



Plan Effective Transitions for Children

In Education and Care Services



National
Alliance

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Disclaimer

This resource is based on the most current information available in July 2012.

In developing this resource we have referred to legislation and regulations, sought advice from professional organisations and reviewed contemporary research. This document should be used as a guide to compliment and develop service's existing practices, policies and procedures. Services should always check the currency of information at the time of use and consider the information in this booklet in the context of their particular service.

This booklet can be accessed online at:

www.pscalliance.org.au



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About the *How To* series

The **How To** series has been created to offer professionals working in the education and care sector in Australia practical support to implement the National Quality Framework. The **How To** series consists of seven booklets promoting key areas of quality provision. Throughout each booklet, there are references to national legislation (the Act and Regulations), the National Quality Standard, the Early Years Learning Framework (Belonging, Being and Becoming) and the Framework for School Age Care (My Time, Our Place). The **How To** series can be used by a variety of professionals working in education and care services across Australia.

The introduction of the National Quality Framework marks a significant change in the way we, as a community, see children and their place in society. All professionals working in the education and care services are responsible for continuous improvement to ensure the best possible outcomes for children.

Whāia te iti kahurangi - Ki te tūohu koe, me he maunga teitei.

‘Pursue excellence – should you stumble, let it be to a lofty mountain’ (Māori proverb)



Introduction

Transitions happen whenever children switch from parent to educator, move from place to place, or change from one activity to another. Different places and spaces have their own purposes, expectations and ways of doing things (EYLF, p.16). There are many different types of transitions children will go through in their lifetime. For example, they move from their home environment to an education and care service and this is often described as a major transition in a child's life. Other types of transitions which can be described as minor, are when a child is moving from play time to hand - washing and then sitting for morning tea or between other activities in your service or at home.

It is important to view transitions for children not as single events but as pathways to later successful outcomes particularly toward learning. "Children's long term success in school derives from their learning experiences before school". (p. 1, Centre for Community Child Health 2008).

By the time children enter formal schooling they may have already attended a number of out of home settings. Each of these experiences is likely to affect children's capacity to adjust and learn. Such is the significance of early transitions for young children that it is essential that parents and educators pay close attention to young children's experiences in order to provide well for them. (Dunlop and Fabian, 2006)

Both the EYLF and the FSAC highlight the importance of transitions for children and encourages educators to assist children to understand the traditions, routines and practices of the service to ensure that each child feels comfortable, secure and confident with the process of change. (FSAC, p.16)

How can this resource help you?

The purpose of this resource is to assist educators in supporting children's transitions to their service, within the service and between room / age specific areas. This resource will offer you ideas and suggestions for practice, including links to the National Quality Framework. Activities after each topic will assist you to think about your current practice and offer you ideas for continuous improvement.

Definitions

Well-being - refers to feeling at ease, being spontaneous and free of emotional tensions and is crucial to secure 'mental health'. (Laever's, 2005)

Abbreviations and Acronyms used in this booklet

ACECQA - The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority established under the National Quality Framework www.acecqa.gov.au

Legislation - In this booklet, the term legislation encompasses the Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010) and Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011) as applied in each State or Territory through an applied law system. Explained further on the ACECQA website www.acecqa.gov.au

Law/Act - Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010)

Regulations - Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)

NQF - National Quality Framework www.acecqa.gov.au

NQS - National Quality Standard www.acecqa.gov.au

EYLF - Early Years Learning Framework (Belonging, Being and Becoming)

FSAC - Framework for School Aged Care (My Time, Our Place)

QIP - Quality Improvement Plan, required as part of the National Quality Framework

Types of transitions

For the purpose of this resource, we consider three key transitions for children:

1. Transitioning to the service.

The transition from home to your education and care service is a milestone for both children *and* families. Families, like children, may experience some anxieties during this time. For example, children may struggle with new routines and being separated from their family. However, families themselves may have concerns about their child's ability to cope with the demands of their new environment—learning where things are, what is expected of them, asking for help when needed.

Forming a strong partnership between you and the child's family helps to establish an understanding between educators and families about expectations and attitudes, and provides a foundation for building on the knowledge of both parties (i.e., both parents and educators) (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2012).



2. Transitions between rooms in the service

The significance of moving from one room to another for a child can often be overlooked as they are still in the same service. Moving from a room where they know the flow of the day and what and who to expect in it, to a new environment with perhaps different educators with different ways of doing things can be overwhelming for the child.

