



Little Ladybird Creche & Montessori

Policy #17

SUPPORTING TRANSITIONS POLICY

Introduction

Transitions occur as children move **within** settings – from one room or area to another – from one type of activity to another (e.g. active play to tidy up time to eating time) – and as they move **between** settings (from home to the childcare centre, from childcare centre to school etc.).

Many children, especially young children, experience a wide range of transitions each and every day. Because of the many different experiences children may have even in just one day, it is especially important that there is some continuity and similarity of approach in the ways in which the important adults in their lives behave and interact, not only with the children themselves but also with other adults who are involved with the child.

Changes can be stressful at any stage in life, but for babies and young children they can be particularly challenging. Moving on to different surroundings makes demands on young children as they learn to cope with a new situation. Parents/Carers also need support to cope with change and new situations. Because of this, the sensitive care and attention given to planning and ensuring smooth transitions is extremely important.

Young children learn from every experience, including routines and transitions, and can develop skills by participating in these routines and transitions.

Definitions/Glossary

Transitions include:

- Multiple daily changes in routines and experiences and separations from familiar people and settings.
- Changes in care provider or setting.
- Entry into and transition from the current childcare setting into another childcare setting or school.

Policy Statement

Successful experiences during early transitions can increase a child's ability to adapt to changes in the future and can provide a more secure base for the child's development. It is essential to enable parents/carers and staff to support and facilitate successful transitions through responsive relationships that are secure, consistent and continuous. All transitions will be planned with sensitivity to each child's needs.

We will work to develop strong family-staff relationships through frequent sharing of information and goals. We aim to develop strong connections between each child's home



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and the service to help ease transitions into new or different settings or routines. We will maintain continuity of relationships and carefully plan all introductions to new settings, routines and experiences for the children to help ease any anxiety they may have associated with change. We will do our best to ensure that we provide a secure base that supports the children's focused attention, curiosity about exploring their world and emerging independence.

We aim to provide relationships and routines that are consistent, predictable and responsive to support each child's sense of trust, security, and identity. We consider it essential that the staff member assigned to their care can read and respond to each child's cues.

We will:

- Consider transitions from the perspective of the developmental needs of each child and their family.
- Build partnerships with families to support the development of responsive, respectful relationships among children and staff.
- Individualise routines and practices to support each child's needs, temperament, family preferences, culture and language.
- Use routines and transitions as opportunities to promote children's development.
- Plan for transitions and placements that provide consistency and continuity for children and their families.
- Evaluate the quality and effectiveness of transitions using various means, including feedback from families.
- Assist parents/carers in becoming advocates as they make the transition with their children both into the service from home or from other childcare settings (e.g. *childminder*) and from this service to other childcare settings or to school.
- Ensure the most appropriate environment and services following participation in this service by beginning transition planning as soon as possible prior to the child's move.
- Provide any relevant information (with the parents'/carers' permission) about the children that is helpful in ensuring a successful transition from this service to other settings, e.g. school.
- Assign a Key Person to each child. (See Key Person Policy)

Procedures & Practices

On entry to the service, we will:

- Encourage parents/carers to visit the *Service/Centre* before and after their child enrolls.
- Include the Key Person in the *admission/enrollment* meeting and make plans with parents/carers at that time to ease the child's transition into the programme.
- Invite parents/carers to take an active role. If parents/carers can help their child, they will also ease their own feelings of separation.
- Encourage parents/carers to spend as much time as they can at the *Service/Centre* when their child first starts and help them to work out a schedule for a gradual transition.
- Post a sign welcoming the child and the parents/carers by name and include photos where possible.
- Empathise with parents'/carers' concerns about leaving their child in care.



