



ORIENTATION AND SETTLING IN POLICY

Policy Statement:

Settling your child into childcare can often be an emotional experience for both you and your child. It is a major transition in your lives where your child will be cared for in a new setting, by somebody other than a family member. It may be that your child is moving to a new room or section of the Centre, commencing care at Little Saints for the first time, or moving into school. In any of these situations, children may experience difficulties separating from their family or familiar caregivers.

Aim:

- To ensure new children and families feel settled and comfortable in their new care environment.
- For families to be aware of the orientation period provided for them by the Centre.
- To encourage families to take this option to settle their child and themselves into the childcare environment.
- For children moving up to the next room to feel comfortable and familiar with the staff before commencing permanently.
- For the parents of children to feel comfortable and familiar with staff and routines within the room.
- For the staff within the room to be aware of child's like and dislikes before being permanent within the room.

Rationale:

We believe orientation is an important process where educators are able to get important information about the new child's needs and those of the family. This process helps to make the transition from home to childcare as smooth as possible with the aim to maintain continuity between home and the service, which helps the child adjust to the new setting.

Strategies/Practices/Procedures:

Children who are moving up to a new room are required to have a two-week orientation period before they will commence permanently. The child should feel secure before room move commences.

Process

- Director discusses placement of child/children with Group Leaders / Teachers.
- Priority will be given to the oldest child in the group, if this child however is not ready emotionally and developmentally (based on observations and discussions with parents) the second oldest child will move up.
- Director informs Group Leader / Teachers and parent of movement of child, this is done verbally.
- Parent will be informed about:
 - ✓ Staff in room.
 - ✓ Arrival and departure information.
 - ✓ Any concerns & queries to be directed at the appropriate staff.
- Group Leader / Teacher of the original group will:
 - ✓ Discuss move with parents.
 - ✓ Explain the orientation process to parents.
 - ✓ Talk to the child about move to room and orientation.
 - ✓ Introduce parents and child to new educators.
 - ✓ Give any developmental records to Group Leader / Teacher in next room.
 - ✓ Discuss orientation times with Group Leader / Teacher from next room.

Each day the child will spend a small amount of time in the next room. This time will gradually increase, depending on the child's mood and reaction to the new room. By the end of orientation a child should have completed activities, eaten lunch and rested in their new room. The orientation process should meet the parents and children's needs. At times, an educator from the child's room should stay with them in their new room if they seem unsure about the transition.

Group Leader / Teacher from new group will:

- Give parents of child a tour of the room.
- Discuss any concerns the parents might have regarding their child's care.
- Give parents information on room routine, etc.
- Explain curriculum within the room.
- Offer time outside the room in which they might like to talk about concerns.
- Show lockers, fridge, toilets, bathroom, information board, educational documentation.
- Introduce any staff members in the room they are not already familiar with.

New children commencing at Little Saints Early Learning Centre:

All families will be encouraged to use the orientation period of one week before commencing at the Centre.

Director and senior staff will explain the importance of this time to parents and the benefit it will give parents and children.

Parents will be:

- Encouraged to use time available to them.
- Asked to ring each morning of orientation to arrange the best time when staff are able to give their full attention to the new family.
- Leave their child gradually, depending on numbers in room and reaction of child.
- Informed of their child's moods and activities throughout the day.
- Encouraged to stay by staff members for some period to become familiar with the routine and room atmosphere.

Staff will:

- Welcome new parents into the room.
- Spend time with the new child to become familiar with them.
- Arrange times with parents for the children to participate in the orientation.
- Discuss and inform parents of child's reaction while left at the centre.
- Ask parents to telephone the centre if they feel they need to during the day.
- Listen and respond to parents' concerns.
- Use the child's routine from home as much as possible within the routine of the room.
- Inform resource agencies of any needs if necessary.
- Gather information for programming on the child's culture.
- Ask parents to say goodbye to their child before leaving.
- Complete a 'My First Day at Childcare Sheet'.

This process will be different for each new child and will vary depending on the child and family's needs at the time of commencement.

Management will:

- Contact the child's parents if the child is upset or distressed.
- Conduct an Orientation Interview with new parents to discuss the Centre management, licensing and general Centre processes.

Transition to school:

When a child first attends school, there is a great change for that child and for their family. We believe that the child's parents are the most important link in this transition.

- The better the transition between home and school, the better the education: that's the message of recent research.
- Little Saints will always talk about starting school in a positive manner that will reinforce a healthy attitude toward the transition.
- Throughout the Kindergarten year, the children will visit St. Andrew's Anglican College on a weekly basis to ensure that they are familiar with the College.
- The Kindergarten children will participate in regular events organised throughout the College such as Under 8's Week.
- Toward the end of each year, children will be encouraged to wear their school uniform and practice doing 'school work'. This allows the children to compare uniforms and find friends who will be going to the same school.

- Parents will receive a ‘transition statement’ that contains information about their child. Parents are encouraged to add information about their child and the transition statement should be handed to their Prep teachers the following year.

Measuring Tools:

Verbal Feedback
Room Meetings

Sources & Further Reading:

Early Years Training Group
National Quality Standard
Early Years Learning Framework
Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline

Links to Other Policies:

Licensing Policy
Enrolment Policy
Greeting Children Arriving and Departing Policy