

CHANDLERS CHATTERS PLAYGROUP/PRE-SCHOOL

TRANSITION POLICY

Chandlers Chatters is a sessional preschool catering for children aged 2-5 years. The length of our session varies from 2.75 hours to 5.75 hours. At Chandlers Chatters we recognise that transitions from home to any early year's settings can cause anxiety for both parent and child. In order to make all transitions, not only the initial one into playgroup but all transitions during the session, we will undertake to be aware of all children's' needs and show an understanding of their anxieties.

To enable young children to cope with making any transition they must feel safe, secure and confident in what they are doing and know what is going to happen next. To facilitate these times, there needs to be

- A good amount of information gathering on the part of the preschool so that they know the needs of all children. Building a picture of each child starts with a good working relationship with the parent – sharing their knowledge of their child – what their child likes/dislikes, favourite songs, what they like to play with, any siblings, pets, favoured name, etc.
- The preschool needs to be sensitive to background, cultures and needs of each individual.
- Staff should be able to recognise moods of children and any signs of anxiety or stress that may affect them and try to pre-empt any sticky situations.

Transitions that can cause anxiety during the day are:

- When the child first arrives in the morning.
- Moving from registration to playtime.
- At the end of playtime and beginning of tidy-up time.
- Toileting and snack time.
- Start of music and rhyme time.
- Circle time.
- Home time.

A graduated routine can be set in place almost from day one. The following strategies can be used to build confidence and ease the child into playgroup routines:

The new child

- A comfort blanket/toy.
- Gradual settling in with parent/carer support.
- Longer play sessions/shorter carpet or quiet times i.e. storytime
- Background knowledge of the child – especially sibling names, pets, interests, favourite toys, rhymes, stories, pet name (what child is known as at home)

- Playdays before they start to familiarise them with the setting and staff.
- Use visual prompts/photos for daily routines, especially if a child particularly difficult to settle or they have communication difficulties.
- Choice books of resources.

Once established

- Greet all children as they arrive/be interested in them. Use knowledge of each child as they arrive to ask after welfare, interests, what they did, where they went, what the weather is like outside – anything to keep them occupied whilst waiting for other children to join them.
- Try to keep outside distractions to a minimum.
- Work on what the children enjoy doing.
- Ensure their interests are catered for.
- Give them time to work at their own pace.
- EAL – find out familiar words from the home language and use during playtime.
- Recognise strengths and interests and on build on these.
- Model good behaviour and how to play with resources.
- Engage those children who drift around without focus.
- Give children positive feedback about the morning, what they achieved, resources, tidying up, etc. Get the children's' opinions as well.
- Support children who find it difficult to move around independently/buddy-up with a more confident child.
- Routines should not be set in stone – they should be flexible and reflect the children's' moods, any events, how engaged they are in play, etc.

Major Flash Points that unsettle

- End of playtime/tidy up time – have strategies in place that cater for these children to make the transition more 'bearable' i.e. making them responsible for a certain area, helping teacher, etc.
- Give children a visual reminder (using an egg timer, for example) that tidy up time will be in, say, 5 minutes time.
- Use tidy up time song to ensure that they know what is happening.
- Use similar strategy to signal music/rhyme & movement time to avoid a mad rush. We also use spaced-out large coloured rubber dots so that children find a 'space' of their own.
- At the end of rhyme time use a different rhyme/song to signal a move to circle time.
- We also sometimes place the child's name on chairs for circle time – this allows the child to find their own name (with support for those who can't) and also takes into account a 'seating arrangement' that will support good listening and attention.

- A child who finds it difficult to sit quietly without support will sit next to a member of staff.
- Again, to maintain order and interest during circle time good strategies need to be used i.e. props that hold attention and keep them guessing and engaged. For example, a magic apron (with fun resources), story or prop box, finger or glove puppets, cuddly toy, etc.
- The use of a routine round up at the end of the morning helps children to know that it is the end of the session. Always finish with a good morning/afternoon song.
- Ensure the handover to parents is done in an orderly manner i.e. children to remain seated until parent/carer arrives. This can sometimes be an unsettling time for the children as well i.e. you left me/haven't finished playing, etc.

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