

Woodcote Pre-school
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Settling-in at Pre-school

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For many children, starting Pre-school is their first step towards independence and there are important lessons to be learned, namely:

- that it is possible to feel safe and happy while the parents are not present for a while
- that other adults can be a source of authority, help and friendship
- that new play and learning experiences can be enjoyed in a group and shared with parents afterwards.

Give your child a chance to learn these positive lessons by working with our Pre-school staff to make the settling in period as easy as possible. Here are some tips to help you.

- **Brief visits** to the Pre-school before you start attending will make the place and people feel more familiar.
- Before starting at Pre-school, **talk** to your child **cheerfully and positively** about the good things which will happen there.
- **Be prepared to stay** with your child in the group until he or she is ready to be left alone. All children are different and this might take anything from a few minutes to a few weeks for them to settle in fully. It is a good idea in any case to stay for the first session. It gives you an idea of what goes on and enables you to talk about it afterwards with your child.

- Arrange to **arrive a little later** than the others on the first day. The beginning and end of each session are our busiest times. By arriving at about 9.15-9.30am, your child will come into a quiet and settled group in which the children are already busy and the staff are free to introduce people and activities.
- When you judge that your child is ready to be left, **say goodbye**. Do not be tempted to creep away whilst the child is occupied. This might seem easier at the time but it can cause the child to feel let down and mistrustful.
- **Give a clear explanation of what is going to happen**. "I am going to the shops and I will be back after lunch time" can help the child to envisage where you will be and what timescale will be involved.
- For children who find parting particularly hard, it might help to have a very **brief separation** at first - just to post a letter or to go to the shop. The separation time can then be extended gradually.
- **Be punctual**. If a parent is not there at the time he or she promised, the child may feel let down or any newly built confidence could be upset.
- **Don't worry**. Children develop very quickly at this age and a child who seems unable to manage alone for even a second can have a very different attitude in only a week or two. Just be calm and practical about it, reassuring the child that he or she will be able to manage soon and helping him or her to make friends and get used to activities.

We do very much hope that you and your child will enjoy being part of our Pre-school. If you have any questions or difficulties, please let us know. Speak to our staff about questions concerning your child or the Committee Chair or Manager about fees and administration.