

THE TRONDHEIM MODEL

Parent-active transition to childcare center

Information for parents



TRONDHEIM MUNICIPALITY

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The Trondheim model
Parent-active transition to childcare center
Information for Parents

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Parent-active transition to childcare center

The New in Daycare transition model has been developed for the youngest kindergarten children through a public health project in Trondheim Municipality. RKBU Central Norway at NTNU has been responsible for the evaluation of the project, and data has been collected over many years from parents and staff about how they experienced the transition period. Based on this feedback and experiences from the childcare centers involved, the transition model described here has evolved.

Why is good transition important?

When one-year-olds start in childcare center, there is no way of explaining to them how this first big transition in their lives is going to take place. They therefore need parents and staff to work together in the best interests of the child, so that the transition is as smooth as possible. The goal is that the childcare center becomes a positive addition to the child's life and gives the children many new opportunities to thrive and develop. A good transition process where the child has time and opportunities to familiarize themselves, together with their parents, will promote confident toddlers who can thrive, play, explore and learn in the childcare center.



Parent-active transition

Parent-active transition means that parents take on an active role in relation to their own child during the transition period. Parents represent security for the child and are therefore best suited in supporting the child when getting to know a new environment. Parents are familiar with the child's expressions, needs and routines, and know when the child needs comfort and closeness, or when the child is ready for play and exploration. During the visits and transition days, parents will get the opportunity to share this knowledge about their child with the staff. It will make it easier for them to get to know the child.

Parent-active transition ensures that parents get the opportunity to help the child become familiar with the childcare center, and with staff and other children. The goal is that the child gradually experiences that the childcare center is a nice and safe place to be.

What happens in connection with the transition?

Before start-up

Visit to the childcare center

Parents and children are invited to a one-hour visit to the childcare center approximately once a week during the spring. Children who are going to start later on in the year will also be invited to some visits. Parents will be sent the dates for the visits. During the visits, you will meet the staff who will be working in the child's department, as well as other new children and their parents. The visits will be about getting to know the childcare center and each other, by being together around the children. The visits are carried out inside the child's department or in the childcare center's outdoor area.



“
I felt that we had won the lottery when we came to visit. My child was able to have a head start in the childcare center early and at ease, and in the autumn, he was really happy to see the childcare center again
”

A father of a one-year-old who has participated in New in Daycare:

Parents' meeting

The childcare center will invite parents to a parents' meeting in the spring. Among other things, the meeting will focus on the knowledge we have about young children's need for assurance and support in connection with starting in the childcare center, and how parent-active transition is carried out on a day-to-day basis.

Parent-teacher conference

You will also get the opportunity to partake in a parent-teacher conference with one of the child's key persons before the child starts in the childcare center. This conference can take place in the childcare center or at your home. Some people conduct this conference digitally. The goal of the parent-teacher conference is that parents say a little about the child (the child's circadian rhythm, what the child likes to play with, what food the child likes, how the child seeks comfort etc.) and that the key person provides information about the childcare center and the transition process. The parent-teacher conference is also a good opportunity for parents to ask questions.



Allowing familiar people to look after the child

To ensure that your child does not find it very difficult when you leave them in childcare center after the transition days are over, it is recommended that you occasionally let someone who knows the child look after them for short periods of time. The child will then have experienced saying goodbye to you and, not least, that you return after a while. This will make things easier when you leave your child in the childcare center for the first time.

Key persons in childcare center

Each family gets one or two key persons who have a special responsibility for taking care of 'their' children and parents in connection with the start in childcare center. In some childcare centers, where several children start at the same time, small groups are established with 2 key persons and 3-4 children and their respective parents.

The key person's task is to quickly establish a relationship with the child, so the child has a 'safe haven' when their parents are no longer in the childcare center. It is also important that parents establish a good relationship with the key person, because this will also assure the child.



The first five days in the childcare center

You should share the days

In most childcare centers, there is only room for one parent per child per day of transition. Parents are therefore asked to share the five days, so that both parents can spend some time with the child during the transition period.

Time in childcare center during the first week

The length of time is agreed with the key persons on a day-to-day basis, partly based on the child's circadian rhythm. In principle, it is desirable that the child is given the opportunity to spend a relatively large amount of time in the childcare center during the five transition days, while one of the parents serves as the child's safe base for exploring everything new. However, if the child becomes tired and exhausted, the childcare center day can end earlier. If your child is unable to sleep in the childcare center, it might be a good idea to take them home or go for a walk with them, and then return to the childcare center later in the day.

