



Grass Roots Newsletter

Hello July!!



Welcome to our bumper July newsletter! This month is completely dedicated to Transitions and School Readiness. For our oldest children, this means preparing to take that giant leap into primary school. For some of our younger children, it means stepping up into new rooms, welcoming new children, and adjusting to fresh environments within our nursery.

As a setting, our approach to transitions is grounded in both physical health and emotional security. We understand that a child's mind and body are entirely connected. A child cannot focus on learning their new school routines if they are physically exhausted from a lack of core stamina, or if they are overwhelmed by big, unmanaged emotions. This month, we are showcasing how we combine physical independence with Emotion Coaching strategies across all age groups, ensuring every child transitions with a strong body and a resilient mind.

Monthly Theme: School Readiness Through Emotion Coaching

Transitions require an immense amount of energy. When a child faces change, their nervous system treats it as an unknown adventure, which can manifest physically through clumsy movements, disrupted sleep, or sudden emotional outbursts.

- **The Physical Foundation:** To sit comfortably on a carpet for storytime or upright at a desk, a child requires excellent core stability and shoulder strength. We build this core stamina through "heavy work" like climbing, carrying large outdoor blocks, and rolling tyres.
- **The Infant Roots:** For our babies and toddlers, school readiness begins on the floor! Plenty of uninterrupted tummy time and crawling builds the exact same neck, back, and shoulder muscles that they will rely on years from now to hold a pencil and focus in a classroom.

In our setting, we practice Emotion Coaching to support emotional readiness. This means we view emotional outbursts or anxiety as opportunities for teaching and connection, rather than moments that require discipline. When a child shows anxiety about school or room transitions, we use a three-step approach:

1. **Notice & Validate:** Observe their behavior and label the feeling. "I can see your body is moving very fast and you look a bit worried. It's okay to feel nervous about your new room."
2. **Align & Connect:** Sit with them at eye level so they don't feel alone. "Starting a new group is a big change. I remember feeling worried on my first day of work, too."
3. **Problem-Solve Together:** Once the child is calm, guide them toward a solution. "What shall we put in your bag tomorrow to help you feel brave?"





Summer

Practitioner Spotlight:

Amy is our staff praise winner this month!

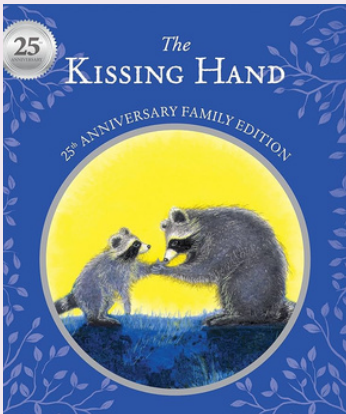
Amy is the preschool room leader at New Road and has worked at Grass Roots since 2018 as a newly qualified teacher.

Amy leads the teaching and learning within The Woodland room, where she excels at providing the children with exciting, stimulating, and enriching learning activities and resources.



Event Calendar:

- We break up for the Summer holidays on Friday 17th July
- Check out Grass Roots Family CIC facebook page for community events
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100086769567112>
- 50 things to do before you are 5 has events on their website
<https://calderdale.50thingstodo.org/app/os#!/welcome>
- Support Noa's Place, a vision of one of our nursery's parents - www.noasplace.org.uk



Book Review:

The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn

This beautiful, comforting story is an absolute masterpiece for any child experiencing the anxiety of separation or transition.

- Why we love it: Chester Raccoon is terrified to start school in the forest, so his mother shares a precious family secret called "the kissing hand." She presses a kiss right into the center of his palm so that whenever he feels lonely at school, he can press his hand to his cheek and feel her love with him all day long.
- The Emotional Link: It provides a tangible, physical coping strategy for children. At home, you can adopt this exact tradition before drop-off. It bridges the physical gap between home and nursery or school, offering deep emotional comfort when you cannot be there.
- Communication Link: The book opens up natural, low-pressure conversations about mixed feelings. We can ask children: "What makes your hand feel warm and brave?" mapping loving language directly onto their complex transition emotions.