3. Daily transitions within the service

Although daily transitions for children can be considered as minor ones, they still have the potential to cause children a significant level of stress. Children's individual needs must be considered during any transition and particularly when assisting with daily transitions. For example, a child with a learning difficulty may need visual cues rather than verbal communication to explain what is coming next.

All three transitions (listed above) require careful planning from educators to ensure all children's needs are appropriately met.



Why are transitions important for children?

Transition times for children could be stressful and children who have sustained high stress levels are less able to learn and develop to their potential. *When children are experiencing stressful situations they have high levels of cortisol in their bodies. Cortisol damages neuronal connections and brain cells.* (Sims, 2008).

It is essential that adults understand the damaging effects of stress on children's health, behaviour and learning and in turn, value the benefits of a calm, relaxed state. Continual emotional distress can create deficits in a child's intellectual abilities, crippling the capacity to learn. In addition to a general stressed state, specific events can create anxiety. For example, children's distress when separated from their parent / family member can be a very disturbing experience for children. (Goleman, p.27).

Children all react differently to stress. Some cope well, while others may become anxious even during minor transitions such as moving from indoor to outdoor play time. Their level of anxiety depends both on the **individual** child and the **type** of transition they experience. This highlights the importance of forming close relationships with all children and their families so you can understand their individual needs and learn how best to support them.



Benefits of planning transitions together

“Through partnership with families, early childhood educators ensure that children have an active role in preparing for transitions” (EYLF, p16).

When children and their families play an active role in preparing for transitions, there are many benefits. The benefits are as follows:

CHILD	FAMILY	SERVICE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When children know what to expect they are better prepared for change and may be less afraid of the ‘unknown’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feel at ease knowing their child is being supported during a potentially stressful process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When children are prepared for transitions they are more likely to settle easily into your service and allow for a smoother day
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When children feel safe and secure with their educators they tend to be more involved in play experiences and thus likely to learn and develop to their full potential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When educators and families work together to ensure smoother transitions for children, families are likely to feel valued and respected and supported in their role as parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families gain insight into your role and the benefits of working together to support better outcomes for their child during transitions is highlighted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children’s needs are recognised and therefore supported 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families are more in tune with their children’s needs and understand how they can be better supported 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working in partnership with families to ensure smooth transitions for children means your service is working toward NQS QA 6.

Theory

Before thinking about *how* to assist children in making more successful transitions to your service or from one room to another, it is important to think about developmental theory. John Bowlby's (1979) attachment theory explains how **children need to form a strong attachment** / bond with the educators caring for them and why this is fundamental to facilitating *any* transition for a child. To form a positive relationship with each child, you need to be responsive to and supportive of their individual needs. When children have developed a secure attachment with you and other educators, they are much more likely to feel secure, confident, included and happier in your service. (NQS QA 5: *Relationships with children* also highlights the importance of forming positive relationships with children).

Transitions for children are often less stressful when they have a good relationship with the person / people caring for them.

Emotional and social development

Being aware of children's developmental milestones, particularly emotional and social development, helps you understand what you might expect at different ages and stages in children's lives. This understanding, coupled with information about the **individual** child and their **family**, will help you to prepare for children's transitions. It is important to consider each child's emotional and social development to effectively support their transition to and within your service.

For example, developmental milestones indicate that a child aged between 1 and 2 years *may show anxiety when separating from significant people in their lives. They may also seek comfort when upset or afraid.* (The Early Years Learning Framework Practice Based Resources, 2012). Coupling this milestone with your knowledge of individual children allows you to better plan for successful transitions. You understand why a child aged between 1 and 2 years may cry when separating from their parent in the morning, and know it is typical for many children in this age group. However, all children will develop at different rates so remember to tune in to children's holistic development (e.g., well-being, spiritual, language, cognitive, emotional etc) rather than focusing on specific developmental domains.

Young children with strong attachments to caregivers (both family and educators) are better able to regulate their emotions and calm themselves. This contributes to a high level of well-being that provides a strong base for early learning. (Research paper to inform the development of An Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, area 3, p3.).

Note: For more information on how to assess children's learning and development see the CD of resources in the *Educators Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework*.

The National Quality Framework

The NQF recognises that transitions are significant for children and need to be carefully planned and facilitated to maintain children's well-being.

