

Hagley Community Preschool

Transition Policy: into, within and beyond (to school)



Rationale

Moving into an unfamiliar environment involves tamariki, their families/whānau, and kaiako/teachers in a time of change as new relationships, roles and responsibilities are formed. A child is not expected to adapt to and cope with change on their own; the people in the child's world need to be ready to facilitate the process of change.

Some children, parents and whānau find settling and transitions stressful and challenging. When transitions are planned for and handled well they can improve children's self-confidence, and support them to develop the skills needed to transition smoothly with an appropriate level of independence.

The values and aspirations of the child's family or whānau will be respected and responded to during transition.

Objectives

- To help children and their parents/whānau feel welcome during the 'settling in' period of transitioning into preschool.
- To have staged procedures that are adaptable and responsive to individuals throughout the year.
- To involve the child's parents and whānau by providing them with opportunities to be included in decision-making about how we are supporting them and their child through settling and transition processes.
- To have in place strategies that give children the skills and self-confidence to help them make smooth transitions
- To have in place suitable strategies that promote independence during transitions
- To support children and parents to adopt positive attitudes toward transition to school

Procedures for transitioning your child into preschool

The preschool Director and/or administrator will complete the enrolment and booking procedure.

A 'Welcome to Hagley Preschool' information booklet is given to all new families.

Teachers and the preschool director are available to discuss and explain information from the booklet that whanau need to help in making a successful transition to preschool over the first few weeks. If required a translator can be scheduled to meet with whanau and teacher to assist with this process.

The preschool has an 'open door' policy and you are welcome to spend time at the service.

Whanau are encouraged to visit 'for a play' prior to their child attending, or being on the roll. Visits can progressively become longer and over important routine periods of the day such as nappy changing, kai or sleep routines.

Settling in:

On the child's first enrolled day we ask that a parent/caregiver take time to settle their child into preschool. A 'Leaving your child' pamphlet of supporting information is available for parents. Depending on the age of the child and his/her experience in separating from their parents, our settling in guidelines are as follows:

- Be prepared to stay with your child if they seem to require your support during their settling in phase.
- Developing a relationship with at least one teacher is our priority in the first days at preschool.
- Settling in time can be used as an opportunity for you to share information about your child with teachers
- Parents leave for an agreed time, and for children under two parents this may be a very short time. It is important that parents tell their child it is time to say 'bye' and that they leave promptly. While this separation may feel uncomfortable or seem distressing, the child will learn quickly that their parent is being honest and will return when it is time to leave together for home.
- The child is cared for by one teacher until the child feels safe and secure.
- No child will be left in a distressed state. Emotional safety will be the first priority and parents are discouraged from leaving their child until he/she is secure and safe.

Supporting resource

- Welcome to preschool booklet

Procedures for transitioning your child from under to over two programmes

The ways in which preschool teachers work together with parents to help children navigate the changes they experience during this transition period are explained in our 'A guide for supporting our transitioning children from the Under to Over Two's programme' booklet.

The under two transitions teacher (Susan) will discuss a transition plan for your child with you/parent to invite your ideas and suggestions for how we can support your child's transition.

The movement from under two to over two programmes is a fluid period of time for children. Children are provided time to explore and gain familiarity in the over two environment well before they turn two. If they want to spend time in the under two environment (when they are two years old) rather than a full day in the over twos, we support them to do so.

Your child will determine when they have successfully transitioned into the over two programme – they will show us when they are comfortable in our over two year old group.

Supporting resource

- Welcome to over 2's pamphlet
- U2 to O2 booklet

Procedures for transitioning your child to school

Transition to school can be viewed as a time of important progression in the child's development and learning. The period of transition to school spans the time between preparing for the move to school to when the child is more fully established as a member of the new setting. In order for the child to smoothly adapt to this transition, we need to ask ourselves "how am I ready to scaffold this child's transition?"

