

Transition Policy – Gardens Montessori

Updated 23/10/2018

Transitions are inevitable in the life of a child. They can be daunting, especially when children don't have a good understanding of time. Nonetheless, transitions can be fun and easier if the right help is given. Each child is different and his or her adaptability skills should be taken into consideration as teachers follow these guidelines.

A. Starting nursery

Children are each assigned a group teacher as their key person. For new pupils, this is the welcoming process:

1. The school invites parents and their child to come the term before the child starts so they can ask questions and understand what will happen once they start.

The parents are sent a letter a couple of weeks before starting letting them know who the child's teacher will be. They are encouraged to talk about the teacher at home.

2. The child is sent a welcome card from the teacher with a picture of the teacher on it. Information as to how children and parents are expected to behave is sent to parents of new children before the term starts (Parents' Handbook).

3. The day before children start at school, they come in to meet their key teacher. All teachers act with love and warmth to all children, but a special effort is made with their key children.

4. Especially in a child's first few weeks at school, the teachers actively work to create bonds by spending time with their key children, learning what the children are particularly interested in and what they enjoy. The patience and love displayed by the teachers are highly effective in ensuring children have secure bonds. These relationships are maintained throughout the child's time with us, with children keeping their key teacher over the whole time they are with us. A strong bond is formed between parent and key teacher, leading to a good exchange of information about what is happening both at school and at home.

B. Moving from one session to another

Children who started in the afternoon session will most likely move the following year to the morning session. The morning session is a dynamic and busy environment for children between 2.5 and 4.5 years. It lasts half an hour longer than the afternoon session and it has different routines.

The term before the children move up, the teachers introduce certain routines (such as outside free-flow) to get the children used to them. They also talk to the children for a

couple of weeks before the term ends about how school will be different once they start coming in the morning.

C. Changing settings

Parents are always encouraged to explain to children they will be changing schools if the parents have decided to move them to another establishment. Once the child knows, the key teacher prepares a goodbye card made by other children, and signed by members of staff, with an encouraging message. She will also prepare a goodbye circle to explain to the child's friends they will be going to another school. At Gardens Montessori, children sing a song to say farewell and we make a point of helping with this transition using love and encouragement. It is important for the children to know they can return to say hello, and see their old friends. We contact past and future schools to inform them about the child's current attainment level.

D. Starting primary school

This is one of the first big transitions in the life of our pupils. Parents are increasingly stressed out by the many options available to them, the need to choose schools early, and the worry of not getting a place. Once we have supported parents throughout the academic year with advice and guidance, children go to take their assessments. Places are offered, and choices are made in the spring term. During the last weeks of the summer term, teachers begin to introduce certain practices that will be useful in primary school: the register, that most will wear a uniform, and appropriate behaviour for circle time. We also suggest all day sessions or after school clubs to certain pupils to get them used to longer school days. Events such as sports day are carefully described so children know it will be the last day. Parents are encouraged not to make a big deal of primary school early in the summer as this creates anxiety for a long time. We send a message out to parents at the end of term reminding them that independence is one skill that most schools are looking for: the ability of children to feed themselves, dress themselves, and go to the toilet on their own.

Some children need additional support in order to facilitate a smooth transition to their new school. In this case, the key teacher or SENDCo, in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice (DfE and DfH, 2015)¹, will contact the new school in order to ensure a smooth transition for the child. Parents will be informed that this will happen.

At the end of the academic year the children's reports and achieved skills are passed on to future schools.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>