

# Q&A

## HOW PARENTS AND EDUCATORS CAN SUPPORT CHILDREN AS THEY TRANSIT BETWEEN SETTINGS (E.G. HOME TO PRE-SCHOOL & VICE-VERSA), AND ADAPT TO NEW ENVIRONMENTS.



For Parents



**My infant is attending a centre for the first time. What can I do to make it easier for him, and for myself?**

**Jane Ching-Kwan:** Feelings of guilt and apprehension are common, especially among first-time parents. Here's how you can make the experience smoother and less traumatic for the both of you.

**Tip #1** Establish a stable, trusting relationship with educators. Talk to your baby's educator and share your concerns and feelings. Discuss how she can support you and vice-versa. Your baby will then sense that he is in good hands and this will help to gradually ease any separation anxiety.



**Tip #2** Provide information about your baby's sleeping patterns, temperament, likes and dislikes, favourite music and activity etc. Share details of what the baby does at home. A baby needs familiarity and continuity to feel secure and safe. The information will help educators provide transition from the home to the centre environment.

**Tip #3** Plan for a gradual separation. Start with short periods (1 to 2 hours) before increasing to longer periods. Sneaking off is never a good idea as doing so will create even more anxiety and distrust in your baby.



**How can we prepare ourselves to guide children more effectively through transitions?**

**Shirley Tan:** Transitioning into pre-school can be a challenging experience for any child, and also stressful for novice and experienced educators alike. For a start, create a calm and cheerful environment at the start of the pre-school year. This will set the right tone and help translate each teaching day into a positive experience not only for you but also for the children and parents. Centre leaders can ease the educators' worries by providing a listening ear, and giving assurance and support.

● Anxiety is contagious but so is a

good laugh. Work on simple strategies such as these, as a team:

- ▶ **Set aside time to touch base and 'refuel' with your centre leader and peers.**
- ▶ **Communicate, and clear the air of reservations or concerns anyone may have.**
- ▶ **Plan work schedules well ahead and do not leave important tasks to the last minute.**
- ▶ **Assure one another of each other's support.**



For Educators

**BONUS TIP!** by Ms Chia Yin Yin, Principal of Haven Infant & Toddler Centre.  
**"No matter how much you might have prepared, the first two weeks in infant care will be a period of adjustment for both your baby and you. Your baby will cry but it is unlikely that she is unhappy or not cared for properly. Your baby just needs extra time to adjust. Keep communications with the educator open, regular and friendly. Eventually you and your baby will establish a happy and familiar routine together."**



## ASK THE EXPERTS



● **SHIRLEY TAN** is a Principal with Church of the Holy Trinity Kindergarten and has been in the sector for 13 years. Appointed an ECDA Fellow in April 2015, Shirley works with educators, families and the community to spearhead children's education and development.

● **DR JANE CHING-KWAN** is an early childhood consultant with more than 28 years of experience, specialising in Child Development and Technology. She is also the CEO and Principal of KLC International Institute, a training agency for Early Childhood educators.