

# SURVEYING THE SECTOR



Moving rooms can be unsettling for children and parents alike. **Dr Jo Verrill** explores mums and dads' views on how well this process is managed and shares ideas for smooth transitions...



**T**ransition between rooms is a critical time in a child's development. Ceeda recently introduced a 'room movers' survey to our national research service, in support of this process. To date 380 parents have given their views.

The timing of a room move is a critical factor. For the majority of parents this occurred at the right time for their child (86%), for some it was too soon (3%) and over one in 10 parents (11%) felt it was too late.

"It is important that settings put the child and his/her individual needs at the heart of all decisions about the timing and length of the transition process when moving between rooms," says early years consultant Deborah Fielden (@DeborahFielden). "The decision about when a child should move up to the next room is sometimes influenced by staffing and ratio issues, but this approach may not meet that child's individual developmental needs and should be avoided if possible."

## Preparing for change

As with any change process, preparation is important. Nine out of 10 parents said they had a discussion with staff about how their child's move would be managed (90%) and 87% felt they had the opportunity to talk through any concerns they had. Almost three-quarters of parents (73%) said staff consulted with them on how they could work together to help their child settle quickly and two-thirds (69%) were

introduced to their child's new key worker prior to the move. This good practice needs to be the common experience for all.

## Making the move

A range of questions explored experience of the move, using a rating scale of 1-10. Parents praised the gradual introduction of their child via visits to their new room, in particular (average score 8.74 out of 10) and the support of the child's original key person through the process (8.79 out of 10). All ratings are shown in the table.

Finally, parents were asked to sum up how their child was getting on in their new room. The picture was positive for the majority, with 43% saying their child was 'very settled' or 'settled' (42%). For others the process was taking a little longer.

Early years consultant Anne Gladstone (anne@annegladstone.co.uk) offers her thoughts: "The process of transition is similar to the grieving process, so there is no surprise that it can be unsettling. Children have to be given the opportunity to learn to weather change through the support of adults who understand them as individuals and the emotional aspects of the transition process."

Michelle Brown, quality and training manager at First Class Childcare, explains how the group's settings approach transition: "During their initial visits to nursery, each child is given a transition box to use and share at home," she says. "This contains photos of key people from their room, resources to play with, a book to look at with their parent/carer, and information about the

### How well are we doing in ensuring that:

Average score out of 10

Your child's original key person was supportive during the change	8.79
Your child was introduced to the change gradually with visits to the new room	8.74
Your child's key person in the new room was welcoming and approachable	8.64
The new key person established a good relationship with your child	8.57
The new key person established a good relationship with you	8.25
Overall how well do you feel we managed your child's room move?	8.18
There was good communication between staff in the old and new rooms	8.16

**Source:** Ceeda room mover benchmark Averages are calculated across all cases answering the question

**Base:** 380 surveys returned in the period 01/03/14 to 28/01/15

routine. Transition boxes are used throughout the nursery.

"With internal transitions, parents are invited in prior to their child moving to be re-introduced to the next room and its team; they then visit with their child to further develop relationships and complete a new 'All About Me' booklet, providing essential information for the next key person. We also use an 'Information Exchange Key Person to Key Person' form, a one-stop document for staff on the child: their likes, dislikes, natural routine, parental requirements, developmental milestones, etc.

"We pride ourselves on our transitions as we believe that our method puts children and families at the heart of the process."

## find out more

Dr Jo Verrill is director at Ceeda. To find out more about Ceeda surveys, you can email her at [enquiries@ceeda.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@ceeda.co.uk) or call 0845 680 0631. Visit [ceeda.co.uk](http://ceeda.co.uk) or share your thoughts on this research by tweeting @ceeda\_uk