



How you can help your child to settle at Nursery

Leaving your child at nursery for the first time can be a very emotional time for both your child and for you.

We recognise just how important your child's attachment to you is for their emotional well-being and aim to create personalised settling-in programs for each child in partnership with parents/carer's.

To help do this we have brought together this information from the experts to help you feel confident during the settling-in process.

The vital importance of attachment

A healthy bond between your child and those who care for them is vital to their wellbeing, giving your child loving reassurance when they are scared, hurt or angry (even when that anger is aimed your way) is the key to giving your child the best start in life.

However, it can seem silly that they are crying just because you have popped to the loo, left them with nanny while you dash to the shops or have said the dreaded 'no' word.

However, scans of babies' brains have shown that when a baby is left alone, even for a moment, or when they are left with someone who they aren't sure can or will protect them, it is really and genuinely scary for them.

In her fantastic little book 'Sabre tooth tigers and teddy bears: The connected baby guide to attachment' Dr Suzanne Zeedyk explains that far from being silly or an overreaction the following key points can be learned about these behaviours:

- That a baby's behaviour results from their fear of impending danger;
- That their fear has an evolutionary heritage and is therefore legitimate for them to feel;
- That their brain 'knows' that if they do not keep trusted adults near them, then they are likely to die;
- That their fear is not imagined but is physiological and thus real for them.



In such situations the research has shown that when babies and children receive loving comfort at these times of fear their brains build structures that help them become resilient, happy and healthy individuals who can learn to regulate their emotions and behaviour: and who doesn't want that for their child.

Learning to part from their carer and then reunite, if done with sensitivity and loving support will have a long term positive impact on your child and help them in all their future relationships. If you would like to know more ask to borrow the nursery copy of Dr Zeedyks book or look at the connected baby website

<http://connectedbaby.net/>

How the nursery can help

- Every child will be given a key-person who will work to build up a special bond with you and your child that will help them to feel confident and happy at nursery.



nursery.

- We have a settling-in period where we encourage you to spend time with your child getting them used to nursery before they start through stay and play visits and the settle-in sessions.
- We use a five step process to help your child get used to saying goodbye to you

How can you help your child?

- Start this process about a month before you need your child to start nursery so there is plenty of time for your child to grow confident at nursery. Rushing this process will not help you or your child feel settled and comfortable.
- Play games at home like peep-po or hide and seek so that your child gets used to you being out of sight
- Talk to your child about nursery before you go there (even if they are too young to really understand yet) it will help you and them get used to the idea.
- Help us get to know your child by sharing information about their favourite toys, games, songs and activities and about anything they don't like or are unfamiliar with.

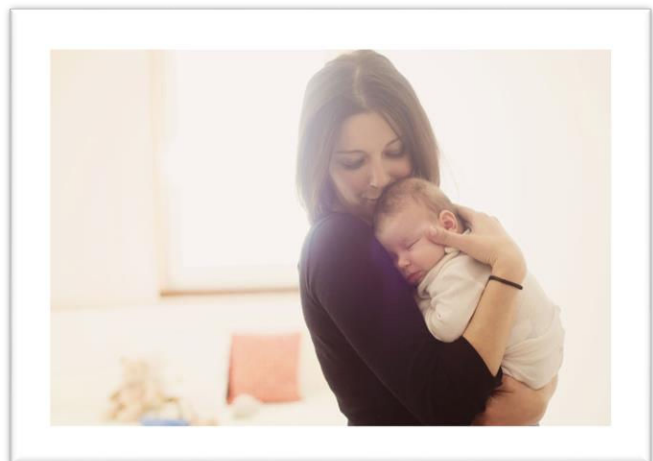
- Tell us about any nappy, sleep or feeding time rituals between you and your child so we can try and recreate those themes at nursery.



