



AN INTRODUCTION
TO ADEONA COORPAROO

Educaring (RIE)
PRACTICES

FOR FAMILIES





Welcome to the Top Centre community! The following information is a breakdown explanation of some of the practices we follow at Adeona, touching on some of the specifics of our Educaring Approach.

The Educaring® Approach encourages adult caregivers to see young children as competent and capable humans from birth. The Approach seeks to help parents and professionals build stable, secure, healthy relationships with infants and toddlers, encouraging the children's natural abilities from the very start.

This information will provide you some insight and understanding into how we work and why we do things certain ways.

Some of it will be things we may have discussed in person, or things touched on during orientation, but we want to make sure everyone has the same information to ensure consistency, and eliminate as much confusion as we can.

If you feel like you would like more information or clarification on something, you are all more than welcome to email, start a private story park conversation, or seek out a top centre Educator to arrange a time to chat that is suitable for you and the Educator (It's not always possible to have a good in depth conversation while 'on the floor' as we are always supervising and aren't always able to direct our full attention to the topic). Shared values, understandings, consistent boundaries and open dialogue help to create an efficient and productive care environment for the children, as well as enjoyable relationships between families and educators.

The goal of Educaring is to develop an authentic child who feels secure, independent, and able. Respect is a large part of the RIE philosophy, which stems from Emmi Pikler's original methodology. Parents and Educators must respect an infant's ability to learn and develop naturally and give them ample opportunity to do so. We must observe infants (and children) to best understand their individual communications and needs.



CARE GROUPS/

PRIMARY EDUCATORS

Children thrive from a base of consistent, loving and secure relationships. This is normally provided by a child's parents but it can also be provided by a 'Primary Educator' when the child attends an early childhood service. Primary Educators take responsibilities for a small group of children- they help those children in the group feel safe and cared for, meet their emotional needs and support each child's well-being.

The Primary Educator approach is characterised by a relationship of trust so that the child can feel secure within a group experience. This 'key person' is first to support all needs- including meal times, sleeping, nappy changes/toileting, as well as emotional and behavioural needs. That person is a familiar figure who is accessible and available as a point of contact for parents and one who builds relationships with the child and parents or carers. Respectful communication and relationships among parents and educators help to provide an environment that encourages learning and growth.

To support this way of being with children, Adeona utilises a primary care model whereby children are cared for, and build relationships with, a consistent carer/Educator. This Educator is supported by a secondary Educator, who builds an accompanying relationship should the primary Educator be unavailable- due to the nature of long hours services, these secondary Educator are needed to step in when the primary Educator is not at the centre (before/after their shift), so then a third Educator follows when that secondary Educator is unavailable- Adeona does its best to ensure the extra Educators covering for correct 'child to Educator ratios' in the infant and toddler rooms are familiar and consistent to the best of our ability to ensure secure relationships are able to be made and maintained.

When children feel safe they are more inclined to try things out and be more independent. They are confident to express their ideas and feelings and feel good about themselves.

Attachment influences a child's immediate all-round development and future relationships.



-INTERACTIONS-

It's important for an Educator to ask a child before they touch them, or pick them up, even if they're upset. If the child doesn't respond, or it's a situation where we need to pick them up or move them, we will tell them first *'I'm going to pick you up now'*, and then follow through within 10 seconds (this gives them a chance to process the statement, and ensure consistency between our words and our actions). If possible, we will also verbalise a reason, *'I'm going to pick you up because it's time to go inside'*. If absolutely necessary, of course an Educator can pick up the child immediately to prevent an incident, if this were the case we would communicate with the child afterwards, something like;

'I'm sorry I had to pick you up quickly/unexpectedly, I saw the your friend on the swing coming towards you and I didn't want you to get knocked over'.

Adeona Educators don't want to dismiss a child from their feelings (namely sadness, frustration, feeling unsure, feeling scared, and being hurt), rather we aim to acknowledge and validate them and do our best to be present with them while they're processing and working through that moment, sportscasting and labelling feelings.

E.g. *'Mum has left for work, I hear you, you sound like you're unhappy about that, I'll be here with you'*,

'I saw you fell over and bumped your head, that must have hurt, would you like to have a cuddle until you feel ready to play again?'

