

# START Project

A Good Start For All: Sustaining Transitions  
Across the Early Years



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# Corby in Context



...two halves of one constantly evolving whole  
“Early Years Teaching School”

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# START Project

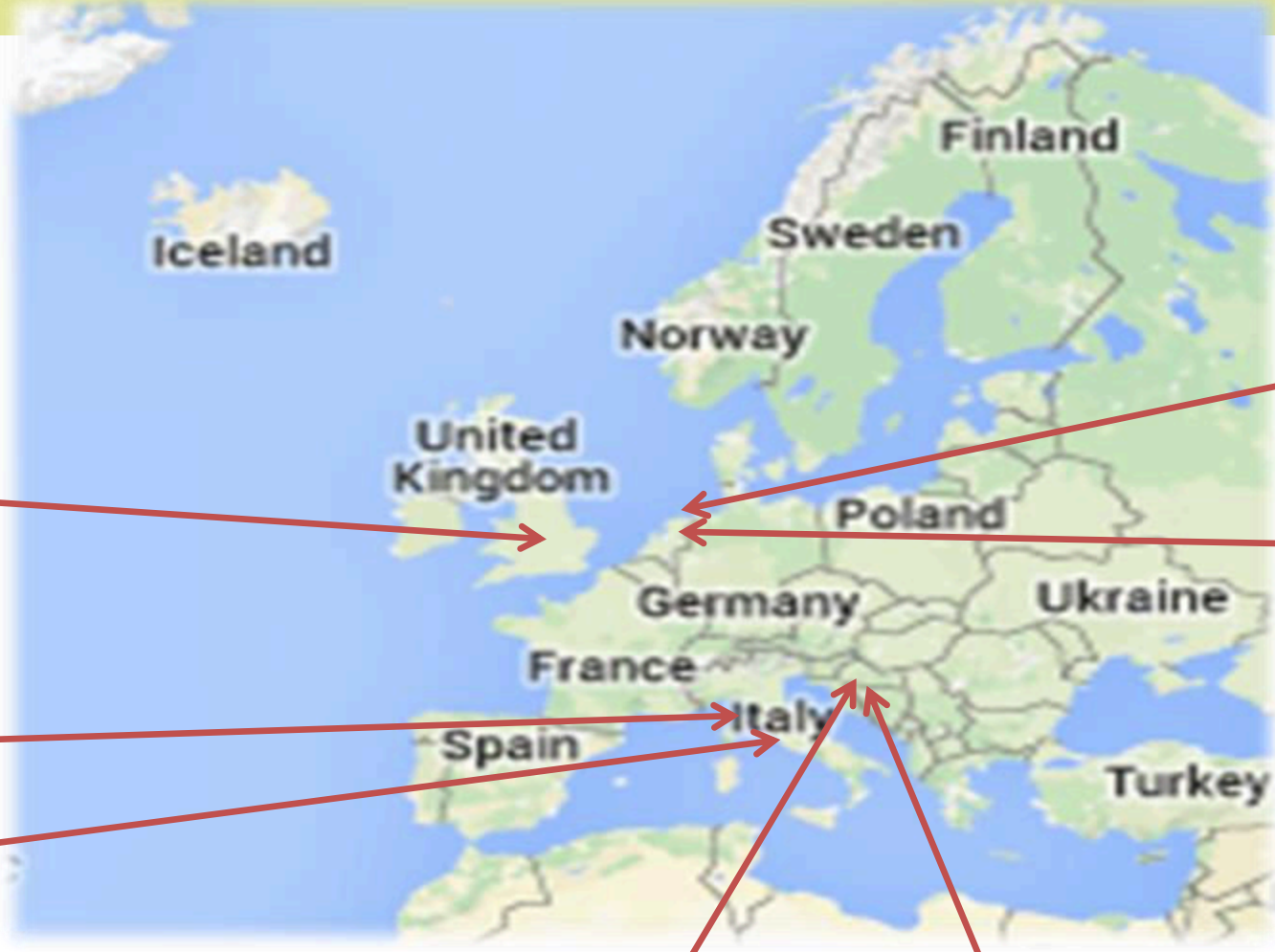
## A Good Start For All: Sustaining Transitions Across the Early Years

Partners from the Transatlantic Forum on Inclusion in the Early Years:

- Italy
- Belgium
- Slovenia
- Corby, United Kingdom

Supporting teachers and early educators to adopt new methods and tools to deal with complex and diverse groups of learners (many at risk of social exclusion) and developing collaborative practice with children and families.

