

09 Early years practice procedures

09.04 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.

From old Policy 4.1 The role of the key person and settling in: Settling-in

- Parents and children are encouraged to visit Pippins at least once before their child starts.
- Before a child starts to attend Pippins Preschool, we use a variety of ways to provide their parents with information. These include written information, displays about activities available within the setting, and open days.
- We provide opportunities for the child and their parents to visit the setting before a child is enrolled. An adult will need to stay with the child.
- When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with their parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the setting.
- Initially, some children settle straight away and can be left almost immediately. At Pippins we do not have a specific procedure to follow, as each child's needs are treated individually. We ask that parents allow some time for your child to adjust and be prepared for any changes in behaviour. On the first day we ask that parents be prepared to stay for the whole session if needed or for at least part of it. Staff will guide you as to how things are going and discuss needs as required.
- When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when. We do not recommend sneaking away while children are not looking and specifically ask that parents and carers do not do this.
- Pippins staff are sympathetic to the needs of the parent and the child during the settling in period, and will telephone if the child is in distress.
- We recognise that some children will settle more readily than others.
- Many children will cry during the period of settling in. If the child is in obvious distress, and is unable to self-regulate or be distracted, then we will telephone parents or carers. A parent or carer will need to return to collect the child and discuss how best to support the child to settle.

From old Policy 4.1 The role of the key person and settling in: Comfort objects

- We recognise the importance of comfort objects and treat them with sensitivity and care. Children are encouraged to bring in comfort objects from home to help them during the settling in period. Comfort objects can be kept and accessed at all times.

Settling-in for those with SEND

- If a child has been identified as having SEND then the key person/SENCO and parents will need to identify and address potential barriers to settling in e.g. timings of medication and invasive procedures, specific routines and levels of support.

For children whose first language is not English

- For many children learning English as an additional language, the child is dependent upon the parents' input to make sense of what is going on.

- The settling-in programme is explained to the parent, and it is emphasised how important it is that they stay with the child and talk to them in the home language to be able to explain things.
- Through the parent, the key person will try to gauge the child's level of skills in their home language; this will give the key person an idea of the child's interests and levels of understanding.
- The need for the parent to converse in the child's home language is important.
- The key person makes the parent feel welcome using smiles and gestures.
- With the parent, 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. These words will be used with the child and parents will be addressed with 'hello' and 'goodbye' in their language.
- 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.
- When the child feels happy to spend time with the key person, the parent should spend time outside of the room.
- Progress with settling in will be done as with any other child; it just takes a little longer to reach dependency/independence.