

SETTLING- IN

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Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 (Síolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare, Síolta Standard 13: Transitions) (National Standard 1: Information, National Standard 3: Working in Partnership with Parents/guardians or Guardians, National Standard 6: Evaluation, National Standard 8: Care, Play and Learning, National Standard 9: Nurture and Well-Being)

Statement of Intent:

We aim to ensure children feel safe and secure in the absence of their parents/guardians. Due care and attention will be paid to a child's need for time to settle into our setting.

Policy and Procedure:

The service will therefore endeavour to make the settling-in process a positive experience for children and will work closely in partnership with parents/guardians to ensure this is achieved.

We recognise that in some cases there may be particular difficulties experienced by children, parents/guardians, and staff during the settling-in period and we are prepared to explore and consider various approaches to transitioning the children into the service. All children are individuals and we will use a child-led approach to supporting their transition. In order to accomplish this, we will ensure that:

Pre- Admission:

- Prior to enrolment, exchange of information will take place between parents/guardians and Teaching staff. The "All About Me" form asks families to share information such as likes/dislikes, how to be comforted, familiar peoples and pets names, medical or developmental information etc. This information helps teaching staff to plan strategies, environments and resources that will support smooth transition.
- Where children have needs that will require additional support (e.g., medical condition, awaiting assessment for early intervention etc.) Parents/guardians must provide all relevant information to us as early as possible so that a transition plan can be created and resources allocated to support the child.
- It is ideal for the Family Wall to be prepared in advance and we will ask for photographs.

- Teachers will send a short video before the first day to introduce themselves and the spaces to children.
- We offer a phased/staggered settling-in period. The details will be provided in advance. Please note this settle in period may be extended for children.

First Day:

- For new groups, the group is split into 2 for the first several days of settling in to allow for each child to have more time and support with Teachers.
- Children and families will line up at the designated area at their drop-off time.
- Each child will be appointed a key worker.
- Parents/guardians are welcome to stay for the child's first session.
- Some children may not be ready for a full session and the person in charge will advise the parents/guardians on this matter. An individual plan will be agreed.
- As children become more comfortable in their new environment and a routine develops, we will provide more opportunities for parents/guardians to stay or visit in the classroom.
- Children must be collected on time and promptly from their session at the agreed time.

Ongoing Matters:

- Parents/guardians should never leave their child without saying goodbye.
- Our Centre is a mobile phone free zone, and for Child Protection and GDPR reasons you cannot take photos on the premises. We will send photos to you on a regular basis.
- Our staff will provide support and encouragement to parents/guardians during the settling-in period should the transition be difficult. Staff will phone parents/guardians to reassure them, if necessary.
- We may need to assist parents/guardians through this separation process as an extended goodbye can be stressful for children.
- Opportunities will be made available for parents/guardians to exchange information on the child's progress at this stage.
- When children are beginning to settle without their parents/guardians, they should be supported in observing, experimenting and discovering for themselves without any attempt to make them participate in activities.

Extended Settling-In:

- The 'settling in' process has no time limits and may need to be repeated if a child becomes unsettled.
- Children presenting with needs without a care plan in place may need to have their attendance delayed until an individual care plan has been agreed between the Service and family. (See Enrolment and Admission policy and AIM policy)
- Children who are still clearly distressed having followed the above procedure may need to have their attendance reduced or deferred for a trial period.

Transition to Primary School:

- Being open to liaising with the local primary schools.
- Building a programme regarding “Starting Big School” into our curriculum.
- Focusing on practical “independence” skills.
- Liaising with parents/guardians so that teachers and parents/guardians have a consistent approach regarding preparation for school.
- Having a progress meeting with parents/guardians to discuss school readiness.