

Teaching and Learning

Emotions - feeling secure



How as a key person do we support the children in our care to develop the emotional resilience that leaves them feeling secure as they manage the transitions in their life?

We can all think of an example when we have observed a child struggling with transitions. Whether is finding it hard to understand why it's now time to come inside from the garden, leaving parents at the beginning of the day, moving up from the toddler room to preschool etc. Children experience the emotional upheaval of these challenges frequently. How the child copes with these challenges will be dependent on their age and stage, their lived experiences and the support provided by the adults in their life.

How will we know secure the child is feeling? Understanding the child's behaviour should be the first priority as a key person. Through your observations, you can identify what the child's behaviour is telling you. Where a child is struggling, they may present as distressed, angry or withdrawn. We may observe the child refusing to cooperate or physically demonstrating their emotions etc.

“Behaviour can be an expression of feelings or emotions. To help children make sense of this, and have the best effect, approach them with empathy, supporting and guiding them to identify and deal with their emotions’

Help for Early Years Providers. 2022

So how do we support them to develop a strong emotional foundation that leads to them feeling secure?

Task 1

With a partner or as a group, use the table below to capture your reflection of your current practice. Some suggestions have been populated already to get you thinking.

Be sure to capture what you do now but remember to add what more could be done!

What steps do we take as a key person to understand the child?	How do we support children to feel secure and manage transitions?	How do staff upskill themselves to manage children's emotional needs?
Talking with parents Observing the child Identifying triggers	Having reliable routines Exploring feelings Modelling Talking and listening Promoting independence Providing cues Providing reassurance and comfort	Targeted training Observing peers supporting a child's emotional needs Further reading Reflecting on their own experiences and considering what they could do differently