Curriculum Focus: Low-Pressure Independence & Everyday Skills



This month, our team is focusing on making transitions feel like a natural extension of our everyday play. We firmly believe that school readiness should never feel pressured or clinical; instead, we embed these vital skills into the tasks and routines the children already do and love every single day.

- **Everyday Independence:** Rather than running formal lessons, we look for natural opportunities for independence. During our daily routines, we encourage the children to manage their own clothing, practice putting on their shoes, and navigate zip-up coats during play. At mealtimes, we practice using cutlery independently and managing tricky items. This builds their fine motor control and self-help skills in a completely relaxed, low-pressure environment.
- **Group Games & Routines:** We weave school-friendly habits into our normal circle times and games. Through simple, everyday group activities, the children naturally practice turn-taking, following multi-step instructions, and listening to their peers. Because it is wrapped up in fun, it doesn't feel like hard work—it just feels like play.

? Q&A: Managing Regression & Big Feelings

Q: My child is starting school in September and has suddenly become incredibly clingy, prone to massive meltdowns over tiny things, and is even having potty accidents again. What are we doing wrong?

A: You are doing absolutely nothing wrong! This is an incredibly common response to a major life transition known as developmental regression. Children are highly intuitive; they know a massive change is on the horizon, even if they don't have the cognitive capacity to fully articulate what it means. When their internal world feels unpredictable, they unconsciously "regress" to a safer, simpler stage of development to seek reassurance. The best approach is to co-regulate. Avoid punishments or logic-based lectures during a meltdown. When a child is in the middle of an emotional storm, their "logical brain" is completely offline.

Use Emotion Coaching tools: sit with them, hold them if they want to be held, and say, "You are safe, I am right here, and we will figure this out together." Once the emotional wave passes and their heart rate slows, you can address the practical skill (like heading to the toilet or putting on shoes). Consistency, patience, and continuous validation will guide them through this temporary phase.





Recipe Corner: Independent Lunchbox Pinwheels

These are fantastic for practicing lunchbox autonomy and building finger strength. They require absolutely no cooking and are packed with slow-release energy to sustain a busy day of exploration.

- **The Recipe:** Take a wholemeal tortilla wrap. Let your child spread a thin layer of cream cheese, soft cheese, or mild pesto across it. Layer with fresh spinach leaves and thin slices of ham, chicken, or turkey. Roll it up tightly like a sleeping bag and slice into bite-sized "wheels."
- **The Independence Factor:** Have your child practice packing these into their own lunchbox, wrapping them up in reusable wraps, and—most importantly—practicing opening and closing the lunchbox clips completely independently.
- **The Conversation:** Talk about the physical structure of the food. "Look how rolling it tightly keeps all the yummy ingredients safe inside!" This builds spatial awareness, fine motor control, and confidence in managing their own food choices at school.



Tips & Tricks: Practical Skills for School Success

You can build essential school skills through simple, playful adjustments to your daily home routine, turning independence into a rewarding challenge:

- **The Coat Trick (The "Over-the-Head" Flip):** Teach your child the nursery-approved coat trick. Lay the coat completely flat on the floor, with the hood or collar right by their toes. Have them stand at the hood, put their hands down into the armholes, and flip the coat up and over their head in one smooth motion. It works every single time, eliminates frustration, and builds massive physical confidence!
- **The "Two-Prompt" Rule:** At school, children need to follow multi-step instructions. Practice this at home during play or chores. Give them two connected tasks to complete independently: "Please put your shoes in the basket, and then fetch your red water bottle." This builds their auditory memory and executive functioning skills.
- **Visual Morning Timelines:** Create a simple morning routine chart using drawings or photos of your child completing tasks (Brush teeth → Get dressed → Put on shoes). This reduces your need to constantly nudge them verbally, giving them a sense of autonomy and mirroring the visual timetables used in Reception classrooms.
- **For further ideas**
<https://startingreception.co.uk/>





Risky Play: Emotional Bravery & Spatial Navigation

Transitions require immense emotional bravery, and risky play is where children build that exact internal muscle. Stepping into a brand-new classroom or an expansive primary school playground is a significant psychological risk for a young child.

