

Stepping Stones Learning Center of Littleton: Transition Plan

This document will summarize activities that Stepping Stones Learning Center does to help children and families navigate necessary transitions.

The five key transitions this policy will focus on:

1. Transitions into a program;
2. Transitions while enrolled;
3. Transitions within the program day;
4. Family transitions outside a program; and
5. Transitions when leaving a program.

1. Transitions INTO our Center.

- a. Prospective family visits—families considering enrolling their children are invited to visit for a tour. During this tour, families learn of our approach to teaching and learning (philosophy), see our learning environments, meet our teaching staff, and have opportunities to have their questions answered. The goal of this visit is to make sure that SSLC is a “good fit” to prospective families.

- b. New family orientation sheet—we use an orientation checklist to make sure the enhanced orientation is complete. The orientation includes: a tour of the building, showing children where their cubby is, meeting teaching staff, playing in their classroom with peers and teachers, conversations between parents and teachers and between children and teachers, learning more about the policies and practices, learning drop-off and pick-up procedures, and much more. Teachers also speak with parents about a child’s first day and talk about how we will help the parent and child with common separation issues. The goal of orientation is to help children and families feel comfortable and part of the SSLC family, and ease the child into their first day of attendance. Most of the orientation can be completed over the phone, or via Zoom meeting.

- c. Family information sheet—when a family chooses to enroll, we provide the parents with several forms to complete. One form is a “Family Information Sheet.” This document provides parents the opportunity to tell us all about their child and their family. From this sheet we learn about child interests, typical guidance approaches, family dynamics, health history, etc. After this form is returned the Director, Assistant Director and teachers of the room, read the form as a means of getting to know the child and family better. A copy is put into the classroom binder, and the original is placed in the child’s file in the office. This form will be handed out, to be updated, with every transition into a new classroom.

- d. Family Handbook—upon enrollment parents are provided with instructions on where to locate our comprehensive Family Handbook (found on our website, www.SSLCofLittleton.com). This handbook explains SSLC’s purposes, policies, and procedures. The purpose of the handbook is to help the parent transition into the culture of SSLC with a clear understanding of how SSLC operates. Choosing a child care center is an important task and we use our Handbook as one way of telling families all about who we are and what we do.

- e. New family welcome—teachers warmly welcome new (and continuing) children into the classroom with a well prepared learning environment and warm interactions. Teachers help children who may be having a difficult time separating by speaking calmly to them, helping them get involved in activity, singing to them, listening to them, looking at a family picture from home, waving to parents from our “waving window,” etc.

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f. New family info sharing—teachers encourage parents to call later in the day, or message on Brightwheel, to see how their child is doing. Teachers also try to send a quick message during nap time so parents can know how their child’s first day is going.

g. Observation window—our Center feature an observation window in each classroom where parents can observe. As parents leave they are invited to observe if they wish to see how their child is transitioning.

2. Transitions WHILE enrolled: as we find your child is ready to transition from one classroom to the next; the following steps take place.

a. Parent/family is notified

b. Team meetings between previous teachers and perspective teachers to discuss readiness and expectations of new rooms.

c. Messages are sent to families outlining expectations of new room, copy of schedule, etc.

d. Families are introduced to new staff.

e. Children will have a soft move-up, where they are given a chance to visit increasing amounts of time in their new classroom, before permanently moving up. This typically occurs over 3-5 days, starting with visiting over in either the morning or afternoon, then staying through lunch, then the entire day.

f. A Back to School event will be scheduled, where you will have a chance to visit your new child’s classroom. At this time, we will ask parents to participate in the ASQR-3 survey, which will aid in our assessment process and allow us to tailor the classroom schedule in manner that we can individualize care and learning. We will schedule parent/teacher conferences approximately one month after your child has been in their new classroom, and will share our formal observations, in regards to Colorado’s Early Learning and Development Guidelines, along with the findings of the ASQR-3. We will also schedule follow up conferences when we are nearing the time for your child to transition out of the current classroom.

* Blended classroom—we open and combine classrooms from 6:45am-7:30am and again at the end of the day. This mixed-age classroom helps our preschoolers develop relationships with their older peers thereby making moving from to our Older Classroom easier at the start of the fall semester.

* Community Services and Specialists—when children enrolled in SSLC have special learning needs necessitating the use of specialists (ex., speech or physical therapists), the specialists spend time at the center either working with children directly in the classroom or in our multipurpose room. Prior to beginning to work with children at the center, parents are asked to have the specialist work with the children’s family to gain consent and familiarity. We work closely with community programs, such as Child Find and Jefferson Center, and utilize classroom observations, assessments, and parent input on the ASQR survey to determine when a child may need further support.

3. Transitions WITHIN the program day.

a. Written daily routine—each of our classrooms follows the same daily routine. (Posted). This routine includes: free play/choose areas, breakfast, lunch, snack time, bathroom breaks, group time, small/large group activities, and outdoor play time. While exact timing of transitions from one activity to the next may vary slightly from day to day, each day includes the same sequence of activities. This allows children to easily transition from one activity to the next because they know the schedule and can predict what is coming next.

b. Plentiful time for play—we minimize the number of transitions we have by providing generous amounts of playtime.

c. Notice of change of activity—prior to switching activities (ex. from child-choice play time to group time), teachers walk around the room and give children time reminders such as “in ten minutes, we will

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be cleaning up for group time.” Teachers also involve children in announcing upcoming transitions by asking children to walk around and share that the transition is approaching with their peers.

d. Songs, finger plays, and movement activities during “waiting” times—on occasion where children are waiting for an activity to begin (such as the start of mealtimes or bathroom breaks), our teachers engage in singing songs, doing finger plays, participating in movement activities, etc. so children are not required to sit idly but rather can have fun and learn while waiting. Our teachers work together during transitions. For example, at the conclusion of meal time, the teacher not facilitating meal time sends children in small groups to the bathroom for hand washing.

4. Family transitions OUTSIDE a program.

Connect parents to helpful services—our center works closely with helpful community services/resources. When a family is experiencing challenging times, we work to connect the parent with these important resources so they can receive the support and assistance they need.

5. Transitions WHEN LEAVING our program.

a. Various reasons for leaving—children leave our center for a wide variety of reasons including graduating to kindergarten/elementary school, family needs changing, moving away, etc. We aim to support all children transitioning out of our school.

b. Equipping children to be learners who can succeed in school. We help children to transition to next care environments and kindergartens in a few strategic ways. First we work to help children to be successful life-long learners by building in them the dispositions needed such as curiosity, cooperativeness, friendliness with peers, respect for teachers and administrators, ability to follow routines, ability to speak and listen, ability to follow directions, etc. Second, we also develop academic skills and knowledge so children will know what they need to know when entering kindergarten. Third, we frequently provide a letter for parents entitled “Kindergarten Readiness” that helps parents understand what they need to know to help their child be ready for formal school. By encouraging parents to attend parent-teacher conferences at our center and get involved at our child care center, we are working to help them develop the understanding of how important their involvement is in their child’s continuing education. We will also utilize relevant books, class discussions, drawing journals, and invite teachers from local schools to chat with the children about kindergarten.

d. Practical helps—when a child exits SSLC and moves to a new care environment, we help the parent with this transition by providing a copy of the child’s health appraisal so they can take it with them to the next care setting.

Summary

The above mentioned practices are consistently implemented to help children and families to best handle the various transitions that they face as they enter our center, while enrolled in our center, and as they exit our center. Since one of our goals is to develop lifelong learners, we believe that helping children and families learn to successfully navigate transitions while they are with us will help them learn the skills needed to handle transitions in their future.

Special considerations regarding COVID-19:

At this time, we are dedicated to continuing to provide a high level of care, and partnering with families and guardians of enrolled children, while following all recommendations and mandates that are designed to decrease the risk of covid-related illness. Unfortunately, this does call for the need to limit face-to-face interaction with families and staff. All drop off and pick-ups will be conducted at the front doors. This is common practice among all care environments in Colorado, at this time, as we are a community dedicated to safety and health. We will ensure

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it is the same group of individuals who welcome your children, and bring them to families at pick-up. We will work with the children to make sure that they are comfortable and know what to expect during drop-off and pick-up times. New families will be given the opportunity to enter the center (briefly) for the first drop off only, so they can meet the teacher and see their child's classroom. We do ask that these families limit touching any materials/surfaces, and that they keep their mask on at all times. For classroom move-up transitions, we are unable to combine classrooms at this time. For this reason, we will ensure that teachers introduce themselves to children ahead of the transition, and parents can request a chat over the phone or curbside. Teacher will send out a welcome message, via Brightwheel, to make an introduction, and share relevant information. We will continue to schedule conferences, whether in an empty classroom or via a virtual platform, and are available to address questions or concerns, at any time during business hours, via Brightwheel, email (cmagrouplittleton@gmail.com), or phone call (303-904-1121).

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9/8/2020