We do our best to steer clear of saying things like 'you're ok, it'll be ok, its ok, don't worry, don't cry' etc- These phrases can brush off children's real emotions and can give the message that we don't care about how they're actually feeling, and they should only feel how we want them to feel. If we over-react, and make a fuss, this can affect the way a child learns to regulate their emotions too, so our aim is to be present, mindful, respectful, and empathetic in all our interactions with the children in our care.

While we are here to offer comfort to children when they are upset, we want to do so in a respectful, supportive manner.

When most people think of 'soothing' a child, they think, shushing, bouncing, cuddling, phrases like 'its ok', or 'you're ok'- This is not how we soothe at Adeona, our Educators should acknowledge the child, their feelings, stay present and available to them, allowing them to come to us if that is what they want to do.





Children don't all wish to be soothed in the same way, some prefer not to be touched, they need space, some need 5 minutes to shout and get their emotions out before reconnecting with an adult, some will want that physical contact right away, and some again may not even be sure in the moment what it is that they want or need. Working with the children over time and building our relationships with them will help us to understand each one uniquely, and how we are best able to support them.

We will also not try to distract children from their feelings, waving a toy in their face or trying to start a sing a-long may seem to 'work' in stopping their tears, but in reality it again simply dismisses the child's feelings, it says 'my discomfort (in seeing/hearing the child upset) is more important to address than what you're feeling, so I will ignore your feelings and act like everything is fine'- this can be disrespectful and confusing for infants and toddlers, it can say to them that their emotions and urges and anxieties are not justified, not accepted, not important, and that is not something we want to instil in them.

Adeona's Educators will try to be present, and still in the room (as much as possible)- especially in the beginning as we observe the children and get to know their different personalities. We find that sitting in the space, and being present but not overbearing seems to make for the calmest environment and gives us the opportunity for sensitive observations- we also understand this is not always possible and we will need to move around to meet care needs, offer comfort, and keep the children safe- so if needed we will sportscast our own movements;



E.g. *'I'm moving over here now so I can see the children playing outside',
'I need to move into the kitchen now to prepare lunch'*



We are happy to join children's play when we are invited, but we don't want to inject ourselves into what they are doing, we don't want to 'take over', 'entertain' or 'perform' for them, rather allowing them to focus on their tasks and run through their 'play cycles' organically, without us leading their play/exploration/investigations/ learning. It's an important part of our practice at Adeona, to provide children the opportunity and respect to play, explore, and discover, on their own, in their own ways and in their own time, we strive to let them learn and discover things for themselves at their own pace. If they want to interact with an Educator, we try to be mindful to do so without 'entertaining' them or leading their play, we want the children to be authentic involved learners, and not passive recipients to adult led activities.



This practice can extend to every aspect of their learning, not just 'play', and resources, but furniture, meal times, toileting, and all of their physical movements too. We have basic trust in each child to be an initiator, to be an explorer, eager to learn what they are ready for. Educators will also try not to have the children sit on us too often too, when they're content and playing, and if they want to sit on us we might tell them they can sit next to us on the ground or on a cushion instead. If we do allow them to sit on us and they're happy, we try not to prolong it, after a few minutes we could say *'I'm going to sit you on the ground next to me, but I'm still going to stay here with you.'*

This encourages the children to engage in their play space, as well as feel comfortable and confident 'on their own', it can also help to minimise feelings of jealousy that other children might have that can be expressed through biting/ pushing/'attention seeking' behaviour, as they also try to seek a connection with us.

This carries over to cuddling/carrying children unnecessarily too- we know all too well that the urge to pick up, cuddle, and carry young children is quite primal, however this can be another unintentional intervention from adults that takes away a child's opportunities to play and explore independently. It's normal for infants and toddlers to seek connection and physical contact with adults, however it isn't always in their best interest, (or the interest of the room as a whole) to prolong this.

It's ok to pick up/cuddle a child who is seeking connection (once you have respectfully communicated with them, and if the current situation allows), but Educators must remember to be mindful of the amount of time we spend here, and when it comes time to put them down again (if they have not already moved on themselves), we will explain to them that the cuddle and moment with them has been wonderful, and it's time for them to sit/ lay back on the ground now- whether it be so they can play, or we can assist other children etc.

It's important to note, that playing with children, or offering activities/experiences; and entertaining or leading their play, are two different things. And this concept with children under 18 months, vs older, are also quite different, as children's developments and play needs change (children under 18 months are just learning to play and understand the world, and the more time we can offer them of uninterrupted exploration, the better chance they will have of being confident and independent learners as they grow).

