

## 5 things to know about...

### Settling in



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#### 1 It takes time

How long it takes varies from one child to another. Settling at nursery is a gradual process that cannot be rushed.

Children settle in different ways. Whilst they may seem fine quite early on, this may change. The child will express this through their behaviour if unable to say what they are feeling.

Some settings give a minimum length time for the parent to stay. This avoids parents thinking their child has settled very quickly.

#### 2 It starts before the child's first day

An open and trusting relationship with the family forms the bedrock of this transition. Building this starts at the first meeting between the setting and family.

The home visit (when possible) is when the key person further nurtures the relationship, which continues to develop the parent and child visits to the nursery.

During visits key person and staff will see how the child and parent interact: this will help them identify things which could be helpful to settling in and things that the parent and child may need supporting with.

### 3 The parent needs to know about the process

An accessible settling in policy outlining its main principles helps parents to understand the process. Talking this through with them is a good way to introduce it.

Brief and pragmatic guidelines about the parent's role during settling in can be useful- just enough for them to know what to do and what not to do. This should include pragmatic things like switching their phone off and where to sit.

### 4 A confident atmosphere is invaluable

There may be a lot of nervousness and anxiety, so it is important that staff instill a note of confidence: a 'can do' attitude is important. When the child gets upset, the key person can reassure the parent that it's only natural.

Encouraging parents to express interest and enthusiasm about their child's new adventure can help the child feel more confident.

It is a good idea for the key person to know/ learn a few basic words if the child's has EAL (toilet, home, cold, hot, sad, thirsty). This helps them to understand the child's basic needs and the child will feel confident that they will be understood.

### 5 Preparing for their first day

This starts with the key person warmly welcoming the child and parent as they did on visiting days.

Having particular things ready will provide familiarity and warmth: favourite toys and objects, a special bag, something with their name and photograph. Joining them up with a child they previously connected with can also help.

Taking a family photo when you are on the home visit or on the first setting visit. This can help some children as they can refer to it for comfort or use it to talk to their key person about their family. Keep in mind that photos may comfort some children, but will cause others to miss their family. This can be assessed with the parents.

\*parent is used to refer to the carer or close person who will consistently accompany

Further reading:

*PACEY: [Helping your child settle in](#)*

*[Handbook for families](#), Sheringham Nursery School and Children's Centre*

