Orientating Back to Onsite Early Childhood Education and Care
Orientation/Communication Plan

An individualised orientation plan can support orientating back to on site Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) for children and families. Below are some considerations and strategies that you might find helpful when developing each child and family's orientation plan.

Keeping a record of individual children's orientation back to on site ECEC can also provide you with valuable insights that can be used in developing your transition to school plans. Download a Word Document template for you to record your approach for each individual child and family here.

Steps to a successful orientation back to onsite ECEC	What you might need to consider	Reflecting for each child and family
Inform families that the service is open and COVID safe practices are shared	Individual families will respond best to the communication tools that are most meaningful to them. – Phone calls – Letters – Emails – Text messages – Social media	– Ask families what type of communication tool will ensure they are supported. – Does this family require a nuanced approach to ensure the process is equitable? – Remember to keep your communication inclusive of all families
Gather important information	– What support do you need to engage meaningfully with families? – Do you require a bilingual worker/interpreter for this strategy to ensure families are informed and supported? – Is a particular teacher or educator best suited to engage with this family? – Is there a member of your community who can support you in engaging with this family?	Think about the type of information that will support the child and family returning to on site ECEC. Ask open ended questions that will support your relationship with the family and support their orientation back to on site ECEC: – What have the past 6 months been like for you? – Will your child be returning? – What do you need to feel safe to attend? – How do you think your child/ren will settle? – What has the child been interested in over the past 6 months? – What pattern of attendance will support your family in the orientation period? – Has your child expressed any concerns?

Steps to a successful orientation back to onsite ECEC	What you might need to consider	Reflecting for each child and family
Negotiate a time and day for the family for return	Time slots may need to be longer for the first few days: – Families may need more time to settle their child back into the environment – You may need to provide more remote communication with the child/ren before they return face to face if settling in time with family is not possible	– Reflect on the strategies you used in the Term one orientation process – Consider how many adults will you have on site at any one time – Reflect on your physical space in relation to social distancing – Can you transition children in groups based on friendships? – Can you call or zoom with children just before they return?
Consider the range of supports children and families may require in settling back into the environment	Whilst some children and families are eager to return to ECEC services, others may have concerns about separation. Build on the strategies you have used to engage children in learning at home. – What connections can you build between learning at home and learning at your service? – What strategies were successful in maintaining your relationships while children were learning at home? – Are these strategies transferable to learning at your service? – What shared experiences have the children engaged in? – Is there a song or story that all children used whilst learning at home?	What do you need to consider on the first day to support children settling back into on site ECEC? – What resources/experiences does the child like to engage in? – What familiar items can you have available to support the child in separating from their family? – Would a comforter/transition item from home aid the separation process? – Perhaps a family photo could be displayed for children to connect with over the day?
Orientation and Transition social scripts	Providing families with photos of educators in the environment that tell a story of what to expect when returning can be useful in preparing children and families for orientating back to on site ECEC environments.	– Is there a story a child would like to share about learning at home? – Is there an event or experience that the child could share with the group? – Perhaps families can support children to make use of family photos or drawings to share with the group.

Steps to a successful orientation back to onsite ECEC	What you might need to consider	Reflecting for each child and family
Handover/information sharing with families about learning	You may find that you have limited time to engage individually with families on a daily basis to share learning. What other strategies might be useful to ensure this still occurs? – Interactive displays/photos where families can contribute by writing comments. – Online platforms, email, school stream, zoom. – Scheduled phone calls	How will you ensure the family has ongoing opportunities to contribute to their children's learning and development? – Ask families what changes they have observed in their child's learning and development during their time learning at home – Has their child developed new interests or skills?
Other considerations	The information above is a general guide to the minimum requirements of a successful orientation.	Each ECEC program will have unique circumstances that will also require a considered approach. Such as; – the members of the team that are returning and when – the physical space that is available – other local supports available to the kindergarten – other programs that may be being delivered at the service such as School Readiness Funding, Allied Health professionals and the Early Childhood Languages Program.