Do children need to 'practice' being alone?

It works better for young children to spend many days with their parents in the childcare center, and that way get a safe start, rather than having them practice being there without you at an early stage. This very often leads to a lot of crying and unrest. If it is okay for the child, it is recommended that you leave them for a short while on day five, and that this topic is something you talk to the key persons about.

“
What I like about this model is that the children have time to get to know each other and that we don't have to leave them so quickly. I have had three days of transition before
”

A mother of a one-year-old who participated in New in Daycare



A plan that can be adapted

The following describes a plan for the first five days in the childcare center. It is emphasized that this plan can be modified and adapted to the needs of the individual child. Some children will need several days to settle in, and this will be something you talk to the key persons about from day to day.

If the child or key persons become ill in connection with the start in childcare center, more transition days may also be required.

Settling-in phase; parents in the daycare center with the child

Day 1

You are with your child all the time and are fully responsible for your child

- The childcare center provides information about what time you should meet up or you arrange this together in advance. One or two key persons will welcome you and your child upon arrival at the childcare center.
- On this first day, your task is to be with your child all the time and help your child get to know the childcare center in their own way and at their own pace. You know your own child and know what support your child needs in different situations.
- The key persons task is to be together with you and get to know you and your child. Tell the key persons about your child and your child's habits, then the getting-to-know-you process between the key person and the child will go faster.
- You are the one who helps your child in practical situations such as meals, changing nappies and bedtime. One of the key persons is with you and can therefore see the routines the child is used to. The key person will also explain to you about the childcare center's rhythm, so that you get a good insight into how the childcare center day works. Ask questions about anything you are wondering about!
- You and your key persons agree when it is time to go home. Some parents want to have a slightly shorter day on the very first day, others want to stay longer. The important thing is that your child has a good day.
- Before you go home, the key persons will have a short conversation with you where you summarize the day and make arrangements for the next day.

Day 2

You are with your child all the time and are fully responsible for your child

- You will be greeted by one of the key persons and have a short conversation about what will happen during the day. If there is something you are wondering about, please ask questions!
- Also on this day, your task is to be with your child all the time and take responsibility for them in all practical situations. The key persons will be with you all day.
- You should take on the role of the child's 'translator' for the staff. You know your child best and how the child expresses their needs and wishes. By 'translating' this to the key persons, it becomes easier for them to get to know the child. For example, you could say "When she has that expression, she is a bit skeptical", "He is a little scared now, he doesn't like loud noises", "When she feels insecure, she might push a bit".
- When your child shows interest in toys, key persons, other staff or other children, they will feel assured that you support this establishment of contact and exploration. For example, you can articulate what your child does: "Yes, it is Pia. Look, she is smiling at you. She is going to be with you in childcare center," "Wow, that is a big ball. You have rolled it across the floor. Come on, we will go and fetch it."
- At the end of the day, you will have a short conversation with the key persons about how the day has been for you and your child, and you will arrange what time to meet the following day.



Day 3

The key persons take over one or some of the tasks with the child, but you are still present throughout the day together with the child

- You will be greeted by one of the key persons and have a short conversation about what will happen during the day. If there is something you are wondering about, please ask questions!
- On day 3, many children will be ready to be a little more independent from you as a parent. If it is okay for the child, you can sit still on the floor and let the child come and go as it see fit. That way, your child will be able to seek support and help from you when needed, but also explore their surroundings a little more on their own. Show interest in what the child is interested in and give the child encouraging comments. The key persons take responsibility for the child when she or he moves away from you. It can be a great opportunity for them to get to know the child a little better. However, some children are not ready to let go of their parents on Day 3. If this applies to your child, follow them and give them the support they need.
- On day 3, try to let one of the key persons take over responsibility for the child in one or more of the routine situations, such as changing nappies or mealtimes. You are present in the situation but stay in the background. In this way, you signal to the child that it is perfectly okay for the key person to take care of them, while you also have the opportunity to assist or take over the situation if needed.
- If it is okay for your child, you may want to participate in some practical tasks in the department. The child still has you nearby, but all of your focus is not on the child. For some children, it facilitates their exploration of the childcare center.
- You will have a short conversation with one of the key persons at the end of the day about how the child's transition is progressing. Many parents feel uncertainty or worry during the transition process. Put your thoughts into words and ask any questions you may have. Before leaving, arrange what time to meet the following day.