The Educators will still absolutely be present to play and have fun with the children- keeping the child's best interests in mind (following on from an interest or idea, we won't force or coax the children to participate), as that is still considered organic play. If the children choose to join the Educators and are active participants in whatever the experience is, that will still be healthy play. Children will want to play with us! It is one of the highlights of our profession in getting to connect with children through their play and learning, and we will be continually reflecting on what our intentions in each interaction are and why we are offering each activity (and even resources).



-BOUNDARIES-

'Boundaries' are decided limitations regarding activities, areas, and actions that are set and upheld by the Educators to ensure the safety and consistency of care for everyone within the Top Centre.

Being a part of the top centre, we are reliant on our communication and consistency to make our days run smoothly and to enable us to provide a safe, secure, and calm environment for the children to learn in.

Educators need to make decisions for themselves and the children around the boundaries they encourage and hold valuable, as well as the way they actively supervise throughout the different spaces- we are all responsible for understanding the limits of each other, as well as each child, and are required to continually make judgments about how to position ourselves and communicate our movements to each other so that the children's needs and safety are being met at all times. It's important that Educators and families have a degree of shared understanding of what these boundaries are to ensure we are setting consistent examples and offering consistent situations for the children to learn in (e.g. Bikes are outside toys, sand stays in the sandpit, we all need to wear a hat outside, water bottles stay in the caddy/trolley etc)- There are many boundaries and sometimes they change with the children's abilities so you can speak to your Educators if you are unsure about any of the current expectations in your child's space.

-ALTERCATIONS-

Educators will allow the children time and opportunity to solve conflicts and challenging situations on their own before deciding to step in. If any one is in immediate danger (whether that be falling, getting bitten etc), we intervene straight away but if everyone is physically safe, we may just let them know we see what is happening, perhaps move closer to the child/children and sportscast the situation. This is the same approach we have to 'sharing/snatching/turn taking', children within our top centre age groups aren't cognitively capable of understanding 'sharing' the way an adult does; Breaking down what is needed to understand and implement sharing, children will need to have developed an understanding of a number of things including:

-self and 'mine'; -ownership; -their needs getting met ("I have all I need, now I can look around and see what others need"); -other people and their feelings (which can be different from their own); -time (for turn- taking); -patience, -control of actions and ability to override impulses (waiting; not grabbing what they want).

"When we unnecessarily intervene in a struggle by insisting that a child shares, we rob him of a social learning experience. And when we insist that our children share before they can truly understand what that means, we risk making "share" a bad word. Children share when they begin to feel empathy for others, empathy modeled through a parent's patience and trust in them" - Magda Gerber (RIE founder)

It is also our job as the responsible Educators within the room, to decide when and when not to step in during an altercation- we want to provide the children the time and space to work through things independently so they are able to feel a sense of accomplishment and control over their wants and needs. It may be enough to sportscast and describe the situation, or the possible feelings that are being felt by each child:

E.g. 'I see you have been using that car, and now Billy is trying to take it away from you, you seem frustrated',

'Billy, It looks like Bobby isn't finished using that toy, he's holding on tightly, he doesn't want you to take it'.





We don't need to say 'Billy, you can't take that'- because they can, and if that happens we can be there to talk through Bobbys feelings about the situation if needed, we don't say 'Bobby it's time to share the toy'- because we are not here to enforce 'sharing' or turn taking', we want the children to learn the value of this as they develop empathy and can understand and feel joy from sharing with others.

Sometimes we don't need to say anything, if the interaction hasn't bothered a child involved, we needn't bring attention to it and create feelings of frustration or confusion that didn't come organically from the situation- this can feel 'unfair', but if it hasn't made an impact on the child involved, we reflect on if it is fair to then 'victimise' them over something they were happy to move on from.

There may be times when children can seem stuck on taking toys from others, perhaps to see a reaction, or as a way to seek connection from an Educator, it may be part of their social learning, or perhaps whatever the other child was doing with the toy made it look really interesting, only for it to lose it's magic once the child takes it. The Educators will be able to make the decision on if and when we should intervene, if a child is continuously taking toys from others just to throw them aside and move to the next thing to take, this may be a time for us to step in, we may say;

'I'm not going to let you take anymore things from other children, we can find something else to do/are you trying to tell me something/would you like to read a story together' etc.

