

A Transition Guide for Parents and Carers

Children may find it hard to leave you and this is completely natural. This may be because they haven't done it before, or they may be feeling unsure about something that has changed, or they may be feeling unwell or tired. There are many reasons why a child may find this hard, but our approach to supporting their transition to new settings must remain consistent and reassuring.

What do children need?

Children need to feel safe, to feel noticed and to feel confident that you are coming back to collect them later. Some children will need the reassurance that you are thinking about them whilst they are away too – especially if they haven't had much experience of being away from you.

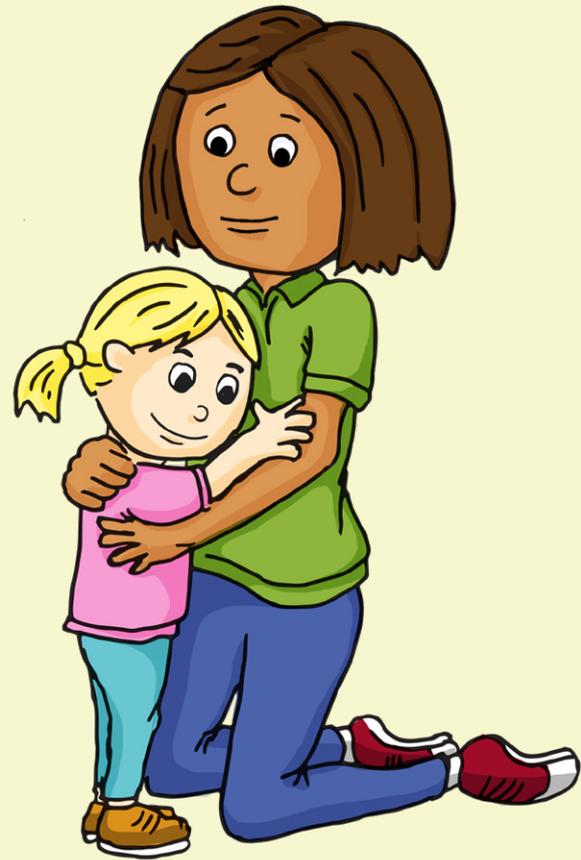
Children will need the adults in the setting to connect with them and professionally love them. You might like to explore what this means and have a conversation around this with the setting.

How can we help?

Take the time to become familiar with the setting and the people who work there, perhaps show your child photographs and do walk pasts of the setting. Visits before starting are really helpful for both child and adult.

Settings should allow adults to stay with their child to help settle them – this should be for as long as the child needs and will vary depending on the individual's needs. Again, this is a natural process and one size does not fit all. Settling children outdoors can sometimes be more relaxing for everyone.

A full session may be too much for some children to begin with so be prepared to build up to a full session over several days, a few weeks or even longer.



I need to get going!

Drop and go may be convenient for the adult but may cause unnecessary stress for the child, which can lead to further difficulties. Think carefully about how you manage the introduction to playgroup and pre-school; time invested well here will help to build a more confident child who will be better equipped to manage transitions at later stages in their school career.



I feel like I'm in the way

You are never in the way when you are caring for your child's wellbeing. The professionals in the setting know this and should work with you to help settle your child. They may feel confident that your child will settle; they have lots of experience of settling children and will work with you as you are the first educator of your child and know them best. You may wish to move out of sight for a while. If so, always let your child know that you are going to do this and always come back when you say you will.

Some settings may offer a follow up phone call or other form of communication to reassure the adult if their staffing ratios permit them to do so – this isn't always practical though and the team looking after your child must prioritise the safety of the children in their care over the reassurance of parents and carers.

I don't know who finds it hardest, me or my child...

It's okay to be anxious about leaving your child for the first time, or any other time for that matter. Just as our children find things hard sometimes, so do we. Our children pick up on our feelings, even if we haven't said anything, so we can help them greatly by managing our own tricky feelings and showing them how calm and in control we are. Try some of the activities from the Mindful Me Activity Poster together; the 5,4,3,2,1 sensory grounding is simple and soothing – perfect for the journey to the setting (see link below).

<https://facts4life.org/for-parents-carers-2/mindfulness-2/>



This is a safe space

a settling script for parents/carers

The following script is similar to the one that may be used in settings. Talk to your child about what happens on playgroup days and reassure them that although they will be away from you for a while, they are still in your thoughts and someone they know will collect them when it is time to come home.



Today is a playgroup day...

There is lots to see and lots to do there.

What do you like to see and do at playgroup?

Playgroup is a safe space. The adults there care about you and will look after you.

Who are the caring adults there?

I/we will leave you here for a while and will collect you at home time.

You're going to be having fun doing things at playgroup.

I/we am/are going to be doing other things too, but will still be thinking about you.

You're going to have lots to share with me/us when you see me/us later!

What might you want to do first when you get there?

