

Habviuk Knowledge Exchange Meeting

Transitions

6 February 2024

Pre-school/Starting school

Most referrals for pre-school come from QTVIs. There was some difference in approach as to number of visits for pre-school children – one Hab specialist reported doing 2 pre-visits to nursery with child and parent and then 2 post visits with a child with moderate low vision but fortnightly visits for a child who is severely sight impaired. Services often use spreadsheets to pick up children in advance and referrals trigger visit into school, but it is worth remembering that the QTVI interpretation of need can be quite different to the hab perspective. Parents reluctant to attend pre-school groups. Referrals tend to come in once the child has already started school. Better links are needed with QTVI's as they are not always based in the same setting as Hab so reliant on QTVI's referring. Nurseries can be a complex environment to carry out an environmental audit.

At this age, hab specialists tend to work through TAs and there was some feeling that this age group is hardest for some as it is difficult to get to know the children. It is important that you get to know the family, but this can be hard if referrals are last minute. Early transition works much better if there is early involvement but again there can be some difference of opinion with QTVIs as to when habilitation involvement should start. It becomes more complicated the later a child is referred. Transition work being carried out after the child has already started at the setting.

Treasure hunts with pictures can work well with early years pupils to support orientation skills.

Can be tricky finding out which classroom they are going to be in, and things can then change over the holiday and training can be problematic if there is a high turnover of staff. Sometimes do not have equipment there on time which can be frustrating. One person within an organisation can make all the difference. Joint working with other involved professionals to have a joined approach and can share resources. Ideally equipment to be in place before the child begins

Part time timetable can be really useful if child is struggling with orientation. The anxieties from parents cover a range of things – steps, playground, friends. Peer awareness training is really important too. Questions in a box from a child's peers can be a useful tool. Prospective schools should be visited while the school is in operation to get a proper feel for it. Hab could advise on whether the child will ultimately become a cane user. Familiarising the environment, where the coat peg, drawer is and do these need marking up. Thought given to lunch times – cutlery skills, opening food packaging etc. Pass on skills that TA's can reinforce. Sometimes the TA moves up with the child this is useful for consistency. Easier to work on transition when moving from on-site nursery into the adjoining primary school. More time consuming if moving to a different location completely.

Peer awareness training – not always great for little ones but could suggest they put questions in a box.

Fiona Broadley's book is excellent – really good for sharing with parents and preparing children

Do It Yourself folder handouts are really useful too – doesn't seem to still be available but worth trying to share with peers.

Lots of ideas for equipment that people use on Pinterest .

Key worker transitioning up with child can be useful when moving from nursery to infants or infants to juniors.

Transition from primary to secondary school

PE can be less accessible than in primary school and may need to be part of the role of a hab specialist to make suggestions. Getting things in place for PE and food technology can be key

Talking watches are an asset.

Stairs are a big bugbear - children should not have a lift pass unless necessary. Fire evacuation plan advise on the best route to safely exit the building.

Run a skills day to assess kitchen skills and share info with food tech teachers

Staff training in secondary is harder due to larger numbers and tighter timetables.

Children don't necessarily find out which secondary school they are going to until a month before they leave. Don't know timetable or form room so just have to give an overview of the school.

Transition booklets including a quiz are useful as can prompt pupils to ask questions

Frustration of spending ages on routes if they then don't use it. Parents reluctant to let child travel on public transport.

Difficulty of getting transport to and from school for children who need it. This is also not guaranteed each year as can be re assessed.

Hopefully CFVI will raise profile of what Hab role involves.