



SETTLING IN POLICY

Statement of intent:

We want children to settle in to the pre-school as soon as possible so that they feel safe and happy in the absence of their parents, enabling them to enjoy learning through play and projects from an early stage. If they feel safe and happy they will also learn to recognise other adults as a source of authority, help and friendship and to share their new pre-school learning experiences with their families back at home.

Aim:

Our aim is to make children and parents feel welcome from the start and to encourage a partnership approach between the pre-school and parents to their children's development and learning.

Methods:

To achieve this aim we operate the following Settling In Policy:

1. We create opportunities for a two-way exchange of information, using among other resources a copy of the pre-school information guide and a shared approach to the registration form – see **ADMISSIONS POLICY**.
2. We ensure that there are plentiful opportunities for parents to inform the pre-school about their children's current achievements and interests.
3. We encourage parents to visit pre-school with their children during the weeks before an admission is planned.
4. If required, we offer to arrange a home visit in order to gain more insight into the child's background and needs and to allow the child and family to become familiar with pre-school staff.
5. We operate flexible admission procedures, if appropriate, to meet the needs of individual families and children.
6. We make clear to families from the outset that they will be welcome and supported in the pre-school for as long as it takes to settle in their child.
7. We reassure parents whose children seem to be taking a long time settling into pre-school.
8. We endeavour to introduce new families into the group on a staggered basis, for example two new children a day for a week rather than 10 new children all at once.
9. We encourage parents, where appropriate, to separate from their children for brief periods at first, gradually building up to longer absences.

Children cannot play or learn successfully if they are anxious and unhappy. Our settling procedures aim to help parents and children to feel comfortable in the pre-school, and to ensure that children can benefit from what the group has to offer and feel confident that their parents will return at the end of the session/day.

Even after all this sound preparation, some children might not be ready just yet. A birth certificate is no real guide to the child's readiness for pre-school. Some children are ready for pre-school at about three years of age and some are not. Behaviour, not age, is a good guide to readiness. The child who is eager to tackle new experiences, even in the presence of a stranger, who enjoys playing with other children and is used to short periods away from his parent is one who is probably ready to try pre-school.

Pre-school keyworkers are trained enough in this situation to share with a parent their concerns if they do not feel the child is quite ready. A possible solution is for the adult to stay with their child in the pre-school for a longer period until their child is really settled, or to delay the start for a few weeks until their child is a little older and more ready.

Some children just don't settle. This is fairly rare but it does happen. It is important for everyone to know that it can happen to perfectly happy, intelligent, secure children. It might be that such a child is simply not ready for pre-school yet and admission needs to be delayed for half a term or so.

Refer also to:

ADMISSIONS POLICY