National Quality Framework

At times, a service may need to provide additional educators to adequately supervise and support children. For example, at the beginning of the year when a number of children are transitioning to new rooms, a service may need to roster educators in excess of minimum ratios. This could assist educators to respond to children's needs and foster children's sense of security and belonging. (The Guide to the National Law and Regulations, p. 65)

(See adequate supervision - National Law: Sections 165, 167, 174 and National Regulations: Regulations 101, 176, 166, 168 and Interactions with children – National Regulation 155)

Centre based services

In Centre based services for children who are preschool age or under, the service should also minimise the number of times children transition to different groups during the day. Moving children multiple times throughout the day can reduce their sense of belonging to a group, their well-being and opportunities for developing and extending play. When making decisions about children's grouping throughout the day, the best interests of children should be the primary consideration. (The Guide to the National Law and Regulations, p.102).

(All services must adhere to the legal requirements applicable to their service type under the National Quality Framework). Approved Providers and Nominated Supervisors need to consult with the National Law, National Regulations, National Quality Standard and approved learning frameworks in addition to any State / Territory specific requirements.

QIP TIPS

Before documenting either strengths or areas for improvement in your Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) you must first self - assess, in other words you reflect on the effectiveness of your current practices. For more information about how to self-assess your service watch the video available on Early Childhood Australia website (www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/nqsplp/e-learning-videos/)

National Quality Standard

Transitions for children are integrated across several NQS Quality Areas, including QA 5: *Relationships with children* and QA 6: *Collaborative partnerships with families and communities*. The National Quality Standard places legal obligations on services to form positive relationships with children to best support children's well-being, learning and development.

National Quality Standard

Quality Area 5: Relationships with children

Element 5.1.1 - Interactions with each child are warm and responsive and build trusting relationships.

Element 5.1.3 - Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included.

Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

Element 6.3.2 – Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities.

Daily transitions and guiding children's behaviour

“Transitions tend to be the most difficult and stressful moments in any education and care service. At these times children often display more challenging behaviours and educators feel like police officers than nurturing educators. If you are uncomfortable or frustrated during transition times, this is a sign that your current schedule may need to be revised to better meet the needs and developmental levels of the children in your care.” (Barb Gallick and Lisa Lee, 2010)

Common problems with transitions:

1. Daily routine has a high number of scheduled transitions
2. Transitions are rushed
3. Children don't know what is coming next
4. Children are not ready to stop doing what they are doing
5. Children have little or no warning of what is expected of them.

Often when children's needs are not met, transitions can increase unwanted or challenging behaviour such as non-compliance, aggression, biting, and so on.

QIP tips

Have you identified with any of the difficulties listed above? Is there something you think may need changing? Document this in your QIP and don't forget to save each version (of your QIP) to highlight where your service has come from and what you are trying to improve. Ensure ALL educators (and children and families where possible) are involved in the development of your QIP so as to ensure consistency in practices when facilitating effective transitions for children.

Thinking about my practice:

1. What are some of the common behaviours you see in children during daily transitions?
2. Why do you think children might display such behaviour?
3. How might you guide children's behaviour through positive interactions with you? (See National Regulation 155 and 156: Interactions with children)

Brainstorm

Possible reasons for behaviour

Children's behaviour during transitions may be related to how you structure, schedule, and implement transitions. Challenging behaviour is more likely to occur when:

- there are too many transitions
- all the children transition at the same time in the same way (e.g. all children must eat together)
- transitions are too long so children spend too much time waiting with nothing to do (e.g. waiting to wash hands in a large group)
- educators do not give children clear instructions (verbal or visual)
- transition occurs without warning; and
- the routine at home is very different to that of your service (e.g. sleeptime for a child at home is at 1pm, not the 12pm as scheduled at the service).

Remember that your service may be only one of several places where the child spends their day and there may be different expectations in each setting. Consider, for example, school age children going from school to outside school hours care. In one service (e.g. school) children must remain seated during snack until all children are finished eating and at outside school hours care individual children may leave the table and look at a book while other children finish.

Inconsistency in educators practice

Children may not understand what to do when different educators implement routines differently on different days. For example, on some days children wash their hands, then get their placemats for snack; and on other days they get their placements first and then wash their hands. Inconsistency in practices between educators can cause confusion for a child so ensure that while there is flexibility for the child there also needs to be some level of routine to support consistent practices of educators. All educators should be involved in developing a flexible routine for their room which suits the needs of children in it. This is a process and routines will require on-going discussion and evaluation.