# Partners from the Transatlantic Forum



Pen Green, UK

Vignola, Italy

Bologna, Italy

Aalst, Belgium

Ghent, Belgium

Tisina, Slovenia

Ljubljana, Slovenia



# Rockingham Primary School

In September 2016, for the first time, children were admitted to Reception full-time from the first day.

- Our initial study was around the success of this new approach to transition
- From the results have implemented changes to support the new intake and families
- In addition to parent visits, visits to school with the nursery keyworker
- Allocated Key person for September
- Stagger the timings on the first day - more time with parents.

# Move up, Stay up – whole school

- Children join their new teacher in July for 10 days prior to starting in September after the long summer break (6 weeks)
- Follow this cohort through to Year 1 to monitor the impact of this on the children's well-being settling in to school in September
- Questionnaire for parents views on their child's settling in.
- Monitor data on their academic progress

# Limitations and Challenges

This academic year:

- Staff changes in Foundation Stage at Easter – mitigated with transition sessions
- Moderation of assessment data – different teachers

Next academic year:

- New starter Year 1 teacher cannot be present for the Move-up, Stay up

# Further Study

To follow through the projects focus on vulnerable children further, we have elected to consider what we can do for the children who may be affected by:

- Poor maternal mental health
- Families in which there is domestic abuse.
- We find that these issues possibly impact more than financial disadvantage on the children's well-being.
  
- 4 families chosen to study:
  - 1 disadvantaged and DV
  - 2 disadvantaged, previous DV and Maternal Mental Health
  - 1 previous DV, attendance issue and Maternal Mental Health



# Limitations and Challenges

- Unwillingness / inability to engage enough to enable meaningful discussion
- In cases of Domestic Abuse may not be 'free' enough to be able to participate
- Disguised compliance

## Solutions:

- Visits to home where appropriate
- Meetings in school where possible
- Less 'official' engagement through chats with the teacher

# Our Lady's of Walsingham Primary School



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# A Good Start for All in Corby

- “A Good Start For All: Sustaining Transitions Across the Early Years”
- Previous Research – Race to the Top
- What we are going to do
- Who will it involve

# Research Aims

To undertake case studies to research transition experiences for children at risk of social exclusion, including:

- Traveller Families (Gypsies, Roma and Travellers (GRT))
- Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND)
- Child Looked After (CLA)
- Other vulnerable groups

# Research Framework

**To support children's vertical transitions by researching and understanding their needs, and their ability manage their horizontal transitions.**

