



Developing Responsive Routines and Transitions

Self-Guided Learning Package

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About Self-Guided Learning Packages

Self-Guided Learning Packages can be completed in your own time and convenience and offer an alternative to attending training sessions. This package aims to develop skills and knowledge that will be valuable to you in providing quality education and care programs. Packages are often used for professional development by staff teams, networks and other groups of children's services professionals. You can work through the package with colleagues by reading the package together, discussing the information and collaborating to complete the one assessment task.

Gowrie Victoria Leadership and Learning Consultants are available to support you while working through the package. Feel free to phone or email if you require any assistance completing the tasks within the package. Phone 1800 103 670 (freecall) or (03) 9347 6388 or email pvc@gowrievictoria.org.au

Developing Responsive Routines and Transitions

You have chosen to complete the Developing Responsive Routines and Transitions package. The aim of this package is to provide you with an opportunity to consider why we implement routines within our programs and how we can tailor the routines and transitions to ensure they are responsive to the needs of the children, educators and the service.

Successful completion and assessment contributes to the following competencies from the nationally accredited Community Services Training Package:

CHCPR301A Provide experiences to support children’s play and learning

- Provide areas, resources and materials for different kinds of play and physical activity
- Allow sufficient time for play to develop and be completed when possible
- Provide a range of physical activities to allow children choice in their play whenever possible

CHCIC301D Interact effectively with children

- Ensure interactions are frequent, caring and respectful
- Use clear communication that suggests positive options to encourage a child’s cooperation

The following learning outcomes are addressed:

- Identify how routines can meet the individual needs of children
- Analyse the effectiveness of current routines and transitions
- Identify strategies to increase the effectiveness of routines and transitions

Introduction

Why are routines important?

‘Children feel safe, secure and supported and use effective routines to help make predicted transitions smoothly’ Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity (Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, 2009, p 21).

Routines are an intrinsic part of any children’s services program. They provide a sense of consistency and predictability and can often be used as a framework for the rest of the day. When they work well, routines can be a positive learning experience for all children, they provide opportunities for educators to empower and interact with children in relation to their daily experiences. When they don’t work, routines can be a source of stress and frustration for educators and a source of anxiety for children.

In most Early Childhood Education and Care services, routines include the following times:

- Mealtimes
- Sleptimes
- Toileting
- Group times

Where do transitions fit?

Transitions are the parts of the curriculum which facilitate a change or a movement; they usually indicate the end of one experience and the beginning of another, for example moving from play to lunch, lunch to sleep, even indoors to outdoors. A curriculum that manages its transitions well is one

that appears calm and relaxed at even the most hectic times of the day. Without successful transitions the day becomes disjointed and it becomes increasingly difficult for educators to focus on the individual needs of children.

Whole group transitions generally do not provide opportunities for educators to incorporate the needs and interests of individuals within the group. For example, when a service provides whole group transitions all children must eat, sleep, and go to the toilet at the same time. This provides little room for flexibility for the child who slept in or has finally managed to build that tower and would rather enjoy this sense of accomplishment than pack the tower away to eat.

When routines and transitions work well together:

- There is a harmonious atmosphere.
- Children appear calm and relaxed
- The day seems to flow easily
- Educators are focused on interacting with the children
- Children participate enthusiastically and are keen to help educators with routines
- Educators have clear and consistent expectations of the role of the children during routine times
- Children are involved in the design of routines where appropriate and are responsible for particular tasks
- Time is set aside for educators discussion about the effectiveness of routines

Effective Routines

'Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency' Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity (Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, 2009, p 22).

Effective routines and transitions are those which are designed to meet needs of children, not the needs of educators. Routines should be considered as an important learning experience, and as such they should be carefully planned. Time should be committed to the evaluation of routines and transitions when undertaking curriculum development and evaluation.

Effective routines and transitions provide opportunities for children to develop their understanding of social roles and responsibilities, it is a time where children can experiment and discover the boundaries of socially acceptable behaviour.

Well designed routines also provide opportunities for children to develop and practice mastering skills and foster a sense of positive self-esteem e.g. pouring drinks, dressing, washing hands.

Well managed routines provide educators with the opportunity to have uninterrupted discussions with children. Sleep time, toileting and mealtimes are all excellent opportunities for one-to-one interactions.

Self Help Question 1

List 2 examples of types of routines that are carried out daily:

Routines and transitions that are stressful send the following messages to children:

Issue	Educators response	Message for children
Children requesting that they bring their own lunch	No, this is too difficult, everyone will want to do it	Your tastes and needs are not as important as the rest of the groups' tastes and needs
Child has not finished the puzzle but it is time to pack away for lunch	We don't have time to finish it now, you need to pack it away	It doesn't matter how hard you are working on a task, it is more important that you do what I say
It is rest time and all children must sleep. One of the children slept-in this morning and does not feel tired	Just lie down and have a rest, you have had a busy day	Your feelings and needs are not important and adults will tell you how you should feel

Responsive routines and transitions should try to work towards the following:

- Treat all children with respect
- Listen to the views and needs of children
- Share the days' responsibilities
- Create a calm harmonious environment
- Be appreciative of the different abilities, values and backgrounds families
- Maximise opportunities for interactions on all levels
- Maximise opportunities for learning

Self Help Question 2

Which routines currently work well in your workplace?

Why do you think they work well?

Which routines do you think need to improve?

Why do you think they need to improve?

Observing Routines and Transitions

Take this checklist to work with you. As you progress through the week tick any of the following that you achieve.

