



BEDTIME, MEAL TIMES & DROP-OFFS, OH MY!

The funnest part of our days. are they not?

It's no secret that these transitions can often be the trigger for power struggles, tantrums and anxiety. So, how can we navigate them in beautifully, conscious ways that support our children AND allow them to be easeful for us as the Guider?

BEDTIME

- **SET THE LIMIT:** let the child know when it's getting close to bedtime, so they know what's coming next. "You have 10 more minutes of playing & then it's time to get ready for bed." If needed, set a timer on your phone or invest in an egg / sand timer, as a visual & auditory aid.
- **FOLLOW THROUGH:** when the timer goes off / the 10 minutes is up, support them in transitioning to begin getting ready for bed. This might mean helping them pack away the toys they were playing with, and then asking 'would you like to brush your teeth or put your PJ's on first?'. Remember, kids LOVE choices & asserting their personal power.



- **HAVE A CONSISTENT RHYTHM:** *most* children thrive off consistency & rhythm ~ it helps them know what is coming next and feel grounded / relaxed in the process. Maybe your rhythm is calm spray (essential oils), 2 bedtime stories & a short meditation. Maybe it's mindful colouring & 5 minutes of cuddles. Try & keep it similar each night.
- **SET THEM UP FOR COMFORT & SAFETY:** Ensure your child has all they require already with them, e.g. cup of water beside their bed, nightlight on, favourite teddy to cuddle, crystals ~ whatever supports them in feeling safe & comfy.
- If your child tends to get up out of bed multiple times throughout the night, gently lead them back by the hand. Remind them it's time for bed, give them a cuddle, kiss and say 'goodnight'. Keep it short & sweet.
- If your children becomes extremely distressed / anxious at bedtime, chat to them during the day and help them come up with a plan to feel safe ~ "what do you need to help you feel calm in going to sleep tonight?", and do your best to adhere to it.
- Educators: these tips are also really supportive for nap / relaxation times!



MEAL TIMES

- **SET THE LIMIT:** Once again, let your child know when meal time is coming. "It's 5 minutes until lunchtime". Use a timer to support you if required, & follow through (as per bedtime).
- **INTENTIONAL CONNECTION:** Make meal times fun & interactive, a way for you to connect as a classroom / family. Maybe you go around the table and share the funniest thing that happened in your day, something you're grateful for or the biggest challenge you had.
- **ALLOW FOR INDEPENDENCE:** Children from 3+ are more than capable of serving their own food. Place the different elements of the meal in bowls / plates across the table, and have serving spoons or tongs, so the child can add what's desired to their plate. As the guider, support them in understanding portions, e.g. you can have 1 scoop of pasta & 2 pieces of garlic bread. Alternatively, let them help pack their lunchbox for school / kinder ~ you can choose one piece of fruit, ham and salad or vegemite for your sandwich & one special treat. This is also really supportive in developing children's fine motor skills & coordination.



- If your child says they aren't hungry / refuse to eat, allow that to be okay. Foster your child's ability to listen to their bodily cues. Save their meal on the kitchen bench, and let them know that when they're hungry, that's all there is to eat. Follow through with this: if they try to sneak a snack or skip to dessert, "You can have dessert once you've eaten 5 mouthfuls of dinner".

TRICKY DROP-OFFS

- **SET UP SAFTEY:** Chat to your child about what would help them feel safe / happy at school. Maybe they can take a family photo in their lunchbox, a crystal in their pocket, wear a piece of mum's jewellery ~ a way they can feel connected to home & family whilst being far from their safe space.
- **ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR FEELINGS:** "I understand you don't feel like going to school today" or "I can see you're feeling sad and you're going to miss me today".
- **COMMUNICATE** with the child's educator, let them know how your child is feeling about school. Us educators are equipped with tools to support you through this, and create connection with your child so they do feel safe in our classrooms!



- **KEEP IT SHORT & SWEET:** It can be heartbreaking to leave your child crying and upset at school, but keeping your drop-offs short and sweet allow your child to feel how much you trust their teacher and the space to hold them whilst you're gone. Have a little drop-off ritual: hang their bag up together, walk to the classroom door, whisper some loving words in their ear, bear hug & off you go.
- For the educators here, creating a visual map of the daily routine / rhythm can be a really supportive way for children to 'see' how long until home-time. Get them to move a photo of themselves along the map, as the day flows, empowering them to feel the comfort & closeness of their family returning to pick them up.

Play with these tips, and see how they can support your children through tricky transitions in a connected & loving way!

If you're experiencing challenges in other areas you'd love support with, jump in the [Facebook Community](#) & share with us.