



## Settling in Policy

We aim for children to feel safe, stimulated, and happy in our Playgroup and to feel secure and comfortable with all the staff. We want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners, with the child being able to benefit from what the Playgroup has to offer.

We aim to support parents and other carers to help their children settle quickly and easily by considering the individual needs and circumstances of each child and their families.

Playgroup staff will work in partnership with parents to settle their child into the setting environment by:

- Providing parents with relevant information regarding the policies and procedures of the Playgroup.
- Encouraging the parents and children to visit the Playgroup before they start. We offer a settling in session for all new starters at the beginning of September.
- Allocating a key person to each child and his/her family before they start Playgroup. The key person welcomes and looks after the child and their parents during the settling in period, and throughout their time at Playgroup.
- Welcoming parents to come into the setting with their child until the child feels settled and the parents feel comfortable about leaving their child.
- Ensuring good communication and information sharing between staff and parents to help with a smooth transition.
- Reassuring parents whose children seem to be taking a long time settling into the setting.
- Encouraging parents, where appropriate, to separate themselves from their children for brief periods at first, gradually building up to longer absences dependent on individual needs, age, and stage of development of their child.
- Reviewing the nominated key person if the child is bonding with another member of staff to ensure the child's needs are supported
- Respecting the circumstances of all families, including those who are unable to come into the setting to settle their child.

On a child's first day parents may want to stay a while to see that their child is settled and happy, however they need not feel obliged to do this and may leave soon after saying goodbye to their child. Some children settle faster if their parents say goodbye and leave quickly rather than prolonging the situation and increasing the child's anxiety.

Your child's keyworker will discuss and agree how long your child's first few days will be. Ideally the first few days should be shorter and planned so that the child is introduced gradually into the new environment, does not get too distressed and is not the last one to be collected, as this can be upsetting for them. Often children need to increase session times slowly until they feel safe and have made a secure attachment to a member of staff. We understand that this can cause difficulties for working parents however, we advise that for the first couple of weeks of starting Playgroup someone is available to collect the child early if needed. We will call the parent if any child becomes overly distressed and we feel that they have had enough. The first few weeks of Playgroup can be overwhelming and very tiring for your child so please understand that we have your child's best interests in mind if you are asked to collect them.

For children attending afternoon sessions we will ask that they start after lunch at 1pm when they first start with us. This is due to us sitting straight down to lunch when all the afternoon children have arrived, this can be very upsetting and confusing for a child who is expecting to come to play and excited to investigate what is on offer when they arrive.

Parents are invited to telephone the Playgroup at any point during the day to check that all is well.

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