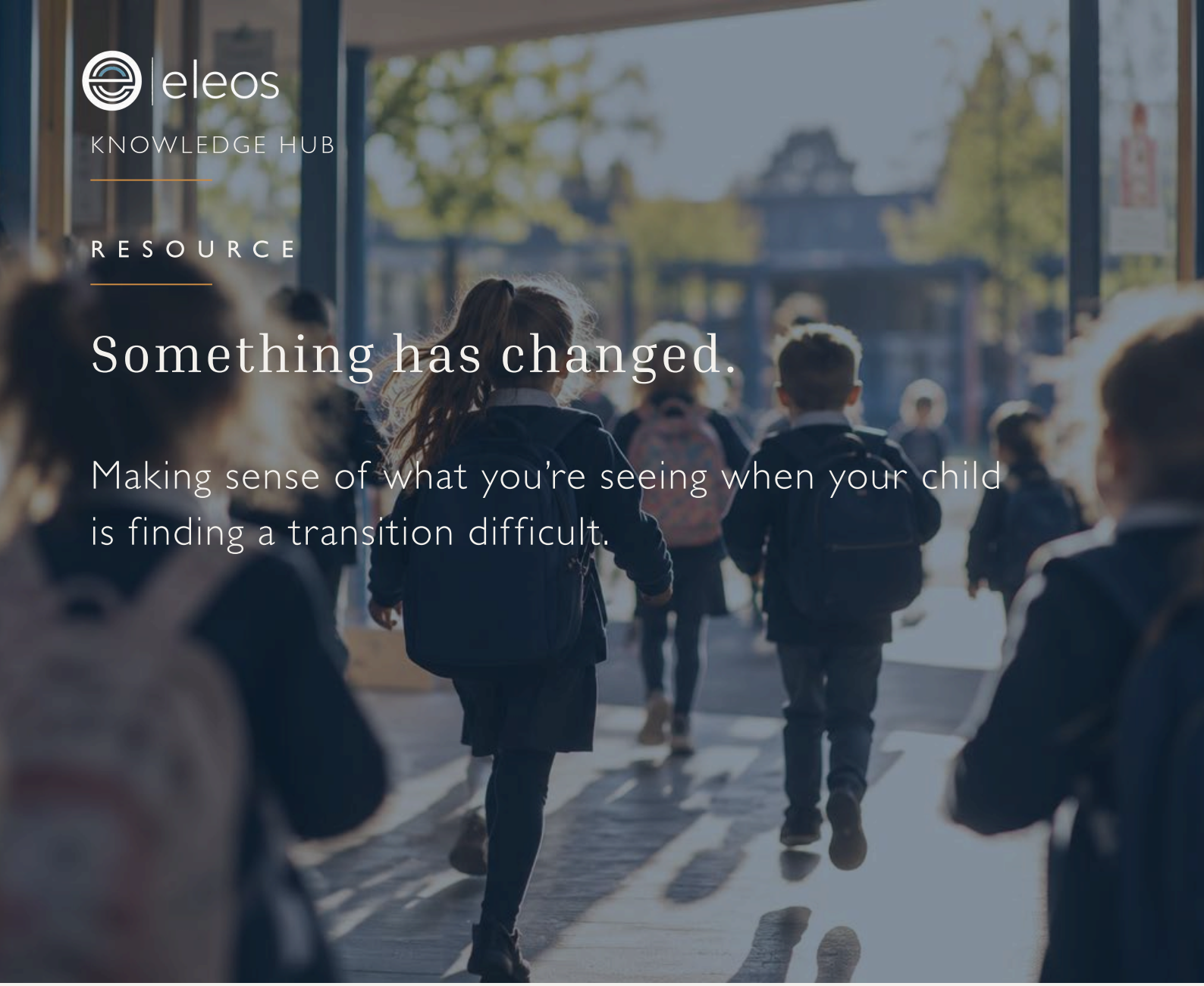


eleos

KNOWLEDGE HUB

RESOURCE

Something has changed.

Making sense of what you're seeing when your child is finding a transition difficult.