We may also tell them something like;

'Billy is holding on really tightly and is feeling really frustrated that your trying to take this, he isn't finished using it, I'm not going to let you take it'

"Following the RIE approach, we start with the least amount of help and intervention and then slowly increase it. We do expect and trust that even infants eventually learn most by working out conflicts all by themselves. If every time adults jump in and bring in their version of what is right, the children learn either to depend on them or defy them. The more we trust they can solve, the more they do learn to solve."

- Magda Gerber





Each scenario will be unique and the Educators involvement will depend on the situation, the children involved, their knowledge of them, the relationship between the Educator and the children, and what we think is appropriate action or non action on our part. On occasion we may also see children seemingly 'stuck' in a negative behaviour cycle, such as moving through the room pushing others, or pulling hair- when unprovoked these behaviours are much the same as a child stuck in toy taking- is it a reaction they seek, from the child, or from an adult? They are trying to communicate, and we need to decipher what it is they feel that they want or need at that time. This can look and sound a lot like the narrative from toy taking; with an added highlight on whether something is inappropriate and needs adult intervention, E.g. *'I won't let you do that, it hurts to have your hair pulled'*

In these situations Educators will show empathy for the child who has been hurt, while also acknowledging the feelings of the first child- we still need to communicate with them and figure out how to help them through this moment in a more appropriate way.

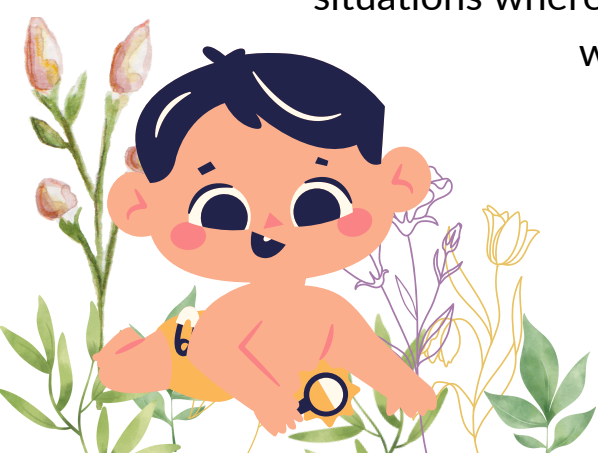
In the same respect, we will also not force or coax a child to apologise after any incidents, while manners are important and apologies will be necessary later in life, plainly saying sorry often doesn't teach compassion. However, encouraging the understanding and growth of this from within—a genuine desire to (re)connect and show compassion, being in our integrity—is more essential for healthy relationships. Having a child simply say "I'm sorry" is going to do very little for a child to grow an understanding of how they feel, why they feel, what they can do with all these feelings —all of which are precursors to compassion.

As per child psychology, toddlers have an underdeveloped ability to feel empathy or understand another person's point of view. It is an important social skill, but it is also one of the last social skills to develop, and this results in most toddlers and preschoolers showing a lack of empathy. When they can't understand how the other person feels, they can't feel bad for their actions that hurt them. Ultimately, forced apologies can 'train' children to say things that they don't mean.

What we will do instead is model apologies, and talk through/talk to the children when situations where an apology may be appropriate arise;

what happened, why did that happen, why it might not be ok, how do they feel, how does the other person feel, how can we move forward?

We want to allow the children the time and space to understand the importance of being caring and following up if they have 'wronged'.



-APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE-

The language we use with and around the children in our care is really important, we don't use labelling words like naughty, or bad, or mean, or even 'not nice', we don't shame children or blame our feelings on them;

E.g. *'You're making me angry'*, instead, we could say, *'I'm feeling frustrated'*.

We understand that our feelings are our own and we should own them, doing so with/in front of the children also provides a safe space for them to understand their own feelings and accept and understand them too.

The use of clear full sentences also give the children a capable stepping stone in their own language development (children within the top centre are about to take off from the starting line of their journey into language, and it's vital we make sure what we're saying is appropriate and fits the context of our environment).

So instead of saying worrying things like;

'Get down, you'll fall from there',

We reflect on the situation and whether we need to say anything at all.

If necessary, we could say

'Do you feel safe, I see your body is right next to the edge of the shelf?' or

'I see you've climbed up high, I wonder how you will get down now?'



