



## 9 Early years practice procedures

### 9.4 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 can 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 can 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.

We treat each child and their families as individuals, we will agree a settling in process as suits them. Each child/Carer will have a visit to preschool where the parent/carers stay followed by an induction session where the parents stay. At this point the key person will discuss any future transition sessions based on needs identified.

The setting manager and key person explain the need for settling in and agree a plan with the parents/carers.

#### **Settling-in for those with SEND**

- If a child has been identified as having SEND then the key person/SENCO and parents/carers 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.

#### **All Children**

- The key person always greets the parent/carers and child. (Shift patterns may need to be adjusted when settling in.)
- The parent/carers is invited to play with their child and the key person spends time with them. As much time as possible is allowed for the key person to do this.
- The key person observes to see if the baby is recognising them, beginning to explore the environment (if able), noting what they seem to like and making sure it is available the next day.

#### **When a parent is unable or refuses to take part in settling in**

- Information about the 'settling in' plan is given at the first visit and the reasons are explained.
- If the parent/carers feels that this will be difficult – perhaps another close relative can come in instead.
- Genuine difficulties need to be handled sensitively, but generally speaking this is not an issue where the parent/carers has a choice not to attend with their child. A parent/carers who refuses to take part in settling in may have the offer of the place withdrawn.



### **Two-year-olds starting a setting for the first time**

- A two-year-old may have little or no experience of group care. As part of gathering information from parents, it is important to find out about the child's experience of non-parental care, for example grandparents, or childminder; this informs staff as to how a child may respond to a new situation.
- After the induction meeting with the setting manager or deputy and key person, a settling-in plan is drawn up. Where possible, a home visit is carried out for the same purpose.
- Separation causes anxiety in two-year-olds, as they have no concept of where their parents/carers have gone. Parents/carers should always say goodbye and tell them when they will return. Patience with the process will ensure children are happy and eager to come to play and be cared for in the setting.

### **Three- and four-year-olds**

- Some children appear to leap to dependency/independence within a couple of days. In most cases, they will revert to the need for proximity and secure base. It can be difficult to progress to true dependency/independence and this can be frustrating.
- After the parent/carer attends for an induction meeting with the setting manager or deputy and key person, (or in some circumstances a home visit), a settling-in plan is drawn up.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to explain to their child where they are going, and that they will return.
- 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.