

Children and young people development

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There are many transitions a child or young person will have to go through in their lives, this will start from a very early age and continue through to adulthood. The first time away from a main caregiver or parent is a huge transition and can be very traumatic for a child, especially if they are left with someone they don't really know very well. Babies form attachments with main caregivers and people they see on a regular basis.

It is important for them to realize that their caregiver is going to return, this cannot be explained to a young baby so it is only by the caregiver leaving and then returning that a baby would realize they are going to return. The baby receiving positive attention, cuddles and someone talking to it in a calm manner would help to reassure the baby whilst the caregiver was away. If this was handled negatively within the first few months of a baby's life then it could have a negative impact on their feeling of security and self-worth at a later date.

Those children who have experienced an insecure attachment where sensitivity to their needs has not been met or understood respond to challenge with less confidence and face adversity with greater uncertainty. The ability to tolerate and manage change is essential to healthy living and development; however, those children who have experienced an insecure attachment will be less equipped to manage changes than others. (Young minds in school) The birth of a younger sibling is another huge transition for a child and can cause confusion, possible feelings of being pushed out or ignored as opposed to feeling happy and content.

When a new baby is born into a family unit it is very important that any existing children are not made to feel left out. If the new baby was to receive instant attention the existing child could begin to feel unimportant, ignored and ultimately unloved which could lead to the child having conflicting feelings about the new sibling and long lasting emotional affects. Although they may be overjoyed at having a younger sibling they could also have conflicting feelings and feel jealous of all the attention the new baby receives.

This could cause the child to display anger and jealousy at times towards the baby which could later lead to problems for the siblings in building a close, positive relationship, fighting to take attention from each other and being overly competitive. It could also have a negative impact on a child's feeling of self-worth and confidence which could cause insecurity issues which could last into adulthood. Starting nursery, changing schools, moving house or to a new area can be traumatic and emotional for a child or young person of any age.

The feeling of the unknown entity, not knowing what to expect, settling into a new environment and possibly not knowing anyone and having to make new friends can be a very emotional and upsetting time. It can be very worrying for a child wondering if they are going to fit in, will people like them, are they going to get bullied. All these issues can feel overwhelming to a child and if the transition isn't handled or dealt with sensitively then this could lead to insecurity issues and affect their feelings of self-worth and confidence. Toilet training and completing simple personal tasks like achievement for a young child.

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Not all children find this as easy to master as others. It is important to praise and encourage any progress the child makes, no matter how small or it could again affect the child's feeling of self-worth and confidence if they are made to feel like a failure or constantly compared with the progress of another child. A child will need constant encouragement in any area they are learning to do things for themselves no matter how small the progress may seem. This will help them to have confidence in their choices and achievements, assist in building security, self-worth and individuality.

Choosing study options ready for entering higher education can be a very worrying time for a young person. Support and guidance during this time, choosing what will be relevant to their long term plans and what they are realistically capable of achieving is very important. This should be handled sensitively so the young person feels they have made their own decisions and confident they are capable of achieving their goals. Negative comments when receiving guidance and support could cause them confusion around how they feel regarding their academic capabilities and leave them feeling unsure and self-conscious.

Parental divorce or grief can cause a child or young person huge emotional trauma. It will often cause feelings of blame and maybe even feelings of abandonment. Sometimes when parents become divorced a young person can feel they have to support the parent that is left at home or maybe feel guilty about the parent who has left the family home and maybe lives alone. If a family member has passed away the parents or even siblings may not appear to be coping and the young person may again feel responsible for their family members.

Their own needs may not be met due to caring for others and their possible feelings of abandonment or blame may not be dealt with. It is crucial a young person feels supported during this transition and receives any help or counseling they may require. If this support is not received then the child could carry feelings of abandonment and blame into adulthood which could have detrimental effects on a young person. They may have issues around trust and struggle building positive relationships.

A young person being away from the family home into care is a massive transition and can cause major trauma for a child or young person. The thought of going to live with potential strangers, often only being able to see their family periodically and contact possibly having to be supervised is a huge transition for a child or young person to have to go through. They will often have come from homes where there is little or no structure and often no real boundaries for them to follow. This can be very distressing when they are suddenly placed in an environment surrounded by structure, boundaries and routine.

If this transition isn't handled sensitively it can have detrimental effects to the young person and their feeling of belonging. Although the home they have left may have been unsafe or unstable it was still their home and what they have been used to. The transition period can often be an unsettled period of time while they build positive relationships and learn to trust the people caring for them. Building these relationships will hopefully have a positive impact on their future outlook and enable them to have confidence in themselves and any choices they make.

It will also help with their self-image and self-esteem and show them that they can rely on someone else to help them with situations they may find difficult. Eventually they will they want does actually matter. Ultimately we aim to not only show a child what is deemed acceptable and appropriate behavior but also that they are as important as anyone else and deserve all the same life chances. Their wishes and feelings are very important and people do care. Along with these changes there are a number of others, such as puberty, sexual awareness and activity.

There will be a change in their body and possibly emotionally which isn't always easy for a teenager to understand or deal with. Confusion surrounding sexuality and the unknown entity of sex and discovering who they are can be a very troubling and unsettling for some. Leaving home and adapting to being alone and having to think and do everything for homeless. Budgeting as well as shopping, cooking and cleaning. Not having someone there all the time. The need for developing independent skills such as budgeting and proportioning can be a very traumatic time.

Realizing how much things cost when they haven't been used to having to pay for many items within the home. The loss of mobility for some children can be a massive life changing transition. The need to learn new skills in order to complete tasks or even just to manage getting about, often in a different way to what they have been used to. A number of the above transitions could affect a child's confidence, feelings of security and self-worth if they were consistently handled in a negative way. As we have explored there are many transitions a child or young person will go through.

Many can have long lasting effects and if not dealt with appropriately as the transitions arise can be detrimental to a young persons' feelings of self-worth and confidence later in their life. Handling transitions in a positive manner and having support, guidance and someone to turn to they can trust can have a huge positive impact on their future choices in life, giving hem confidence in themselves and hence improving their feelings of self-worth, Many of the children I look after have not been positively supported in many of the above transitions which has resulted in them lacking self-confidence, security and self-worth.

They often have very low self-esteem and don't really have the ability to handle emotional situations in an appropriate manner. Instead of being able to discuss feelings they will become abusive or even violent at times. Often seeking comfort by self-harming or running away from any issues and putting themselves in unsafe situations and participating in risk taking activities. We strive to educate the young people and arm them with coping strategies to help them deal with things in a safer, more appropriate manner.

By staying firm, not giving up on them and showing them that we care and are there to help them deal with any issues or situations that may arise we will hopefully show them that it is safe for them to trust, build positive relationships and rely on someone else for support. This is often hard for a young person to understand when they have felt constantly let down, unworthy and insecure. They may have been abused or sexually exploited which has added to their lack of self-respectand self worth.

Never really had the chance to build positive, appropriate relationships and don't really understand how to do so. They show promiscuous behavior and can use sex to either get what they want or as a form of personal control or release. The support and secure home base they receive, along with the non-judgmental positive relationships they will be encouraged to build once living in our home will start to equip them with the security and confidence they lions.