- Bring in a familiar or comfort object to help your child feel secure (e.g. a dummy, blanket or treasured toy)
- Resist the urge to sneak away while your child is playing - this can make things worse next time around as it can undermine your child's sense of security when they realise you have suddenly vanished.
- Create a goodbye 'ritual' and follow it each

time. Give your child a hug and a kiss, tell them you love them and will be back for them after lunch/ in time for tea etc... and then hand them over to their key-person and say goodbye. It is very likely your child will cry as you go (it's their way of saying they'll miss you) but don't be tempted to return or delay going as this just prolongs the inevitable tears when you do have to go and makes you feel worse.

- Remember that babies and children will pick up on your emotions so if you are feeling sad or anxious they will think there is something scary going on. Try to appear calm and confident when you part - and remember staff are here to support you too so do talk to us if you are struggling with this process.
- Have a return ritual as well. When you collect your child show them affection, show an interest in what they are doing to show you value their time at nursery too. Don't feel bad if your child starts to cry again when they see you arrive; they are just letting you know how much they missed you.
- Remember every child is different; some children settle very quickly while others can take much longer and will need lots of reassurance in their first months at nursery, either way we are here to help so talk to us if you have any concerns



Our Settling in process

On the first few visits you make to our nursery the staff team will help you and your child feel familiar and confident in the

setting. We will chat through our paperwork with you and spend time getting to know your child through you.

In order to maintain social distancing we have adapted our settling in process significantly. At first we will see if your child is happy to come in and play with us whilst saying goodbye to you at the door: remember tears are normal and our team will support your child to part with you and come in and explore the nursery.

For most children repeated short visits to 'practice' parting and reuniting work well and they are able to grow in confidence, play and make friends as they settle.

If your child struggles to settle then we will review with you and try a slower process to support them.

Our five step process to help your child settle

For children who have struggled to settle we adopt a process developed by leading Early Years expert Penny Tassoni to help slowly build their confidence at nursery.

Your key-person will invite you into the nursery; Please remember to observe COVID-19 safety rules of Hands: Face: Space for these visits. They will then guide you through this five step process with your child:

1. Settle at an activity and play with your child. Their key-person will slowly introduce themselves to your child through play. When they give you a signal, or you see your child is relaxed and happy, sit back and read a magazine, book or our welcome pack. If your child comes to you for reassurance tell them you are reading and encourage them to play. Their key-person will work to entice them to play and join in the nursery fun.
2. In the next stage we begin as before, playing with your child but this time when the staff member signals you stand up and wander across the room making sure you stay in sight of your child and have a nose at nursery displays etc. If your child follows you, let them and after a short period return to play with them. We'll keep repeating this step until your child remains playing beside their key-person rather than following you.
3. Sit playing with your child and then, on signal, take a wander about the room and disappear from your child's sight for a few seconds before returning to your child. Again we'll repeat this activity until your child remains playing happily (it may take many tries or just the one).
4. Again this stage begins with you and your child playing together. On cue state (don't ask) that you need to get something from the kitchen/office/ reception and get up and leave the room only for a few seconds before returning. We'll

gradually lengthen the time you remain out of the room each time as your child becomes more confident with their environment and key-person.

5. Begin as always with you and your child together but this time tell your child you need to get something, say your goodbye's reassuring them you'll be back



very soon and then leave the room and wait in the reception for 15 minutes before returning. Please don't worry if your little one becomes distressed at first we will help sooth them and if we can't we'll come and get you and we'll start the process again until you and your child are ready to start with the settle-in sessions.

Once you child is doing well at step 5 we will begin longer settles where their key-person will collect them from you at the door/gate.

This process has successfully helped many children confidently settle into nursery - but each child will need to do this in their own time, rushing this process will make it traumatic for all parties involved.

Once you and your child's key-person decide your child is ready we will then confirm their start day ☺

Please see our [Settling-in and Transition Policy](#) for more details.

Please call and chat to us if you have any concerns or questions about settling your child at our nursery,

The Denton Island Nursery Team