

- ☛ **Continue to communicate.** Parents will continue to want close communication. They enjoy and rely on the daily notes sent home that describe feeding, sleeping, diapering, and daily activities. This exact type of communication should continue as children become toddlers and two-year-olds. The toddler years will focus more on activities and cute things the child says and does during the day than on bodily functions.
- ☛ **Stay close.** Make sure that regular, “routine” mini-conferences are scheduled with parents, simply to discuss how things are going and how everyone is feeling.

Transitioning to the Toddler Room—A Child’s Point of View

The key word for a successful transition from the infant room to the toddler room is *gradual*. The child is entering a new world in the toddler room. Make this new world as familiar and comfortable as possible. Again, if you practice continuity of care, almost all of the potential “trauma” or disorientation is eliminated for the child. The familiar adult is the child’s anchor.

- ☛ **Arrange for the child to visit the toddler classroom frequently,** for increasing amounts of time over a period of several weeks. Start with the child’s primary caregiver going along with the child and being there as the child explores in the new space, first for just a few minutes, then for longer periods of time. (Perhaps a staff swap can be arranged.) Then have the child visit without his familiar caregiver for a short time, and then increase the amount of time. Next, encourage the child to have snack with the toddlers. When he is comfortable, encourage the child to eat lunch in the toddler room, too. Finally, have the child nap with the toddlers and spend the whole day.

- ☛ **Move with friends.** The transition is easier for the child if several friends are moved at the same time. Young toddlers really do form friendships. These social bonds with other children will help the child feel less alone.

- ☛ **Remember to keep groups small.** It is still important to have small group sizes and a low child/staff ratio in toddler programs. The young toddler will be less overwhelmed with the new setting if there are only a few other children in the group.



- ☛ **Plan on extra attention.** The caregivers will need to give a little extra attention to any child just entering the group. Young toddlers need close supervision. They are accident prone with their new gross motor skills and are in the climbing stage. In addition, this is the age at which children are most likely to bite each other.

TRANSITION ACTIVITY

"Moving Up" Book

Materials

camera

paper

zipper-closure bag book (see directions below)

poster board (optional)

To Make the Zipper-Closure Bag Book

Sew sandwich-size, zipper-closure plastic bags together along the bottom edge, either by hand or machine. If you cut thin cardboard such as poster board to fit inside the bags, you can use both sides. Then simply slip the pictures inside the bags on both sides of the cardboard and zip the bags shut.

To Make the "Moving Up" Book

Take photographs of the child visiting the toddler room and engaging in several of the activities, such as playing with new toys, climbing on a new climber, eating snack, playing with a new friend, and getting a hug from a new caregiver. Finally, photograph the child bringing her diaper bag to the new room and putting her "lovey" in a new cubby. Mount the photos on paper and add a few descriptive words. The last page might be a picture of the child with the sentence, "Molly is a big girl now." Place the pages in the zipper-closure bag book.

To Do

Give this book to the parents to take home and read frequently to the child, noting with pride the child's development and speaking positively about the new experiences ahead in the child's widening world.

Moving From the Toddler Room to Preschool

The same principles described previously apply when it is time to move the child from the toddlers and twos program to a classroom of older children, or a "preschool" program. This is usually, but not always, where the practice of "continuity of care" stops, and the primary caregiver starts over in the infant room. The children move up into the preschool and have a new caregiver or teacher. Generally, this transition is less traumatic because the child has language skills and is eagerly anticipating the adventures ahead.