

Pre-school to School Case-study

The focus of the Gainsborough preschool and school cluster was for settings to share what they already did to support transition and to identify ways in which the transition process could be improved for the children.

The group decided that it would be beneficial to have some form of common approach to transition that was shared by all of the settings involved. The idea was to use a toy that the children were familiar with in their nursery setting to support them as they progressed to school. We described 'Lola' a small cuddly leopard that was already being used in Gainsborough Nursery, as a speaking and listening tool for the children, particularly at circle time. The children responded very well to 'Lola' and because she was small, quiet and shy, the children knew that they had to treat her kindly and talk to her quietly so that they didn't frighten her!

The Children's Centre Practitioner suggested to the group that she could visit the local reception classes, accompanied by 'Lola' and 'check it out' for the children. She would take photographs of 'Lola' in different areas of the new reception classes to show the children back at nursery.

The idea was accepted by the Transition Cluster Group, so 'Lola' went off on her travels, visiting the local receiver, reception classes, recording visits with photographs. Lots of information about the schools was also recorded, by speaking to the teacher and the children, so that any questions asked by the parents of the nursery children could be answered..

The Transition Cluster Group decided that, in partnership, they could put together and deliver a workshop to parents with information about the local receiver schools, the curriculum and

how we were using 'Lola' to support the children. The workshop was to be held in Gainsborough Early Years Children's Centre. As part of the workshop we introduced the reception teachers to the parents, spoke about the Gainsborough Cluster Group and our journey so far, introduced 'Lola' and demonstrated how she could be used. The workshop was delivered both morning and afternoon and an evening at a different nursery, to include working parents. Parents took part in active learning activities supported by the practitioners and were given time to speak to them at the end of the workshop.



At a future Transition Cluster Group meeting photographs and the information collected on school visits were shared and it was further suggested that each school involved in the project make their own book about their school. The books should be in the same format and include photographs of 'Lola.' Schools produced their own booklets which were kept collectively in a 'Transition Box' displayed in prominent areas in nursery settings, for parents to have access to when thinking about which new school to choose for their child.

All About School Book



It was suggested that a 'Lola' was purchased for every setting in the transition cluster

Parents commented on the success of 'Lola' with some parents asking where they could buy one. One parent took a 'Lola' on holiday with them when they were touring France to reassure their child.

A Speech and Language therapist related how a reluctant child became animated when she produced 'Lola,' who he recognised from school, and as a result became easier to work with.

The Birth to Five Service wanted to hold a 'Transition Showcase' to inform early years practitioners and other professionals working with children in the Gainsborough area about the work carried out by the Gainsborough Cluster Group and to encourage new members. We suggested that practitioners would be encouraged to attend if they were given a 'goody bag.' There was sufficient money in our funding to offer a 'Lola' to identified organisations who would benefit from her use. Also included in the bag were outlines of the workshops we had written in order for practitioners to replicate them to their parents with the minimum work.

We co-produced a flyer, prior to the event, to promote the 'Showcase.'

In preparation for the showcase, members of the cluster were asked to produce a storyboard to promote some aspect of our work. The Children's Centre Practitioner was asked to speak at the 'Transition Cluster' as a representative of the pre-schools. The work using 'Lola' was discussed and how she had been used to support Transition.

