transitional anxiety is to create a plan of HOW your child is going to manage each worry. This helps to create perspective, and increase the perceived ability to cope by offering a practical solution. Endlessly discussing a worry does nothing to reduce it, but creating a concrete plan will.

The most reassuring way to begin talking about transition is to start by discussing things that will be the same or similar and then gradually introduce the bits that may change or be different.

Share the transition strategies that you choose to use with the setting/relevant staff.

Parent/Carers Transition Tips

- Read story books about starting a new school. You could make your own books using your child's favourite characters.
- Begin (or continue) filling out the transition booklet 'This is Me' and 'My New School'.
- Use a visual countdown calendar to indicate to your child when the final transition will take place.
- Buy their new school uniform early and practice wearing it. You may need to wash it a couple of times first to make it feel comfortable and worn in.
- Practice the school journey so that your child can familiarise themselves with the route.
- As the time nears, particularly if it is summer holidays, begin to get your child into the morning school routine (including bedtimes).
- Take photographs of all your new steps with your child; in their new uniform, on the practice runs; reading books.
- Make a starting school book and stick all the photographs into the book. Involve your child as much as possible in the process. Allow your child to have free access to the book.

Importantly, highlight all the things that will be the same or similar; you will get up, have breakfast, get dressed, go to school with Mummy/Daddy/carer etc., in the car/on the bus/walk etc.

You will have break/play time, lunch time, and home time – Mummy/Daddy/carer etc., will collect you etc.

It is much more comforting and reassuring to let your child know that some things will be the same or similar to their current routines and experiences. Having a familiar foundation to build upon can be key to managing any anxieties or fears about the unfamiliar new experiences coming up.

Summary Tips:-

Social Stories: Pick a time when your child is calm and receptive. Read the stories regularly throughout the summer holidays. Have a spare copy of each story that is accessible to your child at all times so that they can explore the story when they want to.

N.B. If your child is anxious about moving on to school, it may not be a good idea to read them as bedtime stories!

'This is Me' and 'My New School' booklets: Support and involve your child as much as is possible when adding information to the booklets. If they can take any of the photographs to go in the booklets let them do so. Photos of themselves in their new school uniform, visiting their new school, pictures of the journey to school, photographs of their teacher and support staff are all good ideas.

School uniform: Buy your child’s new school uniform as far in advance as you are able (and when you are positive they have a confirmed placement). Support your child with trying on their new school uniform and begin teaching them the skills of dressing and undressing while doing so. If practiced regularly enough, you could, over time, slowly reduce the amount of help that you give them while doing so (as they become more competent). Some children, particularly those with sensory processing differences, may not like the feel of the new, different materials and style. This can be alleviated by washing the uniform a couple of times before they are expected to start wearing it.

Routine: As the start time at their new schools moves nearer, begin to get your child into their new school routine (morning get up time and bed times especially).

Countdown calendar: Start a countdown calendar a month before your child is due to start their new school (then use the ‘Back to School Countdown’ (see below). Have the calendar displayed where they have easy access to it and it is visible. Support your child with crossing off each day.

Include this timeline in your child’s ‘Starting School’ book



Top Transition Tips

All of these tips are advice to help you and your child's transition into a new environment go as smoothly and stress free as possible. It aims to provide your child with the daily structure and routine that will be expected of them in the coming weeks and hopefully makes this transition easier for yourself as well as your child.

1. Get your child into a similar routine as that of their new setting/nursery/school - **Tip: think about eating timings, play timings etc.**
2. Practice transitioning times (changing between different activities during the day)- **Tip: use sand timers for countdowns.**
3. Start to introduce a structured bedtime/sleep routine- **Tip: this will help with enabling your child to get up for school/nursery when the time comes more easily.**
4. Practice/create a morning routine that your child can continue when they go back to school/nursery- **Tip: washing, brushing teeth, getting dressed, breakfast.**
5. Once you know when your child is starting or returning to nursery start a countdown calendar-**Tip this will help your child to 'see' when they will be going back and prepare them for the transition.**
6. Use social stories to support your child's developing understanding of the changes ahead. **Tip: this should help relieve some of the anxiety that your child may be experiencing about some of the new experiences and impending changes.**

N.B. Remember to discuss with your child all the things that will stay the same or similar. We are often tempted to prepare our children for change by highlighting all the new, different things that are going to happen. Starting off with the things that will still be happening can be a huge comfort to our children and lay a secure foundation to build upon.

Readiness Ladder

Steps to getting your child ready for Nursery/School.

Top tip: Visual resources such as timetables and routine strips can assist with independent skills and can make transitions easier.

Ready for Nursery/School.

Practice your route to nursery/school with your child.

Create a morning routine e.g. washing, brushing teeth times, breakfast times.

Practice getting dressed into uniform or create a dressing routine.

Create a structured daily routine for your child e.g. play time, learning time, and story time.

Top tip: Rewards no matter how small are a good way of reinforcing positive behaviour.

