

Pillar 6. Managing progression and transitions

Key points

- Progression and transitions are both about moving children on. A transition is a major change whereas progression involves a continuing series of minor changes.
- The essence of developmentally appropriate practice is that there is no single, simple model of progress that applies to all children's development. Nevertheless, children do learn and mature, and this should be reflected in increasing pedagogical complexity and structure as they grow older.
- Good transitions are provided by preparing the children for what is to come
 - through discussion, art, and drama, that reflects on the educational transitions they are going through, and on the differences between their past, present and future learning environments;
 - by providing opportunities for children to meet peers from older (and younger) age grades;
 - through a visit to the new situation; and
 - by making the transitions gradual.
- Best progress is ensured by
 - having a clear idea of the developmental pathways in different domains;
 - providing the child with the suitable level of difficulty, one that will not cause *persistent* failure but will provide sufficient challenge;
 - making the learning as engaging for the child as possible;
 - planning pedagogical sequences that provide for children moving forward in their learning; and
 - ensuring that children understand that hard work makes their progress faster and that sticking at difficult learning tasks will eventually work for them.

This should include discussion about what school life is like for older children. They can also talk about children they know who are in other years.

Do you thoroughly know in what direction the child's learning will develop in emotional development, in physical development, in cognitive development, in literacy and in numeracy?

Both very able and very weak children can be at risk of receiving insufficient challenge. *All* children need to know that learning will not always come easily, so a child getting everything right is not being challenged.

Talk about the differences in social rules and routines at older age grades, as research suggests that this is a particularly important topic to young children.

The classroom should not suddenly become a much more formal place at the start of a new school year. Instead, gradually introduce more structured elements into children's play sessions as the year goes on, and make structured teaching time slightly less playful (while retaining a light and engaging tone).

QLI indicators of success

- *Motivation*: Children show a positive attitude towards the changes the future will bring and show a belief that they can improve their own learning.
- *Concentration*: Children can remain on task for a reasonable length of time and understand that they may have to struggle (work at things for a while) at times to learn new things.
- *Confidence*: Children face new learning and new situations eagerly.

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Cameo 1. Structured play: Progression in numeracy

Year 2 child in a Year 1/2 class

Jane chooses to write numbers on a white board at the writing table during structured play. She writes the numbers one to ten across the top. The teacher stops beside her and praises her effort. "What do you think would come next?" she asks. "Eleven, twelve..." says Jane. "Do you want to write that down too?" says the teacher, showing her how to put the 11 under the 1 to start a number square. The child later shows the teacher her work. She has left out 18 and she is gently encouraged to find her mistake. When it is corrected, she wants to continue. The teacher tells her the numbers up to 23 and then asks her if she sees the pattern, pointing to 3, 13 and 23 etc. She is able to see the pattern eventually and shows pleasure when she does. With some more support when needed, the child continues. She works on this throughout the whole play session, remaining deeply engaged and eventually getting up to 100. "What's bigger than 100?" Jane asks. This sparks a lively discussion about "very big" numbers in which several other children look at her work and join in, showing high levels of engagement. At the end of the session, she has written 1,000,000, with support.

The teacher provides a prompt to enable the child to see how she can take the activity forward.

Nothing succeeds like success; she is motivated to go on.

She has begun to see the pattern and has been enabled to progress further in numbers than ever before. Her progress had not been limited by any artificial barrier at a particular number.

Her work provokes interest in other children.

The girl chooses the activity because she enjoys it. Children often make no distinction between work and play at this age because work is equally enjoyable.

It is better that she finds the mistake for herself, if possible.

Pattern recognition is an important part of thinking skills. She is helped to see it with the scaffolding provided by the teacher.

She does not understand exactly what one million means but her horizons have been extended.

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Cameo 2. Play-based learning: The road project

Year 1/2 composite class

There has been ample preparation for an ambitious project.

The teacher is confident they can work on their own

Anna does not supply much of the conversation but she has the advantage of listening to two very articulate boys.

The decision to stop is Anna's own; the teacher has not told her what to do although she has given a gentle steer.

The teacher has planned for progression beforehand.

The teacher has previously had a preparatory discussion about roads and constructing a roadway. She asks who wants to paint roadways on large flat pieces of cardboard. Several children volunteer and go to fetch aprons and paint rollers and brushes. The teacher makes sure they can all make a start and leaves them to it. Another group are making the houses and apartment blocks to go with the roadway with the support of the classroom assistant. The teacher comes back to the first group and suggests that they could do another road crossing the first one. One roadway keeps getting wider and wider as a girl, who obviously thinks she has to fill the whole area, continues painting. This girl, Anna, is very quiet but the others keep up almost continuous chatter about what they are doing. The teacher sees what Anna is doing. She says, "That's a very nice wide road Anna, not a narrow road. Is it wide enough now do you think?" Anna nods and stops. The teacher asks what is going to be at the side of the road. One boy proposes "Grass," and the others agree. They go to get green paint and begin filling in the rest of the space. Anna gets her paint brush stuck with another brush in the entrance to the pot. As she pulls, the widest parts of the paintbrushes jam the entrance harder. One of the boys sees her difficulty and tries to pull them out. It doesn't work and he sits back to consider the problem. Then he realises he must push them both fully in to get one out. Anna watches intently. After some time, the teacher goes and gets a copy of the Highway Code and starts to show them some of the contents. "What else might your road need?" she asks. White lines and signs are two of the suggestions. The teacher says that they can continue the project tomorrow.

The children are independent on these housekeeping tasks. One boy even helps another with his apron.

These houses will eventually form part of the project.

The teacher uses the opportunity to contrast wide and narrow, with supporting gestures.

This is an opportunity for problem solving and for Anna to learn from her peers. There is benefit for both children in the interaction.

This project is a sustained piece of work, covering several sessions, with ample opportunity for progression.

On a later visit, the finished project is displayed prominently in the main foyer of the school, showing that it is valued highly. All the children in the class have contributed to it.