

Orientation & Transition Policy

Date 29/03/01, Revised 15/06/05, Revised 14/05/08, Reviewed 25/11/11, Revised 15/09/16, Revised 23/06/20

Signed By Management Committee _____ **Date** _____

Aim

To have an orientation/transition process that welcomes children and their families to the Centre.
To tailor the “settling in” of new children to meet the individual needs of each family.
To ensure that transitions through different rooms of UPCCC and the transition to school for children attending UPCCC and their families is a positive experience for all.

Background

Starting at a new centre, a new room or transitioning from the Centre to school, can be a time of uncertainty for children and families.

Transitions are times when children move between and adapt to different spaces or places and with different people, experiences, expectations and routines. The term encompasses regular transitions across a day and those that occur at significant times in children’s lives, such as starting in an education and care service or starting full-time school (EYLF, p. 16).

For young children the transition to school is a major event in their lives. There is often a lot of hype surrounding School or ‘Big School’ as it is often referred to, and sometimes pressure to ensure children are ‘ready’. Children often have confused ideas of what going to school involves. This confusion can make them fearful and unsure of what to expect.

For parents too this is a time of major change in their lives, more particularly for those parents who have not already been through the experience with older children. Parents are also unsure of what to expect, how their children will respond, many may associate this time with their own experiences of starting school which in some cases may not have been a positive experience. They are therefore unsure of how to prepare their children for the experience.

This policy will attempt to alleviate some of the uncertainties surrounding the orientation/transition process whether it be from home to the Centre, to a new room or to school and thereby make the transition less stressful for all concerned.

Related Policies

Waiting List & Enrolment Policy
Transition to School Policy

Implementation

1. Orientation to University Preschool & Child Care Centre.

1.1. Prior to the child’s commencement

Once a place has been offered to a child the family will be encouraged to schedule a time to visit the Centre so that they can be introduced to the Educators in the relevant section. During this visit, Educators will:

- a) Introduce other Educators in the team and familiarise families with the program, routines, resources and other aspects of the environment
- b) Ensure that families have been provided with the section information booklet
- c) Discuss and plan an ongoing orientation program for the child that meets the family’s and the Centre’s needs. During these discussions the family will be encouraged to:
 - 1) Schedule regular short visits, commencing with 1 – 2 hours duration. These visits will allow:
 - i. The child to become familiar with the Educators, other children within the group and general routines of the day

- ii. The family to pass on any information about their child to Educators, demonstrate the methods they use with their child when feeding, settling them to sleep, etc and to see first hand the types of interactions that occur through the day.
 - iii. The Educators to pass on information about the routines of the room, including where the child's personal items are kept, where the child's food is stored, the ways in which they will communicate with the family (phone, email, room documentation, Educational Record, newsletters, etc.)
 - iv. The Educators to observe the methods used by family with their child when feeding them or settling them to sleep, and,
 - v. For the Educators to gather information about the child's routines, development, etc. and build a rapport with the child and their family.
- 2) During some of these visits Educators will also encourage the family to visit the centre staff room and to leave their child with the Educators for a short amount of time by themselves. This will allow;
- i. The child to get used to being left with Educators
 - ii. The family to become more confident in the Educators abilities to provide quality care for their child
 - iii. The Educators to develop a rapport with the child
- N.B. If the child is present at the initial visit, parents are encouraged to stay and interact with their child and the Educators and children for a short amount of time.

1.2. After the child commences

After the child formally commences in the room the child's family will be encouraged to:

- a) Initially leave their child for shorter days and gradually extend these leading up to full days;
 - b) Phone Educators during the child's' day to enquire how their child is going. Alternatively, Educators will call to reassure families;
 - c) Discuss the possibility of leaving an appropriate personal item with the child as a comforter. This may help the child to feel a sense of connectedness to their loved ones during the day;
 - d) Discuss with Educators how their child responded during the day and make ongoing plans;
- Parents should also:
- e) Contact the Centre if they are not bringing their child to the centre on any day. This is particularly important if their child is not able to attend for health reasons, as this may be of significance to other children (and Educators) in the centre. Illnesses are tracked on the Centre's Illness Register to help prevent the further spread of illness.

2. Transition of children through Centre

As with transitioning children from home or another Centre to UPCCC, transitioning children from room to room or Section to Section can also be full of anxiety for both child and family.