- I asked the children to help me with part of the routine
- I thanked the children for their help
- I tried to minimise the amount of time I spent cleaning and tidying by involving the children in this task
- I offered alternatives for children who did not wish to participate in the routine
- I communicated transition times to the children individually rather than moving the children as a group
- I asked a family member if he or she was happy with one aspect of our routines and accepted his/her suggestions
- The children did not have to wait for something to happen at any time throughout the day

If you managed to achieve any of these items during the week, then you probably made both yours and the children's experience more enjoyable and rewarding.

Can you think of anymore?

Self Help Question 2

Write a list of ideas that you could use to help to make routines more relaxed and interactive

Review and Develop Your Own Work Performance

Time is a central ingredient in the development of routines. Reflecting on how your time is presently used and setting priorities for the best use of your time will further assist your routines.

Reflective practice is a form of ongoing learning that involves engaging with questions of philosophy, ethics and practice. The intention of reflective practice is to gather information and gain insights that support, inform and enrich decision-making about children's learning. As professionals, early childhood educators examine what happens in their settings and reflect on what they might change (Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, 2009, p13).

How often have you said the following?

- Just let me finish wiping these tables and then I'll read you a story
- Just lie down while I finish this
- Hurry up and finish what you are doing I have to clean that
- Sit there and wait for 5 more minutes until lunch comes

By reflecting on your own work performance, you can take an honest look at the areas you may be contributing to the stressful nature of your program's routines.

Setting Personal Goals

Goals are very useful, but sometimes difficult to achieve. Your first priority is to set achievable goals. Start simple! Make a concerted effort to:

- Ensure that there are always activities for children to do (set up activities for children to go on with, if and when they choose)
- See routines as an ideal time to interact with children
- Focus on the children's needs and not the clock

Self Help Question 4

Reflect on a time in your service when a transition was not facilitated as well as it could have been

What was the transition?

What happened during the transition?

Why do you think the transition was not facilitated as well as it could have been?

How could the transition be facilitated in a more effective way?

It is important to continue to review and develop your program. By recognising the stressful and challenging times during the day and developing strategies to address these you can work on continuous improvement.

Planning for Change

Often the quality of routines and transitions begins to decline when educators focus on time. If you are finding it difficult to instigate any change in your routines, talk to your fellow educators. Perhaps they may have some insightful suggestions. Here are some practical suggestions which may help to make your routines and transitions more child-focused

5-12 year old children

- Encourage children to set their own tables and choose where they would like to sit for meals
- Allow unlimited time for children to sit and chat during lunch
- Use tablecloths and placemats to make the table more inviting
- Consider using wide based heavy vases for flowers for the centre of tables
- Why not make your own candle holders using spray lids and plaster to create heavy safe candles and then have afternoon tea by candle light, or have an outdoor picnic
- Offer children choices at mealtimes, place food in separate serving bowls in the centre of each table and encourage children to serve themselves
- Allow children to bring in their own healthy food if they want to and encourage the children to investigate the role of healthy food and exercise in their lives
- Encourage children to scrape their own bowls and place them on the trolley
- Sit with the children and talk to them during meal times
- Provide activities for children to move straight into after meals
- Position educators so children can play either indoors or outdoors for most of the day
- Ask the children how they would like to make routines and transitions better for them

3-5 year old children

- Encourage children to set their own tables and choose where they would like to sit for meals
- Allow unlimited time for children to sit and chat during lunch
- Use tablecloths and placemats to make the table more inviting
- Consider using wide based heavy vases for flowers for the centre of tables
- Why not make your own candle holders using spray lids and plaster to create heavy safe candles and then have lunch by candle light
- Offer children choices at lunch time, place food in separate serving bowls in the centre of each table and encourage children to serve themselves
- Allow children to bring in their own lunch if they want to
- Encourage children to scrape their own bowls and place them on the trolley
- Sit with the children and talk to them during meal times
- Provide activities for children to move straight into after lunch and once the children have helped you re-set the tables, start to think about sleep time
- Provide activities at tables in natural light for children who do not sleep
- Encourage children to make and pack away their own beds
- Encourage children to go to bed when they are tired, not when the clock dictates that it is time
- Structure educator breaks so that children can play either indoors or outdoors for most of the day

2-3 year old children

- Offer children choices at lunch time, place food in separate serving bowls in the centre of each table and encourage children to serve themselves. Use large serving spoons to minimise spills
- Encourage children to pour their own drinks, put enough water in the jug for one small cup of water at a time
- Be available to assist children with their meals
- Allow children to bring their own lunch if they want to
- Encourage children to place their own bowls on the trolley
- Provide activities for children to move straight into after lunch and once the children have helped you reset the tables, start to think about sleep time
- Bring children to the rest area one-by-one, allowing plenty of time for talk and interaction

0-2 year old children

- Ensure that the timing of meals at the centre is consistent with the timing of meals at home
- If children are tired let them sleep and feed them once they have woken
- Ensure that methods for feeding children are consistent with the methods used at home, i.e. if the child is fed by the mother at home, then ensure that educators feed the child, if the child is encouraged to eat with her hands, then encourage this
- Encourage children to sleep at a time when they are tired, not when the clock dictates

Self Help Question 4

Focus on one particular routine and consider what changes you could make to improve the routine.

What is the routine you chose and why have you chosen this particular routine?

What changes could you begin to make to improve this routine?

If you implemented your suggested changes, how would you expect this routine might improve?

References and Resources

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Assessment Task

1. List three positive points about the routines at your service
2. List at least four areas of learning that occur during the routines at your service
3. Suggest at least one different or additional practice you could consider implementing to ensure that your routines meet the individual needs of the children in your care
4. How can routines be used to encourage children's self-help skills?
5. How could you assess whether or not your current routines and transitions were effective?
6. Describe three situations where circumstances or events have required you to alter your routines
7. Describe a scenario where you do or could effectively collaborate with families, children and other educators in the planning of routines?