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Guidance for Transition in the Early Years.

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Contents

Section 1: Context and Purpose

- Introduction
- Aims
- Staff's responsibilities

Section 2: What is quality transition?

- Supporting transition
- Transition activities
- Effective Communication
- Information Sharing and Multi-agency & Integrated working
- Outcome of positive transition

Section 3: The child and family

- Considering every child as an individual
- Diversity and difference
- Observation
- Play and the benefit of physical play
- Safeguarding and promoting welfare

Introduction

This handbook is aimed children transitioning from the day center into reception and for all practitioners in Rise and Shine children center. The purpose of the handbook is to make sure that all practitioners have a clear understanding on providing a positive and productive experience of transition for every child and their family. The handbook includes:

- The meaning of transition
- Effective communication during transition the periods
- Information sharing
- How to support the child and the family
- Safeguarding and promoting welfare
- Supporting transition and transition activities
- Observation
- Understanding diversity and differences
- Outcome of positive transition
- Reference list

Staff's responsibilities

To: explain the purpose and process of transition procedures and paperwork intervention strategies. Assessment for children that have extra needs should be done and it is important to be sensitive to the needs of the family regarding their child's situation.

To: plan for follow-up visits and assist families to identify and build on existing skills and strength that both the child and family have already acquired.

To: consider and plan for, allowing a generous amount of effort, time, attention and support to benefit both the child and the family and specifically meet the needs of the child.

To: include in the plan ways to direct the child and family in building competence and confidence. A written transition plan should be given to everyone involved, to ensure that they have a clear understanding of what their role is, and what is expected of them for both the child and family to have a smooth and positive experience from the service delivered. A checklist and timeline will benefit all practitioners and other professionals involved.

To: make yourself familiar with other services that might benefit the child and their family and inform the family about them. For example, information that will benefit families on low income.

To: support the family in arranging appointments if needed.

To: make sure you are aware of the law concerning schooling, and to have sound knowledge of colonial past and history of different cultures and children's rights.

To: be able to support families and ensure parents that their children's identities are catered for.

To: check frequently that families have precisely and specifically understood issues concerning their child.

What is quality transition?

Quality transition describes what should happen during a period of time involved in moving a child from one setting to another. This includes effective communication with the child and their family and any other professionals that may be involved in varying aspects of the child's development and wellbeing.

Quality transition includes a systemic:

- As a practitioner, you will need to arrange visits and accompany the key care giver.
- You will need to visit the new setting when there are no sessions, but on short time visit when classes are in session.

This approach allows children and their family to observe the new setting, interact with the new service providers, and become familiar with the new environment. This will give parents the opportunity to inquire any questions and mention any concerns they might have. It will also provide information that might be useful for parents in helping the child obtain essential skills that they will need. Quality Transition should also include the Timeline Early Successful Transition (TEST). This is a combination of different activities like family information, meetings, activities and dates activities were accomplished, visits to new settings, and other agencies involved. It will help guarantee, cooperation, constructive communication and continuity in a child's personal plan.

Adjustments

Parents will often seek social support to cope with adjustment problems. Be prepared to support parents and their children. By supporting parents and their children in a positive and caring way, it will reduce stress and worry. Eventually parents will adapt and get used to the real situation. It is important to understand the course of the behavior and to observe how often the child behave a certain way.

Adjustment is a very important part of transition, ideally the child should have a friend or familiar child in the same class. Parents should also support children and encouraging them to maintain relationships among friends outside school. Parents should arrange informal play groups with potential class mates.

Look out for signs of adjustment difficulties as parents might feel challenged in letting go of their children to go to school. Children might find it difficult to adapt to their new environment, being separated from their family, making new friends, following instructions and being rejected by peers or practitioners. Find ways to support children and their parents by encouraging both of them to explore the positive activities that happen in school that the children enjoy. Praise them constantly even when they don't behave and share good memories by showing photographs of the child's involvement in activities at the center. Avoid making promises and be aware that it is a parent's responsibility to recognize their own role in supporting their child. A positive relationship with each set of parents will be beneficial for both you, the parent and the child. Organizing parenting skills training will equip parents just before transition period and will provide information about strategies for solving problems, giving a clear understanding and an idea on how to deal with adjustment difficulties.

Effective Communication

Effective communication involves mutual respect, including a homebased contact and consultation. This will be beneficial to you as a practitioner on how and when to support the child and their family. It gives opportunities for communicating about the desires, the needs, and concerns of the family and the child. Interacting with the child in a positive way and supporting them emotionally, instructionally and in

classroom organization, will be beneficial to the child's development. Be aware that your knowledge, belief and skills will contribute and influence the child in a positive or negative way. Therefore, make use of the training opportunities and resources provided. (Vygotsky, Montessori 1870-1952)

The child and family

Every child is unique and develops differently from their peers, therefore every child should be considered as an individual human being who has the right to live life to the fullest in all aspects of life. Families should be given opportunities to contribute to their child's development and have the freedom to choose the extent of their involvement. Every child need to be prepared for the next setting in the following skills according to their own ability and interest.