The best way to ensure that these transitions proceed as smoothly as possible is to ensure that both the child and their family is informed about what is happening and that there is enough time allowed for all children to transition at their pace. Procedures followed for moves within the centre need to be flexible, however the following steps will generally be followed:

- 2.1. Parents will be advised at least 2 weeks prior to the move and asked to discuss any concerns with the Lead Educators and/or the Director. At this time parents will also be provided with information about what to expect during the transition, their child's start date in the new room and how the transition will proceed.
- 2.2. Educators from both rooms will meet to discuss visit dates and share information about the child's individual needs with each other. Observations and recordings can be passed on and discussed at this time.
- 2.3. Before visits begin parents will be encouraged to visit the child's new room and meet the teaching team. On this visit they will be shown around the environment and given an information package with more information about the room and the expectations.
- 2.4. A transition calendar will be made up including dates and times of all visits over the transition period. The first visit will involve an Educator from the child's new room visiting the child's room to get to know the child. Your child's visits to their new room will start off small and then progress to longer visits as they become more comfortable.

- 2.5. During the transition period parents will be encouraged to visit the child's new room as often as possible with their child. This could be a drop off time or pick up time.
- 2.6. Once the child feels more comfortable with the teachers and the environment in their new room their old Educators will spend less time there and give the child the opportunity to spend more time with their new Educators and friends. The child may spend a morning or whole day depending on their readiness.
- 2.7. Transition days will always be flexible. If there are any concerns about a child's transition due to illness etc. we will do our utmost to accommodate this. Communication is key for a smooth transition for all involved. Our desired goal is that the child learns that the new room is a safe and fun place where they can learn and grow in a setting that respects and cares for them.

3. Transition to School

During any change process the key to ensuring the transition is a positive experience for all is to keep all parties informed of what to expect and to provide them with the skills they need. To prepare children and their families for the transition to school Educators in the Preschool – Geckos room, will focus on:

3.1. For Parents:

- a) Providing them with a written summary about their child's skill development and their readiness for school; Parents will also be given the opportunity to organise a meeting with the Preschool Teacher to discuss the summary and their child's readiness for school further.
- b) Provide information on the school enrolment process (immunisations, before school screening).
- c) Guide families with an information sheet with practical information and tips on how they can help prepare their children for the transition to school.

3.2. For Children:

- a) Providing them with information about what it means to go to school, i.e., what they can expect when they start, what they will wear, who else will be going, what they will do there, etc.
- b) Supporting children to acquire the identified skills and dispositions necessary for them to cope with the change. To ensure this happens the following procedure will be followed:
 - 1) Where schools have provided enrolment and other information to the Centre, the Centre will pass this information to the parents;
 - 2) A school readiness information session may be organised for parents. Parents will be informed of the transition policy and the process to be followed in preparing their children for school. Guest speakers for the session could include a Kindergarten teacher to talk about what parents can expect when their children start school, or a parent of a child who has recently started at school;
 - 3) Information regarding school enrolment periods, before school screening and any information regarding children's school readiness and preparing children for school will be included in newsletters from term 3 - this will be continued to the end of the year;
 - 4) Parent/teacher interviews will be offered following the release of Educational Summaries. Parents are encouraged to arrange a time with their child's teacher to discuss their child's progress. During these interviews any areas of concern that either caregiver or parent have with regard to the child's development can be highlighted and a plan developed to address these concerns where necessary.
 - 5) Staff will prepare children for school through discussions, experiences and daily routines. These will focus on developing the broad range of skills and knowledge that provide the best foundation for future learning in a school environment.
 - 6) Additional learning extension activities will be planned for those children going to school in the following year.
 - 7) Parents will be encouraged to indicate which school their child will be attending by adding their child's name to a list. Staff will use this information in discussion with children about the school they will be attending and identifying other children who may be attending the same school.

3.3. For Children who have Additional Needs

- a) Children who may have additional learning needs may require support with the transition to school. These children will be identified as early as possible, ideally at least eighteen months prior to their anticipated date for starting school. The needs of these children will be identified and their parents will be informed of the process to be followed in accordance with the Guidelines developed by the Department of Education regarding the Transition to School of Children with Special Needs.

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