We steer away from closed words or phrases like 'no', 'don't do that', 'stop that', and instead try to be mindful to give reasoning and explanation to the situation-

E.g. *'I won't let you hit your friends, that might hurt them'*,

'Please don't bang on the shelf, it's making a loud sound and that could wake our friends who are trying to rest, maybe you can bang onto the floor instead?'

'I'm going to stop you from drinking out of this water bottle, because it's not yours.'

Our tone is also just as important as the words we say, we want to be mindful to be calm, and 'real' when we talk to children (Adeona believes part of having a respectful relationship is being yourself, sharing our real selves in times where it feels appropriate), and we do our best to steer clear of sounding angry/yelling/having a bad attitude or overly authoritative. We understand we are human and we work in a sometimes high stress environment and that sometimes our ability to stay calm is also strained, but we all Educators are encouraged to reflect on these moments, to 'rebuild relationships'/check back in/explain our feelings if this happens at any time.

Eg. *'I'm feeling really frustrated right now', I felt overwhelmed before and I wasn't very present with you, I'm sorry'*.

-SUPPORTING EMOTIONAL NEEDS-

Humans are emotional creatures, this is especially true for our infants and toddlers, as they learn to understand and navigate their feelings, as well as the world around them, coming into/starting daycare is a big shift for many children (of any age), it is different to their every day lives and everything they have known up until this point, and sometimes different is unsettling, the unknown can be scary, confusing, frustrating, and children can process these emotions in a variety of ways- most commonly, to cry and become upset.



We also understand how hard it can be for you to see your child distressed, or to walk into the centre and see other children who are distressed, or an Educator with their hands full knowing you are going to need to hand over your own child who may also become upset. It is of high priority to us as your child's Educators, to create strong relationships with them throughout the day (through care moments, and moments of play and fun), from the start of their childcare journey- this is one reason we place such high value in 'orientation days and transitional visits'. We are working to get to a place of security with each child so they feel safe- safe with us, and in the space, but also safe enough to express big emotions and insecurities, to have a relationship where they can come to us for affirmation, or acceptance, and that we are still there for them in times of emotional crisis. From the start, we aim to display that we acknowledge and hear them as a person sharing their strong demands and opinions rather than perceiving them as a 'helpless, needy children'. Our reactions matter, as showing anger, or projecting sadness about their feelings can communicate we 'don't care' or are just 'feeling sorry' for them, and not seeing them as capable of getting through these big emotions, or even of simply being allowed to be in disagreement with us. It empowers them when we perceive them in a strong way. We believe nothing could be more comforting and powerfully healing than feeling accepted by our loved ones when we are at our worst.



Young children are generally far more sensitive and emotionally turbulent than adults as they have not developed an adult level of self-control- this is something we as Educator reflect on regularly and try to keep in the forefront of our minds during times of emotional stress and challenging behaviour. Being able to see and accept these impulses, helps to create our own emotional release that helps ease 'negative behaviour cycles'. At times you may see a child upset, with an Educator nearby, but not physically 'comforting' the child. This is the back end of our approach, and we call it 'holding space', when we have tried other options and the child has expressed their need for space and time to work through the emotions they're having. When a child becomes upset, we offer ourselves to them, we offer to comfort and support them, through physical contact and sportscasting, saying words like, *'you're really upset that mum has left, its hard to see her go, I'm here with you'*, if a child doesn't want us, as can be the case especially during that time of initial relationship building, we need to respect that, we tell them *'I hear you, I'm getting the message you don't want me to touch you, or talk to you, so I will sit close by, I'm here when or if you need me'*.

It can look a little different for us, as being in a daycare service with many other children, it can be hard to always remain 100% present through every moment that every child has, but we will always acknowledge whats happening, and we will always let them know what we're doing, if we need to move, where we will be, and continue to check in with them until they have worked through the emotion they're feeling. We also understand, this can look overwhelming, especially of a morning, during drop offs. A lot of children can be triggered by busyness, having the number of people around them grow, seeing other friends become upset, or adults walking in and out of the room.



This is a big reason why we believe your morning drop off ritual is so important, not just for your child, but for all the children, they need consistency, and predictability as much as we can offer it to them- and the best way we find the children are able to 'settle', is when there isn't much movement, adults do not to-and-fro unnecessarily and Educators are able to sit and 'hold space' as needed- this is another reason why children are calmer after all the drop offs have been done and we can get stuck into our 'normal' (which we do our best to share with you through our wrap ups and photos/videos at the end of the week).

