

Orientation Process - Settling in Phase

Entry into a Child Care centre may well be a child's first experience away from his or her parents and their home environment. It is therefore quite possible that the parents and the child will view this experience with mixed feelings of anticipation and anxiety.

It is structured and recommended to be adhered to in the following way;

Visit 1 - Get to Know You session. In this visit the parent and child stay for 2 hours. A strict start of 9:30 and a 11:30 departure for parent and child. During the visit the parent stays and assists with settling the child into their new environment and briefs the staff in the child's routine.

2nd visit - Half Day- Child arrives at 9:30 and will stay through to 12:30. The parent may stay as long as they wish to but it is hoped that at some stage during the visit the parent gives staff the opportunity to bond with the child without them in the room. Most parents will leave and have a coffee in the staff room or go down the street. The child leaves the centre at 12:30 with the parent.

3rd Visit- Full Day. Child and parent arrive at 9:30. During this visit we encourage the parent to leave when the child is settled and come back at 4:00 pm at the latest for pick up.

If possible the child and parent should visit the centre for short periods before the child/children are to begin. Children need time to adjust to new situations so it is important for the child to visit the centre for a short time with his or her parents just to observe and perhaps try out some of the resources and experiences. They need this time to explore the environment and to begin to build a relationship with the caregivers.

Parents should also use this time to feel comfortable with the centre, room routines, staff, centre procedures, and to ask any questions and concerns they may feel to either room staff or management.

Management's role in the orientation process:

Management will give the parents an overview of Pooh Bear's House.

- The aims and policies of the centre.
- The number of children attending the centre
- Staff ratios and qualifications in the room
- How the centre is organised and what is expected of parents (e.g. parents to bring bags with clothes, bottles, comforters etc)
- What parents will expect from the programs
- The fee structure and an insight into the fee relief subsidies available.
- The hours the centre is open
- Health and medication requirements
- Daily schedule
- Menu provided
- Tour of the centre outlining centre set up

Information to take home

Centre Booklet	Room Booklet
Menu	Enrolment Form
Additional Information	Routine Sheet
Swipe Tag	Policy Booklet

Staff's role in the Orientation process

Staff will ensure:

- That the child/children and parents are welcome and comfortable
- Are shown where the toilets, lockers, etc are,
- That the child is given the opportunity to participate in the activities and experiences that are occurring at the time, but is not pressured into doing something.
- Parents are shown and informed of; the program display, parent notice boards, white board, medication/accident book,
- That time is given to the parents to answer any questions and concerns as well as listening to any additional information the parent may wish to give you concerning their child's needs. (Eating habits, comforters, behaviour, development, etc)

Message to Parents

Children sense parent's feelings of anxiousness, uncertainty and guilt. Some parents may find it hard to leave. Prolonged good-byes are usually not helpful to either the child or the parent, so after an initial warning the caregiver will step in, in a friendly and positive way, and help the parent leave, comforting and re-directing the child to an activity or peer.

Pay attention to your own body language when saying good-bye to your child. If you're feeling uncertain about the new arrangement, you could be conveying some of your own ambivalence and anxiety to your child.

Staff will also help your child settle into childcare by;

- Staff will greet your child/children on arrival each morning. Staff will go to your child's level, make eye contact, and offer a cuddle (if the child is comfortable with that); this lets your child know that their presence is acknowledged and important.
- Staff will have the room set up on arrival to make your departure smoother. Staff will quickly engage children into activities to help you leave and settle them into the program. If a child feels anxious when you depart staff are trained and professional to deal with this situation. They will offer cuddles, talk to the child e.g. "I'm glad you're here today, I can't wait to play with you, you'll see Mum and Dad later when they come to pick you up, let's go and see what there is to do."
- Staff will organize the environment to allow for as much independence as the children can manage. For instance, having a constant place for the child to put their bag – in a labeled locker, having activities set up, and a predictable routine will foster independence and communication as children enter their room.
- Listening to parents
- If staff otherwise are occupied, please be encouraged to engage your child in an activity until the staff member is free.
- Reassuring them and discussing the adjustment process with them

- Encouraging the parent to ring the centre if they have concerns during the child's first few visits, (and any other time when their child is in care)
- Taking time each day to discuss the child with the parent. Using communication books when necessary.
- Staff will respect the differences of each child and accommodate them wherever possible; this will give the children a much better chance for a successful day.

