

Settling in Policy for Early Learning and Childcare Settings

Starting in a new Early Learning and Childcare setting is a major event in a child's life and this time of transition should be a positive experience for children and families. Care and attention must be given to the needs of each child and family when settling into the Early Learning and Childcare environment and routine.

'Research tells us that a child's individual personal characteristics, their family background and experiences will have an influence on how well they adjust to the challenges of a new situation. We should not expect babies and young children to immediately settle into unfamiliar routines or playroom layouts without careful preparation. Such preparation would include well considered settling in arrangements being discussed and agreed with parents.' (Realising the Ambition)

Aims

- To offer a welcoming and nurturing environment where children and families feel valued, happy, safe and secure
- To develop positive relationships with children and families
- To work in partnership with families to settle the child into the setting
- To recognise and support the individual needs of children and their families during the settling in period

The staff will:

- Arrange introductory visits to the setting for children and families prior to the placement commencing.
- Offer additional introductory visits when required in order to meet the needs of the children and/or families, such as those with additional support needs.
- Link with ELC settings children have previously attended.
- Liaise with other ELC settings where children have blended placements.
- Allocate a key worker to each child to ensure that all families and children have an identified contact person to assist with the settling in process and also over the course of their time in the setting.
- Be familiar with information in Enrolment Forms for the appropriate key worker group.
- Warmly welcome new children and their families to the setting on each visit.
- Ensure 'Being Me!' information is gathered from families prior to the placement commencing. This will be a basis for planning to support each child's development, learning and wellbeing.
- Offer familiar play experiences and opportunities both indoors and outdoors to promote children's confidence and self-esteem.
- Be flexible in response to individual needs such as making arrangements for the child to be collected early on the first few days if necessary.
- Deal sensitively with any anxieties children and/or families may have.
- Invite families to stay for a sufficient time so that the child feels settled and the family feels comfortable about leaving them.
- Liaise with families daily during the settling in period and share relevant information about their child.
- Liaise with the families of children who do not settle after a period of time to develop strategies which may help their child settle into the setting. If a child continues to be unsettled, it may be advisable to review the situation and consider deferring their attendance at the setting for a trial period.
- Be aware that the settling in period has no time limits and may need to be repeated if a child becomes unsettled.
- Share the transition policy with families.

The Head of Setting will:

- Arrange an information meeting to inform families of the settling in process and key information relating to the setting including family engagement.

- Monitor, evaluate and review the above arrangements with staff and adjust them according to need.