

# Early Permanence for Older Children

Considerations when moving older children

**EARLY PERMANENCE**  
**BETTER OUTCOMES FOR MORE CHILDREN**



Kayleigh Starkie – April 2024

# Moving Older Children in EP

Moving from a child's birth family into a new home will be a traumatic and frightening experience.

Add to this, the uncertainty of where you will live permanently will no doubt be terrifying.

How this move is managed whether it be planned in advance or in more urgent situations will make a difference.

Think about some of the factors below and consider whether you are able to address some of these areas to improve the experience of a move for older children.

## Awareness of Self

Children in frightening and unpredictable situations will be looking to the adults in their company for signs of safety.

Understanding your own current emotions, your use of certain words, body language and general presentation will be helpful.

The more you check in with yourself, the more you can offer a child the emotional support and feelings of safety they need.

No matter how experienced you are, this is an upsetting situation and it's important that you check in with a colleague or manager afterwards.

## Identifying Trusted Adults

When working with children, explore their support network and who children present as most comfortable. This may be a teacher, childcare professional, health professional or relative.

Would there be any possibility that this individual could help in offering reassurance?

Could this person of safety have some involvement in the transition to give the child access to those they can trust?

## Space for Questions

Giving children space to ask questions with individuals they feel able to talk to could be useful.

There may be occasions where children can spend time with a social worker (or professional that is known to them) where they can talk through what is happening.

This may be that rather than go straight to their new home, they can have time to hear what will be happening next and ask questions they may not feel able to ask later.

## Visual Aids

The more predictable a situation can be, the safer children may feel.

Would there be an opportunity to create welcome books, recording.

Would there be opportunities for a welcome bag e.g. a toothbrush, toiletries, a little reassuring personalised note.

Items that could help a child feel wanted, special and cared for.

It may help to send the EP children's book to the identified EP carer to complete so that it can be shown to the child before they arrive in the placement.

## Validate

The situation will be distressing for all, no one involved would wish for a child to move from birth family if at all possible.

It will be important to acknowledge the situation so that children can see that professionals care that it is upsetting and that they are upset for the child. Validating how hard this is for children will ensure that they know professionals do care.