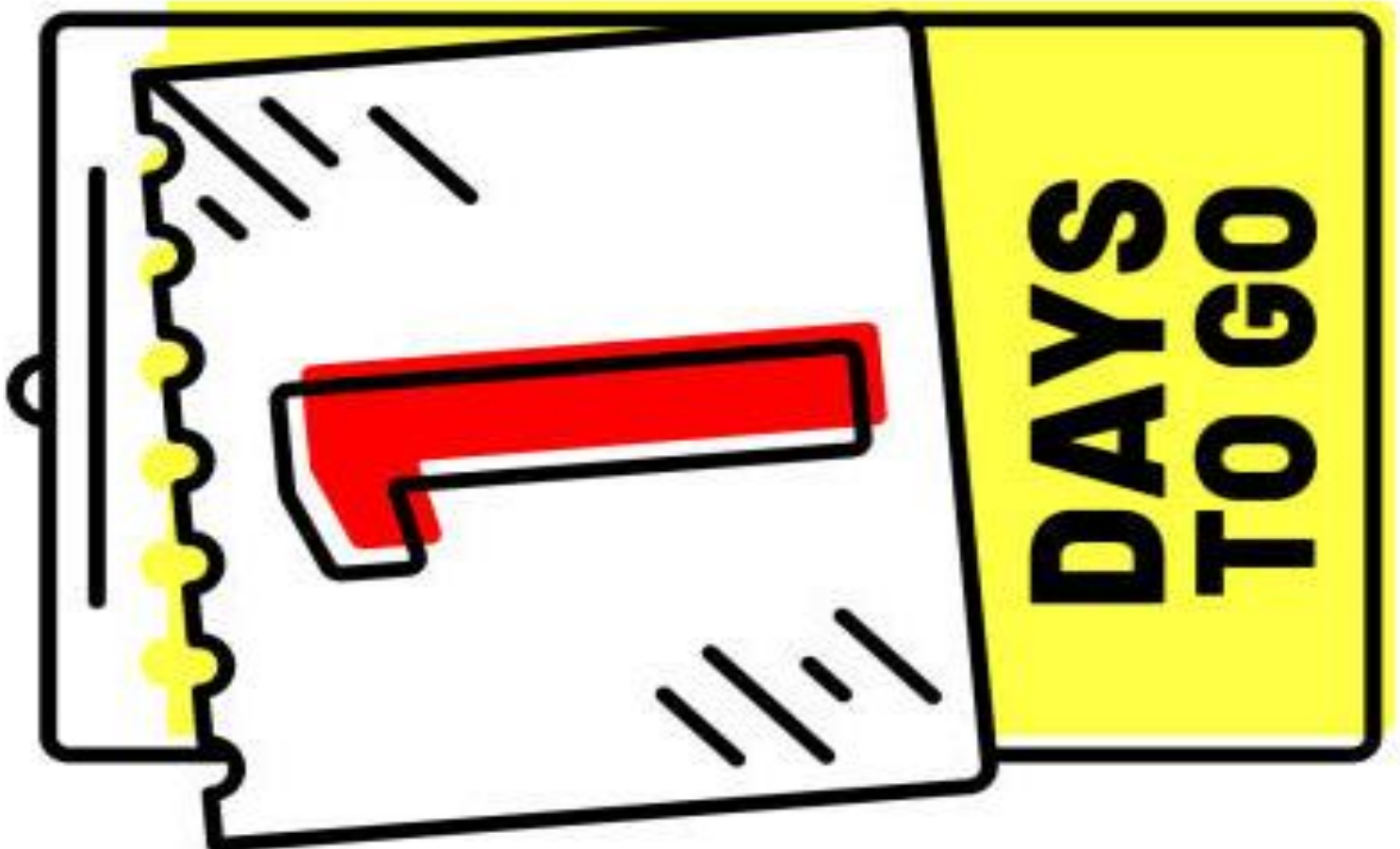
Try and get your child into a consistent eating pattern e.g. snack and meal times.

Try and get your child into a regular bedtime routine/sleeping pattern.

Top tip: A countdown calendar can help to show your child when/what day they will be going back to Nursery/School helping them to prepare for going back.

Top tip: Social stories are a good way of preparing your child for nursery/school and the changes ahead.

Use this calendar to countdown the days to go before your child is due to start at their new setting, help them to cross off each day.



Social stories

These specially written 'social stories' can be read to your child repeatedly over an extended period of time. The stories are designed to support your child's understanding and familiarise them with some of the new, different experiences they may have when starting nursery or transitioning on to school.



What is a Social Story?

What is Nursery?

Moving on from Nursery

My New School Uniform

What is a social story?

A social story is a short story written in a specific style and format. They are used to support the development of social skills and social understanding (particularly for autistic children and young people). Social stories are used to help a child understand a small part of their social world and how to function appropriately within it. Each story provides a child with clear, accurate information about what is happening in a specific social situation, outlining why it is happening and what a typical response might be; or what people do, why they do it, and what the common responses are. The story describes what is obvious to most of us but not obvious to those with impaired social understanding. The stories are written with the individual child's needs in mind.

The objective of a social story is to share information that will help a child understand a particular situation; they should not to be used as 'bossy' rule books.

The goal of each story should be to teach social understanding, not rote compliance; to describe rather than direct.

Social stories can be used to:-

- Provide positive feedback to a child so that they can recognise their own appropriate skills and responses (in an affirming style).
- To support the development of self-care skills (e.g. how to clean your teeth, get dressed etc.)
- To prepare a child for a new experience.
- To help a child customise themselves to a new situation and to give information about appropriate responses within the particular scenario.
- To help prevent extreme responses that may be triggered by a lack of social understanding.

The writing of a social story should be suited to match the language and vocabulary levels of the child in mind. The story should be written in the first person and present or future tense and should contain one aspect or step per page.

Basic social stories use three kinds of sentences:-

- **Descriptive sentences:** are truthful and observable sentences (opinion and assumption free) that give accurate information about the environment or setting. They provide, in words, the basic facts about what can be seen. They often answer "why" questions. Example; 'There is a waiting room at the doctor's surgery'. 'The waiting room usually has a row of chairs around the edge'. 'The people sitting on the chairs are waiting to see the doctor'.
- **Perspective sentences:** refer to or describe the internal state of other people (their knowledge/thoughts, feelings, beliefs, opinions, motivation or physical condition). These sentences give the child insight into the heads and hearts of those featured in the story, so that the individual can learn how others' perceive various events. Example; 'The people usually like to sit quietly, because they don't feel very well'. 'The people will be happy if I sit quietly and wait'. 'Dad will be happy if I sit quietly next to him'.
- **Directive sentences:** present or suggest, in positive terms, a response or choice of responses to a situation or concept. Example; 'I will try and sit quietly next to Dad and wait'. 'It is good to sit quietly in the waiting room'.

The ratio of these sentences used within a story are; 1 directive sentence for every 2-5 descriptive and/or perspective sentences. (There are seven sentence types that may be used in advanced social stories).

