

**LA TROBE UNIVERSITY**  
**COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S CENTRE**

**TRANSITION STATEMENT**

**Background**

This document is a guide for Families and Centre's Early Childhood Educators.

Change is a key feature of Transition.

*'Transitions occur at many different times across children's lives, affecting them, their families and educators. Transition often begins when children are very young, for example, when a child moves from the care of a parent to a grandparent, or moves into child care, or moves between child care settings. As children get older they may transition to Kindergarten, and children experience the transition to school.'*

*Change is a key feature throughout each of these transition periods. Children need to feel secure, confident and connected to people, places, events, routines, rules and understandings when they move into new environments.*

*Effective transition is made up of a combination of approaches and processes, and will be achieved when:*

- *Respectful, trusting and supportive relationships are maintained between all those working with a child and their family;*
- *Communication and collaboration are keys to the process of transition;*
- *Information about the child is well understood, shared and valued;*
- *Children have the opportunity to have their say about what is important to them;*
- *Processes are adopted to the needs of the local communities;*
- *Children and families who require additional support are identified early, and support is planned and delivered through a collaborative approach.'*

*(Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework For Children Birth to Eight Years, 2009)*

To assist children in managing smooth transitions it is important for the family to develop a secure and trusting relationship with the Centre. It is important that we and families work together to ensure that any transition is handled individually, sensitively and in a stress free way.

*'Research has shown that resilience is the most important quality you can instill in your children.'*

*Resilience is having inner strength to cope with life's many challenges, overcoming obstacles, dealing with disappointment and change in a manner that allows us to feel we have control of our life whilst keeping a sense of optimism.*

*It is important for us to be aware that resilience is not something we are born with. The child, the family and the larger social environment can all be significant contributors to children having resilient mindsets.'*

*(Robert Brooks, Ph.D. & Sam Goldstein, Ph.D. Raising Resilient Children, Contemporary Books, 2001.)*

We acknowledge for some staff, families and children transitions/change come more easily. Transitions are designed to meet each child's/families individual needs.

Major life transitions are not "point in time events", they are experiences that start well before, and extend far beyond. For you and your child the immediate major life transitions include: Home to Centre, within the Centre, Centre to School.

## **Transition from Home to the Centre**

*'Transition from home to the Centre is a schedule of activities or experiences designed to support children, families and educators to build supportive relationships and become familiar with changing environments and experiences. These programs most commonly involve three groups: children, families and educators. Successful transitions rely on children, families and educators developing positive, supportive relationships. Children have to feel that the Centre is a place where people care about them and where they are likely to succeed. Similarly, families are valued and respected and included in Centre life.'* (Transition, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2009 p 6)

### **Guidelines**

To assist you and your child in this process we recommend you consider undertaking the following steps:

1. Visit the Centre before your commencement date, meeting firstly with the Manager to discuss any concerns re separation, general information about the Centre and costing etc; secondly meeting with staff who will take you through the daily routine. You are encouraged to ask questions of staff. Staff will also provide enrolment information and discuss each document. We encourage you to contact the Centre and make an appointment so that appropriate personnel are available for this important first visit.
2. Make arrangements for subsequent visits with the staff in your child's section. This can be undertaken as many times, as you require. It is important you feel comfortable and develop a sense of trust in those caring for your child/children whilst allowing time for your child to develop relationships with other children and staff. These visits also enable your child to explore their new environment with their security blanket (you). Your child will move further away from you as their confidence grows in their new environment. This process assists greatly in a smooth stress free transition. Whilst you are present with your child/children during transition no fee will be charged so long as you remain in the Centre.
3. You need to inform the staff of your child's/children's individual routine, needs and interests.
4. Bring with your child/children, a favorite item e.g. blanket, soft toy. This will assist in developing your child's sense of security as well as provide something familiar.
5. Ask questions of staff, phone or visit the Centre at any time to enquire as to how your child/children are progressing throughout the day.

### **Additional Information**

When you are ready to leave your child/children, please say goodbye and do not sneak out. Let your child know that you will be coming back at a time they can relate to e.g. after lunch, rest time or afternoon tea. Children have no concept of 'soon'. Please feel free to stay as long as you want to settle your child, but once you have said goodbye, please follow through and proceed to leave. Children need to build a sense of trust with the staff and need to know that their parents feel confident in their new surroundings, before they will feel secure. By sneaking away, rather than saying goodbye to your child, the smooth stress free transition process will be compromised.

## **Transition within the Centre**

*Transition within the Centre is a schedule of activities or experiences designed to support children, families and educators to build supportive relationships and become familiar with changing environments and experiences. These programs most commonly involve three groups: children, families and educators. Successful transitions rely on children, families and educators developing positive, supportive relationships. Children have to feel that their new surroundings is a place where people care about them and where they are likely to succeed. Similarly, families are valued and respected and included in this transition.* (Transition, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2009 p 6)

When children transition within the Centre we arrange a familiarisation program with you and the child. This includes children and parents visiting the new section over a period of time with familiar carers. The visits are important in assisting children and you with a smooth stress free transition.

