

Rethinking Transitions in School Age Care

OVERVIEW

Transitions are some of the most frequent and emotionally charged moments in School Age Care. Moving from school to OSHC, between activities, indoors to outdoors, or toward pick-up places real demands on children and young people's nervous systems, sense of safety, and autonomy.

Rethinking Transitions invites educators to look beneath the surface of these everyday moments; reframing transitions from logistical tasks into relational opportunities to build regulation, trust, agency, and belonging.

Grounded in contemporary neuroscience, the Phoenix Cups® Framework, and rights-based practice, the course explores why transitions are often where challenges show up, particularly for children and young people who are tired, hungry, overstimulated, new to the service, or navigating increasing independence.

Designed specifically for School Age Care, it offers practical strategies that fit within busy environments, mixed age groups, and shared school spaces; strengthening safety and connection for children, young people, and teams alike.

WE WILL...

- explore why transitions place increased demands on children and young people's nervous systems
- examine transitions through a needs-based lens using the Phoenix Cups® Framework
- reframe resistance, withdrawal, and dysregulation as adaptive responses rather than misbehaviour
- explore how predictability, rhythm, and relational presence support felt safety
- identify practical strategies that support agency, autonomy, and choice within necessary structure
- consider the role of active supervision as a relational practice, not just a regulatory requirement
- reflect on common transition points in School Age Care and design intentional, responsive adjustments

DELIVERY MODE:

Option 1: Self paced online course approximately one hour

Option 2: Face to face workshop (2-3 hours)

Option 3: Online webinar (2-3 hours)



Contact us to book your workshop [HERE](#).

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PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

By the end of this workshop, participants will possess:

1. A deeper understanding of why transitions can be challenging for children and young people
2. increased confidence responding to transition related behaviours in ways that are calm, connected and consistent
3. practical strategies to support regulation, agency, and cooperation during everyday transitions
4. shared language to support consistent, team wide approaches to transition practices
5. greater insight into how intentional routines and educator presence build trust and belonging

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Neuroscience of Regulation, Prediction and Emotion **Lisa Feldman Barrett, Bruce Perry, Stephen Porges**

Neuroscience shows that the brain is constantly predicting what comes next to maintain safety. During transitions, uncertainty and rapid change increase cognitive and emotional load. Predictable, relational transitions support nervous system regulation and felt safety, while rushed or unclear transitions can activate stress responses. .

Self-Determination Theory **Edward Deci and Richard Ryan**

Self-Determination Theory identifies autonomy, competence, and relatedness as core psychological needs. Transitions that allow choice, voice, and participation support children and young people to feel capable, respected, and engaged rather than controlled.

Needs-Based and Choice Theory Approaches **William Glasser, Phoenix Cups Framework**

William Glasser's Choice Theory positions behaviour as an attempt to meet basic human needs. The Phoenix Cups Framework enhances this understanding. Transitions are often where needs for safety, connection, freedom, or mastery show up most clearly. How we respond can reduce escalation and strengthen trust.

Children's Rights and Participatory Practice **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, MTOP v2.0**

Children and young people have the right to be heard in decisions that affect them. MTOP v2.0 emphasises children and young people as capable, competent participants, with a strong focus on play and leisure. Co-designed transitions build agency, belonging, and wellbeing.

Alignment with National Quality Standard

QA1: Educational program and practice (elements 1.1.2, 1.2.1, 1.2.3); supports educators to personalise transition practices in response to children and young people's strengths, rhythms, and needs, using intentional strategies such as landing zones, rituals, and responsive language, alongside reflective prompts that strengthen team-wide practice over time.

QA2: Children's health and safety (elements 2.1.1, 2.2.1, 2.2.2); reframes active supervision as a relational practice that supports emotional safety and anticipates risk, while strengthening predictability and shared team roles to promote wellbeing and reduce incidents during high-movement times.

QA4: Staffing arrangements (elements 4.2.1, 4.2.2); builds shared language and coordinated team responses during transitions, supporting consistent, evidence-informed practice that aligns with professional responsibilities.

QA5: Relationships with children (elements 5.1.1, 5.2.1); positions transitions as prime opportunities to build trust and relational safety, with strategies that invite children and young people's voice, choice, and co-design in everyday routines.

QA7: Governance and leadership (elements 7.1.2, 7.2.1); supports services to embed reflective systems and identify transitions as a meaningful focus area for Quality Improvement Planning, with strategies that are observable, reviewable, and adaptable.

Alignment with MTOP v2.0

Principles: Equity, inclusion and high expectations; Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships; Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning; supports educators to view all children and young people as capable and competent, adjusting transition supports to meet individual needs while building trust and connection through attuned, predictable interactions. Reflective questions and shared inquiry support teams to continually adapt practice in response to children and young people's experiences.

Practices: Holistic approaches; Collaboration with children and young people; Play, leisure and intentionality; recognises transitions as moments where learning, wellbeing, relationships, and safety intersect. Educators are supported to co-design transition rituals and routines with children and young people, and to honour both active and passive leisure through movement, rest, social connection, and choice.

Outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4; intentional, inclusive transitions support children and young people to feel capable, respected, and confident in who they are, strengthen their sense of belonging and connection to their service community, promote emotional regulation and wellbeing, and foster confident engagement in play, leisure, and learning.

Alignment with National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Principle 1 – Child safety and wellbeing are embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture. The course supports a culture where children's needs, rights and wellbeing guide every decision.

Principle 2 – Children are safe, informed and participate in decisions affecting them. A needs-based, guidance approach strengthens children's agency, voice and meaningful participation.

Principle 3 – Families and communities are informed and involved. Wellbeing planning encourages transparent communication and genuine partnership with families.

Principle 5 – People working with children are suitable and supported. Educators develop reflective, relational skills that strengthen safe, attuned practice.

Principle 6 – Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child-focused. The focus shifts from blame or behaviour management to understanding needs and providing support.