Example social Story:-

What do I do in the waiting room at the doctors:-

There is a waiting room at the doctor's surgery.

The waiting room usually has a row of chairs around the edge.

The people sitting on the chairs are waiting to see the doctor.

The people usually like to sit quietly, because they don't feel very well.

The people will be happy if I sit quietly and wait.

Dad will be happy if I sit quietly next to him.

I will try and sit quietly next to Dad and wait.

It is good to sit quietly in the waiting room.

Notice the non-directive language used; usually, I will try, It is good to (rather than you will!) Other good examples could be; sometimes, most, my teacher will be happy if.

Social stories were developed by Carol Gray (1994). <https://carolgrayssocialstories.com/>

For further information: <https://www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/social-stories-comic-strips.aspx>
(National Autistic Society).

Book: Writing & Developing Social Stories – *Practical Interventions in Autism* by Dr Caroline Smith

What is Nursery?



Soon I will be going to Nursery...



Nursery is a place where children go to play, learn and make friends....



There will be adults at nursery who will help me...



I will spend some time at nursery during the day.



**Then my Mum, Dad or my carer will
come and take me home...**



Nursery can be a fun place to go to play and learn...



It will be ok



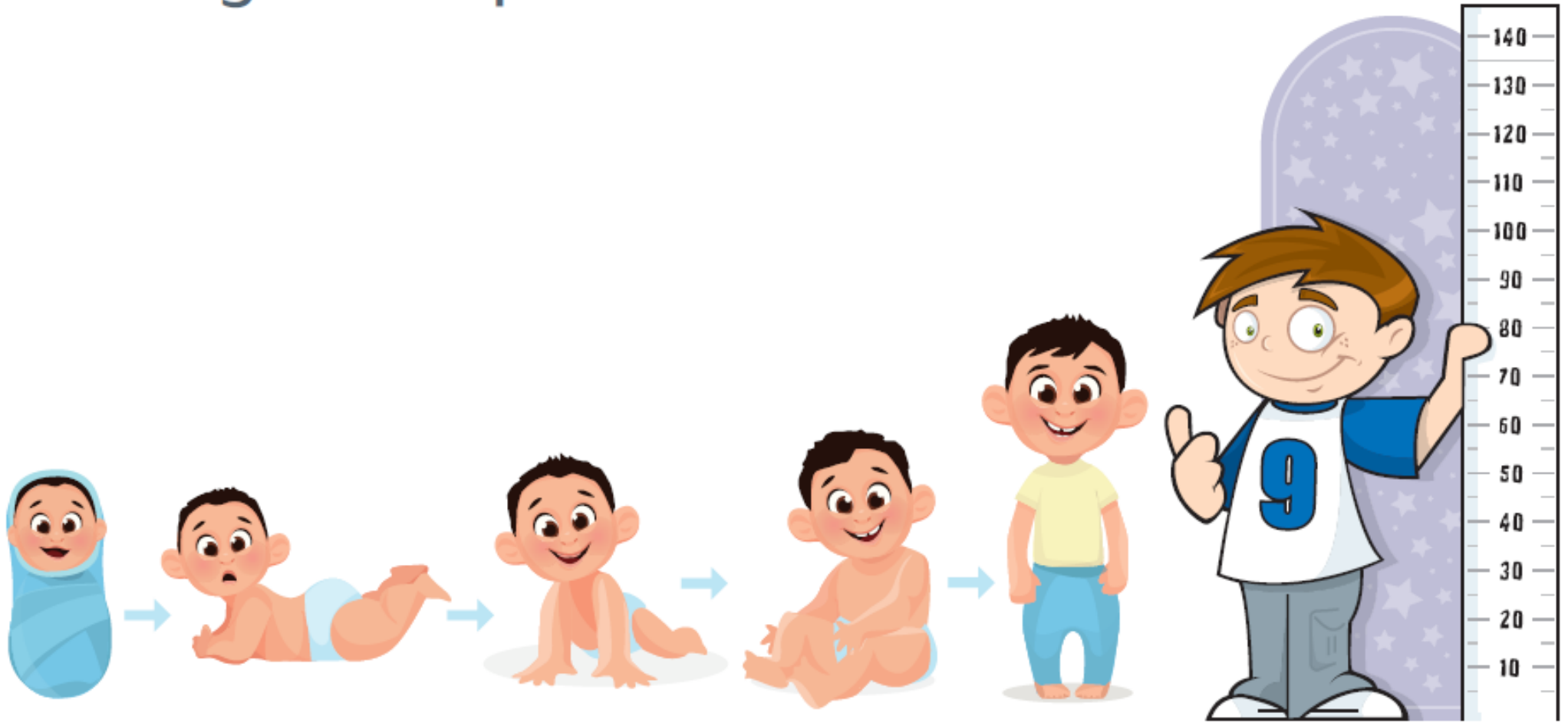
Moving on from Nursery...



I have been going to nursery for a long time now. I have done lots of playing and learning...



I have grown up...



My teachers are happy about the growing
and learning I have done...



It will soon be time for me to go to big school...



Most of my friends at nursery will be going to big school...



First it will be the summer holidays...



Then, when the summer holidays have finished, I will be going to my new school...

Back to School Countdown



I will have a new teacher to help me learn new things...



If I feel worried about my new school I can talk to an adult...



They will help me.

There will be lots of fun, interesting things to do
at my new school...



It will be ok.

My new school uniform...



Soon I will be going to my new school...



When I go to my new school I will wear special clothes called school uniform...



There are different coloured uniforms for different schools...



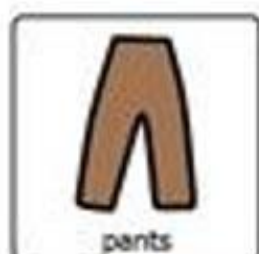
SCHOOL
UNIFORMS

My Mum, Dad, Carer will know
which uniform I will need...



When an adult has bought my new school uniform for me I can practise wearing it...





