

Settling your child into childcare

Thank you for choosing our centre. This letter may help you to get to know us and the centre better, and get some idea of what we do to help your child feel happy and secure. And you'll also want to know what you can do to make it easier for your child to settle successfully into child care.

Before your child actually starts attending, we really encourage you to spend some time in the centre together, so your child gets to know the place, the sights, sounds, smells, toys and people. We usually recommend a visit two weeks before the start date, with a couple or more visits that gradually get a little longer. When you both go to the centre for a visit, the teachers will encourage you to join in the activities. If your child sees you're enjoying yourself, and feeling relaxed and happy, he's more likely to settle himself- children often detect when their parents are anxious, so it's part of their confidence building to see that you think this new place is ok, and fun.

Our philosophy is to treat each child with respect, and to honour his or her individuality, so we'll ask you questions so we can note down your child's preferences around routines, food, toileting, how she likes to be soothed (particularly important for very young children), and how she asks for and accepts affection. With very young children, we will ask how he sleeps, whether on his left or his right, how he likes to have his bottle, does he have a special way of wrapping up and so on.

Other things teachers will talk to you about might be what your child does at home, his or her interests, the family, what languages are spoken, any cultural heritage, favourite stories, and any special toys or blankets she uses for

comfort. This helps your child, and helps us to develop an individual learning programme. We'll give you the daily schedule or routine that the centre uses to support the learning environment, and provide predictability and security for the children throughout the day. For younger children you may be given a communication book that goes between the centre and home, providing daily information, and in which you can also write things that have been happening at home if you wish. The better the communication between home and us at the centre, the better we will be able to care for your child.





These steps will help your child to settle in:

Step 1.

Talk about the centre, the teachers and the activities after your first visits, so that the idea of going there becomes familiar to him.

Step 2.

When you arrive together, ask what activity your child wants to start with. Be direct, so your child knows what to expect.

Our teachers suggest that talking about who she might play with when she gets to the centre, gives your child something to focus on and what she's going to do.

Step 3.

Ask your child which teacher he wants to look after him when you leave. This helps your child to know that you also trust this person, and that you know they will be able to comfort him if he needs it. Warn that teacher that he or she is the chosen one!

Step 4.

Don't slip away when you think your child is so absorbed that she won't notice. She will, and her trust will have been broken, and she will not feel safe. Instead, warn her a little in advance that you'll be leaving, and you will return to pick her up at the end of the session (or earlier if you can manage it on the first few days). Then, when you are ready, calmly give her a hug and a kiss, tell her you'll be back with all the other mums

and dads, and then leave, smiling and waving, so she knows everything is ok.

Our professionally trained teachers are skilled at comforting and re-assuring children. They'll acknowledge your child's feelings when you leave by telling them re-assuring things like: "I will keep you safe and play with you till mum/dad comes to get you after lunch. I will be here when you need me".

You can be quite sure that one of us will stay within range of your child, so we can see immediately if he needs comfort or re-assurance. We'll talk to him about all the things he can do and introduce him to the other children, and we'll wait for his cue as to when he's ready to start exploring the centre.

At the end of the day we'll tell you how it all went, and discuss anything that might make the transition easier for your child.

If you've any questions or want help in preparing your child, do ask us. We want your child to be happy with us, we want all our children to love coming to the centre and beginning their learning journey,

With best wishes from the teaching team.

PS. We never mind you calling to find out how your child is getting on in those first few days. So if it would give you peace of mind call us.