Purpose

When something changes in your child's behaviour, mood or willingness to go to school or college, it is natural to want to know why.

You may not know yet.

Use this resource when:

This resource can help you step back from the most difficult moment and build a clearer picture of what has changed, when things are hardest and easier, which way they seem to be moving and what appears to help.

You are not trying to diagnose your child; you are gathering useful information that can help you understand what might be needed next.

1 What have you noticed?

Start with what is actually different. Try to describe what you have seen rather than explaining why you think it is happening. For example: *"She says she feels sick most mornings before school"* tells us something you have noticed. *"She has developed school anxiety"* is an explanation that may or may not eventually fit.

BEFORE

What happens when school or college is approaching?

Think about evenings, Sunday nights, mornings, getting ready, the journey or separating from you.

DURING

What does your child tell you about the day?

What does school or college see?

Are there particular lessons, times, places, people or activities that seem easier or harder?

AFTER

What happens when they get home?

How long does it take them to recover?

Have you noticed changes in mood, energy, sleep, appetite, relationships or the things they normally enjoy?

You do not need every answer. You are looking for a pattern, not a diagnosis.

2 When is it hardest, and when is it easier?

Difficulties are rarely exactly the same all day.

HARDEST

When does the difficulty seem strongest?

What is happening just before?

Is there a particular part of the day your child talks about?

Does it change depending on who is there or what is expected?

EASIER

When do they seem more comfortable?

Are there days, lessons, people or routines that appear to help?

What is different about those situations?

Try not to focus only on difficult moments - the easier ones can provide useful clues too. If something consistently makes the day easier, it may tell you something about what is making it hard.

3 Which way are things moving?

Think across a period of time rather than today's experience.

BECOMING MORE MANAGEABLE

Are difficult moments becoming shorter or less frequent?

Is your child recovering more quickly?

Are parts of the new environment becoming familiar?

Are they beginning to need less reassurance or support?

BECOMING HARDER

Is reluctance to attend increasing?

Are worries beginning earlier or lasting longer?

Are difficulties appearing in more parts of the day or week?

Are you noticing changes in sleep, relationships, appetite, behaviour or things they usually enjoy?

MIXED

Are some things improving while others remain difficult?

Has something new happened that might explain a setback?

Transitions rarely improve in a straight line.

The question is not whether every day is better than the one before. It is: *overall, which direction are things moving?*

4 What seems to help?

Think about occasions when the difficulty becomes easier to manage. Do they do better when:

THEY KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT?

Would more information or preparation make something feel more predictable?

THEY KNOW WHO TO GO TO?

Is there a particular adult or relationship that helps?

THE PROBLEM IS MADE SMALLER?

Is one part of the day much harder than "school" as a whole?

THE DEMAND CHANGES?

Does a different pace, environment, routine or expectation make a difference?

THEY HAVE HAD TIME TO RECOVER?

Do particularly demanding days require more recovery afterwards?

You do not need to solve everything at once. Look for what makes a meaningful difference.

5 If you're talking to school or college.

You do not need to arrive with an explanation. In fact, it can be more useful to share the pattern you have noticed. For example:

What has changed:
"Over the last three weeks, mornings have become increasingly difficult."
When it happens:
"She seems particularly worried on days when she has PE."
What school sees:
"You've said she seems settled once she gets into lessons."
What happens afterwards:
"She is exhausted and tearful for most of the evening."
What seems to help:
"She manages better when she knows the plan for the day in advance."

Then ask what they are seeing. Together, you may have a much clearer picture than either of you has separately.

Bring it together.

Ask yourself:

- What has changed?
- When is it hardest, and when is it easier?
- What appears to help?
- What are school or college seeing?
- Which direction are things moving?
- What do I understand now that I didn't understand before?

You may decide to give things a little more time while continuing to watch the pattern. You may want to speak with school or college, agree something that could make a part of the transition easier, or seek further advice if difficulties are increasing or affecting more areas of your child's life.

You do not have to understand everything before you can do something useful. Start with what you can see, look for the pattern, and then decide what might help next.

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Insight that makes a difference.

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