Developmental needs

Some children may have a difficult time with transitions because they have additional needs. For example, children with an autism spectrum disorder often have difficulty coping with change in their environment and require particular assistance or support (such as visual cues) to help them understand what is required in your service. Some children may have limited or delayed communication, social, emotional, physical or cognitive skills. For example, some children take longer to process and understand information. If educators give too many directions at once, or give verbal directions without visual cues, such as holding up a backpack to signal that it is time to go home, these children may not know what to do. In these situations, educators may view the child as engaging in challenging behaviour rather than recognising that the child needs to learn a skill or receive additional cues to understand the direction. Children may engage in challenging behaviour when they do not understand the expectations for the transition.

Not ready to move on – lack of stimulating activities, experiences

Some children may engage in challenging behaviour during transitions because they do not want to stop what they are doing, they do not want or need to go to the next activity, or the transition occurs without warning. Think about a child who is busy looking through a favourite book and is interrupted by an educator saying that it is time to go to wash their hands and eat their snack. It is easy to understand why this child might resist or ignore the transition. Challenging behaviour can occur because children are not motivated for, in need of, or interested in the next activity. This highlights the importance of offering children choices and stimulating experiences based on their interests, strengths and abilities and planning how to successfully transition children to new experiences, activities and routine times.

Sometimes you may not understand the reasons for the child's behaviour and may assume that a child is having a bad day, is ignoring the educator, is stubborn, or is 'just tired', when in fact they may not know what to do. It is important to consider all the possible reasons why the child is having a difficult time and then identify strategies to support the child during transitions. In the next section, we provide ideas and strategies for planning, designing, and implementing transitions to better support children's well-being, learning and development; and to minimise the occurrence of challenging behaviour (for further support, contact your local Inclusion Support Agency).

General Principles

Continuity of experiences for children is **essential** for them to feel safe and secure in your care. There are four general principles that can be used to plan effective transitions:

1. Plan ahead
2. Limit the number of transitions
3. Teach children what is expected
4. Regularly review the effectiveness of transition plans and make changes when needed.

The EYLF and FSAC encourages you to think about the importance of using a *holistic approach* when planning transitions for children which takes into account the unique differences of children. There is also an emphasis on reflecting on your current practices and then planning for effective routines and transitions that ensure children experience continuity (EYLF, p.14).



Key things to consider

There are a number of important factors to consider with any type of transition for children, including:

Transition to the service

- What opportunities are there for children to visit their new service and meet with educators?
- How are children and their families prepared for the transition that is about to occur? What information are children given about where they are going and what will they do there? (Think of visual communication – photos of the staff and the service).
- What information are families given about the importance of the transition process for children and their role in supporting the child?
- What policies are in place to underpin the practices of educators and co-ordinators during transitions for children?
- What information do you ask families for (at enrolment) and how is this information used to support the transition from home to your service? (What do you know about the child's home routine, cultural traditions/values, likes/dislikes). How do you create a sense of belonging in your service for each child and their family?
- How do you ensure that each child feels safe and secure in their new environment?
- What intentional teaching strategies are adopted by all educators working with children who are transitioning to your service?



Transitions between rooms

- Are children gradually introduced to their new room / environment and educators?
- What information about the child is important to handover to the child's new educators?
- Is it possible for an educator to move with a child or group of children to the next room so as to maintain consistency?
- How are relationships developed between the child, new educators and their family?

Transitions – between daily activities

- How are children prepared for their day and what is coming next?
- Are transitions planned for as part of the curriculum?
- Do all educators reflect on **how children are coping** during transitions?
- Do some children need more warning than others that a change is about to occur?
- Is there a visual routine placed where children can see what to expect at your service?
- How do you communicate these important messages to CaLD children and children with various learning needs?

Forming a positive relationship with each child and their family is critical to supporting all kinds of transitions for children.

What do transitions look like in your service?

Take a moment to reflect on the different transitions children are expected to go through at your service. Consider the impact they might have on their well being, learning and development.

