



Rachel McMillan Nursery School and Children's Centre

Settling in with your child.

At Rachel McMillan we put a very strong emphasis on settling in. We want to be sure that each child feels confident about being in nursery and about being looked after by her or his Family Worker. We also want mums, dads and carers to be confident about what we offer in nursery.

Starting nursery is an exciting step but it can also be stressful; with care, we hope to make it a positive experience for everyone involved - children, mums, dads, carers and staff.

The settling-in period.

This is the time when you are here with your child. It is a time for your child to get to know his or her Family Worker and key team BUT with the reassurance of having you here too.

We aim:

- To present a safe, secure and welcoming environment for your child
- To support a gentle and smooth transition from home or other early years settings to Rachel McMillan Nursery School
- To support your, and your child's, understanding of our expectations
- To recognise each child and their mums, dads and carers as individuals and therefore to be as flexible as possible
- To build a good relationship between mums, dads, carers and staff so that everyone feels comfortable when separation happens

Aims for your child during the settling-in period:

- To begin to trust that their Family Worker and key team can meet their needs and be helpful, comforting and deal positively with any problems
- To begin to trust that their Family Worker and key team can provide interesting and enjoyable experiences which make it worthwhile to come to nursery.
- To develop the confidence to stay without their mums, dads and carers.

Aims for mums, dads and carers during the settling-in period:

- To see what type of nursery this is and to understand and support the aims of the setting
- To see how the staff work
- To see what kinds of experiences we offer the children
- To play with your child and show them different areas and equipment within the nursery
- To feel comfortable leaving your child here

Aims for the staff:

- To ensure your child's needs are met by a carefully planned settling-in period
- Whenever possible to meet the needs of children who do not speak or understand English with the support of bilingual staff or visual clues
- To negotiate with you time limits and leaving and returning times using the *Settling Passports, once you have started to leave your child*
- To help you understand the value of playing alongside your child.
- To discuss and review your child's settling-in needs on a daily/weekly basis.
- To continue giving high quality teaching and care to the children who are not new.

Our aim is to settle children in at their own pace- when children are ready to move away from their mums, dads or carers, we will encourage and support this. We have found that in the long run, this means more settled and happier children - and mums, dads and carers!

The settling in process

1. Visiting. After your admission meeting you are always welcome to visit the nursery with your child. Several short visits (ten or twenty minutes) will help your child get used to coming and they can start to meet the staff and other children. Dates for visiting will be given to you at the admission interview.
2. The Home Visit. (if you choose to have one) This can be very special for a child - often children remember it for a long time. The home visit helps your child to begin an attachment to their Family Worker and key team on 'home territory'. It is also an ideal situation to exchange information and ask questions. Staff will often bring along toys, books or other resources that your child can borrow, as well as photos of the nursery

3. Your child spending time in their shelter with you. During this time, you are available to support your child and to help staff get to know your child. With their mum, dad or carer there, we find that children feel more confident to begin exploring the nursery and secure enough to play. This is a very important part of the settling-in period even if your child has already visited the nursery a lot. It is best to be **available** to your child **but not too interesting!** We are aware that both you and your child may be feeling stressed and your child may not be on "best behaviour". **Please don't worry about this.**
4. Your child spending time in their shelter whilst you are in another part of the building. Your child's Family Worker or key team will discuss with you when your child is ready for this. This might be for quite a short period of time at first and then for longer stretches of time as your child gets more used to you not being there.

It is always very important that you clearly say to your child that you will be leaving the shelter but that you will be coming back. It is tempting to nip out when your child is busy or not looking but if your child turns round a few minutes later to find you have unexpectedly gone, she or he may be really upset.

5. Finally. Your child's Family Worker or key team will discuss with you when your child is ready to be left at nursery. Your child might be sad or angry at the moment of parting but if the settling process has gone well, she or he will be able to manage with the support of familiar staff. If your child continues to be unusually upset long after you have gone, **please be reassured that we would contact you and would not put your child through an ordeal. You can also always phone us, or we can phone you, after a little while to see how your child is.**

Top tips for saying 'Goodbye'

- Some mums, dads and carers find it easiest to set a limit on how long they will stay e.g. "I'll read two books with you and then it will be time for me to go"
- Some mums, dads and carers like to have a special ritual, such as going to the sofa and reading a book, waving goodbye through the window or 'kiss-cuddle-high five'.

It is up to you how you manage this but please do ask for support or advice if it will be helpful. **Please make sure you always bring your child right into their shelter and make sure a member of staff is aware of them before you leave.**

It is not uncommon for a child to settle very well into the nursery and then unexpectedly a few weeks later to find it difficult to come in. This might be for any one of a variety of reasons and again we will offer our support or help you if you would like it.

You are always welcome to phone and ask how your child is getting on at any time of the day.

(Reviewed September 2014: Next review September 2016)