- 'HELPING' -



We believe Educators should respect an infant's ability to learn and develop naturally and give them ample opportunity to do so. For this reason, we do not want to put children into positions they cant get into themselves, this includes 'tummy time', sitting up, standing up, and 'walking'. For more physically able children, even something as simple as getting onto a bike, the child needs to figure out for themselves, this goes for getting out of positions too. Educators remain present, and will sportscast situations, offering verbal and emotional support to guide the children through these movements, and then step in if the child becomes too frustrated with the situation to continue independently (e.g. trying to get off a bike, or down from a shelf they have climbed). Part of this also comes down to safety- if we continually do things for children, and help them through bigger physical movements than they are independently capable of, we can create a false feeling of safety and security in their movements, which can lead to accidents during play if they approach these same situations independently, after feeling like they 'can do it', because an adult helped them initially. Alternatively this can also foster a child's self view of inability, that they aren't able to do these things without the help of an adult and that can lead to them holding back, and not trying to learn new things on their own.

We also don't want to do things 'for' children when it comes to play and discovery, we encourage them to turn the pages in their books, open containers, build towers, connect and disconnect blocks, put on their own dress ups (in the top centre we limit these to hats, bags and shoes initially for this reason) put puzzle pieces in etc, and if they cant, we may say *'that can be frustrating, perhaps you can keep trying/ or try again later'*- we believe that just because a child feels frustration about something doesn't mean we need to step in and 'fix it'- we want to nurture a healthy relationship with trying, failing, hardship, accomplishments, and satisfaction.

We also take mind not to 'rescue' children unnecessarily, running to or fussing over a child who has fallen over can create feelings of fear and anxiety within the child because they are concerned about our reaction and what it means for them, it can also bring feelings of embarrassment, to have too much attention brought to their mishaps. We instead respond calmly, explain what we saw, offer empathy and the opportunity for the child to connect with us if they want to- this helps to allow the child time to reflect on what happened, and decide if they are upset about it (not feel like they should be upset about it because of our reaction), it gives them time to focus on themselves and decide how they feel emotionally, as well as notice if they have pain somewhere or need us to step in and help them.

-MEALS-

We aim to make our meal times consistent, following the same/very similar process each time. For group meals, educators get all the items needed for the meal gathered together on a tray, we then move the prepared tray to the meal space, and invite the child/children to join us at the table.

For the children to join a group meal/sit at the table, they need to be able to physically go to the table and get on to (and off of) their chair/stool independently- until they can do this we will continue to offer lap feeds/one on one meals. This comes down to our practice of 'meeting children where they're at', and 'not putting children into positions they cannot get themselves into/out of)

Once sat together, we go around the table in a predictable manner (e.g. from left to right) handing out each water bottle, putting on bibs if needed, and assisting or encouraging the children to wipe their hands with a wet washer. Next we will explain to the children what we have for the meal, and serve out one piece of each option. We start by serving just one piece of each item to start with, and the children can ask for more as they need it- we wait until the children have eaten all of a specific thing- including having an empty mouth, before giving them more (eg, we won't give them more apple if there's still apple on their plate, if they ask for more, we'll direct them to the apple they already have and say something like

'You have some apple there, I can give you more if you eat all of that one', or 'I can see you still have apple in your mouth, once you finish/swallow that I will be able to serve you more'

