



Settling In Policy

Policy Statement

Grace Park Montessori Pre-School is committed to the smooth transition of the children to the pre-school service. The settling-in period commences during the first two weeks of the new pre-school year (usually in September of each year) and is the transition period for those children who have been accepted for placement in the pre-school programme.

Optional Summer Camp periods which cater for children of various ages, do not form part of the formal settling-in period.

Settling in is positive experience as it influences children's self confidence, attitude to relationships and socializing and it lays the foundation for life long learning.

Settling-in is a collaborative process between parents, staff and children and families are encouraged to assist the children to transition smoothly. They are also encouraged to trust in the skill, care, expertise and experience of the staff in helping children to settle in to a new environment in the absence of parents.

Principle

This policy is underwritten by the *Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016*.

Pre Admission Procedure

- The service provides information on the settling-in policy to parents or guardians on initial enquiry.
- It inquires of the parents or guardians about the child's general routines and rituals, preferences.
- Parents/guardians are required to complete a Record Card/Registration Form with all the relevant details about the child, especially, contact and collection information in accordance with the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.
- We aim to create links with home, bringing familiar family photos and displaying them on our Family Tree.
- We discuss with parents the various issues and concerns around the process of settling-in, such as, the different stages of the process- clinging, crying, etc and we discuss how such behaviour is part of initial separation anxiety.
- Parents and guardians are to facilitate the settling-in process by making any necessary adjustments to work arrangements and schedules.
- Staggered starting days and times for new children may be permitted following a discussion with the Directress in order to facilitate the integration of the child into the group.

Guidance for Parents on Settling In

We aim to work with parents to support the child in the move from home, family and familiar people, into the new community of the pre-school service. We seek to help the child to make an attachment to her or his key person so that he or she feels secure and confident in our pre-school service. We aim to work with parents, as far as practicable, to help the child with any difficulties that might arise. Before a child starts to attend our service, we advise the parents to familiarize themselves with our pre-school policies which are available on our website.

Upon request and appointment, we provide opportunities for a child and his/her parents to visit the pre-school setting in advance of the settling-in period.

Once a child has been accepted and allocated a placement within the service, a key person is allocated to each child before she/he starts attends the service. The key person welcomes and attends to the child during the first session and during the settling-in process.

Helping a child to settle in

Children settle into pre-school in different ways. Some children will move into confidently to the school room as soon as they arrive. Others may be nervous and anxious about leaving their parents. Most children will be somewhere in between. We encourage parents not to worry if a child displays typical behaviours. It is a normal part of a child's development to be anxious, nervous or upset about starting pre-school. We also recognize that some parents may find this a difficult process. Whilst parents are, of course, permitted to stay a while with their child during the initial days of pre-school, we ask that they work with the staff to ensure a smooth transition, bearing in mind that we must attend to several children. It is our experience that, as a group, the children will bond better where all children have (eventually) taken the brave step of separating from their parents. The staff are very experienced in settling children in to a new environment and this process works best when parents support the staff in the transition from home to pre-school.

Garda Vetting is not required for parents/guardians who are participating in the settling-in process for their children.

The settling-in period

Different children need different amounts of time to settle in and, in principle, tend to take approximately two weeks during which a child may need additional support. The settling in period is a time for are child to get to know his or her key person - with the reassurance of also having a parent available, if needed.

As the relationship develops, your child will be able to trust that the key person and the staff in the pre-school:

- are able to meet the child's needs;
- can be helpful, comforting and deal positively with any problems; and
- can provide interesting experiences which make it fun and worthwhile to come to pre-school.

Settling In Procedure

Orientation meetings and visits, if requested, will occur prior to the child commencing pre-school. These meetings enable the staff and the parents and the child to familiarize themselves with each other and to provide of opportunity for learning about any particular details, such as, allergies or medical conditions. Which a child may have.

Verbal and written communication channels are established between families and educators to outline children's routines and to share daily events during the initial settling in period. Feedback about the child's day is provided to families after each attendance.

Families are welcomed to share information about their child's interests and experiences outside of the setting.

Informal and formal meetings between families and educators can be arranged to discuss children's learning and development, and to share any concerns that may arise at home or in the setting.

We encourage families to get involved in the curriculum and share their knowledge and/or skills where appropriate.

Family photographs and other aspects of the child's home life are incorporated into the environment and the curriculum. This policy should be read in conjunction with our

- Transitions Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Staff Absence Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Staff Training Policy

Józefa Chrobak
Directress

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