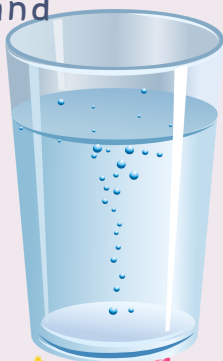
- **Building Environmental Competence:** When we encourage children to explore unfamiliar outdoor spaces—like a new park, a steeper grassy bank, or a challenging climbing frame—we are teaching them how to safely map and assess an unfamiliar environment.
- **The “I Can Do It” Mindset:** A child who has safely navigated climbing a tree or balancing on a high log has physical proof of their own capability. When they face the unfamiliar social and physical landscape of a new school playground, they draw directly on that inner reservoir of confidence. They learn to view the unknown as an exciting adventure to explore rather than a threat to fear.



Healthy Choices: Fueling the Transitioning Brain

The cognitive, emotional, and social load of adapting to a new environment uses up a massive amount of glucose. A child who is navigating change will burn through their energy reserves rapidly, which is what triggers the classic “4 PM after-nursery collapse.”

- **Preventing the After-School Crash:** When children hold their behavior together all day in a new environment, they often unravel the absolute moment they see their secure base (you!). Protect their blood sugar and their emotions by greeting them at pick-up with a complex carbohydrate and protein snack immediately (e.g., oatcakes with houmous, or apple slices with cheese cubes). This prevents a sharp glucose crash and provides emotional stability.
- **Establishing School-Friendly Sleep:** School routines often demand earlier mornings and sustained mental focus. Start shifting bedtimes forward by just 10 minutes every few days during mid-to-late August. Ensure all screens are turned off at least an hour before bedtime, as blue light disrupts the production of melatonin, which is vital for the deep REM sleep required to process the day’s emotional learning and transitions.





Online Safety: Virtual Classroom Tours & Familiarisation

We can use digital media mindfully to make the unknown feel familiar, safe, and exciting long before the first day of term arrives.

- Virtual Familiarisation: Most primary schools now host wonderful virtual tours, video welcomes, or photo galleries of their Reception classrooms on their websites. Sit down with your child and look through these together. Play a game of "I Spy" to spot the reading corner, the toilets, the coat pegs, and the outdoor area. Saying, "Look, they have a water table just like our nursery!" anchors the new space in something deeply familiar and safe.
- BBC Bitesize Starting School: Explore the BBC Bitesize Starting Primary School Game collection together. They have lovely interactive games where children can virtually practice choosing a healthy school lunch, getting dressed in a school uniform, and exploring a digital classroom space.
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Sustainability: Reusable School Toolkits & Lasting Habits

Transitions are a time of high consumption as families purchase new uniforms and equipment, but we can use this milestone to model eco-friendly choices for our children.

- The Pre-Loved Path: Before buying everything brand new, explore your new school's PTA second-hand uniform sales or local eco-swaps (check out the YMCA). Normalising pre-loved clothing teaches children that items have lasting value beyond a single season and helps protect our planet's resources.
- Sustainable Lunch Kits: Invest in high-quality, durable, reusable water bottles and stainless-steel snack boxes rather than relying on single-use plastic sandwich bags and juice cartons. Teaching your child to take care of and bring home their reusable containers builds a beautiful, lifelong sense of personal responsibility for both their belongings and the wider world.

Policy Update - Settling in & Transition Policy

Every month we will share one of our updated policies with the newsletter. Please take your time to read this and feedback any comments you may have in relation to this.

You can find all of our policies on the website <https://www.grassrootsdaynursery.com/policies-and-procedures>

