

Settling-in Policy

We offer a settling-in process based on your child's needs and our attachment based practice at Wood St Nursery.

Attachment theory highlights the importance of a child's emotional bond with their primary caregivers. Disruption to or loss of this bond can affect a child emotionally and psychologically into adulthood and have an impact on their future

The first two years of a child's life are the most critical for forming attachments (Prior and Glaser, 2006)⁴. During this period, children develop an 'internal working model' that shapes the way they view relationships and operate socially. This can affect their sense of trust in others, self-worth and their confidence interacting with others (Bowlby, 1997)

Settling process-

We provide 6 two-hour sessions ("settling in visits") for free to help your child get used to the nursery environment before you begin paying for your place. Your child will then need get used to doing these short sessions without you being present and then short days for them to transition to nursery life.

The child's time at nursery is usually increased by adding lunch, then sleep time, a longer afternoon and then breakfast and we tailor this process to individual children's needs.

Settling sessions-

During these first 6 settling in visits the parent or carer stays in the nursery room with the child. We encourage them to be a comforting presence, but slightly boring, reading a book and sitting in an adult chair. The ideal is for the parent/carer to remain in one location rather than following their child around as this will allow the child to observe and then engage in nursery life and develop a relationship with their key person and other staff and children

Depending on the response of the child during these 6 settling in visits, we may encourage a parent to make short visits to have a cup of tea in the next door room, from about the 4th session.

Once the child starts to be left at the setting, the staff will discuss individual needs of both the child and the parents, and come to an agreement on how long the parent should leave their child each day. This time can then be gradually increased over the course of the next two weeks, or faster if the child is happy, until the child is staying without their parent for a full day.

The settling in process requires a parent or familiar adult to be available to stay at or be able to come into nursery for early collections for at least **3 weeks** and can often take longer for our younger children. Please bear this in mind when planning your return to work.

In some cases:

- the parent may wish to stay for longer periods, and for up to a few weeks
- a child may adapt quickly to nursery life and the settling process can be faster

- the child may have a comfort object that will be needed to aid separation; this should be brought into nursery

Generally, once a parent/carer is leaving their child at nursery. They will be encouraged to leave the child after five/ten minutes, as prolonging the moment of separation time can be counter-productive for the child. Parents may be encouraged to carry out some kind of “ritual” in leaving if the child is having difficulty separating, such as reading one story and then leaving.

Parents will always be asked to say good-bye and to hand the child over to the key-person, and not ‘slip out’ without saying goodbye. Slipping out can result in more distress and anxiety for the child. As the child needs to develop an understanding of the process that their parent leaves and comes back; this is obvious to us as adults, but not so obvious to children.

Every effort will be made by the key person to give feedback to the parent when they return, but where this is not possible, another member of staff will give feedback on behalf of the key person. Parents may also phone in during the initial separation period to check on their child’s well-being, or request a call from their key person.

Children will not be left to cry for long periods. If a child cannot be comforted or distracted, then the parent/carer will be asked to come back to the nursery and the settling plan revisited. This is because leaving children to cry for long periods raises their cortisol levels which can lead to negative effects on their development and can have negative impacts on the other children and adults in the group.