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On enrollment, parents/carers will be encouraged to:

- Bring their child to the *Service/Centre* for visits before they start fully.
- Tell their child when care is going to begin. An infant can be told '..... will take care of you this morning.' A toddler can be encouraged to look forward to playing with other children a few days in advance and can then be reminded on the day itself.
- Spend as much time as they can at the *Little Ladybird Creche & Montessori* at first and gradually shorten the time as the child becomes more comfortable.
- Develop a goodbye routine or ritual that they can use with their child each day – giving the child a kiss or a big hug, waving goodbye from the door, or whatever they feel comfortable doing. This way, both the parents/carers and the child know how to handle the parting.
- Talk with the Key Person about bringing items from home that are important to their child, e.g. a favourite stuffed animal or blanket, photos of family members, or a tape of the parent/carer reading a favourite bedtime story or singing a familiar song.
(See Arrivals and Departures Policy)

Staff members will:

- Help parents/carers understand the importance of goodbye rituals.
- Help parents/carers appreciate a child's need to feel connected to his parents/carers when they are apart.
- Welcome each child and her parents/carers by name each morning.
- Continue to make parents/carers welcome. Encourage them to spend time when they bring their child in the morning and when they return at the end of the day.
- Give parents/carers information about their child's experiences each day and invite them to share information about their experiences with the child at home. (See sample Daily Routines Communication Forms in Appendix A and B and the Key Person Policy)
- Support the parents/carers and child in their ritual for saying goodbye.
- Display interesting items for people to talk about, such as photos of the previous day's experiences.
- Invite parents/carers to bring items from home that will help the child feel connected.
- Help the child express feelings about their parent/carer leaving. Talk with them about home and family later in the day. Suggest that the child call their parents/carers on a real or toy telephone.
- Invite the child to paint, dance, sing or tell a story using toys as characters.
- Give the child opportunities to use the skills they know. Sharing tasks like preparing for meals or putting toys away can also reinforce their feelings of competence.
- Play games of hiding and reappearing.
- Read stories of goodbyes and returns.

On an ongoing basis parents/carers will be encouraged to:

- Continue to spend time when they bring their child in the morning and when they return at the end of the day. Play with them, visit with other parents/carers and children, talk with the staff about what happened that day and express any concerns.
- Be sure to say goodbye each day so their child knows that they can trust them and that they won't leave without warning.
- Keep the Key Person up to date when their child masters new skills or helps out with tasks and routines at home. Knowing this information, the staff can recognise and build on the child's skills.



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Routines and transitions within the daily programme of activities

- Children should be allowed to perform personal routines, such as going to the bathroom, according to individual body schedules.
- Transitions should be planned so that children who are ready before others have something to do.
- Children should be given appropriate advance notice of changes to routines or planned changes within the schedule of activities that will affect them.
- Some children need to be given more time and adult assistance to cope with changes than others.
- Routines and transitions should be handled consistently so that children can learn trust and security.
- While balancing the range of activities (active/quiet, small group/large group/individual etc.), the daily plan should be kept as simple as possible to keep transitions to a minimum.
- If the furniture is going to be changed around this should be discussed with children and explained in advance so that they understand why the change is happening.
- Children should be allowed to participate in routines as much as possible (e.g. *helping to set the table, cleaning up etc.*).

Planning transitions

The following should be considered during preparation for an upcoming transition:

Environment/physical space

- Will the next setting be a different room at a different location? How will the child react?
- Will materials and equipment be different or familiar to the child? How accessible will they be?
- What choices will the child be able to make?

Routines

- What will daily activities be like, and how might the child react to these experiences?
- How are the routines listed below handled?

Example

- *Eating*
- *Napping*
- *Nappy changing/toileting*
- *Outdoor activities*
- *Indoor activities*
- *Tidy up time*

Staff

- Will the child be assigned a new Key Person? If so, how might the child react?
- How do adults interact with the children and when do they intervene?
- How do adults relate to each other? Are they friendly and respectful?

Social interactions

- What opportunities will the child have to interact with other children?
- Will any of the children be familiar to the child?
- What is the family role?
- What are the opportunities for family interaction?



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Other comments and observations

- What can be done now to begin preparing the child for this transition?
- What partnerships need to be formed to build continuity and ease the transition?

Considering culture in transition practices

Providing culturally competent care supports a developing child's sense of security, identity, competence, confidence, and connectedness. When childcare practitioners understand and honour family childrearing practices and preferences, they can provide infants and toddlers with consistency and familiarity, which are especially important during transitions.

