

## **SETTLING IN AND TRANSITION POLICY**

### **Policy Statement**

**Over the Rainbow Early Learning Centre Ltd** recognises that 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 their learning and development. We are committed to work to develop strong relationships between the family and the service through frequent communication and sharing of information and goals.

We recognise that one of the key challenges for all who care for children during this COVID-19 pandemic is to balance the need for a practical and sensible level of caution with the need to provide a nurturing and supportive environment for children. We are committed to ensuring that any practical precautions to reduce the chance of spread of the virus such as limiting adult interaction with the service will be balanced against the needs of children which will remain our priority at all times as they transition into our service.

This policy has been updated in line with current guidance the HSPC Infection Prevention and Control guidance for services providing childcare during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the DCYA's Return to Work Safely Protocol and Tusla's Children Services Regulations Guidance Document for Early Years Services: COVID-19.

### **Principle**

This policy is underwritten by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 and the Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Quality Regulatory Framework.

### **Communication Plan**

All parents/guardians are informed of this policy on enrolment. Staff members will check with parents that they have read and understood the policy and provide any assistance needed.

A summary of this policy will be included in the parent handbook. This policy will also be reviewed with staff members at induction and annual staff training.

A copy of all policies will be available during all hours of operation to staff members and parents in the Policy Folder located in the setting.

Parents/guardians may receive a copy of the full policy and procedures at any time upon request. Parents/guardians and all relevant staff members will receive written notification of any updates to this policy.

### **Aim**

We aim to provide relationships and routines that are consistent, predictable and responsive to support each child's sense of trust, security and identity. Settling-in is a collaborative process between parents/guardians/carers, staff and children. Family involvement will be encouraged to assist all children to develop secure relationships as we recognise that children's most important educators are their families.

Created: Jul20

## Definitions

**Settling-in** means the procedures in place to facilitate the integration into the service of a child when they first attend the service.

**Transitions** occur as children move **within** the setting from one area to another or from one type of activity to another (for example, active play to tidy up time to eating time). They also occur as children move **between** different settings (for example, from home to the early years setting or from the early years setting to school).

## Covid-19 restriction

During the Covid-19 pandemic period our usual face-to-face interactions with parents/guardians will not be possible due to HSPC guidelines. Therefore, we will implement alternative arrangements such as the use of communication technology to communicate with parents. We will focus on working together with parents during this period to support the needs of children.

## Procedures

### We always:

- Consider transitions from the perspective of the wellbeing, learning and development needs of each child.
- Build partnerships with families to support the development of responsive, respectful relationships among children and staff.
- Adapt routines and practices to support each child's needs, interests, temperament, their own and their family's circumstances and their preferences, their culture and first language, whenever possible.
- Create a welcoming environment where the diversity of families and communities, and the aspirations they hold for their children, are respected.
- Incorporate family photos and other aspects of children's home life into the environment and the curriculum.
- Use routines and transitions as opportunities to promote children's learning and 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 such as observations and feedback from families.
- Liaise with other settings appropriately and provide any relevant information via parents or with parents' consent, that is helpful in ensuring a successful transition from the setting.
- Use the templates provided by NCCA (*Mo Sceal: Moving from preschool to primary*) to transfer information from this setting to the primary schools. It is the parents' choice to pass the information to the primary school or not.

## On entering the setting for the first time

Children settle into preschool in lots of different ways. Some children will confidently move into the room as soon as they come in. Other children may be nervous and anxious about leaving their parent. Most children will be somewhere in between. Please try not to worry if your child experiences difficulties – it is a very normal part

of a child's development to be anxious, nervous or angry about starting preschool. We also recognise that many parents will find this a difficult and sometimes upsetting process. We hope that we can use our experience to support you and your child in whatever way suits you. Please remember that we require all parents and carers to help their children settle in. In our experience, all children benefit greatly when the preschool works closely with the family on settling in.