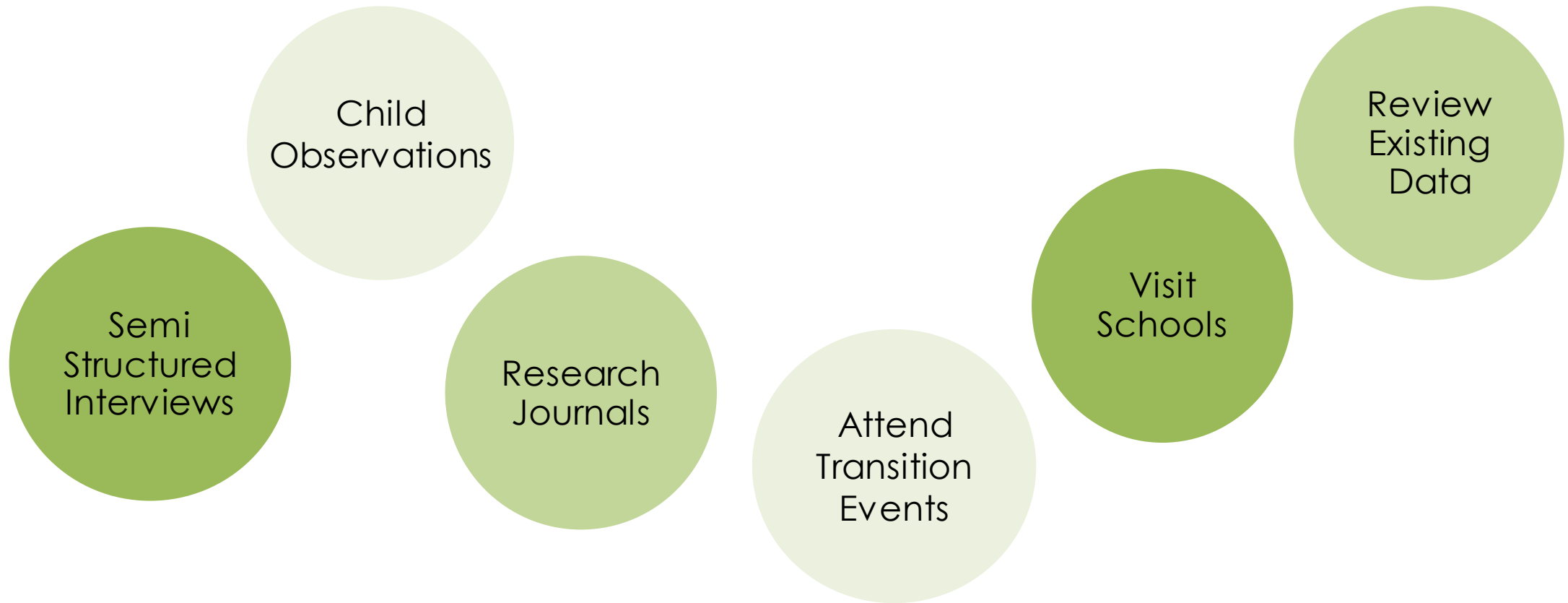
**(O'Connor, 2013)**

Vertical Transitions are the moves through early years settings and school.



Horizontal transitions happen throughout the child's day, day to day and weekly.

# Paradigm, Methodology and Methods



Interpretivist Paradigm, Qualitative, Ethnographic, Purposive Sample, Case Study.

# Data Gathering

- Observations in setting
- Information from child's Celebration of Achievement file
- Information from child's on-line journal
- Making Children's Learning Visible data and school data
- Home Visits
- Visit to School and Nursery
- Semi-structured interviews with parents and practitioners
- Journaling Research
- Focus Groups with parents and practitioners

# Ethical Considerations

- Anonymity
- Confidentiality
- Gatekeepers
- Informed Consent
- Right to Withdraw
- Data Protection
- Vulnerability of Participants
- Rapidly Changing Circumstances
- Power in Relationships
- Safeguarding



# Filip

## Filip's Themes

- Understanding language/jargon
- Complexity of application systems
- Has a definite reason for choosing this school
  - Safety
  - Right for child
- Advocate parent expert
- Fear
- Lost
- Actively engaging with team around the family

## Filip's Implications

- Staff knowing about different types of application/transition
- Staff know EHA/legal
- Staff know IPSEA Worker and use knowledge
- Staff to know law around deferring and advise parents carefully and appropriately
- Support/encourage mum to visit schools and make clear arguments about needs and to visit St Patricks' to know they can meet his needs

# Chantelle

## Chantelle's Themes

- Limited understanding of support schools should/can offer
- What's on top for parent?
- Projection – mum's feelings about leaving setting
- Parents perception of Chantelle – routine
- Desire to support transition – knows her role
- Mum's feelings about current setting
- Feeling let down by professionals
- Reason for choosing school
- Uncertainty
- Separation and Reunion
- Previous experiences of school
- Perception of school

## Chantelle's Implications

- Information for parents about other professionals roles, acronyms – when working towards an EHC plan
- Parent led transition document
- Family Workers to spend some time visiting schools
- Teachers, TA and SENco to observe child in Pen Green
- Family Worker 1:1 visit to school with child
- Family Worker to accompany mum on transition visit
- Invite school/teacher to EHA meetings
- Joint Home Visits

# Phoebe-Grace

## Phoebe Grace's Themes

- Drive to be “good”
- Functional/Practical
- Complexity Precariousness
- Expectations of school
  - - counting
  - - colouring
- Emotional Needs/Development in the hands of the professionals

## Phoebe Grace's Implications

- Other Agencies – professional curiosity (welfare/police checks)
- How do we support the transition of the unit (Phoebe-Grace and Dad) into school system.
- Avoiding Phoebe-Grace becoming a “compliant” child
- Schools sharing “school readiness” information with parents

# Lewis

## **Lewis's Themes:**

Mum's anxiety

Loss

Pain & trauma

Rejection

Abandonment

Adult's perceptions of Lewis

Projection 'how will he react?'

## **Implications for Lewis**

Staff supporting child and parent

Staff looking for positives

Moving on Through Play – impact

Emphasis importance of outside play to teacher

Need for consistent adult

Help parent with strategies

Early Help Assessment handover meeting

# START Project: Next Steps...

- Follow children into school
- Consider next cohort
- Children left behind in early years setting...
- Deferred children