Getting Dressed

1



2



3



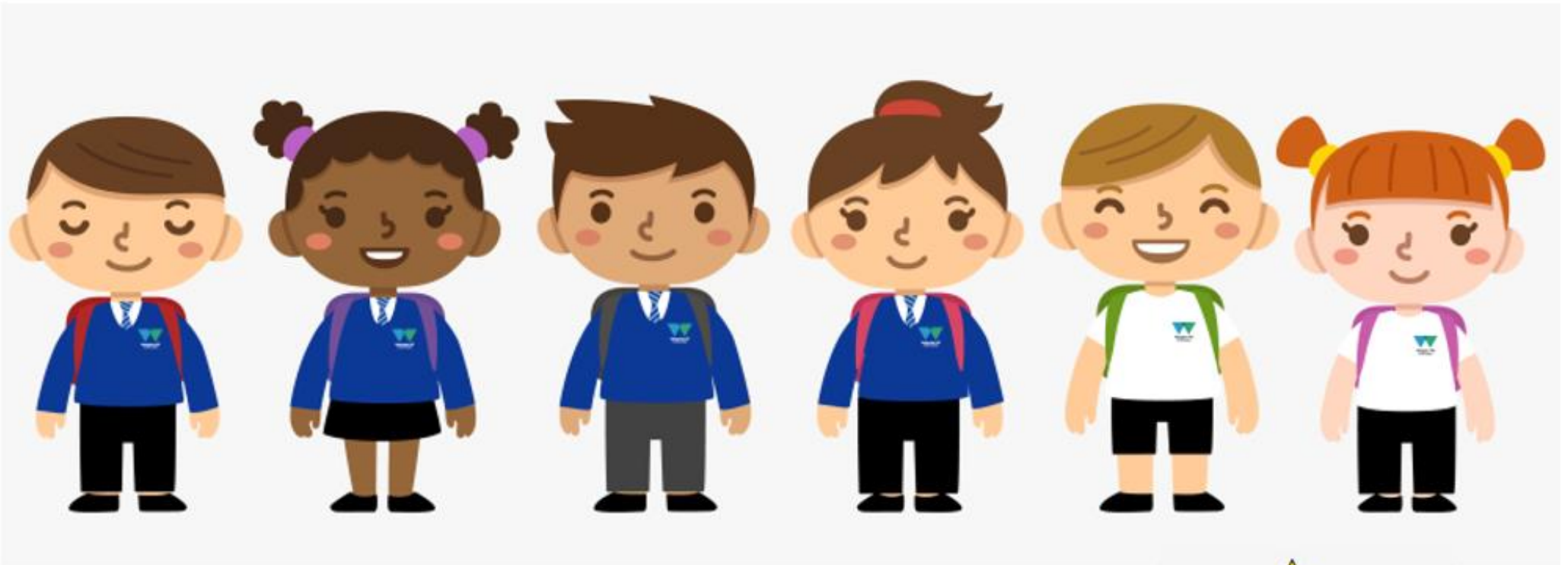
4



5



Most of the children at my new school will wear school uniform...



School uniform looks smart!



Transition Books

Transition books should be completed as much as possible with your child. They should be completed progressively over a period of time. You can use photographs, drawings, leaflets and anything else that is relevant and can be stuck into the booklet. The booklets can then be read periodically and also shared with your child's new setting.



- **All About Me (profile); and guidance**
 - **This is Me; and guidance**
 - **My New School**



My name is

I am years old

I may need help with...

How you can help me

This is me

Things that I like

I am practising:



Things that are important to me

All about me

Guidance for Parents and Carers

This simple profile is designed to begin to support your child with the transition process and share important information with their new setting and the people who are going to be supporting your child.

It is a good way to provide a 'snap shot' of your child and to record their thoughts and feelings as they enter into this new exciting stage. We also hope it may look great on the family fridge! These notes will hopefully give you lots of ideas on how to use each section.

My name is

For this section you could write or print out some of your family's first names on paper, mix them up and help your child to find theirs. Your child could then be helped to stick their name on the space on the poster, or to try and write their own name if they would like to.

More ideas: Encourage your child to recognise their name using a sign on their bedroom door, alphabet fridge magnets or homemade letters.

This is me

For this section you could help your child to take a selfie, print it out and stick it onto the poster, or use an existing photograph. They could also draw or paint a simple self-portrait, if they are able to.

More ideas: Look in a mirror together and explore your facial features, making faces and talking about your expressions.

What does a happy or sad face look like?

I am.... years old

For this section you could support your child to write the number that represents their age, or write some numbers down on bits of paper and help them to identify their age and stick it onto the poster.

More ideas: Try some simple number games to develop your child's awareness of numbers, like Musical Number Songs. Use simple number inset puzzles or go on a number hunt at home or while you are out together, looking out for numbers on houses, in shops or at the park.

Things that I like

For this section talk to your child about their favourite things and people and write them down in the relevant section. More ideas: Record your chat on your smartphone and listen together. Take pictures together of their favourite things, activities, toys, places, foods etc.

Things that are important to me

For this section fill in the things that are meaningful and that your child may rely on e.g. a specific fiddle toy, having time with a favourite activity, quiet time.

I'm practicing

For this section circle the activities that your child is practicing and learning to do. More ideas: Encourage your child to attempt the self-care activities on the poster as part of their daily routine, or when you have a few spare minutes and are not in a rush. Let your child dress and undress themselves, borrow some school uniform and try it on, or set up a 'sniffle station' with tissues within reach. Ask them to help you wash and dry your hands by showing you how it's done.

I may need help with

For this section write down the things that your child may need support with. It could be things like putting their coat on, tying their shoes. Or it could be things like lining up, sharing toys, coping in noisy, busy places, communicating their needs to an adult when they are upset. Write down things that you feel are important for someone to know who is not yet familiar with your child and that perhaps your child is not able to articulate just yet.

