



Settling-In without Tears: Advice & Tips for Parents/Carers

This document contains ideas developed by Penny Tassoni, leading author and childcare expert.

Starting at a new childcare setting is a big step for young children. It can also a big step for parents too! Leaving your child with someone that you don't know very well (yet!) is hard and so it is normal to feel anxious. At Playtime, our aim is to work with you to make the settling-in process as smooth as possible. The aim of our policy is therefore to settle the child in without too many tears.

Working together

In order for your child to settle in, we need to work together. Settling in is a process. Your child has to build a relationship with their Key Person (and other staff members) and feel comfortable before they will be ready to leave you. We will therefore need to work in partnership to make this happen.

Building a relationship

The starting point for settling is relationships. Children need to feel that their parents are happy and relaxed about them playing and being at nursery with their Key Person. You can help this process by letting practitioners play with your child, whilst you stand back. This sends the message to the child that their Key Person is a 'safe' person. Do not sneak off whilst your child is playing. Your child may otherwise associate playing with their Key Person with losing their parent.

Nursery is a place where my Key Person plays with me

It is important that children learn that nursery is a place where Practitioners play with them. It is not a place where they come and Mummy or Daddy stays and plays. This means that whilst we want your child to go and play, we ask you not to play with them too much, although we want you to stay around to help them feel secure.

If your child doesn't want to play, don't worry. They can stay with you. After a while, children do get bored especially when they see others having fun. If you're patient they will eventually make their own decision to venture off and play.

Teaching the child that parents always come back

One of the things that children need to learn is that daddies and mummies always comes back. This is why we feel it is important to always say goodbye. Below there are some tips that we'd like you to try at nursery.

- Tip 1: Once your child is playing - move away a few steps - about 2 metres. Can your child carry on playing when you are not next to them? Keep repeating until your child can play without you standing next to them.
- Tip 2: Once your child is playing, say that you have to collect an object from over the other side of the garden/room - then go. (Don't worry if your child tries to follow you). Keep repeating until your child can cope. It is important that your child knows that you are moving away as this way your child is learning that you go, but always come back.

- Tip 3: When your child is engaged in an activity, say that you are going out to the car or to get something from another room. Go and come back immediately. Make sure that your child sees that you've come back.

All children are different

Some children settle in to nursery very quickly, whilst others need more time. Please don't worry - children are unique and develop at different rates. Settling in is not a race! Some of the exercises may need to be completed 10 or 15 times in a session. We will fully support you with this. You might also like to practice these ideas at home with trusted friends.

Transitional Objects

Some children may benefit from bringing in a toy or special item from home (e.g. muslin or a blankie - even something of yours like a scarf or set of keys!) This helps them feel secure in a new environment. You might even like to provide photos of friends and family for their learning journeys so that we can share at nursery. This will help children 'hold in mind' special people who they are missing. We have our "Welcome to the room" sheets too which have photos of staff and the room so you can then discuss at home too!

Parents need to settle in too!

Many parents find leaving their children difficult. Don't feel guilty about worrying, but try hard to be positive and relaxed with your child. Remember, you are welcome to spend as much time as you feel you and your child need in the nursery. If this is your first child, you may find it particularly hard. Remember, we will not let your child be unhappy and if we work together your child should settle in fine. A good tip is to make sure that you have something to do on the first morning that you leave your child - go see a friend or go shopping! We can call you or email to give you an update if you're particularly worried. If you have any queries or concerns, please speak to your Key Person or the Room Leader. Alternatively, feel free to come and find the Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager at any time.

Triangle of Care:

