



Top Tips

Preparing For Your Pre-School Child Starting at a Setting

Plan with your Child

- When the time is near for your child to start at the setting you have chosen tell them that they will be going there and **let them know you are pleased and excited about that.**
- Your child will need lots of preparation because they can't ask you any questions or tell you their fears. This means that you need to prepare your child and help them get used to the idea that this is something special.
- When you have the right information from the setting talk to your child about all the things they will do at nursery/pre-school/setting and show them photographs of some of the people they are going to be with – particularly their **key person** –talking about the key person's name will help your child get to know it ready for when s/he starts his/her **induction.**
- Look at picture books of children at nursery or pre-school or photos from the setting so that you can help your child to become familiar with the names of some of the new things they will come across such as a painting easel or a coat hook or a pump bag.
- Talk to your child about the toys and equipment they will see at the setting and about the outdoor space that they will be able to explore.
- Do as much of this as you can even if your child is a young baby because it always helps to communicate!

Ask For and Expect an Induction Period

- Begin a series of visits to the nursery well ahead of your child's actual starting date so that they and you get used to the journey there, going through the doors and into the room where your child will be when s/he starts.
- Begin getting to know the people s/he will be with - both adults and other children. Stay with your child at first so that you can help the staff get to know him/her and how to care for her.

- If your child is a young baby his/her **key person** should spend time with you getting to know his/her likes and dislikes, talking about how s/he likes to settle to sleep, her food preferences and any other information that will help to settle your child comfortably when they start at the setting.
- Even if your child is three, four or five years old their **key person** will be interested and keen to share any information about your child so that they settle in easily to their new setting.
- Agree with the setting how long each visit will last and what **you** will do and where you will go during each visit – after the first few visits many settings offer parents brief opportunities to leave the room, or the building, so that their child can gradually get used to being away from them.
- Once you have established that your child is secure and happy for short periods when you aren't there you can plan to leave them for longer periods, building up to their admission to the setting.
- After each visit talk to your child about what happened whilst s/he was there, the people s/he was with, where she took his/her meals, where s/he got changed and slept and played and how s/he felt about it - even if your child can't talk this will help know you care and help her to feel relaxed about being at the setting..

Reassure Your Child and Yourself

- Build your child's confidence by talking about what s/he did at the setting between visits so that she knows what to expect when she goes there the next time.
- **Tell your child that when you leave you will always return.**
- Provide the key person with some **recent photographs** of yourself and any other close family member so they can look at them and talk about them with your child when you aren't around. **Having photos really helps young children to be reminded of you, how much they love you, and that you will be coming back.**
- Show your child that you trust the people who are looking after her/him - **if you have any doubts about this your child will pick up your anxieties** so be sure to be honest with yourself and if you have any concerns **either express them to the manager or find another nursery.**
- Always remember to listen and talk to your child to gauge their feelings.
- Look, listen and judge how your child is feeling when they are going to or leaving the setting.

- Build a relationship with the key person so that you feel able to discuss any concerns you may have. Remember the **manager, teacher or leader and the staff are there to help your child to settle** - so don't be shy about asking even the simplest of questions because you owe it to your child and yourself.