How you can help me

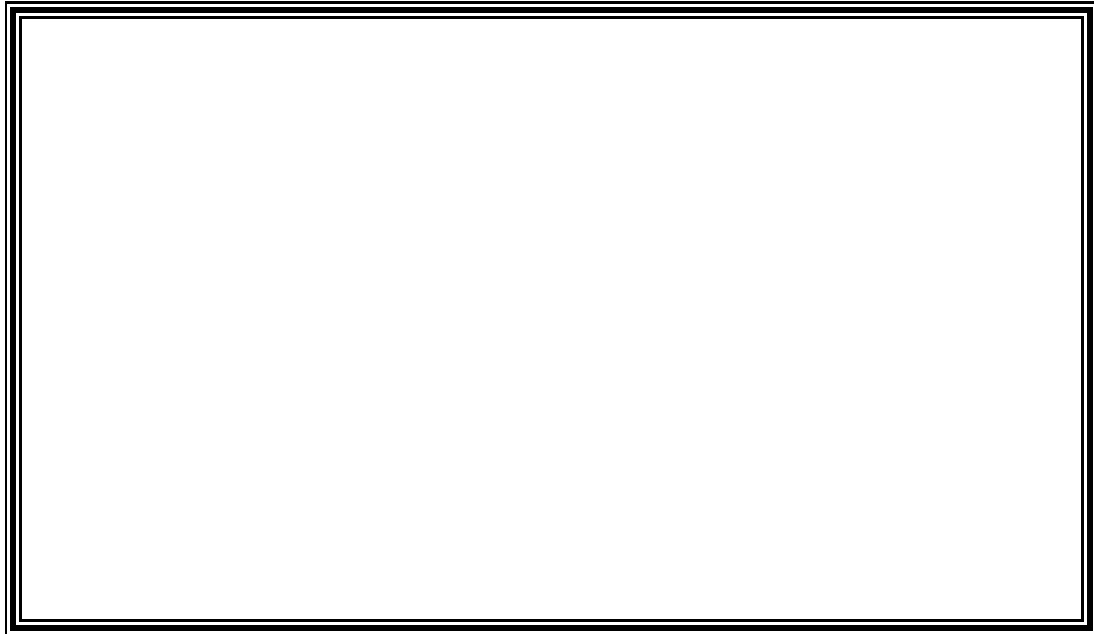
For this section write down useful strategies; such as - giving me quiet time when I am overwhelmed. Letting me sit on a movement cushion at carpet time. Giving me a fidget toy to help me focus and stay calm etc. Write down any strategies that are unique to meeting your child's needs and that are proven to help them to cope well in a busy educational environment.

This
Is
Me

By:

This a special story all about me for my new teacher

Here is a picture of me.



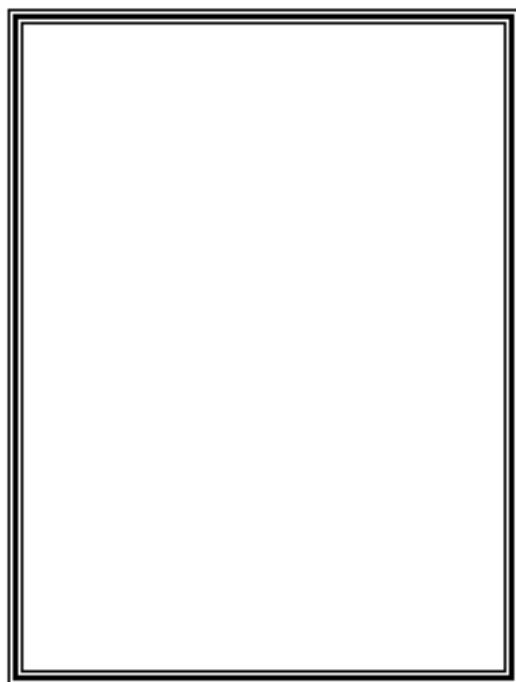
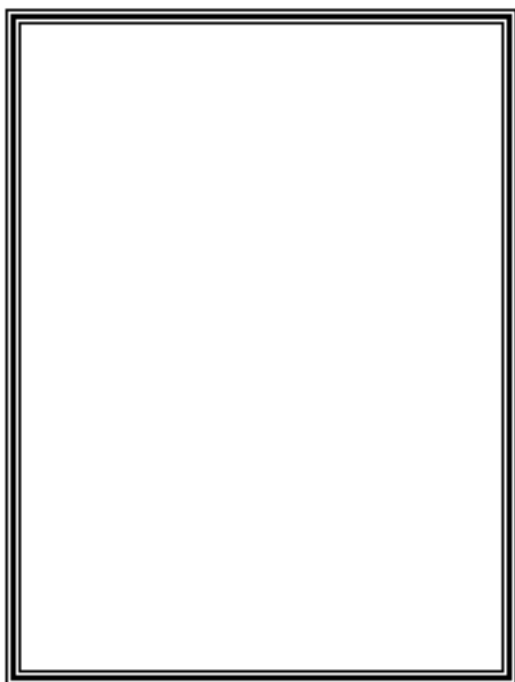
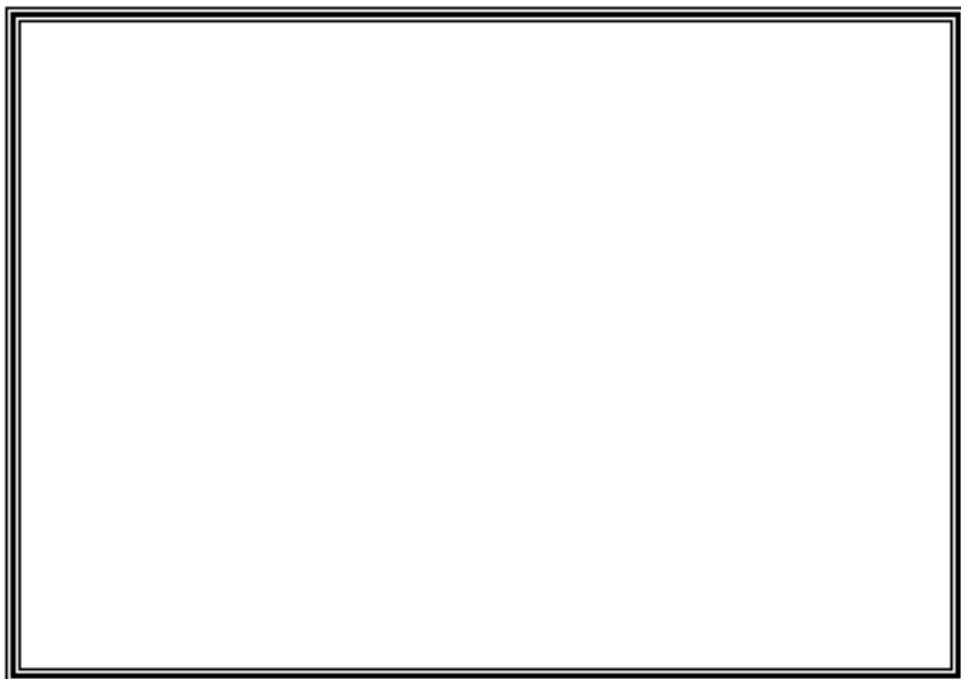
My name is

