



OUR STORIES...

Project for Supporting Children's Transitions

Why is supporting transitions important?

Transitions can include the everyday kind, such as going to and from school, or from the classroom to the playground.

Transitions can also happen at certain times of life, for example moving from primary to secondary school, or into work or college after school.

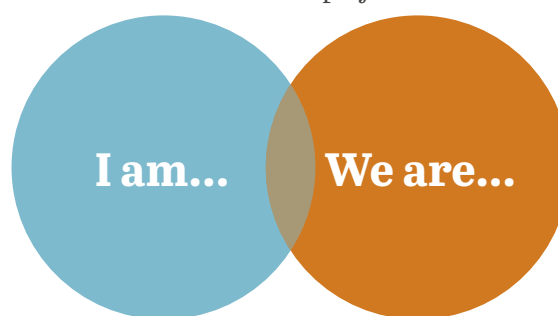
We know that transitions can often be experienced as difficult for children and families and so it is important to find ways to make transitions easier for everyone.



'Our Stories' project

What is the 'Our Stories' project?

The 'Our Stories' project used two different kinds of videos that we have found can help with transitions:



What do we learn by developing and joining these two perspectives?

Find out more online

To view 'I am' video examples visit acorns-soton.org.uk





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'I am' Digital Stories

A short video that provides information about the child, their strengths and interests. This is about getting to know the child before meeting.

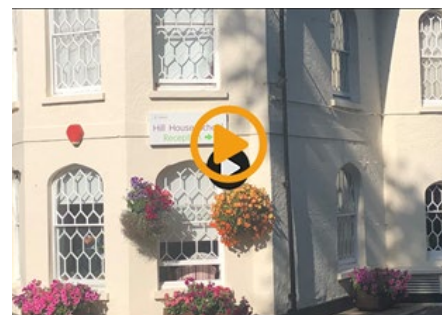
'We are' virtual tours

A set of virtual tours and videos that explain what the new environment is like. This is about the child getting to understand the environment before visiting.



Both kinds of videos can be really helpful by themselves or in combination. You don't have to have both kinds of video to make a difference to children's transitions...

...but having both can be fantastic because it enables each side of the transition to share information with the other



Why: 'I am' Digital Stories are strengths-based



'I am' Digital Stories allow us to

- Hear the voices of children and young people
- Put the child at the centre of discussions
- Include children who communicate in diverse ways
- Open up communication about the child with parents in a way that celebrates and values the child

Why: 'We are' virtual tours show what places and people are like



On the other side of the transition, 'We are' virtual tours and videos can be used to help children develop strategies when going to new places. For example, a virtual tour of a beach can prepare a child for the experience of visiting a beach even if they never actually go there.

Find out more online

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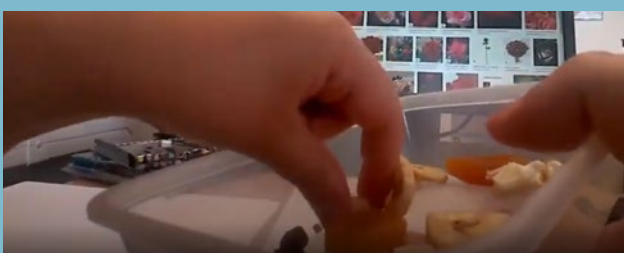
Our approach is strengths based. We focus on what the child can and wants to do, rather than what they cannot:

- Shows their best self
- What things look like when they are going well
- What strategies are effective in supporting the child to have a good day.



This approach is informed by the principles of early childhood education developed by Friedrich Froebel (<https://www.froebel.org.uk/about-us/froebelian-principles>) who emphasized the importance of:

- Play
- Understanding the child holistically-
- And recognising every child's unique skills, interests, and ways of learning.



The 'I am' Digital Story helps improve understanding of the child generally in addition to supporting transitions.

We are virtual tours provide

- autonomy for children to explore the site and 'meet' the staff in their own time
- both visual and auditory elements; through the use of 360 video, sensory elements can be explored, for example, what's it like in a crowded school corridor at lunch time
- multiple opportunities for the child to view and explore of spaces and activities before and after in-person visits and when in-person visits are not possible.

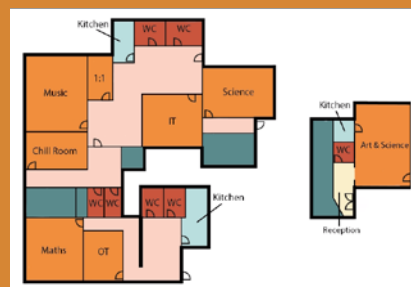


A virtual tour is an excellent exploratory environment as the child chooses their own time, pace and locations.

You don't have to explore in sequence. For example, you can jump straight from the car to the sports area, without having to pass through all the other parts of the school.

A virtual tour can show things like:

- the key people who work there and who the child is likely to meet
- what activities or lessons look like and the spaces they use including classrooms and outdoor spaces
- how staff support children in the setting
- a navigation map of the site
- additional information that can be written, signed or symbol-based



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The Digital Story can help with statutory processes (e.g. in assessments for EHCPs, and as part of annual reviews) or to help health and other service providers understand the child before they visit for an appointment.



In other words, you can start to get to know the child a bit better even if you cannot meet them.



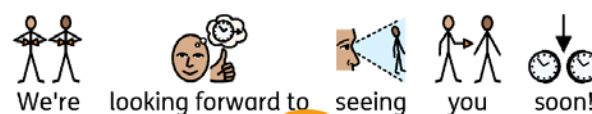
Using inset materials can help the child

- short video clips of staff or activities can be placed within a virtual tour (inset video)
- understand what the school is like, including how children and young people are included in activities
- see things from a child's point of view if young people are involved e.g. narration
- observe how the young people and staff feel about and showcase their setting

Using these approaches can be very effective in supporting children's transitions

'We need this for all of our students!' - said one of the teachers who we worked with

'(It) has given us more ideas of what he likes and how he engages' - social worker who viewed a Digital Story of a young man moving into adult provision



And just the fact that the school, staff and children have taken the time to create these materials gives a sense that they care about new children joining them.



A great illustration of the power of an 'I am...' digital is in the birthday present rule (from Paula Kluth's book, 'You're going to love this kid!'). If you can choose a birthday present for the child after watching their digital story, then it really has helped you get to know the child.

Find out more online

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"Thank you so much for sending through the links to the digital stories. I've loved watching them both this morning! I think they really demonstrate the strengths, skills and uniqueness of each child and their families. I'm so glad that you're doing this project in this way. It's such a simple idea, but one that I hope will have a huge impact."

Due to my work providing Short Break (respite care), I am in the privileged position of reading many children's profiles. I read an average of 6-8 a year. After watching your digital stories, I realise what is often missing from these profiles. You've managed to capture in just a few minutes, through music and visuals, what can't easily be conveyed in words. I wish every family had the opportunity to do this for their child or young person!"

Foster carer



"So, not only did we want children to be able to log on and kind of see the art room or one of the homes or the café or the allotment, but we wanted them to see what you can do in those spaces, to make them real and bring them alive."

Deputy Headteacher



AUTEK

To view an animated version of this guide visit acorns-soton.org.uk

Funded by and with thanks to UKRI (project reference ES/V005286/1). Generously supported by the Froebel Trust.

Find out more online

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