

ORIENTATION FOR CHILDREN POLICY

NQS 4.1.1, 5.1.1, 6.1.1, 6.1.2, 6.1.3, 6.2.1

Aim

All children and families are entitled to feel part of the service and develop meaningful relationships with the educators, children and other families. To provide children and families with an orientation procedure that allows the family to transition to their child being in care, transition to a new room within the service or transition to school

Implementation

We believe orientation is an important process where educators are able to get important information about the new child's needs and those of the family. This process helps to make the transition from home to care as smooth as possible with the aim to maintain continuity between home and the service, which helps the child adjust to the new setting.

The Director/Assistant Director will arrange for the new child to attend the service (together with parent/s) to visit and meet the educators, and familiarise with the environment. The children may participate in the activities if they so desire. A number of young children prefer to just watch, rather than do. Positive interactions at this time (between parents, educators and the child) are important for the children to build positive attitudes to the service environment. Educators are aware that some children respond to new experiences faster than others and will adapt to the situation.

The orientation process must acknowledge the uniqueness of all new children and families enrolling at the centre and be respectful of families various parenting styles. The process must also take on board all information provided by the family about their child as they are the most significant people in that child's life.

The following steps must be undertaken and be flexible to meet the individual needs of both the child and family.

- i. Parent handbook is given out to all new families upon enrolment at the centre.
- ii. The Director/Assistant Director meets with the family at a mutually convenient time to work through enrolment forms, parent handbook and centre policies. Routines, programming, portfolios, safety and WH&S requirements, collection and drop off, custody orders, allergies, special requirements, grievance and feedback procedures, are further discussed.
- iii. Family and child are given a guided tour of the service and further questions answered.
- iv. Child and family are introduced to primary educators, other room educators and other centre educators.
- v. Families and child introduced to Administration Officer to discuss fees process and requirements.
- vi. Family and child are encouraged where necessary to make arrangements with the Director/Assistant Director regarding a series of visits to allow familiarisation with the centre, the room, staff and the other children.
- vii. According to regulations and licensing requirements families must stay with their child during visits as part of the orientation process.

Staff encourage family members to ring, email, or visit as often as they like once enrolment has commenced and also anytime throughout the time the child remains enrolled with the service.

The settling in process should be tailored to each individual child – based on family information and desires for that child. (Must include religious, spiritual, emotional, physical, developmental and nurturing requirements and needs of that child).

The Director/Assistant Director and Educators will provide information about how the centre meets the individual needs of each child, and also about positive guidance of behaviour in children. Parents/guardians are encouraged to raise questions, concerns or issues about their child or service, as soon and as often as possible.

All educators are to make families feel welcome at all times and assure them that all information provided about their child is extremely valuable.

The Director/Assistant Director will provide enrolment information to primary educator and the other educators about eating, sleeping, feeding, and play preferences of the new child. Additional information such as special needs, court orders, allergies, food intolerances, food preferences, emergency contacts will also be provided and communicated to relevant staff members (Cook, Administration, etc.).

Families will be encouraged at time of orientation to share information if they wish regarding cultural, religious or spiritual expectations they have for their child.

Educators will greet children and families upon arrival in a positive manner.

A primary educator will be assigned to each new child for continuity purposes. However all room educators will be aware of child's needs and be able to meet and greet family members. This ensures a level of emotional security for both the child and family.

Educators will also discuss how best to tailor the child's settling in period – with some parents choosing to gradually build up to a full day so the child is reassured that the parents will return to collect them. Educators will encourage parents to say goodbye when dropping off – and reassured that if the child remains distressed over a period of time, that educators will contact them. Parents are able to stay as long as needed to reassure their child, but sometimes it's easier for the educator to settle the child if the parents come earlier on collection to spend time with their child – rather than do this at drop off time.

Educators will continuously seek information about the child and family throughout the orientation process and throughout attendance of the child at the service. This can be done in a variety of ways such as feedback sheets, communication book that moves between centre and home, parent comment section on sign in and out sheets, portfolios, educator/parent meetings at half year and end of year, newsletters, general chats, educator phoning parents, diary, photos, displays etc.

The Director/Assistant Director must always contact the relevant support agency for children with additional needs in order to assist with a smoother settling in period.

Transition

The service aims to arrange for room transitions when a vacancy occurs or at the beginning of a new year. As each room has different challenges and expectations, children will only be transitioned when they are ready in all aspects of their development.

The opportunity to transition between groups / rooms at the service is based on many factors other than just age. When the child becomes of the age to attend school, the service will work with the parents and the school to prepare the child for school entry.

Transition from one room to another

Change is harder for some children than others; however by making this transition as smooth as possible for children and families, we are helping build the child's success. Separation can evoke children's deep feelings which can trigger restlessness, frustration etc.

At time of orientation to the service, and also when a child is transitioning to the next group, the Director/Assistant Director will consult with the family about what expectations, desires, and requirements the family has to settle their child successfully into this new environment. Such information will form the basis for the orientation process.

All orientation or transition processes should be evaluated through the process and also at the end of the process. Families and children will be asked for feedback and this will be the basis of any adjustments or changes to the orientation/transition. Any feedback will be recorded by the Director/Assistant Director and then passed onto relevant educators.

It is imperative that the child and family are regularly asked for feedback on how the child is adjusting to the new orientation/transition to the next group. This should be done on a daily basis so that staff can ensure the child is on track for a successful orientation/transition.

