



09 Childcare practice procedures

09.4 Prime times – Settling in and transitions

To feel securely settled and ready to learn, children need to form attachments with the adults who care for them, primarily a key person, but others too. In this way they feel part of a community; they are able to contribute to that community and receive from it. Very young children, especially two- to three-year-olds, approach separation from their parent with anxieties, older children have a more secure understanding of 'people permanence' and are able to approach new experiences with confidence; but also need time to adjust and feel secure. It is the entitlement of all children to be settled comfortably into a new environment.

Our pattern of delivery of sessions is designed so that children can take shorter sessions initially and build up to a longer half day or full day if parents need a flexible nursery place.

The information below is the routine for normal circumstances. In some instances for example during a pandemic our risk assessments prevent the following steps being possible as the safety of all stakeholders must be paramount and settling in will follow an agreed pattern at the time.

Two-year-olds starting at Playpen for the first time

- A two-year-old may have little or no experience of group care. As part of gathering information from parents, it is important to find out about the child's experience of non-parental care, for example grandparents, or childminder; this informs staff as to how a child may respond to a new situation. This information is generally gathered in the pre-admission process.
- Our open afternoons where parent and child spend time at the setting prior to starting is encouraged so parents, child and staff can get to know each other and begin to make relationships.
- If a child is having trouble settling we will formulate a settling plan and gradually extend the time a child is left without their parent until the child can manage a whole session.
- Separation causes anxiety in two-year-olds, as they have no concept of where their parents have gone. Parents should always say goodbye and tell them when they will return. Patience with the process will ensure children are happy and eager to come to play and be cared for in the setting.

Three- and four-year-olds

- Most children of this age can move through the stages more quickly and confidently.
- Some children take longer, and their needs should be accommodated as much as possible.

For children whose first language is not English

- For many children learning English as an additional language, settling can take longer.
- With the parent the key person will make a list of key words in the child's home language; sometimes it is useful to write the word as you would pronounce it so these words can be used with the child.
- The key person prepares for the child's visits by having a favourite toy or activity ready for the child to provide a means to interact with the child.
- Children will be spoken to as per any other child, using gestures and facial expressions to help.
- Progress with settling in will be done as with any other child; it just takes a little longer to reach dependency/independence.