



SETTLING IN POLICY – Including The Key Person

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the preschool 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 preschool.

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

Procedures

Before a child starts

Before a child starts with us we offer a stay and play session. This session is accompanied by a parent/carer and is an opportunity for the child to become familiar with the environment.

Each family is required to have a settling session at the preschool before their child starts. This gives the parent and child an opportunity to meet their key person. It gives the key person an opportunity to complete any outstanding paperwork and to discuss the best settling in process for the child and to explain their role. It also gives the child an opportunity to spend some time at the setting with the security of their parents/carers. At settling sessions, parents/carers will be asked to provide a copy of their child's birth certificate as well as a copy of their child's Progress Check at Age 2, if this has taken place. We ask parents/carers to complete an "All About Me" questionnaire on behalf of their child to assist us in getting to know the child and preparing for them starting at our setting. Settling sessions are arranged to be as close to the child's actual start date as possible.

Children who start at the preschool at the beginning of the Autumn term will have the opportunity to have a 'Taster Session'. This is a morning or afternoon session where the child comes to the setting and stays without their parent. The setting will have additional staff on hand to help reassure children. The Taster Session is charged at the setting's standard hourly rate.

Key Person

Each child is allocated a key person upon starting. The child's key person will be determined by the working pattern of staff. Parents/carers will be informed of who their child's key person is prior to starting. The child's key person will do their best to get to know the child by spending time with them and will build a bond to create a secure attachment. This will help them to feel safe and secure.

The key person is responsible for:

- Providing an induction for the family and for settling the child into our setting. Building a bond to get to know the child and understand their needs.
- Providing assistance with the completion of relevant forms (as required), including consent forms.
- Explaining our policies and procedures to parents where needed.
- Offering unconditional regard for the child and being non-judgmental.
- Working with the parents to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
- Acting as the key contact for the parents.
- Updating developmental records and observations and share information on a regular basis with the child's parents to keep those records up-to-date, reflecting the full picture of the child in our setting and at home. We use an online system called Tapestry to record and share this information.
- Having links with other carers involved with the child and coordinating the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.
- Encouraging positive relationships between children.
- Completing the child's Progress Check at Age 2 (if this has not been done by another setting).

When a child starts at preschool

How a child settles at preschool is dependent on numerous factors (such as previous experiences, age, personality). The child's key person and other members of staff will work with families to help their child settle as quickly as possible. A child is considered to have "settled" into the preschool, if they come in and happily say goodbye to their parent/carer, or if they show minimal distress, quickly settle with a member of staff, and then go on to participate actively in preschool activities.

When children are new to preschool, activities will be considered which help the children interact with their peers to help them make friends and build a sense of belonging at preschool.

Parents/carers are encouraged to say goodbye to their child and leave quickly and allow members of staff to settle their child.

If a child is distressed, and cannot be settled by a member of staff, every effort will be made to distract them and find activities that they enjoy. Parents/carers will be informed by phone how their child is settling if required. The setting will work closely with families to find ways to ensure that their child can settle at preschool. Should parents/carers be worried about how their child is settling, they should speak to the manager or their child's key person who will be happy to have a meeting with them to discuss how to proceed.

At the end of a child's first session a member of staff will feedback to parents/carers about how their child has managed their day.

Within the first term at preschool parents/carers are invited to come to a parent consultation to discuss their child's settling and developmental progress.

Comforters

If it helps a child to settle, they are more than welcome to bring in a comforter. However, as the child becomes more confident and comfortable in the setting, staff members will encourage the child to keep their comforter in their bag (to avoid loss or damage and also to reduce dependency on it). If parents/carers wish to send their child in with a comforter, please be aware that it could go astray or get damaged. The preschool does not encourage the use of dummies. Staff will work with parents/carers as needed to develop strategies so that these are not depended on.

Policy written June 2023