

Stability

Key areas for conflict include: differences in settling strategies used by parents versus educators and a mismatch between a child's sleep development and number of opportunities for naps provided in the service.

Expectations regarding children's sleep and sleep practices are influenced by cultural background, social context, knowledge and experience. One issue that can arise for educators and families is when the expectation of a service or educator regarding sleep does not match a child's sleep patterns or the families sleep practices. Young children sleep needs change with their development and these changes can occur for different children at different times. Likewise child and family preferences for how children sleep can be very different. Educators need to work in partnership with families to negotiate how to best support consistency in sleep practices across the home and ECEC setting.

Practice Example 4: The Case of the Toddler Transition

Saskia, aged 16 months still need 2 sleeps a day. Her parents drop her off at her service at 6.30 am and by 9.30am she is very tired. At 12 when the toddlers standard sleep time commences she is not ready to sleep again. In response the service has kept Saskia in the baby room, where there is a separate sleep room and sleep time is flexible, and not yet transitioned her to the toddler room that has a scheduled sleep time for 2 hours in the middle of the day. Saskia's parents are concerned that she has not transitioned with children of her age and that she is not getting the new experiences of the toddler room.

Reflective questions:

What does 'genuine partnership' look like in this case?

What advice might you give this educator?

What resources might be useful to help support discussion with the family?

Here is an example of how one educator worked in partnership with the family to resolve this issue:

The educator met with the Saskia's parents and the service director to discuss their concerns. It was resolved in discussion with educators across both rooms that Saskia transition to the Toddler room but utilise the sleep space in the baby room until she only needed a single sleep. The director took the opportunity from this example to discuss the management of sleep and rest and reflect on how the educators across different rooms at the service could work together to provide for greater flexibility of timing of sleep for the children.