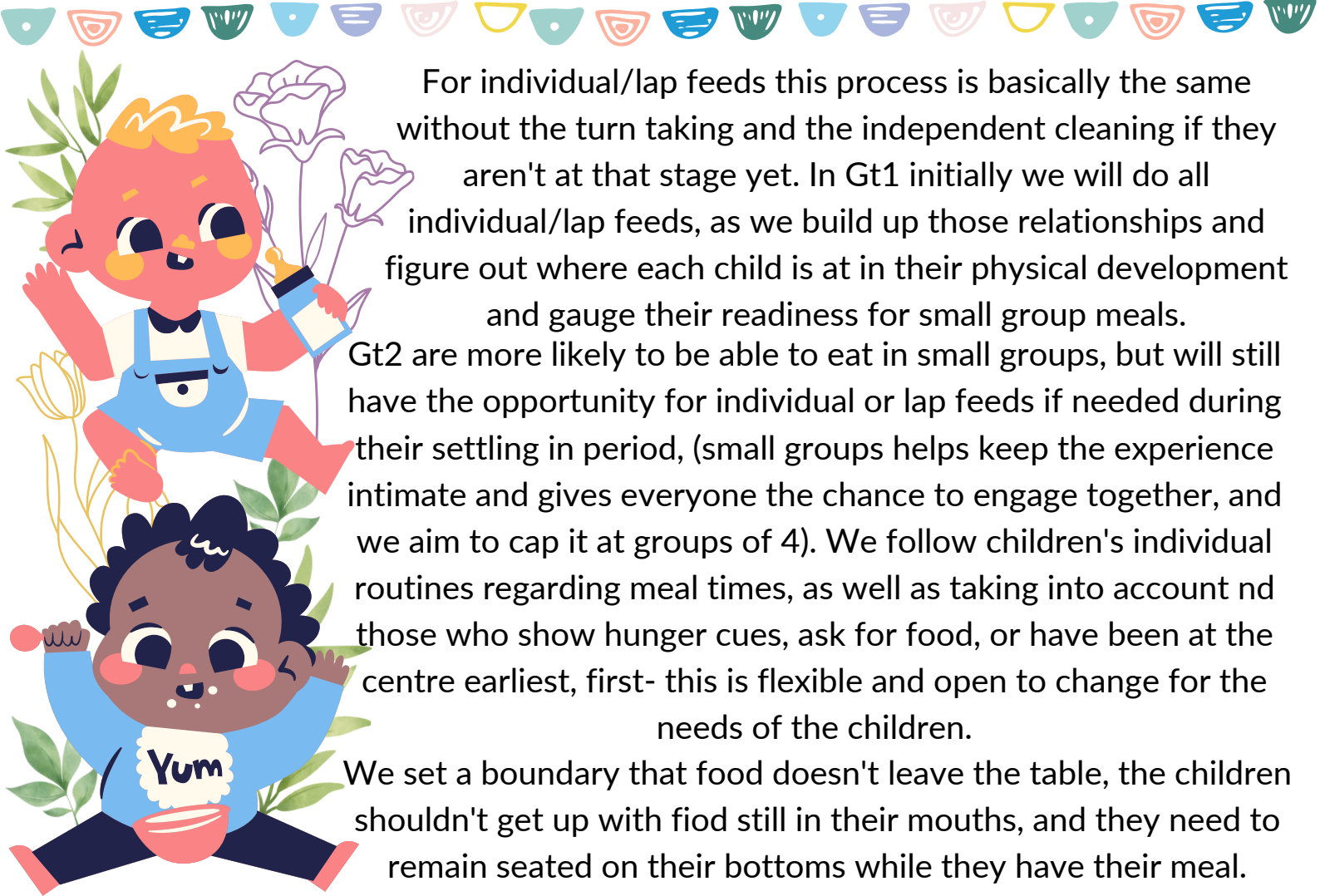
This helps with setting boundaries around wastefulness, 'taking a bite' of everything and expecting a fresh piece, as well as chewing up and spitting out food.

When the food is gone, or it looks like they're done, we ask if they're finished, if they say/sign/nod yes, we offer them their wet washer and give them the opportunity to clean their hands and faces (we also redirect them from wiping the table instead or cleaning up spills and things, to minimise the transfer of germs, the washer is just for them), if needed, we may ask them to come around to us/our side of the table for us to help them finish cleaning up.

If this is the case we open up a dialogue about it, and say something like

'I'm going to help get the last bit of food off your face, I'll use the washer to wipe your chin' etc.





For individual/lap feeds this process is basically the same without the turn taking and the independent cleaning if they aren't at that stage yet. In Gt1 initially we will do all individual/lap feeds, as we build up those relationships and figure out where each child is at in their physical development and gauge their readiness for small group meals.

Gt2 are more likely to be able to eat in small groups, but will still have the opportunity for individual or lap feeds if needed during their settling in period, (small groups helps keep the experience intimate and gives everyone the chance to engage together, and we aim to cap it at groups of 4). We follow children's individual routines regarding meal times, as well as taking into account those who show hunger cues, ask for food, or have been at the centre earliest, first- this is flexible and open to change for the needs of the children.