Orientation/transition of children (and all feedback) will be raised at room and educator meetings to ensure all educators have been provided with consistent information and are all working towards the same outcomes. The Director/Assistant Director is to record minutes of meetings and make available for educators to peruse as necessary.

Families must always be kept abreast of how the orientation/transition plan is going. Educators must also consult with parents about how any feedback will be used to adjust the orientation/transition plan. This ensures families are continuously communicated with. Educators can liaise with parents, arrange another meeting, or use phone contact to ensure this happens.

Procedure

The Qualified Educator (Team Leader) is responsible for:

- Identifying if additional support is required for the children in transition (consulting with families) especially children with special rights.
- Ensuring all information about the transitioning child is given to the next room leader.
- Organising an educator to go with the transitioning child if necessary.
- Planning and implementing a program which incorporates the transition process for the children, families and educators.
- Responding to parents/guardians needs, providing support and guidance, where appropriate.
- Providing support and guidance to other educators.
- Encouraging a collaborative family-centred approach in implementing the program at the Centre.
- Ensuring that the transition program incorporates opportunities for regular review and evaluation, in consultation with all persons involved in the child's care and education (child, parents, educators).
- Ensuring that the parents/guardians are fully informed about the room to room transition procedures.

Transition times between rooms will start 6 weeks before children turn 2 (for toddler room) or 3 (for pre-school room) or as per the child's needs. The transition is only applicable when there is a

vacancy for the child to transition to the next room. The transition process must be agreed upon between Room Leaders and communicated to educators.

In the first 2 weeks children will visit their new room in the mornings only and return to their room for lunch and the afternoon.

The next two weeks (weeks 3 and 4) children will visit their new room in the mornings and stay for lunchtime, returning to their room for a sleep and the afternoon.

The final two weeks (weeks 5 and 6) children will visit their new room for the whole day (morning, lunchtime, sleep time and afternoon routine).

If children are not coping after a short amount of time trying with the transition times they can return to their room and try again the next day they are in care.

Where possible an educator from their current room will accompany the child on their transition.

Transition to school

When a child first attends school, there is a great change for that child and for their family. We believe that the child's parents are the most important link in this transition.

- i. The better the transition between home and school, the better the education: that's the message of recent research.
- ii. The Service will always talk about starting school in a positive manner that will reinforce a healthy attitude toward the transition.
- iii. If possible, information on local schools will be made available to parents.
- iv. Throughout the year reciprocal visits are arranged to visit the local schools so as to familiarise the children with the school environments.
- v. In November the service provides a school lunch week for the children to help prepare them for opening their lunches for school. Parents will be provided with information regarding appropriate nutrition and lunches for school.
- vi. During Term 4 transition visits are coordinated with both local schools.

The importance and value of good relationships between educators, child and family must be emphasised with families. Additional information about this can be provided to families by referring them to the Early Years Learning Framework, Reggio Emilia Philosophy and National Quality Standards.

Any issues resulting from or occurring during the orientation/transition process must be reported immediately to the Director/Assistant Director for follow up.

Orientation Parent Feedback Form

Roxby Downs Children's Centre

Child's Name: _____ Date: _____

Parent's Name: _____

To assist us to improve the service we provide for parents and families, we ask that you take a few moments to complete this form.

Did you feel that the information about the following areas was sufficiently comprehensive and accessible?

	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Comment
Service Philosophy					
Programming for Children					
Service Policies / Procedure					
Fees and Method of Payment					
Staffing					
Meals					
Routines					
Communication Books					

Do you have any suggestions as to how we can improve to ensure your family and children feel welcome and safe?

Orientation Procedure for Families

We believe orientation is an important process where educators are able to get important information about the new child's needs and those of the family. This process helps to make transition from home to care as smooth as possible with the aim to maintain continuity between home and the service, which helps the child adjust to the new setting.

- Child to attend the centre (with parent/s) to visit and meet educators and familiarise with environment
- Meet with Director/Assistant Director to go through:
 - enrolment forms
 - parent handbook
 - parent policies
 - routines
 - programming
 - portfolios
 - safety and WH&S requirements
 - collection and drop off
 - custody orders
 - allergies
 - medical conditions
 - special requirements/needs (including cultural, religious and spiritual expectations)
 - Family expectations, desires, requirements
 - grievance and feedback procedures
 - how centre meets the needs of individual children
 - positive guidance of behaviour for children
- Parents fill in information sheet about their child
- Guided tour / questions
- Administration Officer – introduction and fees procedure explained
- Series of visits for child/parent/s organised
- Daily feedback on orientation is provided by educators/child/family
- Primary caregiver assigned to promote relationships with child and family
- Orientation feedback form filled in by family after orientation visits have taken place

All about me

My name: _____ Preferred name: _____

Date of birth: _____ Language spoken at home: _____

My mother's/guardian's name: _____

My father's/guardian's name: _____

People who live in my house: _____

My pets are: _____

My favourite things are: _____

I do not like: _____

Things that frighten me: _____

Meal times:

I can feed myself: Yes No (please circle)

I like to eat: _____

I don't like to eat: _____

Bottle:

I have a bottle: Yes No (please circle).

If yes, I have Formula Cow's Milk Other (please circle)

Times I have my bottle: _____

Sleep:

I sleep in a Cot Bed (please circle)

I take to bed: _____

My sleep time/s: _____

How I settle to sleep: _____

I have a dummy: Yes No (please circle)

I have a comforter: Yes No (please circle) My comforter is: _____

Toileting:

Nappies Toilet training Independent toileting (please circle)

My general routine at home is:

Other information I'd like you to know about me:

Name Signature Date