

Q&A HOW TO LAY GOOD FOUNDATIONS FOR POSITIVE TRANSITIONS IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD YEARS.



Q My six-month-old baby will be going to infant care. It is a big change. How can I make it easier for him?

The feelings in dealing with this transition may be different for you and your baby. Knowing your baby's temperament will help you understand how to support your baby as you ease him into infant care. At six months, your baby is most likely able to differentiate familiar adults and be aware of those who are new to him. Some tips to help you:

- 1. Get to know the educators and staff at the centre.** This sets the tone as you work together to care for your infant.
- 2. Share details on your child's daily rhythm and caregiving routines.** This helps ensure predictability from home to infant care and gives the infant a sense of continuity.
- 3. Share with his educators what might upset him and how he likes to be soothed.** Each infant communicates and responds in unique ways. Give his educators additional information that would help them care for your child.
- 4. Have a familiar routine for goodbyes and hellos** when you drop off and pick up your baby at the centre. This daily pattern helps your child to gradually understand what comes next and over time feel safe and secure.
- 5. Share your thoughts and feelings** to your child's educators, and welcome their insights. This two-way communication helps build a respectful parent-teacher relationship which will further support your child.

You know your child best and therefore are in the best position to bring him through this experience.

Q What are some guiding principles to foster positive transitions?

Within the first five years of life, a young child goes through many transitions — these are times of change that may bring about sadness or frustration in a young child who is learning to handle new routines, situations or changes in adults' expectations.

Common transitions experienced by young children include:

- > Weaning from the bottle to solid food
- > Leaving home to be cared for by a different caregiver in a new environment
- > Moving out of their parents' bed to sleep in a bedroom on their own
- > When a parent has to leave home to be away for a while
- > When the child joins a new childcare centre or goes to primary school

Infants, toddlers and preschoolers learn best when they feel safe and secure with adults that they trust. This is especially so when children go through changes and transitions.

To minimise disruptions and ease transitions, educators need to familiarise themselves with the children's home routines that can be continued at the childcare or kindergarten.

The dialogues, understanding and collaboration between parents and early childhood educators help young children feel supported during transitions. Communication and building trust are key. Educators need to work closely with families in order to better understand them, and their expectations for the child.

When children observe their family members having a good relationship with their educators, they feel secure and experience a greater sense of self-worth.



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