and I live at



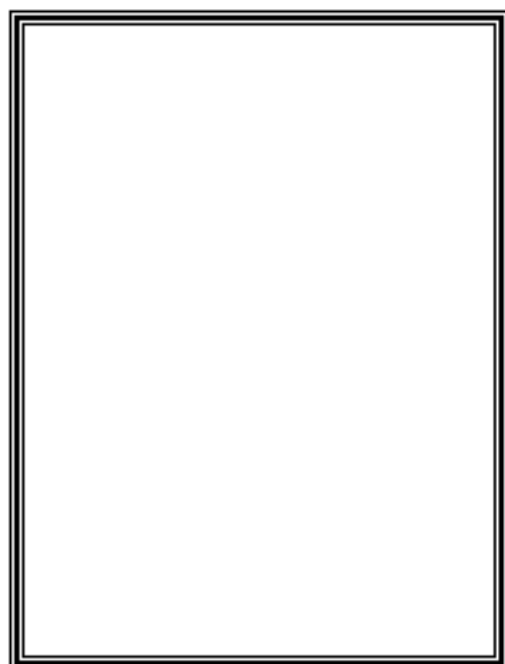
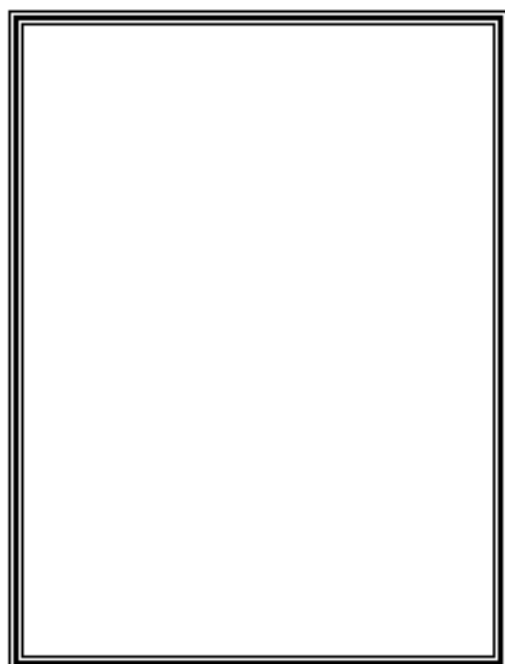
At home my favourite things are

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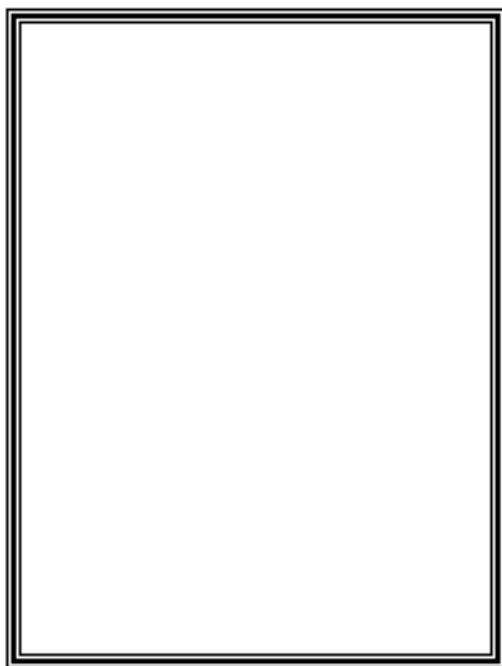


At nursery my favourite things are...

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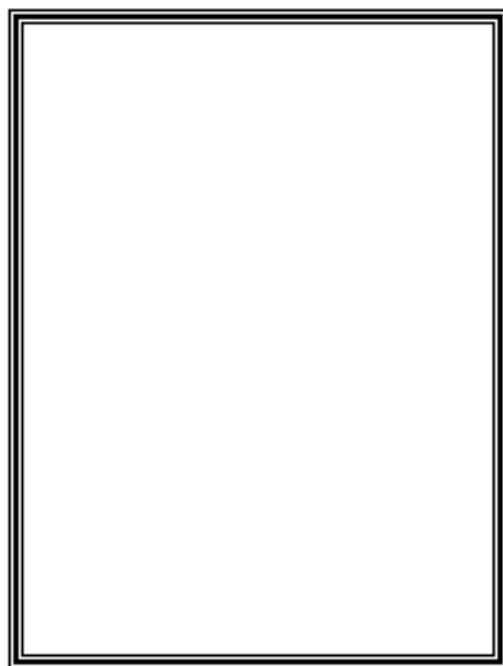


I really like



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I do not like

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I might get upset or worry when

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If I get upset to feel calm I