Our community recognises how important positive transition is to children and their families. We have implemented strategies through our 'My Grown up Buddy' initiative that will support a smooth stress free transition.

### Nominating a 'buddy'

Factors considered by the Early Childhood Educators when assigning a buddy:

1. Early staff can buddy-up with children who arrive first thing in the morning.
2. Common connections – a 'buddy' may have previously cared for a specific child's sibling, a link to the child and family has previously been established.
3. A buddy takes on a specific child and their group of friends. Friends are identified by reading the 6 monthly profiles.

### The role of the 'buddy'

The 'Buddy' cares for your child's day-to-day needs. The 'Buddy' will also be your communication link to the new playroom during the transition period. The Centre acknowledges that transition can be just as stressful for families.

### Actions

1. Current staff will introduce you to the new section.
2. Both the child and families are encouraged to drop in, visit at any time.
3. Current Staff will take the child/children to play in their new section during the day.
4. The Centre's development statements support the consistent transfer of information, Supervising Staff, will meet to hand over this information.

### **Transition from Centre to School**

Preparing children for the next exciting stage of growing up. This involves preparation and a whole community effort, which will in turn provide children with the best possible start to their school years.

*'Many people are involved in the transition to school. Transition to school programs are schedules of activities or experiences designed to support children, families and educators to build supportive relationships and become familiar with changing environments and experiences. These programs most commonly involve three groups: children, families and educators. Successful transitions rely on children, families and educators developing positive, supportive relationships. Children have to feel that school is a place where people care about them and where they are likely to succeed. Similarly, families need to be valued and respected as well as included in school life.'*

*To support a positive start to school for all children, a common Victorian approach has been developed to guide families, early childhood services and schools. This will provide a shared understanding between early childhood services and schools about what is important for children and their families during this exciting time.*

*A high quality transition-to-school approach should recognise and respond to the broad range of factors shaping this period of a child's life, including the cultural background of the child and their family, participation in early childhood services, the school environment and the social and emotional skills of the child.*

*This section provides guidance for families, early childhood services and schools on transition planning. It outlines the approach through which local planning can be further developed. It is important to ensure that these arrangements support:*

- *individual children and their families in the year prior to and following entry to school, not just at point-in-time*
- *building relationships between and among children, families and professionals.*

*The following table gives a planning timeline for transition to school and it has been designed to provide for maximum flexibility. Transition planning may commence prior to the dates provided.*

**Table 1: Planning timetable for Transition to school**

<i>Key Activity</i>	<i>By*</i>
<i>Options for, and evaluations of, transition program activities and events discussed between local early childhood settings, Outside School Hours Care providers and schools.</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>School enrolment commences. (Families lodge enrolment form with school).</i>	<i>From May</i>
<i>Transition planning commences – children and their families participate in their local transition program. Note: Activities and events may start from this point.</i>	<i>July onwards</i>
<i>Early childhood educator commences processes to complete Transition Learning and Development Statement, including engaging families and children.</i>	<i>October</i>
<i>Early childhood educator collates final information, and obtains consent from parent/guardians to forward information to school. (This process may involve face-to-face meetings, or similar alternative, with families and the Prep teacher.)</i>	<i>November</i>
<i>Final copy of Transition Learning and Development Statement forwarded to family, Prep Teacher and Outside School Hours Care contact (where appropriate) through agreed method (in person, mail, email, etc.).</i>	
<i>Prep teacher** reviews information in Transition Learning and Development Statement, and uses to inform curriculum planning.*</i>	<i>November onwards</i>
<i>Where appropriate, Prep teacher meets with families and early childhood educator to discuss Transition Learning and Development Statement and identify additional transition program activities that may be required.</i>	
<i>Additional on-entry Prep assessments of learning commence.</i>	<i>March onwards</i>

*Note: \* It is recognised that in many areas transition planning may commence prior to the dates provided, particularly for children with additional needs. The timeline has been designed to provide for local flexibility.*

*\*\* Where the Prep teacher(s) have not been confirmed for the following year, this activity will be referred to an identified alternative who will pass the information onto the Prep teacher when confirmed.’ (Transition, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2009)*

## **Conclusion**

Remember there is no 'one size fits all' transition program that will provide for all children and their families' individual needs. It is everyone's responsibility to take into account individual needs and circumstances when preparing and undertaking transitions.

The Centre acknowledges that positive transitions require a strong knowledge base about what really matters for children and their families. Therefore it is essential that the Centre, staff, families and children communicate clearly and openly to build a strong positive relationship so to promote a smooth and stress free transition.

### **Links to other documents:**

Guidelines for Induction of Visiting or Enrolling Families

### **Reference:**

Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework for Children Birth to Eight Years, 2009;

Transition: A Positive Start to School A guide for families, early childhood services, outside school hours care services and schools 2009;

Robert Brooks, Ph.D. & Sam Goldstein, Ph.D. Raising Resilient Children, Contemporary Books, 2001;

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