Day 4

You give more responsibility to the key persons, but stay close to the child throughout the day

- You and your child will be greeted by one of the key persons. You have a brief conversation about the plan for the day. Ask any questions that you might be wondering about.
- If it is okay for the child, try to stay more in the background today. For example, you can sit against the wall instead of in the middle of the floor, or you could do an activity at a table or in the kitchen. In this way, you allow the child to make contact with the staff and other children to a greater extent, while you are nearby when needed and the child knows where you are. The fact that you are in the room and represent security for the child can lead to the child becoming more exploratory than if you leave the room.
- The key persons take the main responsibility for the child, both in play and routine situations, if this is okay for the child. If not, agree on who is going to do what in the various situations throughout the day.
- If it is okay that one of the key persons puts the child down to sleep, they can also wake the child and get them up that day. This is often a nice occasion that offers opportunity for contact and closeness. You can then wait a little before entering the department. In this way, the child will have a positive experience of being in the childcare center with the key person, without you being present.
- You will have a short conversation with the key persons about how the day has been and arrange what time to meet up the following day.



Day 5

The key persons take most of the responsibility for the child. You are close to the child in the department, but can take more of a background role

- You and your child will be greeted by one of the key persons and they will go through the plan for the day. Ask questions if you have any.
- You continue to stay somewhat in the background on this day as well, so that your child is encouraged to have as much contact as possible with the key persons and other children. However, your child should know where you are.
- The key persons are with the child and work to establish positive interaction in all types of situations. In principle, they take responsibility for all routines with the child during the day.
- Your role on day 5 is to represent security for the child and show the child that you think it is positive that they have contact with other children and the staff. If your child needs you, give them help and support. For example, many young children need support when playing with other children.
- If you and your key person agree that it is okay for your child, you can leave the department for a short while (approximately 15-20 minutes) in the afternoon. If so, agree with the key person about how you are going to say goodbye and when you will return.
- At the end of the day, discuss the transition process and agree on how dropping-off and picking-up your child will take place the next day, so that these situations work in the best possible manner for your child.



The first time without parents in the childcare center

Some children require more time

Children are different, and some will need more than 5 transition days before they are ready to be in the childcare center without their parents. If you think your child needs more transition days, discuss this with one of the key persons. The childcare center will then make arrangements accordingly. Also listen to what the key persons say, if they think the child needs one of you to be there for additional days.



A good start and end to the childcare center day

During the transition days, you have talked to the key persons about how the dropping-off situation in the morning and the picking-up situation in the afternoon will be carried out. Your child will need you and the staff to cooperate well in these situations, so that the day at the childcare center has a good start and a good end. Relatively fixed routines, such as what to do when you arrive at the childcare center in the morning and how to say goodbye to the child, generally work best for young children, but it is also important to take into account what sort of form the child is in on the day in question.

Many young children protest or get upset when their parents leave them in the morning, which most parents find difficult. However, even though children may cry when their parents leave, they often quickly start playing or exploring soon afterwards. Ask the staff to tell you how your child tends to be and what they usually do after you leave so that you can be confident that your child is getting the support they need. Tell your key persons if you feel uncertain about the dropping-off situation in the morning.

When picking up, the childcare center day should end in a good way. Some children run towards their parents, others barely look up from the game they are playing, while others may start crying or show frustration. In any case, show that you are happy to see the child again, talk to the staff about how the day has been and help the child say goodbye to the staff and the other children.



Short days and quiet afternoons

Most young children get exhausted when they first start in a childcare center. There are many new impressions to take in and the children will miss their parents. Some children become more clingy, whiny or frustrated when the childcare center day is over. Some will also struggle with food and sleep because there are so many new impressions to process. All of this is about the child using up a lot of energy to process and understand their new life situation. If possible, it is therefore an advantage if the child can have shorter days in childcare at the start. It will make the transition from home to childcare center smoother for the child.

It is also recommended that the time during the afternoon is adapted as much as possible, so you are together with the child. You could involve the child in tasks such as cooking and tidying, but make sure that there is also time for cuddles and closeness. Your child needs to calm down together with you after a day of many experiences and impressions. Small children also need good evening routines and a fixed bedtime, so that the day has a quiet end, and they get enough sleep. Talk to your key person or public health nurse if you need advice on food, evening routines and sleep. These are common problems for toddlers, and they often intensify for a period of time when childcare center starts.



Contact us if needed

If parents feel uncertain about things or have new questions after the actual transition period is over, ask for a chat with the key person or pedagogic leader.



Good luck starting in daycare center



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