

Settling In and Transition

Settling In

At Incey Winceys Day Nursery and Preschool we know that children settle best when they feel comfortable, respected and loved. The bond between a key person and the child is one of the most important aspects of the day to day care we provide.

This begins from the first meeting and extends throughout the settling in period and beyond.

We offer a two-week settling in period for every child starting with us, regardless of age or planned attendance, although this can be tailored to the child and their family, e.g. an older child who has attended a setting previously may need less settling. We are aware that usually younger children take longer to settle in, though there are certain developmental phases of awareness that their parents are leaving, and every child and family is different.

During the first initial meeting, the parent brings in the child and they both stay and play for around an hour. The key person joins them (usually in a quiet area of the setting to allow for conversation) and goes into as much detail as possible about the child's routine at home, likes and dislikes and any personal details about the care we need to provide to meet their needs. This includes words in other languages spoken, details about their dietary requirements and general health and signing additional consent forms e.g. Long-term medication forms. Most of this information is written and saved on the Tapestry app, and parents will be sent an email with a link to set up a password to access their child's learning journal.

The next day (or next settling in session) the parent leaves the child at the setting for up to an hour. We recommend a fairly quick drop off to avoid the child getting the idea that the parent will be staying, but we are sensitive to the parent's needs as well as the child's and if necessary, the parent can remain in the room but out of sight or go to the staff room to wait.

We build up the number of hours the child stays with us as slowly or as quickly as the child can manage, being flexible around the parent and their other commitments while providing a consistent and steady increase in the hours.

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We will always call the parent if the child is overly distressed, as although most children cry at some point during the settling in period, there may be days where the child is not coping e.g. if they are not well.

Gradually we include meal times and sleep times as well as playing until we are fully satisfied that the child is comfortable with us, and that we can meet their needs.

At the end of the two weeks, usually on the last day of settling, we recommend that the child stays for a full day with us, with drop offs and pick-ups at the usual time of day to allow the parent an opportunity to practice them as they would usually be. It's good to allow a "dry run" of the busiest times of the day before the return to work as many parents feel anxious on their first day back to work.

If two weeks have not been enough to fully settle the child, the key person should alert the room leader to plan what we will do.

Often, children like to look at photographs of their loved ones and this can be a great way to link home and nursery too, so we welcome copies sent to inceywinceys@rocketmail.com for us to print and laminate.

What can you do to aid the process of settling?

During the settling period it is imperative for the parent to feel as calm and sure in their decision to leave their child, and to ask questions before if there are any concerns at all. A quick drop off is the best way to help the child to understand that you are leaving, always say goodbye (sneaking off never helps!) and be prepared that they may cry. Our staff are trained for this and are great at distracting children so they usually only cry for a few minutes.

Call as often as you like once you've left and the staff are happy to give you updates about how your little one is getting along. Also, make sure you've got your Tapestry app ready to keep an eye on their progress (but please bear in mind that the focus during the settling is on making a bond with the child so sometimes observations may take a few days to be published on Tapestry).

We ask that parents do not visit their child during the day, or try to look through the windows etc, as this is unsettling and can be damaging for the settling process, and the child's wellbeing during their time with us. This

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applies to children of all ages, right through preschool. The routine is well established and supported with visuals, children thrive through structure and often unscheduled visits can be very disruptive, on that child or others around them.

We rely on good communication with staff to allow us to plan effectively.

Transition Between Rooms

When changing from one room to the next (upon turning 2 or 3) we follow similar guidelines, internally. The key person will first introduce the child to their new key person and new room and stay for an hour if possible. They will then build up the hours, gradually increasing them to include mealtimes and sleep times if appropriate.

Parents are encouraged to meet the new key person and where possible, a meeting will be arranged to enable this.

‘Mover sheets’ are completed by the existing key person and given to the new key person, along with access to developmental records and next steps to ensure the child’s learning development is continued via Tapestry.

Transition onto School or Other Settings

It is the aim of the nursery, and particularly the preschool, that we do all we can to prepare the children for school. Schools are liaised with prior to the child’s admittance, and wherever possible we will arrange for visits to be undertaken. We will also invite the child’s new teachers to attend the setting so that the child is familiarised with them.

Other transitional steps will be taken in the run up to the child starting school, such as a transition table with school uniforms and packed lunch boxes etc. Wherever possible we will have pictures of the school, for the children to look at in the run up to them starting. Preschool completes a summative assessment report for the parents to take to school when they visit, and an “All About Me” booklet with need-to-know details about the child.

If a child has additional needs, with parental consent, staff will share information to ensure the teacher and the school are as prepared as possible to meet their needs, this may include the production of an EHC plan (See SEN Policy for more details).

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