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You can help me by

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Other things about me

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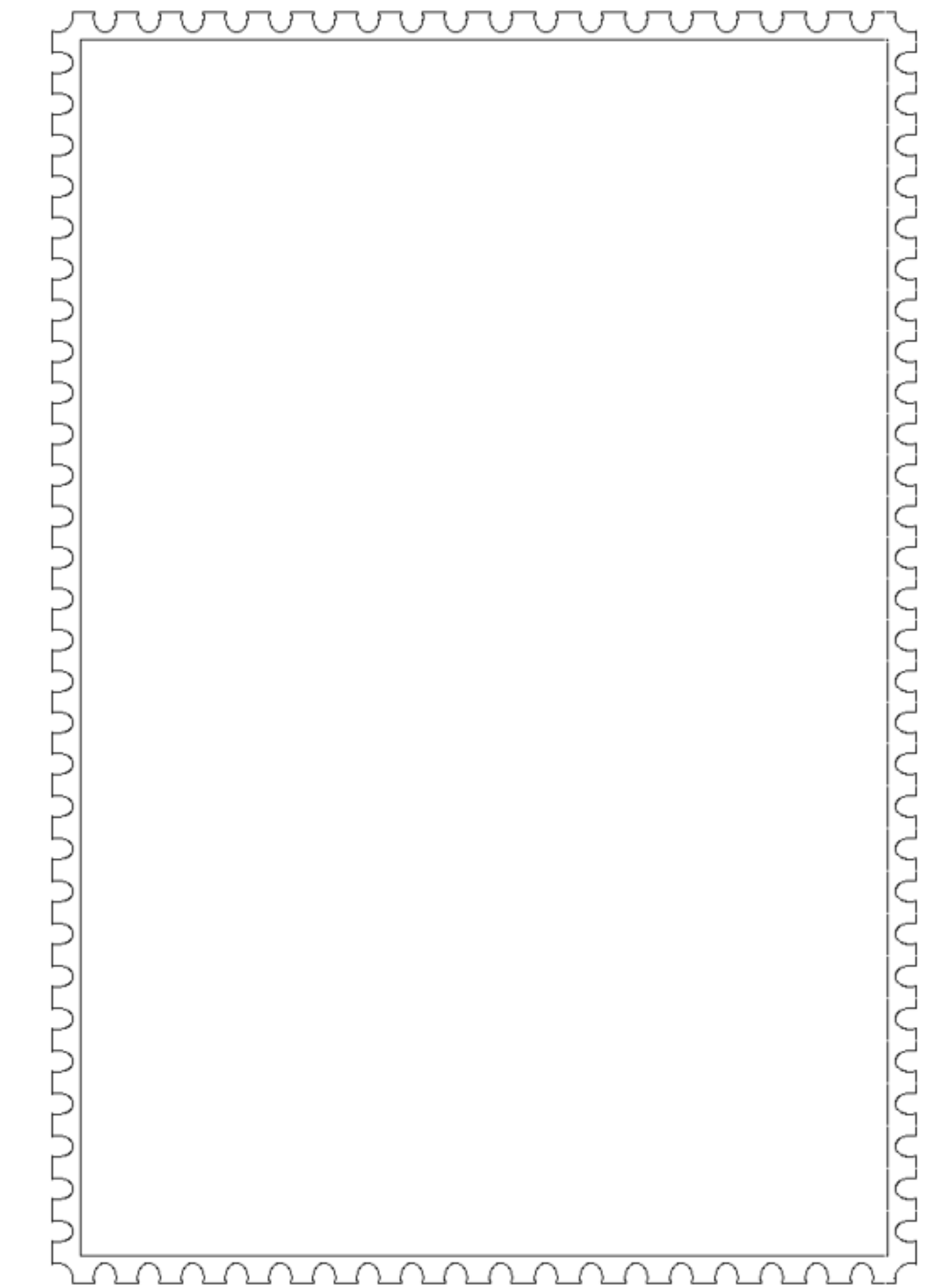
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This Is Me – Guidance Notes

The aim of the 'This Is Me' profile is for the child to be involved in creating a 'snapshot' of themselves that provides key information in an easy-to-read format.

This is useful for practitioners who are new to the child or have infrequent contact e.g. supply teacher, lunchtime supervisor, voluntary staff and students.

You can include whatever the child wants to say and the child can record using drawings, photos, writing or adult can scribe.

Ideas for what to include:

At home

Information about people who are important such as family and friends.

Pets the child might have.

Places the child might go.

At Nursery

Favourite subject areas.

Friends at school.

Special events.

I really like

Include areas of strength.

Special interests.

Hobbies.

I do not like/ get upset/ worried

Areas the child needs support with including academic, social, sensory, physical needs etc.

Worries the child may have due to changes of teacher, changes to the timetable etc.

Fears and phobias the child may have.

Strategies the child can use to feel calm

Reading a favourite story.

Go to quiet place for 'chill out time.'

You can help me by

Signalling change before an activity changes by telling the child or showing a picture of the next activity.

Say my name before speaking to me, so that I know the instruction is for me.

Other Things about me

E.g. If a child has difficulty eating and drinking consider what their specific requirements are;

- I like my drink at the end of a meal
- I cannot eat eggs they make me sick
- My favourite foods are

Transition Booklet - My New School

My New School



By:

Insert picture of school

This is my new school

When I go to school I will wear school uniform...

Insert photos or drawings of school uniform

Insert photo of child in school uniform

I will probably go to school with...

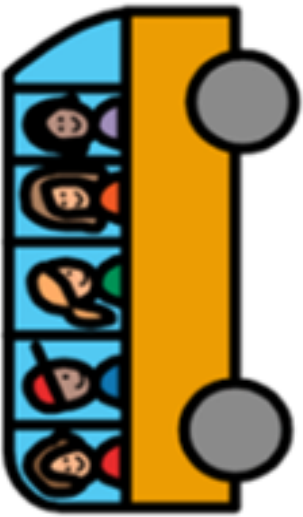
*Insert picture of parent/carer who will be
taking your child to school*

This is how I will get to school...