- a) Communication skills
- b) Social skills
- c) Behavior and self-care skills
- d) Motivational and problem-solving skills
- e) Academic skills

The family should be given opportunities to be fully involved in developing a clear plan to cater for their child's transition. They should provide practical recommendations on how best to support their child's needs.

Diversity and differences

As a practitioner, it is your duty to value, respect and be sensitive to every child's identity, culture and language. Make enquiries with people who have the same cultural background, Google search for words to be able to converse. Find other resources books and materials about different cultures, as this will not only be beneficial to the family but to you as a practitioner, to enhance your knowledge of different cultures. Every child should be treated as an individual even when they are from the same culture and beliefs. You need to have a thorough knowledge on how to support a child so they feel accepted, and what to do when a child is rejected by their peers. Knowledge of colonial past and history of

different cultures is also beneficial in supporting families and in reassuring parents that their child's identity is adequately catered for.

Observation

Observation is a key tool to use as a practitioner in gaining information about a child. You can make quantitative observations by observing a child and rating their behavior and experiences in a specific environment.

You can also make qualitative observations where you write down and keep a daily 'diary' describing your detailed observations of the child's behavior, on a daily basis. It is important however, to be aware of your own feelings, emotions, understanding and belief at the time of observation, as they may contribute and influence the way you interpret what you perceived. We observe children so that we can contribute to the quality of their lives and guide them in a positive way to reach their full potential, by understanding:

- a) Their strengths and weaknesses
- b) What they like and dislike
- c) Their own capability of thinking and understanding
- d) Their characteristics and personal reactions with peers, family members, teacher's other adults and professionals.

It is important to focus purely on the observation and avoid being judgmental.

Play

Play is an important component of a child's life and well-being it is a natural process of a child's own learning development. Every child should have the freedom to choose their own mode of play whenever and however they want to. Play contributes to the child's own learning development, to their physical, emotional and psychological well-being. It is crucial in the development of their interaction and co-operation with others. Children have a natural penchant for inventing opportunities that allow them to use their own imagination in play. It is important to ensure and provide, time, space and materials for both outdoor and indoor playing opportunities for young children. Children learn from each other and quality play offers children the opportunity to gain confidence,

interact with each other and gain social skills. It is important to include all kinds of materials that is safe for children to play with. Sand, leaves, and other 'natural' things within the sphere of fire, water, earth and air. Safety approved man-made items will also help to give children a clear understanding of reality.

For example, arranging an outdoor play where children are involved in picking up the leaves in a fun way. This way they will learn to be responsible for the environment they live in.

Role play should be available for all children and include games that will involve them using their senses- (sound, smell, sight, taste and touch). Over-protecting children will take away their freedom and rights and choices to play. Both outdoor and indoor play is essential for children. This is how they learn to share and be part of a team. Offering small frequent periods of outdoor play is essential. Make sure that the play area is safe for the children. Check and record any concerns about the play area and address them as soon as possible. Appropriate clothing and shelter is essential for all types of weather.

Children need to be assessed on their individual competency in making their own decisions about risks and hazards. However, children should be given an opportunity to make their own decision about risks and hazards for themselves and should be supported in their decision-unless if there is a high risk of serious harm. (Bronfenbrenner)

Benefit of physical play

- a) Physical activities develop stamina
- b) Climbing develops strength, balance and co-ordination
- c) Jumping contributes to bone density
- d) Children develop confidence when actions are repeated

Safeguarding and promoting welfare

Safeguarding children is a very sensitive topic. Especially the spiritual aspect of it. It is important to be proactive in observing and following our safeguarding policy to make sure that all children are supported in all aspects of their life. You are required to respect the children and their family, faith, belief or religion and spiritual perspectives, (even when you do not agree with them). By being respectful you are protecting and safeguarding the children and their family dignity and well-being from any harm. Be aware of signs of spiritual, emotional and sexual abuse as these signs of abuse are not visible like the physical abuse. You need to be able to identify strengths and weaknesses for every child and family, identify resources and plan for actions that will benefit the child and the family towards a hopeful future. Active listening to their story without assumptions and being judgmental will be beneficial. Give them an opportunity to make their own choices and decisions and support and guide them with truth, compassion and love in whatever decisions they make. Spirituality is a sensitive topic and should be approached with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

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