**We will:**

- Encourage parents/guardians to visit the service before and after their child is enrolled. *We will not be able to facilitate this during the Covid-19 pandemic.*
- Include the Key Person in the enrollment meeting and make plans with parents at that time to ease the child's transition and settling in to the programme. *This will be done virtually if possible, during the Covid-19 pandemic.*
- Request information from parents which will help us to get to know their child such as the child's likes and dislikes; their particular needs; who the important people in their lives are; their interests; their ability to communicate; their temperament and their dispositions.
- Introduce the child and their parents to the environment, the adults and the other children who will be in their room and the daily routines. *We will not be able to facilitate this during the Covid-19 pandemic. As an alternative we will make photographs and a virtual tour of the setting available to new parents and children.*
- Settling-in is done over a period of two weeks. All new children will stay for an hour to an hour and a half during week 1. At the end of week 1 each child will be assessed individually in partnership with parents/guardians to see if the child needs more reduced hour days or whether they will be able for the full 3-hour session. Depending on the outcome, children will either come in for the full 3-hour session in week 2, or will continue with reduced hours.
- If the child has adapted well, they will come in full time from week 3, unless it is deemed that the child requires more time to settle in which case another schedule will be drawn up in consultation with the parents.
- Empathise with parents' concerns about leaving their child in our care.
- Parents are encouraged to:
  - ✓ develop a goodbye routine or ritual that they can use with their child each day, such as giving the child a kiss or a big hug, waving good-bye from the door or through the window. This way the child knows that they can trust them and that they won't leave without warning.
  - ✓ collect their children on time every day so their child can be confident they won't be left at the service when the other children have all gone home.
  - ✓ Keep their child's Key Person up to date with relevant information on any big changes in the child's home life or circumstances and small changes, such as when their child masters new skills or helps out with tasks and routines at home. Knowing this information, the educators can provide individualised support for the child where needed and recognise and build on the child's skills.
- Feedback about the child's day is provided to families after each attendance. *During the Covid-19 pandemic feedback will be provided electronically.*
- It should be noted that Garda Vetting is not required for parents/guardians who

are settling—in their children.

- Informal and formal meetings between families and staff can be arranged to discuss children’s learning and development, and to express any concerns that may arise at home or at the setting. *These meetings will be conducted online or by phone during the Covid-19 pandemic.*

### **Guidance on saying good-bye and moving on**

Relationships are very 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, worried, sad or unhappy to describe how they might be feeling if they are showing signs of such feelings.
- Put things in perspective (For example, “*We won’t see Ava as much now but you will still have Sophie and Joe to play with*”).
- 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 are part of life.
- Share with the child some of your own experiences in leaving valued relationships. Tell them how you felt at that time.
- Create a memento. Children are concrete thinkers and having a physical reminder reassures them that the relationship was shared and is an important part of their lives.

### **Routines and transitions within the daily programme of activities**

- Children can attend to personal routines, such as going to the toilet, according to their individual body schedules. Staff will provide help, if requested, however, children must be fully potty trained and cannot be wearing pull-ups or nappies.
- Children have easy access to their transitional objects when they want or need them and are given time and understanding to help them to become more able to manage longer periods without them. *During the Covid-19 pandemic, children can only have transitional objects which can remain in the service. Due to the risk of transmission we cannot accept any toys/objects from home.*
- While balancing the range of activities (active/quiet, small group/large group/individual, indoors/outdoors), routines and transitions are kept to a minimum

and managed consistently so that children can develop trust and a sense of security.

- Transitions within the daily routine, although managed consistently, are as flexible as possible to allow for children to follow their interests where possible.
- Transitions that must happen, involving moving from one type of activity to another, are planned so that children who are ready before others have something to do while they wait.
- Children are given advance notice of changes to routines or planned changes within the schedule of activities that will affect them by using timers or giving a five minute warning.
- It is considered important to recognise that some children need to be given more time, support and assistance to cope with changes in activity levels and/or types of activities, than others.
- If the furniture is going to be changed around or major changes made to the environment, this is discussed with the children and explained in advance so that they can be involved and understand why the change is happening.
- Children can participate in helping with routines as much as they are able (for example helping to set the table or cleaning up).

### **Transition to school**

- Throughout the years before children move to school they are supported to develop the skills and dispositions they will need to transition and settle in well to the school setting.
- These skills and dispositions are developed through our quality curriculum, which is informed by Aistear the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. The curriculum we provide supports children's learning and development under the themes of Wellbeing, Exploring and Thinking, Communication and Identity and Belonging. (See the Curriculum Policy.)
- Staff will use the *Mo Scéal: Moving from Preschool to Primary* templates provided by the NCCA. *Mo Scéal* means 'my story' and the templates help to tell the story of the child's learning and development. This information will be shared with parents and, with their consent, with the primary school.
- Staff will endeavour to liaise with Infant teachers within Barefield National School to gain a better understanding of each other's practice and learning environments.
- We will support and encourage parents and children when visiting Barefield National School at their open day events.

This policy was adopted by **Over the Rainbow Early Learning Centre Ltd** on:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
co-Manager

Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_