RFD Classroom to Classroom Transition Procedures

ECMHSP/RFD educational services are committed to implement continuity of care therefore strives to keep the number of transitions from classroom to classroom to a minimum. Research shows that when attachments are broken or not allowed to form through the provision of care by too many different caregivers, the child may suffer serious consequences. Limiting the number of transitions help children develop deeper relationships with adults, and a feeling of trust in the world. It is strongly suggested that a child should remain at the same classroom and with the same primary caregiver throughout the season.

However, there are times when it is necessary to transition children from one classroom to another. Transition to a new classroom should be built into the schedule and parents, children and staff should all prepare for the change. Parents should be involved from the beginning in establishing the plan for transitioning their child to a new room. All persons involved should know what to expect and feel comfortable with the change that is about to take place. Therefore, the following procedures should be followed when a child is to be moved to another classroom.

1 Week Prior

EC(s) and classroom staff should share with the parents the reasons why a transition to a new classroom is being considered for their child. For example, they may share a child’s progress on an updated E-LAP/ LAP-3 and explain why a different room would better meet the developmental needs of their child.

For children with disabilities, an In-House Staffing/Parent Conference must be held at least one week prior to the transition with the parent, EC, teacher and HC (and any other staff member the team feels appropriate). The In-House Staffing/Parent Conference form must be used to document the following:

- For children suspected of having a disability, discuss reasons for referral, developmental information, status of the evaluation, transition procedures and any other information needed for the child to transition during the In-House Staffing.
- For children diagnosed with a disability, review developmental information, child preferences, IEP/IFSP/DIP and individualization procedures along with transition procedures and working with service providers during the In-House Staffing. Any additional information may be discussed for the child to transition.

If the parents agree to make the transition, the EC and classroom staff from both classrooms should work with the parent to develop a plan for introducing the child and parents to the new classroom. The following should be considered:

Prior to Initiating the Transition Process

Parents Should:

- be encouraged to talk to their child about the change to the new classroom;
- be taken on a tour of the new room and be introduced to the staff and classroom management systems, such as schedules, routines, materials, etc.; and
receive explanation about how the moving to the new room will benefit their child(ren).

**Receiving Classroom Staff Should:**
- designate a cubby/storage space for the new child and label it with the child’s name and picture;
- add the child to the lesson plan, meal chart and attendance sheet;
- plan a “Welcome to our room” activity for the first day the child comes to visit; and
- talk to the other children about the new child who will be joining the group and a photograph of the child can be shared with the children.
- Ask for any allergy or special dietary needs documentation

**Current Classroom Staff Should:**
- prepare the items listed on the **Child Classroom Transition Form** so that all information is ready for transfer when the child leaves;
- share information about the child with the receiving classroom staff prior to the child visiting on the first day;
- relay to the child’s new lead teacher whether a child has an **IEP** or **IFSP** and if s/he should be given guidance from ECMHSP specialists and professionals working with the child;
- provide the child a photograph of the receiving staff as well as her/his own photograph to carry with them on the visit; and
- make up a simple song about the move and talk to the child about the visit. Staff might also use puppets and other activities to act out going to a new classroom.
- Provide allergy or and special dietary needs documentation

**The Parent, New and Current Caregivers, EC, Center Director and Family Services Coordinator should:**
- sign the **Child Classroom Transition Form** indicating that they were involved in the planning for the transition of the child to another classroom.

**Week of Transition**

**Day 1:** Arrange for the child to visit the receiving room during free choice play with her/his primary caregiver.

**Day 2:** Arrange for the child to visit the receiving room during free choice play and outdoor play with his/her primary caregiver.

**Day 3:** Arrange for the child to visit the receiving classroom during free choice play, outdoor play and through lunch, with the primary caregiver only visiting the child during lunch. Make sure the transitioning child is only counted 1 time during the meal count.

**Day 4:** Arrange for the child to visit the receiving classroom during free choice play, outdoor play, lunch and naptime. The primary caregiver will visit at naptime only if the child indicates a need to see her/him.
Day 5: Arrange to have the child completely transitioned to the new classroom. At this time the current caregiver should move the child’s possessions to the receiving classroom as well as notify transportation staff, if applicable, of transition. It is recommended that very young children be placed in a room that they can stay in for the season because of their need to have a consistent, primary caregiver in order for them to bond and develop trust and security. However, there are times when it is necessary to transition a child under the age of two to another room. In these cases, it is suggested that several visits of 15-30 minutes per day be scheduled with the primary caregiver one week prior to transition and 30-45 minutes visits be scheduled the week of the transition, with the primary caregiver gradually weaning out of the child’s time in the receiving room. Special considerations need to be made when transitioning children birth to 24 months of age as well as children with special needs.

As stated previously, it is recommended that very young children be placed in a room where they can stay in for the season because of their need to have a consistent, primary caregiver in order for them to bond and develop trust and security. Because relationship building is so important in caring for young children, unnecessary transitions should be avoided. Planning for very young children to stay in one room for the season allows for continuity of care minimizing transitions from classroom to classroom allowing children and their primary caregivers to build that relationship. Infants and toddlers coming into the center should be able to stay with their primary caregivers for as long as possible before transitioning into another classroom.

Following Transition Week

The bond formed between children and the primary caregivers from their first room needs to be respected. This bond is not to be severed simply because children are moved to a new room. To preserve the connection, there should be ongoing opportunities for children to maintain contact through warm greetings and brief visits from the primary caregiver to children’s new room.

Child Classroom Transition Form

Purpose

• To ensure that classroom to classroom transitions occur in a timely, predictable and unrushed manner according to the child’s developmental needs.

• To ensure parents and relevant staff participate in easing the child’s transition to another classroom.

Instructions

When a child is developmentally ready to be transitioned to another classroom, this form provides the appropriate steps to follow for the child’s emotional stability during the transition process.

• Discuss the process with parents. Upon their approval, fill in the form and plan for the transition.
• Parents and relevant staff need to sign as active participants in the process.
• Date each item as the process is followed.

The form is filed in the child’s folder once the process is completed.