

The settling in period for a Kindergartenchild

The settling in period can only be defined to a certain degree since each child is different. Each child has his or her own needs, routines, preferences and feelings. That is why every day is discussed between the parents and the Kindergarten teacher regarding how long the child is to stay in the day care centre on this particular day. An ideal settling in period for each child could take between two weeks and three months. Possible symptoms for not settling in well could be for example: the child being frequently ill, irregular attendance in the day care centre or listless and passive behaviour on the part of the child.

The basic settling in phase:

The basic phase comprises three days. In this period the child stays in the facility for one to two hours with the accompanying parent. The caregiver should not leave the room without the child in this time and not pressurise the child into going away. During the period in the group room the parent should basically remain passive and thereby take on the role of the observer, in so doing being the "safe haven" for the child.

The first day:

The child should become familiar with the new environment and in the process choose his or her playing and exploration activities freely. The Kindergarten teacher will remain reserved but will react to the child's initial contact attempts. The focus of the Kindergarten teacher on the first day will be on observing the relationship between the parent and child in order to determine the very personal type of interaction in this way. These findings will help the Kindergarten teacher to establish a better contact. It will be easier for the child to make contact through friendly talks with the parent since the child will orientate his or her situation on the way the mother/father behaves. The Kindergarten teacher can try to make contact with the child by playing little teasing games or by carefully trying to join in the game the child is playing.

The second day:

On this day the focus of the Kindergarten teacher will be on the way the child plays. The Kindergarten teacher continues to approach the child carefully. She tries to establish contact with the child by playing a joint game and to find out the child's preferences, dislikes and current needs.

The third day:

The third day proceeds like the second day in order to give the child a certain degree of stability through repetition. The Kindergarten teacher tries to establish more contact to the child in order to gain the child's trust.

The fourth day:

On the fourth day a preliminary decision will be made whether a shorter or longer accompanying period by the parent is necessary. The basis for this decision is the reaction of the child to the initial separation attempt. The duration of the separation will be agreed anew from day to day based on the wellbeing of the child. The fourth day will start with a maximum of 30 minutes. It is important that the parent always says goodbye to his or her child and the child is told truthfully why the parent is leaving and where the parent is going. If the separation attempts are successful and the child can be calmed down, appears even-tempered and feels content, the child is in the final stage of settling in.

Final phase:

In the final phase the parents no longer stay in the day care centre with the child. However, they must be able to be reached by telephone in case the child is not yet fully comfortable in the new relationship with the Kindergarten teacher.

The child's settling in period is considered complete if the child accepts the Kindergarten teacher as a "safe haven" and let himself or herself be comforted by her.

During the settling in period:

The parents will be involved in the settling in period. You can rest assured that the main Kindergarten teacher will give you honest information regarding how the child was during the separation. If a child cries for over 20 minutes without interruption, the parents are obliged to pick up their child early. If there are any uncertainties the parents of the main Kindergarten teacher should seek exchange with the other party immediately and address discrepancies. During the entire settling in period the parents should also plan to set some time aside for conversations in passing with the Kindergarten teachers. In this way it will be possible to establish the relationship and the trust between the family and the day care centre. It would also be helpful if the parents informed the main caregiver about special events such as, e.g. a bad night or illness over the weekend. In this way the needs of the child can be addressed more effectively.

We want your child to feel happy and secure with us!

Saying goodbye in the Kindergarten:

The parents should always say goodbye to their child. In order not to prolong the pain of “being left alone” it is helpful for the child if the parents say goodbye once and then actually leave. After saying goodbye the parents can, e.g. wait in the cloakroom to rest assured that their child has calmed down.

You can also inquire about the wellbeing of your child by telephone.