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Registered Charity No. 1054083

9.05 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.

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.
- On the taster session/settling in visit the parent stays with the child. During that session we will go through the settling in process with the parent, creating a settling in plan, gradually increasing the time a child attends with a parent/carer, if needed.
- It is evident that the child is developing a sense of secure base when he or she shows interest in activities and begins to engage with the key person and other children.
- Separation causes anxiety in two-year-olds, as they have no concept of where their parents have gone. Parents 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.

Transition from Little Stars to Rainbow Room

- During the half term before the child is due to leave Little Stars, they will spend half their session in the main hall getting to know their new key worker and the new routine

Three- and four-year-olds

- Most children of this age can move through the stages more quickly and confidently. Some children take longer, and their needs for proximity and secure base stages should be accommodated as much as possible.
- 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.

- On the taster session/settling in visit the parent stays with the child. During that session we will go through the settling in process with the parent, creating a settling in plan, gradually increasing the time a child attends with a parent/carer, if needed.
- Parents are encouraged to explain to their child where they are going, and that they will return.

For children whose first language is not English

- If the parent does not speak English, efforts are made to source a form of interpretation for induction.
- 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 him/her in the home language to be able to explain things.
- Through interpretation, 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.
- Settling in will be done as with any other child; it may take a little longer.

Settling-in for 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.
- Start times can be staggered to enable the child to settle in easier, avoiding potential distressing situations.