

# EDUCATIONAL TRANSITIONS - STARTING A NEW SCHOOL/EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE SETTING (ELC)

## FASD - FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER

Contact our dedicated FASD Advisors via our Advice Line 0300 666 0006 (option 2) (Tues-Fri, 10am to 2.30pm) or by emailing [fasdhub.scotland@adoptionuk.org.uk](mailto:fasdhub.scotland@adoptionuk.org.uk)

"FASD stands for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. It can arise from alcohol exposure in pregnancy and affects the developing brain and body of an individual before they were born. FASD is a life-long, neurodevelopmental condition, often referred to as a hidden disability. Each person with FASD is affected differently. Each person with FASD has both strengths and challenges, they and their families need support to learn FASD-informed strategies to help them prosper. When an early diagnosis is made, the right supports are put in place in education, at home and in the workplace, then individuals are more likely to succeed and achieve throughout life." ('Basics: What is FASD?', FASD Hub Scotland)

**FASD**  
IS A LIFELONG  
CONDITION

### Person-centred and inclusive

All children/young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN) in Scotland are entitled to an Enhanced Transition from Early Learning and Childcare Setting (ELC) to Primary which should begin at least 6 months in advance and from Primary to Secondary which should begin at least 12 months in advance. Before beginning transition discussions, it might be helpful to list your child/young person's strengths, support needs and possible strategies that might enable a smoother transition, and share these with school. Although there may be some barriers to overcome, the focus should always be on meeting individual needs. Since January 2018, children aged 12-15 have further rights to be involved in decisions about their education under the Additional Support for Learning Act - see link to Enquire in Further Reading.



### Multi-agency involvement

It is important that the whole Team Around the Child are involved at an early stage as advised by the [Getting It Right For Every Child \(GIRFEC\)](#) framework. It is often best to check what information has been shared about your child/young person between education and other agencies before a transition, and add to this if necessary. It might speed up the process if you or the key person involved in supporting your family are able to contact the new school/nursery with details of the whole team currently involved.



### Timing

Planning for transitions should take place as early as possible. If your child/young person is currently in an educational placement, talk to the Head Teacher to request transition planning discussions. If they are not currently in a placement, you might need to seek advice from the Local Authority, future ELC or school. Some children/young people may benefit from starting transition activities as early as possible. However, for others this might increase anxiety. Similarly, some children/young people may cope best with full days, very quickly giving structure and routine, whereas others may benefit from a very gradual transition. All transitions should go at the pace of the child/young person involved and where appropriate with their full consultation and involvement in the planning. Plans need to be flexible so they can be stepped up or down as appropriate to respond to the child/young person's needs. You can also seek advice from your Local Authority or child's school/ELC.



### Preparation

When a transition plan has been agreed, you can think about ways to begin preparing your child/young person. There are lots of ways that you can prepare them before visits begin. There are also a number of useful ideas for helping your child/young person to cope with the transition itself, including visual timetables, transition objects, photos, sensory boxes and agreeing a safe space (See our 'Transitions in Education - Top 10 Tips for Parents/Carers and Educators' factsheet). Also see '[What Educators Need to Know](#)' by the Fetal Alcohol Advisory and Support Team.



### Knowledge and Understanding of FASD

The more knowledge and understanding your child's/young person's education establishment have about FASD the better for everyone involved. FASD Hub Scotland offer training and support for schools and there are also many online resources available. See 'Further Reading' section for additional resources. As a parent/carer you can speak to FASD Hub Scotland about being supported through our 1:1 Family Support Service.



## Relationships are key

Focusing on building a relationship of safety and trust for your child/young person with a key adult in education is essential. Ideally this should be someone who can be involved in all transition activities, and can remain available to regularly check in with your child/young person on a long-term basis. Even if your child/young person does not require individual support long-term, ensuring they can build a strong relationship at the start could really help ongoing success in education. Eventually, more than one key person could be introduced, which is helpful if there are any staffing changes in future. Similarly, it could be best to think about introducing peers more gradually in some circumstances to avoid overwhelming your child/young person; for example, through small group or paired play opportunities. Also, it is important for parents/carers to build positive relationships with their child's/young person's key adult. By modelling these positive relationships it will help the child/young person to feel safe, and confident in building their own trusted relationships with key adults and others at school.



## The Transition Plan

An individualised and flexible transition plan can be created and shared between school and family with details of planned activities and staff involved with these. Remember to ensure that unstructured times such as break times are also considered as children/young people might require more support during these times. It can also be very helpful to have a bespoke plan for the beginning and end of the school day, such as later start or earlier finish time to reduce anxiety and support regulation in response to noise/crowds. Flexibility is essential, with plans made for regular review of the transition, and adjustments along the way.



## Communication

It is important to agree a point of contact as well as the best method of contact for you as parent/guardian at an early stage. This might be best done with a member of the school management team or Pupil Support/Guidance team rather than a class teacher as they may be easier to contact during the school day. It's also helpful to clarify and agree whether telephone/email or a written home-school communication diary would be best for your child/young person. Many schools now use Apps to share information with home, and the message function of these can be another useful communication tool.



## Educational Records

There may be additional considerations and entitlements to support if your child/young person already has a Coordinated Support Plan (CSP), Individualised Education Plan (IEP), Action Plan or Child's Plan/Post Adoption Support Plan. The Transition Plan should take these into account and some of your child's/young person's individual targets may need to be carefully considered during transition periods.



## Advocacy

Finally, if you feel it would be a support to have an independent advocate to assist your child/young person with sharing their views during the transition process and beyond in education, there are several organisations that offer advocacy for care experienced young people and/or children with Additional Support Needs and their families in Scotland.



## Further Reading

**FASD Hub Scotland Education Factsheets**, including 'Transitions in Education - Top 10 Tips for Parents/Carers and Educators' and further transition resources can be found on our website: [www.adoptionuk.org.uk/fasd-hub-scotland](http://www.adoptionuk.org.uk/fasd-hub-scotland)

**Parentzone Guide to the Additional Support for Learning Act (Scotland) 2014.** can be found on the [Parentzone Website](#)

**Enquire Publications** - a range of useful factsheets can be found on the [Enquire website](#)

**POPFASD Transition Tips and Strategies**

**Additional Support for Learning Factsheet (Enquire)**

**Advocacy and support for young people:** - [MindRoom](#)



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FASD Hub Scotland provide a tiered support service for all parents/carers living in Scotland, who are parenting individuals with FASD or have a history of PAE, and professionals working and supporting these families.



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