Important Points;

- Phasing the child in gradually will help the child with the adjustment process. At Pooh Bear's House we will endeavor to make parents feel at ease and comfortable, every encouragement will be given to the parent to help them support their children during this initial orientation.
- Always tell the child when you are leaving - never dump and run.
- Staff will explain the importance of this in helping the child to learn to trust you. Staff can always comfort an upset child, and will even encourage the child to wave goodbye to you as you exit the room. This helps in establishing a comfortable 'goodbye' routine. By sneaking out the door you can create more problems for both of you. Fearing that you're going to disappear again, your child may become unwilling to let you out of his/her sight for a minute – even when the two of you are at home.
- Parents will be encouraged to bring a favourite, named toy or security item from home (pillow, blanket, dummy, teddy etc) as this helps to break down the barriers between home and the centre.

Handy Tips in helping your child adjust to Child Care

No miracle cure exists for the child care blues that many children experience when starting a new arrangement, but there is plenty you can do to make the transition as stress-free as possible for your child, such as,

- Arrive at the center 10-15 minutes ahead of time so that you can help your child settle into an activity before you have to head off to work. They'll be less likely to protest your departure if they are having fun at an activity.
- Avoid making other changes to your child's routine while they are getting used to a new childcare setting. This is not a good time to move them from a cot to a bed or to start toilet training, for example.
- Accept the fact that it takes time for young children to adjust to a new child care setting. And some take longer than others.
- If your child is having difficulty with settling in speak to them at night to try and find out the problem. Sometimes it may be confusion with an activity, a child they may not be seeing eye-to-eye with, sleep time etc. Speak to the caregivers in the room about the problem and work together to solve issues.
- If your child has problems separating from you on arrival at the center see if your child reacts as strongly if your husband/partner or a trusted friend drops them off instead. They might actually be protesting your departure more than the particular childcare environment.

Later Separation Anxieties

Children who after settling in happily for a few months suddenly display separation anxiety, this may be indicating a developmental stage in their awareness of strangers. Parents should be reassured that this is a natural step in development.

A Quote from Christopher Green (Babies-a parents' guide to surviving Baby's first Year Chpt 26 Pg 216)

"Be prepared! No matter how good the childcare may be, some children are going to protest wildly when left. This is not a reflection on either you or the centre, nor is it a sign of emotional disturbance in the child. It is a perfectly normal stage of child development.

Babies in the first six months separate well, but soon after that they start to get a real crush on Mum and close family members. When you leave them with someone else they will exhibit separation anxiety, which will usually peak at about one year of age and wane gradually over the next two years.

Don't be surprised if you leave for work amid a flood of tears and return at pick-up time to find more tears. It might appear as though the crying has been non-stop, but this is rarely the case..."

Remember that all children are different. Some are as independent as ever, while others are of the clinging vine variety. The truth is that most children are as happy as Larry in childcare once they've got used to it.

This Policy satisfies the following National Quality Framework documents;

Education and Care Service National Regulations:

- Part 4.1, Regulation 76 - Information about educational program to be given to parents
- Part 4.2, Division 3 - Medical Conditions Policy
- Part 4.6, Regulation 157 - Access for parents
- Part 4.7, Division 2 - Policies and procedures

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010;

- Part 6, Section 168 - Offence relating to required programs
- Part 6, Section 172 - Offence to fail to display prescribed information
- Part 6, Section 175 - Offence relating to requirement to keep enrolment and other documents

This Policy satisfies the following National Quality Standard Quality Areas;

- 1.1.4** - The documentation about each child's program and progress is available to families
- 2.1.1** - Each child's health needs are supported
- 6.1.1** - There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families
- 6.1.2** - Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
- 6.1.3** - Current information about the service is available to families
- 6.2.1** - The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing
- 7.3.1** - Records and information are stored appropriately to ensure confidentiality, are available from the service and are maintained in accordance with legislative requirements
- 7.3.5** - Service practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly

