

Transition To Children's House

Parental Commitment:

Every child in the TC has a space reserved for them in the CH program. The move happens once the parents have agreed to the CH program, the TC guide has indicated the child is ready, and the Admissions Director (with help from the TC and CH guides) has confirmed the class placement.

A couple months before a child is expected to transition to Children's House, the parents are asked to observe the CH program during the morning and discuss their questions with the Admissions or Program director. The parents then sign a CH enrollment contract and complete the parent questionnaire, understanding that they are establishing their intention for their child to stay at Childpeace until ready for first grade. Parents are also asked to attend a CH New Parent Orientation, in June or in September before their child move to CH.

How Does The Transition Occur?

The transition to Children's House begins with visits from the Toddler Community classroom. For the first visit, their TC guide will accompany your child. Your child will watch the work and be invited to participate. The guide may remain during the entire visit or may leave when she sees that your child is comfortable. Subsequent to the first visit, your child may be escorted to their new CH classroom by the TC classroom assistant or by the CH classroom assistant. The length of the visiting time will be extended until the child has had an opportunity to remain in the Children's House Classroom for the full half-day (that is until 1:00 pm). The CH guide will be in touch with you and with your child's TC guide regularly to let you know how the visits are going and to plan ahead for the first day you will bring your child to their new classroom. During the time visits are occurring, you will bring your child to their TC classroom each morning.

How Long Is The Transition Period?

The length of the transition period is flexible and is determined by the Children's House guide in consultation with the parents and the Toddler Community guide. Each child has different needs and different circumstances at the time of transition. For some children, the change can occur after two visits. For others, it may be a full week. Generally visits do not continue beyond a week so the child will not become confused about which classroom they belong in. This also avoids the impression that the transition involves a choice the child can make.

What Does The School Do To Prepare The Child?

The TC guide will have discussed with your child going to their new Children's House classroom. They will have shown them the door to the new classroom and introduced the child to their new guide. The TC guide will have also been showing your child the tools to aid them in their ability to focus and concentrate, to increase their independence, and

to communicate and interact with other children and adults. Some specific preparations include: having the child practice going to the bathroom by herself, perhaps taking the bathroom necklace to indicate where she has gone; having the child practice walking in a line with a partner; and having the child sit in a bigger circle of children with the guide.

The guides will have spoken about the child and the CH guide will have observed them in their TC classroom. On the first day you bring your child to their new classroom, the staff will have transferred their belongings to their new cubby or bag. If your child also remains for naptime, their nap items will be transferred to the CH nap room.

What Can The Parents Do To Prepare And Help The Child During Transition?

Your positive anticipation of and conversations about changing to their Children's House classroom can be a source of emotional security while this change is occurring. Remember that the time reference of a young child is not the same as adults so it is wise to keep your references general until a specific schedule for the visits is confirmed by a call from the CH guide. Asking your child about the visits is fine as long as you don't press for details. The child may not remember much or have the language yet to describe exactly what they did. If your child expresses fears or concerns, acknowledge that it is normal to feel that way when things are changing help your child recognize the positive aspects of the change; the work in the new classroom that looked interesting; the friends they may know from their TC classroom that transitioned earlier.

What Is The Schedule In The Children's House?

- * **8:25-8:35 am** Arrival and greetings
- * **11:30-1:00** Lunch and playtime at the park
- * **1:00 pm** Half-day dismissal or nap
- * **3:00 pm** 3/4-day dismissal
- * **5:45 pm** Last pick-up

Arrival time: Your child will be able to adjust to their new classroom and feel at home there much more rapidly and easily if they arrive on time. On-time arrivals allow the child to enter the classroom with others, to exchange greetings with friends and the guide, and choose work. Late arrivals mean that the child comes into a room where everyone is already occupied and greetings may be met with the friend asking that their work not be interrupted. It is harder for a child to tell where and how to "fit in" when they arrive late.

What Is Different In The Children's House?

Arrival And Separation:

The CH guide will greet your child at the door to the classroom. Parents are not invited to enter the classroom with the child, as it would be disruptive to the work of the other children. We do not carry the children in our arms and ask that you do not carry them to the door. A very short separation routine (a few minutes at most) can be discussed with your child, and then you need to leave exactly and consistently when the discussed

routine is over. For example, staying while the child takes off and hangs up their coat and puts their lunch box on the shelf, then helping them choose a book, and then giving them a hug and departing.

If morning separation is difficult for your child, it is helpful to discuss this in advance with the guide. When you have said good-bye one time, if your child is clinging, you may help them over the threshold of the door and the guide will hold your child and help them while and after you leave. If your child's guide is not at the door and you need help from a staff person, simply ask and s/he will come over and help. Generally a child who is having difficulty separating from their parent in the morning will recover their composure and engage in work within a minute of the time the parent has departed. We ask that you resist the temptation to return for a second goodbye or to linger to see what happens, as this only prolongs the separation for your child and makes them uncertain of whether or not you are leaving. Please be assured that the guide or assistant will remain with and help a child who needs help with separation and that if your child is inconsolable for an extended period of time, we will let you know.

Early Morning Care:

If your child arrives before 8:30 am, they will be in early morning care in the Clubroom. The CH guide and assistant are at work before 8:15 am, but are busy preparing the classroom. The Clubroom assistant can help with separation but if you need help, again, it is helpful to let us know.

Lunch:

Your child will need a lunch box which they can open by themselves. It is best to limit lunch to three healthful items in wrappings or containers the child can open. If you would like suggestions for lunch items, please speak with your child's CH guide. Cookies, chocolate, and other sweets are not considered appropriate for school lunches, so please save these for home consumption.

Napping:

Your child will be in a nap area similar to the one they are accustomed to, with a mat to sleep on and a basket containing their blanket and perhaps a comfort object. Just as in the TC classrooms, we do not permit pacifiers or bottles in the Children's House. At nap time, the CH classroom divides in to three groups: parents of half day children are asked to wait in the lobby; children who are nappers say goodbye to the guide and go to take their nap in the adjacent clubroom; older children who are in the extended day program remain in the classroom, help with classroom clean up and choose work for the afternoon.

Extra Clothing:

It is important that your child have two full changes of clothing which they can easily put on and take off by themselves. If a child has an accident, it is comforting for them to have familiar clothing to change in to. The wet or soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag and put in the bag or basket.

The Children's House Program:

Your child's guide will discuss the program at Children's House with you. It includes explorations in practical life, education of the senses, as well as further language development and number work. One difference between the Toddler Community and Children's House classrooms is the number of children. With 24-25 children in each classroom, at one time or another, your child will have to wait for a lesson. Simple lessons may be presented to your child by an older child in the classroom who has mastered that work.

** You are always encouraged to contact your child's guide for further information about any of the items discussed here.