We set a boundary that food doesn't leave the table, the children shouldn't get up with food still in their mouths, and they need to remain seated on their bottoms while they have their meal.

We refer to the table and chairs as the meal space or the eating space, and express that this is not a place for the children to play, chairs aren't to be taken away from the table, and toys aren't taken to the table either, this helps to enforce that identity of 'meal space vs play space'. If they start to play, get off their chair or seem disinterested in the meal/food/being at the table, we ask if they're finished, if they say yes, we start the cleaning up ritual- if they say no, we can redirect them to their chair/meal.

If they say no when asked if they're finished but continue to play around, we explain why we don't want them/cant let them do x/y/z, and if they continue to do it, we say *'It seems like you're telling me you're finished now/you seem to have lost interest in your meal/when you move off your chair or start to play it tells me that you are finished eating'* etc and move to finishing up the meal too.

We offer the children all the different foods from each meal, and encourage them to try it, but we don't push it, we don't bribe or say 'two more spoons', 'just eat this much' we want the children from a young age to understand their bodies and the link between their hunger feelings and eating appropriately. If they don't eat during a meal, we monitor them and maybe offer their next meal or bottle earlier- children will generally not let themselves starve, but if we do end up with any concerns, we will start a conversation with the family about it.

We use a few baby signs with the children in regards to eating ('eat', 'more', and 'finished') and they are usually pretty quick to pick these up.

-NAPPIES AND CHANGING-

As mentioned earlier, Educators will always ask first before touching a child, so before checking a child's nappy, communication needs to be offered, if the child doesn't respond, or moves away from us, we would tell them we will come back to check them soon/in a minute. When we return, we can say; *'I'm going to check your nappy now'*.

This time we are giving a statement, rather than a question/giving an option, as it's something that does need to happen; and we will follow through with our statement within about 10 seconds- this allows time for the child to process what we have said/what's going to happen, as well as solidifying the consistency that we will do what we say.

We try our best to engage the child in the process of the nappy change (or clothing change if needed), talking about each step- to assist with this we don't take toys into the bathroom and we don't want to distract the children through the process. We want them to be as involved as they can be. We usually tell them the steps involved- that we're going to put gloves on, before putting them down onto the mat. Then once on the mat, we would talk them through each step of the changing process (sometimes we are short on time/needed back in the room and need to get things done more efficiently, but we would still talk through the process, in those cases perhaps it would sound more like

'I'm going to open the tabs of your nappy now', rather than *'lets open the tabs of your nappy, can you do one?'* etc.

We take as much time as we are able, given the current busyness of the room and other needs to be met, we don't want to rush through a change however if we feel we need to move through the motions quickly, then we would talk to the child about this;

E.g. *'Im moving a little faster than usual for this change because I can hear that the room is really busy and we need to get back to help out'*



-SLEEP AND REST-

As with all the care moments, Educators understand the importance of consistency, and work on building familiar rituals towards sleep and rest time with each child from their first day in our care.

We try to keep this time as calm as possible, which can be hard when children are worked up/over tired, but as we form relationships and get to know the individual children we come to figure out who needs us more during the process of going to sleep than others- this can vary from day to day but knowing the children and learning their needs and cues will make it easier to make decisions around what works best. Again it's about creating and following our own rituals that the children can predict and take part in. We also use a baby sign for 'sleep'.

We do aim to eventually get to a place where we don't really 'pat/rock' or 'help' anybody to go to sleep, where they will be content with our presence, and maybe just gently stroking their hair, face, or back.

Initially though we do adopt a 'do what works' (within reason) approach as we get to know everyone and build those relationships and figure out our rituals and boundaries regarding sleep time and the sleep room.

When they wake up from their sleeps, if they aren't upset or going to disturb others, we want to try not to rush to get them up straight away, we allow them to rest, and check in with them about whether they're ready to get up- if they stand up, call out, or get off their beds/come to the door (Gt2), then they are ready, but if they stay laying or sitting quietly we give them a few minutes before asking if they'd like to get up, if they don't show that they want to get up then we say we'll leave them to rest and check back on them soon. If they are playing/being loud or silly though, and others are sleeping, we will say;

'I see you're awake now, lets go out of the sleep room/I'm going to take you out of the sleep room, so the others can still rest.'

