



Parent Guide to 'Settling In'

Why is settling in so important to get right?

When children are settled, they feel secure and happy. Children need to be secure and happy in order to learn. Research shows that children with high levels of wellbeing make the best progress.

Settling in

The experience can be overwhelming for young children, especially if they have not had experience of another form of care outside of the family or they have a very strong bond with the parent/carer or not had much opportunity to build independence. All are perfectly normal! Separation anxiety is a healthy and protective emotion. It is the child's way of saying "You are my safe place and I need to develop trust and confidence in other carers." Recognising separation anxiety is a good starting point. It means you can prepare for the event and turn it into an adventure, allowing both you and your child to feel stronger and empowered. It is the job of the early years practitioner to ensure your child settles well but parents can really help the transition run smoothly.

Settling in Policy

Read the settings 'settling in policy' so that you are aware of the routines that will be expected of you and your child. Like adults, children need reassurance and it's good to talk through the daily routines and let them know when you will pick them up, for example, after story time. Chat to your child about any concerns they have. Your child may be anxious to know what to do for example if they need to go to the toilet. Talk to your child in a positive way about these concerns.

Saying goodbye

Although you may be feeling as anxious and emotional as your child, it is imperative to stay cheery and confident as children will pick up on your feelings of apprehension. If they see you are happy to leave them, they will feel more secure. Don't be tempted to slip away, it is important when your child starts the early years setting to let the child know when you are leaving because otherwise they will be in a state of constant worry that you can disappear at any time and will lead to the child becoming anxious and not letting you out of their sight on the next visit. Tell your child firmly that you are going and will be back after an activity, for example story time. If they cry, keep smiling, wave say goodbye and once you say goodbye, leave. If your child is clinging onto you the Early Years Practitioner will hold your child, hug and comfort your child while you leave and until they are settled this could take some time. If your child is upset on entering the setting the Early Years Practitioner will communicate with you to let you know how your child is doing through the day. Parents are able to contact the setting at any time.

Relationships

Relationships are key to settling in and to continuous progress. An Early Years Practitioner aims to build a good relationship with you and your child throughout your child's time at the setting. A consistent and sensitive relationship is needed. Early Years Practitioner's will care for your child; they will hug and comfort them, they will read with them, they will change their nappy, all with love and care. They will form close bonds with your children and make sure children feel safe, loved, happy and have a sense of belonging. As a parent it is vital to build good relationships with your child's care giver or key person. Parents can give the staff information about the child and in turn the staff can talk to the parents about the child's experiences in the setting. Early Years Practitioners are aware of the difficulties that can emerge during this transition period. If your child is taking longer to settle in than you had expected, and you still have concerns, discuss these with them. Together you can agree on and put into place strategies to support your child during this time. Helping your child to grow in confidence and independence.