9. Childcare Practice Procedures

9.4 Settling-In

To feel securely settled and ready to learn, children need to form attachments with the adults who care for them, primarily a key person, but others too. In this way they feel part of a community; they are able to contribute to that community and receive from it. Very young children, especially two to three year olds, approach separation from their parent with anxieties; older children have a more secure understanding of 'people permanence' and are able to approach new experiences with confidence but also need time to adjust and feel secure. It is the entitlement of all children to be settled comfortably into a new environment.

Procedure

- Before a child starts to attend our setting, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information from the initial enquiry to arranging viewings where they can meet the team. The Committee also plan stay and play sessions for current and future parents/carers. We signpost parents to our website and Facebook page.
- As part of the settling-in process we arrange Home Visits for the Manager/Assistant Manager and key person to attend the family home prior to the child starting. The purpose of this is to get to know the child in their own territory; obtain information to support our understanding of Cultural Capital for individual children; ensure all documentation is complete. The parents are given a Welcome Pack at the home visit.
- We use Home Visits to explain and complete, with his/her parents, the child's registration records and permission forms. We explain the process of settling in and jointly decide on the best way to help their child settle.
- We provide, as standard, an opportunity for the child to visit the setting for a settling-in session. This will take place after the Home Visit. The arrangements for this settle are flexible and dependent on each individual child. Further settling-in sessions can be arranged if necessary.
- We take into consideration the age and individual needs of the child and, where necessary, stagger or delay start dates to ensure the best possible settling in process.
- Home visits and the settling in session are, originally, arranged, at the beginning of the term a child is due to start. Family circumstances are taken into consideration when arranging these.

- The key person welcomes and looks after the child during the settling-in process.
- We judge a child to be settled when they have formed a relationship with their key person; for example, the child looks for the key person when he/she arrives, goes to them for comfort, and seems pleased to be with them. The child is also familiar with where things are and is pleased to see other children and participate in activities.
- When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when.
- We make parents aware that, should their child become distressed, we will ask them to reduce the period of time at the setting and collect their child earlier than planned.
- We reserve the right not to accept a child into the setting without a parent or carer if the child finds it distressing to be left. This is especially the case with very young children.
- Starting points are established by gathering information from the first contact with the child's parents at induction and during the home visit and 'settling in' period.
- The key person is responsible for establishing their key children's starting points by gathering information in the following ways:

    - observation of the child during home visits/settling in session
    - discussion with the child's parents
    - building on information that has been gathered and recorded in the 'Home Visit' books

- If a child has been identified as having SEND then the key person/SENCo and parents will need to identify and address potential barriers to settling in e.g. timings of medication and invasive procedures, specific routines and levels of support.
- For children with EAL (English as an Additional Language) the settling-in process may take longer and an interpreter may be needed to ease the process. We will ensure any first languages are actively encouraged and promoted within the setting i.e. with the use of talking speech bubbles.