

Transitions Policy

“Transition is a process or period of change from one state or condition to another”. (Oxford Dictionary).

Transitions can be very upsetting for children, and they experience many transitions in their lives. Change is a key feature throughout each period of transition. One of the first transitions they may experience is going from home to an early years service, then going from this to primary school. Children have to leave familiar surroundings and relationships and move into new settings and start new relationships. Some children even experience upset moving from one aspect of the daily routine to the next. It is up to us, the early years practitioners to make these transitions as smooth for children as we possibly can.

When making transitions there are further implications for children with additional needs. It is vitally important that there is a continuity in the provision of any supports they may be receiving.

Positive transitions will help to settle the children in the service and have better outcomes for them. Children’s sense of well-being is developed through their interactions and relationships with others. “Children need to feel valued, respected, empowered, cared for and included”. (Aistear, 2006).

At Tir na nOg preschool we are committed to the smooth transitions of the children and their parents/guardians into our service. We aim to make the settling in period a positive experience for all children as it will influence children’s self-confidence, attitude to further relationships and socialising, and it lays the foundation for lifelong learning. We also recognise that many parents find the transition difficult and upsetting and we aim to make it as smooth as possible for them also.

At Tir na nOg preschool we see the Settling-in period as a collaborative process between the children, their parents/guardians and our staff. We strongly encourage family involvement to assist all children to develop secure relationships as we recognise that families are the children’s most important educators. We believe it is of great benefit to the children when the preschool service works closely with their families, especially during the settling-in period.

To make the transition from home to pre-school as smooth and stress-free as possible we have introduced a couple of strategies which we believe make a difference

- We have a family wall and we ask our parents to send in a family photograph which is displayed. The children are encouraged to look at the photos and to discuss who is in them. This helps the children to feel more secure in their new environment

- We ask parents to send in some items from home that are special to their child. We place these on the children's individual shelves and when we feel the children are a bit anxious or upset we encourage them to get something personal from their shelf.

- We also ask parents to give us any information that they feel is relevant for us to know to encourage a smooth transition into the service for their child.

- During the first few days we take photographs of each child and these are displayed in the entrance hall as a "Welcome to Our Class" display, inside the classroom door for our "Roll Call" and on each child's individual shelf to help them identify their own shelf. From our experience this helps the children to settle in more quickly and gives them a sense of identity and belonging, and promotes their well-being and happiness.

- During the first few days we help each child to make a 'Personal Book' which contains photos and information about themselves and their families. The 'Personal Book' acts a bit like a security blanket for the children, and when they are feeling anxious or upset we encourage them to take out their Personal Books and to have a look through them. We find this has a very good strategy which greatly helps to calm the children.

- We introduce 'Circle Time' on the very first day and introduce the children to 'Talking Ted'. The idea with 'Talking Ted' is only the person

who has Talking Ted is allowed to talk and all the other children, and staff, must listen. It is a strategy we have been using for a long time and it works really effectively. During the first few days we use Talking Ted to allow the children to introduce themselves to the group.

When the time comes for the children to leave us and move on to Primary school the transition can be very upsetting for them. A lot of children find this a very anxious time and will worry a lot about it. We have several strategies in place to try and make this transition as smooth for the children as possible.

- We have a number of books all about going to school and we read these to the children who are moving from us to primary school. We encourage them to ask us questions and to discuss the move.

- We arrange visits to the local schools where the children can see their new environment and meet their teachers.

- We have a 'Transition's Box' which contains items that the children are going to use in Primary school such as the various uniforms from the local schools, a school bag, pencil case, workbooks and photographs of the schools.

- We liaise with the teachers, and in the case of children with special needs, the local SENO, with the consent of parents. We pass on our knowledge of the children and their abilities and the areas we feel they need will need help with. From our experience children transition better when there is good communication between us and the primary schools.

Our Aim at Tir na nOg Preschool is to ensure that every child, and their families, make a smooth transition from home into our service and from us to primary school. This policy is underwritten by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

This policy links with our:

- Admissions Policy
- Settling-In Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Children with Additional/Special Policy
- Parents as Partners Policy

Person Responsible Anne Smyth

Date Implemented 7-2-18

Signed By Anne Smyth

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