Walk



Bus



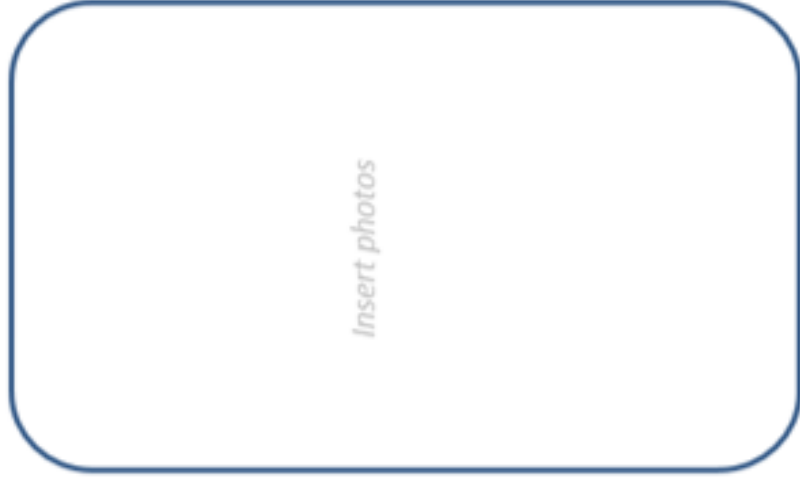
Car



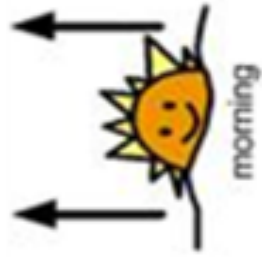
Tick which one



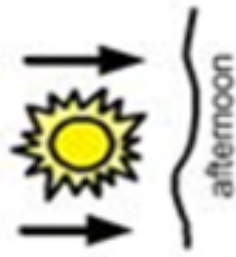
My journey to school...



I will go to school in the morning at about:














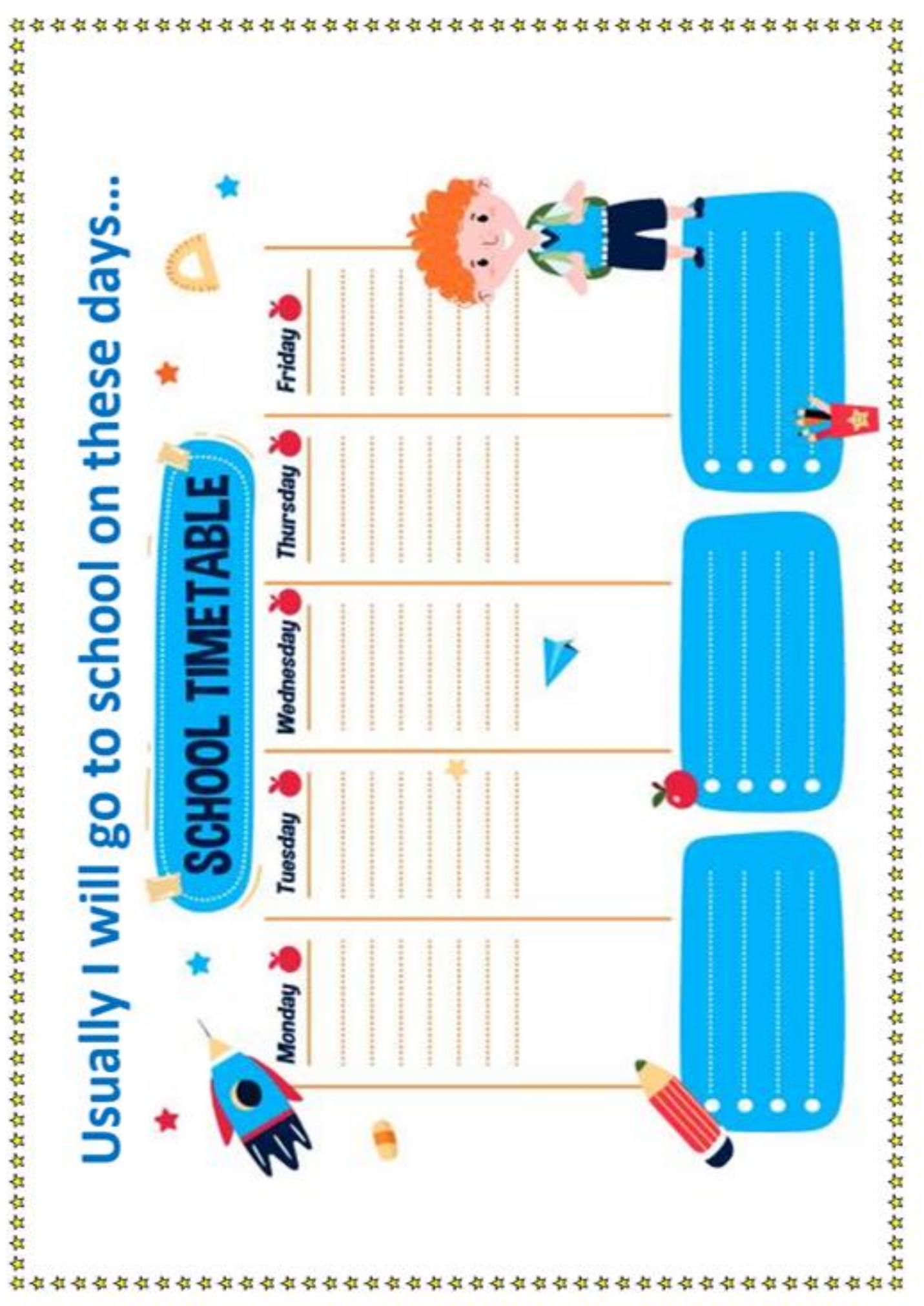
I will come home in the afternoon at about:



Usually I will go to school on these days...

SCHOOL TIMETABLE

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	 			
 				 



Back to School Countdown



How many days until

Back to School





**If you have any queries regarding
the content of this toolkit please
send an email to:**

eyinclusion@slough.gov.uk

**Slough Borough Council, Early Years SEND
Team.**

Happy, Safe & Loved, Thriving