Everyday Transitions
(within services)

Major Transitions
(external and internal)

How you can plan effective transitions for children

Transitions require attention and planning to minimise their potential stress for children and educators. When transitions are planned as a meaningful part of the curriculum, they promote children's learning, create a calm environment, set a positive tone and help everyone move seamlessly through the day. The best practice guidelines section of this resource offers ideas for practice across the three key transitions which children may experience in your service. They are:

1. Transition to the service – ideas for practice
2. Transitions between rooms (age / developmentally specific groups such as moving from babies room to toddlers)
3. Transitions within the service – between daily activities



Best practices guidelines – ideas for practice

Children transition better when they are prepared. They know what is about to change, what they need to do and they have caring, responsive educators to support them.

1. TRANSITION TO THE SERVICE

Before the child begins

Often information about the service goes home to a parent or family member but little information is given to the child on or before enrolment. You could put together a picture book of the service for children to see where they will be going and what the service looks like. Include photos of the educators who will be working with that child so that they can make a connection to the person who is going to be looking after them. A resource like this could also be used to help non English speaking families or children with learning difficulties understand where they are going and what they will be doing.

Enrolment / orientation.

Children and families need a thorough orientation to your service. The more comfortable and familiar the child is with your service and you, the easier their transition will be. You could consider having a transitional policy whereby children visit the service for 1 – 2 hours per day for one or two weeks before they formally start.

Use the information you are given

Families and children can give you important information at enrolment and through ongoing conversation. Use this information when thinking of ways to support the child. For example, a family member might share with you that their child loves tactile materials. This is great information because you can plan play experiences for that child using tactile materials so that when the child starts, there are activities based on the child's interests. (This is important information to share with the educator(s) working with a child)

Transitional objects

Some services offer children transitional objects such as a bear which they can take home and back to the service. This provides a link with home and gives the child comfort and security to reduce their potential stress. It can also act as a distraction to the child if the focus becomes the object rather than the movement between settings. Babies might have a blanket or a sensory object which goes between home and the service, while older children may have something to play with or 'look after'.



Work in partnership with families

When you work in partnership with families, children are more likely to experience smoother transitions. You develop a better understanding of the child and their needs and this helps you adapt your practices to meet these needs. (Links to NQS QA 6)

For more information on how to build partnerships with families, visit www.pscalliance.org.au for the *How To Series: Build Strong Partnerships with Families*

Primary caregiver

You could think about implementing a primary care giver system to ensure all children are receiving adequate time and attention from educators. This will help to build secure attachments to at least one educator. Over time, educators can facilitate children's interactions and relationship building with other educators. It is important that children build strong attachments to multiple educators because there are inevitably times when the primary caregiver is absent from the service, e.g. due to illness, holidays, and the roster. Without multiple attachments, the child may be distressed that the one adult they are attached to in the service is not there.

Prepare environments that support transitions

Just as educators guide children, so do environments. Consider how environments and materials can be arranged to support transitions. Create clear paths with minimal distractions so it is easy for children to move from one activity to the next. Make sure that the materials and the equipment you and the children need for the next activity are available and ready for use. Ensure that you have enough materials, equipment and resources to support the transition. For example, a simple transition can become challenging when too many children are waiting to use the same soap dispenser.



2. TRANSITIONS BETWEEN ROOMS

Some ideas for practice (outlined above) can be used when a child moves from one room to another. For example, implementing a primary caregiver system to ensure each child has a strong attachment with at least one or two educators in their room. Other ideas include:

Sharing information

When preparing a child to move to another room in your service (e.g., baby to toddler room) ensure that important information about that child is shared with new educators (from enrolment, informal conversations with families, observations and other relevant documentation). As well as sharing information about the child's needs it is essential to share information that might assist the child in making smoother transitions to the next room and therefore help them settle into their new environment (e.g., likes, interests, cultural traditions).

Gradual entry

Ensure that children have opportunities to meet with the educators in their new room prior to moving. It is also important to familiarise the child with their soon to be new environment. Families should also be involved in this process. (e.g., you may have an open door policy which encourages families to come in for a short time during the child's move). Ideally, consistency would be maintained between educators so the child's existing educator could move to the next room with the child or small group of children. However not all services have the capacity to do this making gradual entry into the next room a particular important process to ensure children feel safe and comfortable in their new room. (NQS QA 5)

Buddy system

When a child moves from one room to another in your service, it may be a good idea to operate a buddy system where the new child is teamed up with either another new child or a child that is already in the new room. This is aimed at providing further support to children whilst transitioning to a new room / space. The success of this system depends on the age group of the children and whether the children themselves want to partake in the activity.

