**Tips for a Smooth Transition**

**Getting your child ready for daycare life**

* Have your child nap in a playpen in different rooms of your house. Don’t be quiet. Act as if your child is up, vacuum, talk on the phone, walk around, have the windows open, tv on etc.
* Start getting your child use to the daycare schedule. Eat at about the same time the daycare eats, nap the same time the daycare has quiet time etc. And stick to this schedule on weekends and holidays. It will help your child transition from home life to daycare life.

**Food and Drinks**

Please help your child learn to eat and drink on his/her own. I can help out a little, but I have other children to attend too as well. Helping your child learn to be more independent (to a point) really helps out. I don't have time to hold a bottle for a child who is capable of doing it themselves.

**Sleeping**

Help your child fall asleep on his/her own. I can't rock five (5) kids at once. As nice as it would be, it just isn't practical. Helping your child learn to fall asleep and shelf-sooth will keep your child's stress leaves down at nap time.

I don't mind rubbing a back for the first week or two. I don't mind signing a few songs to help the children fall asleep.

I will even sit beside a playpen and read a short book or two.

**Transitioning**

Transition times are often challenging for small children. Think of all the times you are most likely to experience resistance from your toddler: many of them are times when the child is being asked to move from one activity to another, a transition. Bedtimes and naptimes, putting away toys, going or leaving a friend’s house, coming to the table for a meal – all of these are transitions. The transitions that will affect you and your child most during the daycare day are morning drop-offs, and end of day pick-ups.

I want every parent to feel secure in the care that their child is receiving. I want all children to feel happy and secure in the daycare home at all times. Therefore, I have developed guidelines for parents in regard to pick-up, and drop-off, which will help ensure that these transitions are navigated smoothly.

**Drop-Off Guidelines:**

The key to a smooth, happy drop-off is pacing and mood.

1. Drop-offs should be brief. Two or three minutes is a reasonable length of time to exchange necessary information with me, and to wish your child a happy day. Once you have handed your child to me, don’t linger, say good bye and go. Please, don’t take them back for one last hug!

2. Always be calm and upbeat. If your child shows distress, your happy and confident assurance that they will do just fine, followed by a quick, smiling departure, will do much to reassure your child that a) you know the daycare home is a safe place and b) you have confidence in their ability to adjust and enjoy their day here.

If you linger, wanting to see your child happy before you walk out the door, you will most likely be prolonging the problem, and compounding your child’s distress. You are trying to offer reassurance, but in fact you are conveying the idea that departures are frightening, and that the child cannot be expected to cope. Instead, after a hug and a kiss, simply hand your child to me, smile, and cheerfully leave. Once you have handed the child over, don’t take him/her back!

This can be very difficult for you, I know. It can seem so unkind to just walk away from your child when they are crying (and it goes against the motherly instinct!). However, I promise you that within a few weeks, if you are consistently brief and cheerful, your child will respond to your departures cheerfully. If you linger, departures can remain difficult indefinitely. Hang in there!

Don’t be embarrassed to seek reassurance. If you need to, give me a call/text later. I can assure you that the tears at leave-taking, passionate and whole-hearted as they seem, rarely last more than a few minutes after you leave. Small children live in the minute; very often, the tears will have dried by the time you’ve pulled out of the driveway. If you are particularly distressed, feel free to call/text me. Please be assured that this is undoubtedly much harder on you than your little one.

**Pick-up Guidelines**

Pick-up is a more relaxed time. Your child will probably be happily involved in an activity, and so there will be time for us to chat about the day’s events. Be aware, though, that the daycare closes at 5:00 (Regular hours) or 5:30 (Extended hours). If you wish to chat at length with me, please allow enough time before your scheduled pick up time, to do this. I am also willing to schedule a meeting with you outside daycare hours for longer, and more private discussions.

Sometimes your child may be reluctant to leave. It may well be that the very child who seemed so unhappy to be left at the daycare in the morning is just as unwilling to leave at the end of the day! This is not unusual. Don’t worry – your child is not confused, and it’s not personal! – its just another transition.

When we have finished our chat and you are ready to leave, it’s a good idea to give a toddler or preschooler two or three minutes notice to ‘finish up.’ Generally, if you give your child time to adjust to the next step. They will leave quite willingly. The key, like at drop-off, is to keep it brief. Transitions become more difficult the longer they are prolonged. So if at the end of two minutes your child still doesn’t wish to leave, calmly and cheerfully scoop them up and leave. It will take very few such leave-takings before they are leaving cheerfully with you, without any help.

I hope these guidelines are helpful. The basic principle is simple – keep it brief, and smile, smile, smile! I’m sure you’ll be pleased to see how well it works!