Childminders, home based day care and young children’s transitions

Transition and Socialization in Early Childhood

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Transition expectations

- From the moment of registration to become a childminder in Scotland transitions are emphasized when prospective childminders are asked what they will do “to develop positive relationships with parents and carers which allow children to move easily and happily from one caring situation to another, particularly between the home and the childminder”

(Care Commission: Childminding registration documentation)
31,720 children (0-15) cared for by childminders in family based care

6,185 childminding services are registered with the Care Inspectorate

Supported by SCMA - a membership association

A scoping consultation in preparation for a Scotland wide study of childminders’ contribution to child & family transitions

Four different communities
- Island Community
- Country town
- City
- Village

Source: GROS, 1998
Context for the study

- Transitions as Tools for Change’: the focus is on three strands: children’s transitions journeys, family engagement and practitioner beliefs and practices.

- It is in this context that there is an opportunity to look at the more hidden contributors to children’s well-being and successful navigation of early childhood:

- Currently the contribution of childminding is less visible than it should be.

- Family day-care: licensed home-based ECEC, which is most prevalent for children under the age of 3 (OECD, 2015).
Recent research into childminding

- Evans (2013) found that childminders attributed their outstanding practice to training, supportive childminder colleagues, formal and informal childminding networks and LA development officers and support.

- Brooker (2014) finding most of the research into childminding in the UK happened in the 1980s, investigated the perceptions held by childminders of statutory frameworks in England.

- Stephen & Duncan (2014) explored the roles, practices and values of community childminders in Scotland as well as stakeholder perspectives. In Scotland much of the support for childminders is provided by SCMA.
Examples of transitions

- Home environment to first childcare service
- Community childminding placement to nursery
- Community childminding placement to delivery of 600 hours for eligible twos’
- Partnership working between childminder/nursery
- Funded preschool provision for 3 and 4 year olds and transition into school
- Transitions across the day and week
Theoretical background

- Bourdieu - social capital
- Bruner - spiral curriculum
- Transitions networks*
- Transitions ease*
- Transitions readiness*
- Transitions capital*

Practical interruptions

Lack of flexibility in Community Childminding Service Provision, compounded by-

- Little access to additional funds to allow child to remain in childminders care (e.g., transport issues)
- Lack of continuity for the child is there is a mismatch of timing between services
- Lack of consideration of gap between a placement with a Community Childminder which ends prior to the child turning two (and then able to access 600 hours funding)
Approach

- Scoping childminding practices in relation to transitions
- Consultation process undertaken - 4 Focus Groups
  with 17 childminders & two development staff
- 4 locations
- Nominal Group Technique (introduction, main question, individual writing time, round of statements, clarification, discussion of overlaps, defining master statements (including fit of a given statement into a number of masters statements), rating
- Drawing out survey questions & case study approach
The process

Group 1

Group 3
The idea of thinking about transitions seemed novel to the group so we held an opening discussion. As a group they decided to go through their day in the 10 minute note taking session.

- (2 new babies) Introducing babies slowly – talking with existing children about babies who are coming – a new baby will change routine (2 existing children)
- --Gave him a strategy – “Ben Ten” “Ben Ten” (normally counting to ten!) – explained at preschool. Gave him space, not picked on following this – transition to do with behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Master Statements - Group 1 (n=3)</th>
<th>Score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Marking/reassuring about parent’s return</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Existing children’s wellbeing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Preparation is all</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Boundaries with parents</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Providing strategies</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Reassuring role</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Importance of feedback from parents</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Presence in the community</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Transitions into preschool</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Continuity role</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Building familiarity</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Transitions for childminder before &amp; after</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Supporting the supporters</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Own family transitions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group 1

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- (2 new babies) Introducing babies slowly – talking with existing children about babies who are coming – a new baby will change routine (2 existing children)
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Group 2

Links with the community
The childminders’ links in the community were seen as important and valued – it was good to have forged relationships with the doctor, the nursery and the school. One childminder was a coopted member of the Parent-Teacher Council and talked about the benefits for the children and families she supported. She had more contact with the school than many of the families whose children she cared for.
Supporting in this way gives the best outcome for children and families (clarified that the best outcomes for all is that children are happy, confident, able to mix socially, self-assured (to be themselves), feel able, their dispositions. 10, 3, 1, 4

Agree with parents how to best prepare their (families and children are different) child for school/nursery and together work on that plan – eg independence, socialising...to set the child up for success. 1, 10, 2, 3
(2) Continuity of Care (Texts, separation, work out with parents, resilience, children cope very differently – example of child whose parents are separated, 2 full days with another childminder, time with 2 sets of grandparents, time with each parent, 2 days a week with this childminder – Tu & Thurs)

(5) Help them be independent and supporting development eg, making choices (empowering), putting shoes or jacket on, playing games and helping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Master Statements Group 4 (n=5 + 1)</th>
<th>Score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Feeling secure</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Continuity of care</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Socialisation, boundaries &amp; house rules</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Understanding parental anxieties</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Development, independence &amp; confidence</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Being joyful</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Communication with parents &amp; other services</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Communication with the child</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Supportive, flexible, approachable</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Developing trust</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Relationships with older after school care children</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Confidentiality</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Individuality of children</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Focus on the settling in period</td>
<td>2</td>
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Emerging main study questions

- What do childminders do to support children in transition?
- What do childminders do to support parents in the transitions their children are experiencing?
- How do childminders provide continuity as children and families navigate change?
- What informs childminder knowledge of transitions?
- In what ways does the knowledge of individual children held by the childminder support children’s transitions?
- In what ways could childminders share their approaches to transitions with other childminding practitioners?


OECD (2015) Starting Strong IV Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care
References


Research approaches