NOTE: Some of the following ideas for practice may also be used when a child is transitioning between rooms or between daily activities.



3. TRANSITIONS – BETWEEN ROOMS, DAILY ACTIVITIES AND BEYOND

Establish a predictable routine

A consistent routine or schedule lets children know what will happen next. It also helps new children learn what to expect. Children are not motivated by time so a predictable routine doesn't have to be driven by the clock. What is important to children is having a sense of what's coming next. For example, children will naturally begin to put on hats after lunch if outdoor play routinely follows lunch. Be flexible about the time scheduled for experiences and allow for longer play experiences when their interest is high.

Start by posting a visual routine where children can see it. You might use actual photographs of your outdoor area, lunch table, and play centres in sequential order or draw pictures to represent different parts of your day. For children with limited communication and younger children, it is better to use photographs of the actual service to build their understanding.

Model what you are teaching children. Keep a calm voice and manner. Speak softly and move in an unhurried way to communicate that this is an orderly process. If you run around, raise your voice and look stressed, often children will act in the same way as this is the behaviour that you model to them.



Prepare the children for a transition. Walk quietly through the room softly telling children what to expect. You might do this by telling them “when we finish playing, we will clean up so we can have snack.” Your comments should let children know what is happening now and what will happen next. For children who have difficulty understanding verbal cues you could show them pictures from the visual routine.

Whenever possible, give children plenty of advance notice even when you are doing something spontaneous - for example, “Today, we are doing something different. When you finish morning tea, come back out on the verandah for a special music game”.

Provide extra support for children who may require it. Watch for children who seem uneasy or anxious during transitions. Involve them early in a task, ask them to be your assistant, giving direct instructions. For example “Noah, it’s nearly time for snack. Can you help me carry these cups to the table?”

Be responsive, attentive, and nurturing

Transitions are most effective when children feel safe, secure and nurtured. Children are less anxious when they trust their educators and know they are non-judgmental and respond to children’s needs with reassurance, sensitivity, and kindness. (NQS QA 5)



Be aware of child development

Understanding child development helps you know the general skills children have and are developing. Knowing these milestones and skills allows you to provide children with what they need to transition. It is particularly important to have an understanding of emotional development for the age group of children you work with.

Know each child well

A child's age provides us with general information on what they may be able to do, but knowing the child well provides the best information about what they can do and how they learn. Know the child's interests, likes, dislikes, fears, comforts, temperament, family, culture, abilities, and overall background. (NQS QA 5)

Know yourself well

Think about what you need for your day to go well and know what helps you in stressful situations. Discuss this with your staff team so you can work to each others strength's, and understand and support each other during transition times for children.

Reduce waiting time

In situations that typically require waiting (toileting, washing hands), group children in easy-to-manage numbers. Begin with a small group of two or three, and send them to the bathroom while others are still playing. Other children can then follow as the first group returns to the room.

Make transitions meaningful and fun.

By singing a song during clean up, or hopping on one foot to come in from outside, you can make transitions entertaining and educational. You could make a list of songs / rhymes and pictures of animals to imitate ("let's move slowly like a tortoise" "walk like a wombat"). For even experienced educators, it can be hard to come up with an idea during a busy transition so plan ahead and have some ideas up your sleeve!



Promote self-direction and self-control.

Create a climate for children that values responsibility for your room and the environment. Use intentional teaching strategies throughout the curriculum to build children's understanding. For example, teach, role model and demonstrate how to look after their room and clean up after a busy day.



Address the strengths, interests, and needs of each child.

Plan ahead to support children who may need extra help with transitions. Think about the transition cues that could help. Consider visual as well as verbal cues. You might prepare a visual routine or daily timetable with pictures to show children what comes next, or a step by step picture sequence that shows children how to wash their hands. Some children with additional needs may have existing visual cues and supports in use at home that can be incorporated in your service. Some children may have difficulty finishing high interest activities and need more time to shift their attention. You might give them a transition cue sooner than others in the group to give them more time to be ready.

Enable friendships

As well as supporting secure attachments to educators, think about ways to enable children's friendships in your service.