Guidelines:

1. For tamariki/the child

- Tamariki are supported to develop understandings about transition to school during the regular programme at preschool. The preschool collates a file of stories and photos of every child's last day at preschool. This is kept in the over two room book area so that children can access it to:
 - Discuss the transition process in their own time and when it is most relevant to them.
 - Gain familiarity of people, places and things between centre and school
 - Have conversations with others about school
 - Revisit past friendships and anticipate rekindling new ones
- Relationships between the child and the school are encouraged and supported by teachers. We use the school teachers' names in conversations with children, welcome visiting teachers to the preschool, and talking positively about the child's school visits.
- Throughout their time at preschool, tamariki are supported to develop a strong image of themselves as a learner with the competence and confidence to tackle new challenges.
- Tamariki are encouraged to take their profile books to their new teacher when they start school visits.
- A Poroporoaki celebration is held on the child's last day to acknowledge the significance of occasion. Tamariki are involved in saying their individual farewells so that all tamariki have understanding that their friend leaving preschool to move on to school. The child leaving imprints their hand print on our korowai so that remaining children can revisit friendships and memories of their time together at preschool.

2. For preschool teaching staff

- A list of birthdates for all children is kept in the office & staffroom. When parents inform us, the school the child will be enrolled at is added.
- Kaiako will discuss with parents the child's impending 5th birthday to find out what plans parents have in place and make sure that parents have information about school choice and they understand that children can remain enrolled at preschool until their 6th birthday if they wish.
- Tamariki from Hagley Preschool transition to schools throughout the city making it difficult to have in-depth knowledge of each. Information about individual schools can be sourced via school webpages to share with tamariki and whānau.

- With parental permission, the transitioning child's school is emailed about 4 – 6 weeks prior to the child's starting date to let the school know where the child attends preschool and to invite new entrant staff to visit or contact the preschool about the child.
- Kaiako will build their knowledge of the schooling and early childhood sectors, Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum, and the New Zealand Curriculum, by:
 - Encouraging relationships with schools in general through participation in networked Professional Learning & Development (PLD) opportunities
 - Attend cross sector PLD to build knowledge about school curriculum, expectations and aspirations.
 - Seek out knowledge about school through personal and professional relationships in order to confidently talk with children/parents/whānau

3. For Parents/ whānau

- Talk to teachers/director a few months before your child's 5th birthday to share your plans about school enrolment.
- Discussion with kaiako/director can occur as and when you would like support to manage the transition to school procedures for their child. Teachers are happy to share strategies and access information with and for parents.
- Where children are to attend the same school, teachers will actively encourage parents to connect in advance of the child's transition.
- We will request your permission before the preschool can offer to share information about your child with the school.

4. The school

- Each school is emailed to invite the new entrant teacher to make contact with the preschool and/or to visit if they would like to know more about the child.
- Relationships between preschool and junior school teachers is encouraged in order to support working knowledge and understandings about curriculum connections.
- Preschool teachers are available to support families to communicate with their selected school as required. This may be a phone conversation, or to accompany a pre entry visit.

Supporting resource

- Moving on to school pamphlet

Transitions between routines/activities

Learning how to 'be' in a new environment can sometimes be tricky for tamariki to navigate as they are developing new relationships, hearing different languages, and becoming familiar with rules and routines that probably differ from home. Kaiako use a variety of strategies to support children during important transition times in our programme.

Kaiako guidelines:

Before the transition - Plan ahead

- Plan your schedule to include a minimum number of transition times
- Consider what tamariki and adults will do during these times
- Provide verbal and non-verbal cues before transitions
- Teach tamariki the expectations for the routine
- Minimize the number of transitions in which all tamariki have to do the same thing at the same time
- Plan and support the individual child who requires a separate plan of action.

During the transition

- Sing songs, play word/guessing games, recite rhymes or do finger plays with children
- Plan a gradual increase or decrease in the level of activity and good balance of active and quiet play
- Allow tamariki adequate time to complete their tasks/activity and also reinforce that they can return and complete them after this transition
- Vary the strategies to make transitioning fun, positive and effective

After the transition

- Provide positive attention or feedback to tamariki during and following smooth transitions
- Give very specific positive feedback after transitions eg 'you did a good job of putting the blocks away'

Promote independence during transition

- Support tamariki with suggestions about how to move from a routine back into play, eg. as children finish kai, encourage them to replace their lunchbox in their locker and go back to where they like to play: as children finish putting their coats and backpacks away they can come and join their friends).
- Teach tamariki to help others (eg. have children move as partners to wash their hands or ask one child to help another child gather his/her lunchbox)
- Help tamariki self-monitor during transitions (eg they can be asked to think about how quietly or quickly they moved from one activity to another).
- Involve tamariki in preparing the learning environment, making the most of their suggestions and ideas so that they know what is available for them during the day.