

Summertown Montessori Nursery

Settling-in Policy

Statement of intent

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the setting, feeling secure and comfortable with staff, as informed by the **Key Person** approach. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with the setting.

Aim

We aim to make the setting a welcoming place where children settle quickly and easily by giving due consideration to the individual needs and circumstances of children and their families.

Methods to help children settle comfortably in our setting

We use the following procedure:

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our prospectus and policies), displays about activities available within the setting, information days and evenings and individual meetings with parents. We use an 'All about me' booklet to gain information about the child's interests and family background. We find out special words and if the child has English as an Additional Language we endeavor to find out a few basic words of their home language.
- We allocate a **Key Person** to each child and his/her family before she/he starts to attend; the key person welcomes and looks after the child and his/her parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.
- We use **pre-start visits** and the first session at which a child attends to explain and complete with his/her parents the child's registration records.
- When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with his/her parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the setting.
- We have an expectation that the parent, carer or close relative, will **stay for most of the session during the first week**, gradually taking time away from their child, increasing this as and when the child is able to cope.

- **Younger children** will take longer to settle in, as will children who have not previously spent time away from home. Children who have had a period of absence may also need their parent to be on hand to re-settle them.
- We judge a child to be settled when they have formed a relationship with their key person; for example the child looks for the key person when he/she arrives, goes to them for comfort, and seems pleased to be with them. The child is also familiar with where things are and is pleased to see other children and participate in activities.
- If a child or parent does not form a good relationship with their allocated Key Person **we are happy to change the Key Person**.
- When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when.
- We recognise that **some children will settle more readily than others** but that some children who appear to settle rapidly are not ready to be left, so we expect that the parent will honour the commitment to stay for at least the first week.
- We do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle any quicker. We believe that a child's **distress will prevent them from learning** and gaining the best from the setting.
- We reserve the right not to accept a child into the setting without a parent or carer if the child finds it distressing to be left. This is especially the case with very young children.
- Within the first four to six weeks of starting we discuss and work with the child's parents to create their child's record of achievement.