

British Sign Language (BSL) Toolkit for Practitioners

Section 9

This section covers:

9. Supporting transitions

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Transitions are part of everyone's life. While many children look forward to moving on through stages such as: from home to an early learning and childcare setting, from primary to secondary, between schools and from secondary to further education, employment and beyond, others may be quite anxious. Transitions at any stage can be challenging but support from practitioners and parents can help ensure they go more smoothly.

The success of a transition can often be dependent on a range of factors including the availability and accessibility of British Sign Language support throughout the transition period. This is key to helping both parents and children feel supported throughout the transition process.

It should be noted that while information is provided on transitions, this does not actually mean that any or all of those choices will be available in all settings. For parents with Deaf children in the 0-5 age group, BSL is not available consistently in order to acquire the language. For parents of school aged children, BSL is currently only available in a resource base or Deaf school in thirteen local authorities (See Appendix 1 for a list of resource bases).

Ideas for transitions:

- Parents and children must be involved in any transition process. Deaf BSL parents will require particular support when their child is making a transition, but they do not usually need a Teacher of Deaf to help. If the child is Deaf, then a Teacher of Deaf children will be involved. Hearing parents of Deaf children will need support at transition too and the Teacher of Deaf will be involved.
- Ensuring parents are provided with information to allow them to make informed choices regarding education provision.
- Providing information for parents (who need it) in a format that suits them e.g. BSL/English Interpreter, BSL videos, [Easy Read](#).
- Arrange a visit(s) to the new setting or school.
- Accessing advice and/or support from agencies such as the British Deaf Association Scotland's and the National Deaf Children's Society Scotland.
- Having a consistent Communications Support Worker (with BSL SCQF 8 qualification) / Teacher of Deaf children / Support for Learning Assistant / BSL/English Interpreter or ensuring a smooth handover to the new worker.
- Where appropriate, enhanced transitions could include more visits, appropriate communication access and trialing new forms of support.
- Ensuring child(ren) have an identified friendship group in the new setting or school. Teaching BSL to the peer group of a Deaf child is important to allow a few children to become fluent. This fluency in BSL needs to be nurtured to support transitions and peer learning.
- Clear communication links and exchange of relevant information between the existing and the new setting or school.
- Ensuring appropriate staff is in place in the new setting or school that is qualified and able to communicate with the pupil fluently in BSL. Reference should be made to the local authority BSL Plan.
- Ensuring children and parents have early access to and discussions about careers advice and information to prepare them for the world of work or further/higher education.
- Using the services and mentoring support of the [Deaf Roots and Pride](#) project.

Reflective Questions:

- How accessible is the transitions information for parents and children who use British Sign Language?
- Are there additional supports you could put into place for children during transition periods? For example, Deaf role models for transitions (careers).

Further information

Further information for practitioners on transitions is available in the links below:

Click on the links below to access [Deaf Roots and Pride](#) videos with young people on their educational journey and experience:

- Interview with [Jia](#)
- Interview with [Erin](#)
- Interview with [Kisters](#)
- Information on transitions in BSL video format is available for parents on [Parentzone Scotland](#).
- Scottish Early Childhood and Families Transitions [Statement](#).
- Transitions in the context of [COVID-19](#).

