

## 09 Early years practice procedures

### 09.04 Prime times – Settling in and transitions

At Little Doves Christian Pre-school, transitions are organized around the needs of the individual child. The statutory duty to ensure continuity for children during periods of transition are well understood and smooth transitions to support the personal, social and emotional development, learning and future success of every child are a priority.

The aim of the pre-school is for children to feel safe, stimulated and happy and to feel secure and comfortable with staff and parents/carers to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with the pre-school.

The pre-school offers a welcoming place where children settle quickly and easily as consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of children and their families.

The staff are also committed to ensure a smooth transition from pre-school to infant school.

A three-stage model of settling in based on three key needs is followed:

1. *Proximity* - young children feel safest when a familiar adult, such as a parent/carer, is present when they are getting used to a new carer and new surroundings. In this way they can become confident in engaging with those experiences independently later on.
2. *Secure base* – Because the initial need for proximity of the parent/carer has been met, young children gradually begin to feel secure with a key person in a new surrounding so that they are able to participate independently for small periods of time.
3. *Dependency* – young children are able to separate from parents and main carers when they have formed a secure attachment to their key person who knows and understands them best and on whom they can depend for their needs to be met.

### Transition from home and settling into Little Doves Christian Pre-school

#### Enquiries

- When a family enquires about a place for their child they will be invited by the manager or deputy to visit the pre-school during a session. The family will be shown around and given general information. Depending on how soon the child would like a place, the family is given either a 09.01d Waiting List Registration Form or a 09.01b Registration, Sessions Requested and Permission Form. Families are asked to visit the website to read the parent/carer contract, the safeguarding policy and privacy notice. A home visit will be carried out if required. Parents/carers are also informed that the pre-school's policies and procedures are available to read on the website.

#### A clear welcome procedure

- A child is invited to attend a 'build up' visit towards the end of the term before the child is due to start to familiarise them with the pre-school and meet their key person.



- A key person is allocated to each child before they start to attend; the key person welcomes and looks after the child at their first session and during the settling-in process. If the child displays a stronger attachment to another member of staff, then transfer to a new key person may take place.
- The parent/carer as the first educator of their child is valued and during the 'build up' visit essential information is collected as well as information from the parents/carers about the child's needs, likes, dislikes, routines and development. This information assists the key person in understanding the emotional needs of the child and enables them to match the home routine of the child within the pre-school, wherever possible.
- An Essex County Council Funded Early Education Entitlement funding form will be given out to complete, if appropriate.
- The 09.01b Registration, Sessions Requested and Permission Form collects information about any other professional involved with the child/family and parental permission to work with the professionals is requested. Additional permission is sought to share any SEND information with SEND professionals.
- A child will not be able to be left at the pre-school unless a 09.01b Registration, Sessions Requested and Permission Form has been completed and returned to the pre-school.

### **Settling - in**

- Separation causes anxiety in children as they have no concept of where their parent/carers have gone. Parent/carers should always say goodbye and tell them when they will return. Patience with the process will ensure children are happy and eager to come to play and be cared for in the pre-school.
- A flexible admission procedure is used, if appropriate, to meet the needs of individual families and children.
- It is made clear to families from the initial contact that they will be supported in the pre-school for as long as necessary for their child to settle and for any future occasions that may occur.
- Parent/carers whose children seem to be taking a long time to settle into the pre-school are reassured.
- New families and children are introduced into the group a few at each session if possible.
- Parent/carers are encouraged, where appropriate, to separate from their children early on in the session. If a child continues to be upset due to the separation, parent/carers will be informed /contacted.

### **For children whose first language is not English**

- For many children learning English as an additional language, the stage of proximity takes longer as the child is dependent upon the parent/carers input to make sense of what is going on.

