

# Millie's House useful tips for settling in

The first thing to remember is that there is no one model fits all for settling in. Everyone has a different set of circumstances and everyone is different.

Some have had their start date planned for many months, some in the last week and some in the last 24 hours. Some have a very calm and consistent home life which is about to go through a transition into childcare life, some have been through tricky separations and the family routine has been turned upside down and childcare needs to start tomorrow to provide time and space to get things back on track. Every situation comes with a slightly different set of circumstances and parental worries.

Here is a guide and some advice on settling in. When we enrol your child, we will tailor a settling in programme that works for you, your timeframes and circumstances.



## 1. Visit us informally

If you have the luxury of time, visit us a few times in the weeks leading up to start day. Come and stay and play with your baby or child for an hour every so often. Get to know the team who will be looking after them, the space, the environment and allow your baby to become familiar with their new place space.

Allow your baby or child to play away from you. They will be doing this without you, so although you are there, allow the teachers and other children or babies to play with your child.

Bring a magazine to read if you want to pass the time and try to sit back and relax. This is your baby or child's future play space without you, so try not to make it the most fun thing you do together as that is not the future of this play space for them.

When there is an opportunity, leave the room for a short period of time. Read some information in the hall way, go to the toilet, leave the building briefly to check your phone. Make it short and come back. You are sending the message that you always come back and that they can trust you to do that.

## 2. Planned settling in visits



Come in, stay and play and show your child that you like Millie's House. Talk with the teachers. Show your child you like them, are building relationships with them and trust them.

On the settling day that you have agreed with the teachers is going to be the day that you are leaving and allowing your child proper settling time, you need to be prepared to present to your child confidence. No child needs to see the parent they look to for support, crumbling. Hold it together for them.

It is very tempting to slip out quietly when they are distracted, but it is not the right thing to do. You and we are building trust with your child and slipping out on breaks that trust. It might feel easier and calmer when you are slipping away, but when they discover you have gone and didn't tell them, we have both lost your child's trust in us and it takes a long time to build it back up again.

When you are ready; confidently, cheerfully and briefly say 'good bye, I'll see you soon', give them a kiss and leave. They may (and probably will) cry, if not today, at some point. Carry on and go. Repeat at the door; 'I will see you soon.' Give them eye contact as you say it, short wave and go. Do not linger- they sense you and your stress and that is not fair on them. Leave the building.

After holding all that together, once you've left, you may well fall apart. You are not alone on this one, you are a parent. Pick up the phone and call us if you need or want to. We'll be honest and we will not have your child unduly distressed for a prolonged period of time. We will communicate with you how things are going.



## 3. When you return

Be casual. Come in, say hello, give them a hug and carry on playing with them at the centre. This is your stay and play time.

You might be feeling emotionally exhausted and the parental guilt is probably setting in, but this is not a time for apologies. Supporting your child's developing independence and sense of self is nothing to apologise for. It is a time to congratulate them.

'Well done, what a big boy you are. You have been having fun here and I am so proud of you.' Yes- babies need to hear this too. They learn language by hearing it and they understand your tone.



#### 4. Talk to us

Share any worries or ideas you have that might help settling and take the time to talk with us about how everything went. Consciously role model to your child a calm, relaxed and positive relationship with us. This gives them confidence. Children trust people you trust, so share the trust.

#### 5. Transitional objects

Transitional objects are objects from home that your child brings to centre to support them, help them feel safe and connected to their home. They may be a favourite toy, muslin or a photo.

These are really important and they provide wonderful conversation starters for teachers and help your child connect to them as one of their trusted people. Photos of their special people are really good for this.

Transitional objects continue to play an important role throughout centre life from babies to four year olds returning from a holiday. We welcome transitional objects which help children make connections between home and centre.

For children who sleep at centre and particularly babies, bringing in a blanket, toy or something that goes into their bed with them and smells of home at sleep time is a really important tool in making a new sleep routine feel safe. Closing eyes and smelling home is soothing and safe feeling.



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