Limit the number of transitions

If you find lots of children are showing challenging behaviour during transitions, it is likely that the transition may be the problem. Keep transitions to a minimum and always give children ample warning when they need to finish something. Even if young children cannot understand the concept of time, they will quickly understand that this is a cue to finish what they are doing because another activity or experience is coming.

What next?

Fundamental to planning effective transitions for children is a secure attachment with each child. This enables them to feel safe and secure in your service. All children need to have a **positive relationship** with the people caring for them and there must be time spent on quality interactions (links to NQS QA 5). Consistency of educator practices are also important in making children feel comfortable with what is coming next. The EYLF and FSAC also describes the following factors as important to successful transitions for children:

- Ensuring children have an active role in preparing for transitions, in partnership with families.
- Assisting children to understand transitions, routines and practices of the service they are moving to and feel comfortable with this process (keep in mind some children will need more support than others during transitions because their needs will differ).
- Working together with each new educator and other professionals to make certain a successful transition occurs for the child.

Along with these specific practices and the best practice guidelines listed in this resource you can develop your existing strategies to promote smooth transitions for children, to and within your service.

References

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Further reading & resources

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Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, (2009). *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*, Commonwealth of Australia, ACT.

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Useful websites

www.acecqa.gov.au – Australian Children’s education and Care Quality Authority

www.pscalliance.org.au - PSC Alliance

www.childaustralia.org.au - Child Australia Training and Research Institute

www.mytimeourplace.com.au – My Time, Our Place

www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/nqsplp/ - Early Childhood Australia (NQS Professional Learning Program)

Contacts

For information on jurisdiction specific provisions that apply, contact:

Australian Capital Territory: Children's Policy and Regulation Unit
Community Services Directorate
GPO Box 158
Canberra City ACT 2601
Phone: (02) 6207 1114
Fax: (02) 6207 1128
Email: OCYFSCchildrenservices@act.gov.au
Website: www.dhcs.act.gov.au

New South Wales: NSW Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate
Department of Education and Communities
Locked Bag 5107
Parramatta NSW 2124
Phone: 1800 619 113
Fax: (02) 8633 1810
Email: ececd@det.nsw.edu.au
Website: www.dec.nsw.gov.au

Northern Territory: Quality Education and Care Northern Territory
Department of Education and Training
GPO Box 4821
Darwin NT 0801
Phone: (08) 8999 3561
Fax (08) 8999 5677
Email: qualityecnt.det@nt.gov.au

Queensland: Department of Education and Training
PO Box 15033
City East QLD 4002
Phone: 1800 637 711
Fax: (07) 3234 0310
Email: ecec@deta.qld.gov.au
Website: www.deta.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood

- South Australia:** Department of Education and Children's Services
Licensing and Standards
Level 15, 31 Flinders Street
Adelaide SA 5000
Phone: (08) 8226 0085
Fax: (08) 8226 1815
Email: decchildcarelicensing@sa.gov.au
Website: www.dec.sa.gov.au/ybsproviders/
- Tasmania:** Department of Education
GPO Box 169
Hobart TAS 7001
Phone: 1300 135 513
Fax: (03) 6233 6042
Email: childcare.comment@education.tas.gov.au
Website: www.childcare.tas.gov.au
- Victoria:** Department of Education and Early Childhood
Development
GPO Box 4367,
Melbourne, VIC 3001
Phone: 1300 307 415
Fax: (03) 9651 3586
Email: licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au
Website: www.education.vic.gov.au
- Western Australia:** Department for Communities
Childcare Licensing and Standards Unit
Level 1, 111 Wellington Street
East Perth WA 6004
Phone: (08) 6210 3333 or 1800 199 383
Fax: (08) 6210 3300
Email: ccluinfo@communities.wa.gov.au
Website: www.communities.wa.gov.au

Professional Support Coordinators National Alliance
www.pscalliance.org.au

Australian Capital Territory
Communities@Work
www.actpsc.com.au

New South Wales
Children's Services Central
www.cscentral.org.au

Northern Territory
Child Australia
www.childaustralia.org.au

Queensland
Health and Community Services Workforce Council Inc.
www.pscq.org.au

South Australia
Lady Gowrie Child Centre
www.pscsa.org.au

Victoria
Gowrie Victoria
www.gowrievictoria.org.au

Western Australia
Child Australia
www.childaustralia.org.au

Tasmania
Lady Gowrie Tasmania
www.psctas.org.au