- If the parent/carer does not speak English, efforts are made to source an interpreter for induction; it will be helpful for them to see around the pre-school and be clear about their role in interpreting in the play area.
- The settling-in programme is explained to the parent/carer and it is emphasised how important it is that they stay with the child and talk to them in the home language to be able to explain things.
- Through the interpreter, the key person will try to gauge the child's level of skills in their home language; this will give the key person an idea of the child's interests and levels of understanding.
- The need for the parent/carer to converse in the child's home language is important.
- The key person makes the parent/carer feel welcome using smiles and gestures.
- A list of key words in the child's home language may be made with input from the parent/carer; sometimes it is useful to write the word as it is pronounced. These words are used with the child and parent/carers are addressed with 'hello' and 'goodbye' in their language, if possible.
- The key person prepares for the child's visits by having a favourite toy or activity ready for the child to provide a means to interact with the child.
- Children will be spoken to as per any other child, using gestures and facial expressions to help.
- When the child feels happy to spend time with the key person (secure base), the parent/carer should spend time outside of the room.
- Progress with settling in will be done as with any other child; it just takes a little longer to reach dependency/independence.

### **Children who have identified additional needs are supported as they enter our pre-school**

- Information is collected at point of entry about any other professionals who are involved with the child/family and parental permission is sought to work with the professionals before entry, if possible, to ensure the pre-school is ready to meet the child's physical, emotional, social and learning needs. Professionals who support individual children in the pre-school are welcomed and regular TAC/TAF meetings for children with SEND are held.
- Referrals to other professionals are made where appropriate and families are signposted to services provided. If it is thought that a child has sufficient level of identified need and with parental permission, an application for additional funding may be made.
- If a child, about whom there is a child protection concerns, leaves the pre-school Social Services will be alerted.
- If a child in the pre-school has complex health/medical needs with a 04.09 Medical Record/Educational Health Care plan, training is sought, if necessary, to support the child. The environment is assessed and modified to ensure that the needs of the child are met wherever possible.

### **Sharing information**

- An environment in the pre-school is created that reflects the needs and interests of the child and provides opportunities for parent/carers and their child to spend time to get to know their key person.



The key person is usually responsible for telling the parent/carer about the events of the day that have been important for the child. Observations and assessments are used to plan for each child's learning and development. All those involved with the child share this information. A child's "Big book of me" learning journal shows a child's interest, learning, development and progress through written observations and photos. Photos of activities and events are taken to show parents/carers what happens in the pre-school and these are regularly uploaded to the Little Doves Closed Facebook page.

- Communication with the families is promoted through:
  - open door policy
  - guide to Early Years Education Booklet or link on the home page on the website
  - characteristics of Effective Learning link on the home page on the website
  - interest table topic fliers available to take home
  - notice board displays
  - 'What's happened today' notice board
  - snack details
  - reading books in the book swap box
  - books giving advice to parents/carers
  - home learning challenges e.g colouring and counting sheets, treasure hunts
  - helping in sessions parent/carer rota
  - staff photo frame in reception
  - information of events
  - regularly updated website
  - closed Facebook page – regularly added to with activities of the day
  - regular newsletters
  - general parental questionnaire on how the pre-school is doing
  - summer term parental evaluation form
  - 'What to expect when' top tips for learning at home
  - email, texts and WhatsApp messages
  - contact books
  - wow certificates
  - next steps
  - progress check/tracking sheets – for parents/carers to read and sign
  - appointments with key person & viewing Learning Journal scrapbook
  - transition to school arrangements/information/guidance
  - accident outside of the pre-school form
  - policies and procedures available on the 'About – Policies' tab on the website



- advice & help on two, three and four year old funding, 30 hours, DAF applications, childcare vouchers available within the parent/carer contract on the 'Info – Parent/carer contract' tab on the website.
- Parent/carers are worked with as equal partners with, for example, with one plans, healthcare plans and 04.09 Medical record/educational health care plan referrals and report writing.

### **Transitions to childminders**

- Following written permission given by parents/carers, staff will share verbal information with the childminder at the beginning or end of sessions to pass on to the parent/carers. Childminders will also be given all the paperwork given out to other parents/carers to pass onto the parents/carers including the contact books.

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