We will try as far as possible to:

- Provide harmony with each child's home culture.
- Use the child's home language.
- Provide a culturally relevant environment that is familiar and homelike to the child.
- Understand and respect each family's cultural beliefs and child-rearing values.
- Provide consistency of care by understanding the home routines of each child.
- Discuss each family's expectations for their child's development and transition. *For example, ask if the family expects the child to develop independence skills and how the family expects the child to adjust to a new setting, new people, and new languages.*
- Understand your own cultural values, beliefs, and expectations; acknowledge how these match or differ from the family's expectations; and negotiate and resolve conflicts.

Families can foster cultural consistency and continuity during transitions by being encouraged to:

- Share their cultural values and child-rearing practices with staff before and during their child's transition and describe what they expect from staff.
- Communicate frequently with staff about the child's routines, temperament, reactions, likes, dislikes, and ability to adapt to differences and change.
- Provide staff with ongoing feedback and negotiate differences.

Checklist for exchanging information

Families will be encouraged to share:

- Information about their child's temperament.
- Information about what upsets their child and what comforts them.
- How their child reacts to strangers, familiar adults and other children.
- How they handle routines such as eating and sleeping.
- Information about themselves and their culture.
- Information about their child's previous experiences.
- A brief developmental and medical history of their child – from birth to the present – that includes social, emotional, motor skills and language development information.
- How they prefer to communicate (e.g., in person, by telephone, or in writing).
- How they wish to be involved in the *Service/Centre*.
- Their vision for the transition period.
- Their hopes for their child.



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Staff can share with families:

- How they transition children into the *Service/Centre*.
- Information about the programme's composition, philosophy, schedules, and activities.
- How they communicate information to families.
- How families can get involved in the *Service/Centre*.
- How planning and individualised routines are handled.
- How they track and report developmental progress.
- How they handle transitions within the programme.

Saying goodbye/moving on

Relationships are important to children. Although children may not always express or understand their feelings, these feelings do exist and are sometimes expressed in ways that make it difficult for parents and other adults to deal with them. The following suggestions can help children accept changes and deal with them in appropriate ways.

- Prepare the child by giving them some notice when a relationship is about to change. *(For example, tell them, 'Sam is going to be moving soon, and he won't be able to come and play every day.')*
- Help the child understand their feelings by using words like lonely, sad, or unhappy to describe how they might be feeling.
- Put things in perspective *(For example, 'We won't see Susan very often, but we will always remember how much fun you had together.')*
- Help the child express the meaning of the relationship by encouraging them to make a card, draw a picture, or make a small gift. Let them know that relationships are very important by creating an opportunity to express affection and validate their feelings.
- Focus on the positives associated with change. When people grow and move forward, there will always be changes in relationships. New teachers, new friends, and changes in activities and needs are part of life.
- Share with the child some of your own experiences in leaving valued relationships. Tell how you felt at that time.
- Create a memento. Children are concrete in their thinking, and having a physical reminder reassures them that the relationship was shared and is a permanent part of their lives.

Communication Plan

All parents/carers are to be informed of the policy and procedures regarding Transitions on registration. Staff members will check with parents/carers that they have read and understood the policy and provide any assistance needed.

A summary of this policy will be included in the Parents'/Carers' Handbook. This policy will also be included in staff induction and annual staff training.

A copy of all policies will be available during all hours of operation to staff members and parents/carers in the Policy Handbook located in the main office.

Parents/Carers may receive a copy of the policy at any time upon request.

Parents/Carers and staff will receive written notification of any updates.



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Review Date

Date:

Person Responsible:

Related Policies, Procedures and Forms

- Admissions Policy
- Key Person Policy
- Arrivals and Departures Policy
- Daily Routines Communication Sheet: Family Information (see Appendix A)
- Daily Routines Communication Sheet: Staff Information (see Appendix B)

References/Supporting documents/Related Legislation

- **Síolta** – The National Framework for Quality in Early Childhood Education
- **Birth to Three: supporting our youngest children** Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2005
- **Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community: Infant and Toddler Transitions** U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Contact Information

Name:.....

Policy Created

Date:.....

Signatures

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