

I'm so happy to see you





RECONNECT

REFUEL

RELAX

ROUTINE

RECONNECT

Slowing down and **reconnecting** with your child when you come to collect them, shows your child that you are emotionally and mentally available to them after a day of separation.

Before asking too many questions, checking their lunchbox or rushing to sign them out, take a moment to connect and tune in to them.

KEY TIPS

- Getting down on your child's level.
- Your child may want a hug or to be picked up.
- Your child will often want to show you something they've created or to share with you an activity they've been enjoying.
- Listen and observe with interest.
- Limit questions, checking lunchbox or rushing to sign them out.

REFUEL

After a long day of playing and learning, many children will feel very hungry at pick up and need to **refuel**. Your child may have eaten all of their lunchbox, or very little, yet it is best to assume they have an empty tank. Children may be feeling tired and in need of a snack and some quiet time to play, read, rest, or get some fresh air before they feel ready to talk about their day.

Many children do better if they aren't asked, "Are you hungry?". Instead, offering food that they can accept or decline once collected from care.

KEY TIPS

- Bringing a small snack for the trip home like crackers, fruit or yoghurt.
- Out of eyeline of your child, you could offer your child leftover foods from their lunchbox, ensuring not to question what they have/have not eaten.
- Bring dinner earlier on care days if this is an accessible option.

RELAX

It can be tempting to jump in with questions as soon as you see your child “What did you do? Did you have fun? Who did you play with?”.

Instead, **relax** into being reunited and give your child space to unwind first. Follow your child’s lead with the conversation and interactions, being sure to not pressure for answers.

KEY TIPS

- If you are driving, put on the radio and stay quiet. Breathe and relax.
- If you are walking, say little or just comment on the nice things you notice: “Did you see that cute little yellow bird?” This isn’t the time for big conversations.
- Validate your child’s experience and emotions “that sounds exciting”, “I can see that felt really hurtful” and asking open questions “So, what do you think you could do if that happens again?”, “Has that happened before?”

ROUTINE

Creating a predictable pick up **routine** can assist with the transition time after care and can help your child feel safe and secure, particularly when new things are happening. For most families, it can be a busy time leading into dinner and bedtime, so establishing a predictable pattern can make the transition smoother for your family.

Routines after pick up may look like; collecting other sibling's, going to a park, riding bikes, hanging up artworks together, helping with dinner preparations or setting the dinner table.

KEY TIPS

- Communicate with your child about the next step in the routine.
- Some children may need to be active and move their bodies (eg. run, jump, skip to the car or on the walk home).
- Building rhythms around daily meals together where the whole family can come together, talk, and share about the day (this may be dinner or breakfast).
- Connecting with your child during bedtime through bath time routine, singing bedtime songs, reading books, or snuggling and chatting in bed before sleep.

REFERENCES

Starting Blocks: Supporting children during transitions.

Link: StartingBlocks.gov.au

A Beautiful Childhood: How was your day?
Reconnecting with your child after daycare or school.

Link: <https://fridabemighty.com/>

The Centre for Perinatal Health: 7 ways to help your child with their after school restraint collapse

Link: <https://www.perinatalhealth.com.au/>

Raising Children: Family Routines

Link: <https://raisingchildren.net.au/preschoolers>