

Settling In Policy



Policy Statement

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the provision and to feel secure and comfortable with staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's wellbeing and their role as active partners with the provision.

Aim

We aim to make the provision a welcoming place where children settle quickly and easily because consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of children and their families.

Procedure

In order to help children, settle comfortably in our provision we use the following procedure.

1. Before a child starts to attend the provision, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our prospectus and policies), displays about activities available within the provision, information days and evenings and individual meetings with parents.
2. Before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the provision.
3. We allocate a key person to each child and his/her family before she/he starts to attend; the key person welcomes and looks after the child and his/her parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.
4. We may offer a home visit by the person who will be the child's key person and a supporting staff member, to ensure all relevant information about the child can be made known.
5. We use pre-start visits and the first session at which a child attends to explain and complete with his/her parents the child's registration records.
6. Parents are advised to arrange times for a settling-in visit when the child is normally at their most content, ie not hungry or in need of a sleep. Whilst parents are welcome to stay for these sessions we normally recommend that they do leave the child for a short period. The key worker can discuss with parents how this will be arranged so it is the least distressing to child and parent. They will ensure they know how to settle the child if he/she becomes distressed. Parents will be contacted immediately if staff are unsuccessful at settling a child and other strategies will be tried.
7. Children are encouraged to bring in a comfort object (clearly labelled with their name) if it will enable them to settle.
8. Some children take longer to settle. This can be for a variety of reasons; maybe they have not been left before or have had an unhappy previous experience when parted from their main carers. The key person will work with the parents to try different settling techniques. These might include

leaving items of clothing that smell of a main carer, photographs of their family, tapes of their family singing lullabies or talking in their home language, etc.

9. When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with his/her parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the provision.
10. Younger children will take longer to settle in, as will children who have not previously spent time away from home. Children who have had a period of absence may also need their parent to be on hand to re-settle them.
11. We judge a child to be settled when they have formed a relationship with their key person; for example the child looks for the key person when he/she arrives, goes to them for comfort, and seems pleased to be with them. The child is also familiar with where things are and is pleased to see other children and participate in activities.
12. When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when. We do not advocate sneaking off, as this can then develop trust issues and will do more damage than good in the long run.
13. We recognise that some children will settle more readily than others but that some children who appear to settle rapidly are not ready to be left. We expect that the parent will honour the commitment to stay on hand for at least the first week, or possibly longer, until their child can stay happily without them.
14. We do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle any quicker. We believe that a child's distress will prevent them from learning and gaining the best from the provision.
15. We reserve the right not to accept a child into the provision without a parent or carer if the child finds it distressing to be left. This is especially the case with very young children.
16. Within the first four to six weeks of starting we discuss and work with the child's parents to create their child's record of achievement.