



December 2009

Settling in - off to a good start

Before leaving your child at the service for the first time, allow some time to stay with them to help them become familiar and comfortable with the new environment. This may take a few weeks before you both feel happy about this.

Most services will be happy for your child to bring a special comfort object if it will help them to settle in.

Talk to the teachers about your child

To help your child settle in, talk to the teachers about your child's:

- special words and ways of communicating
- favourite ways of being comforted
- sleep routines - when and how they like to go to sleep
- toilet training
- favourite foods and special food needs
- life and family - important things that may be happening and anything that might be upsetting them.

If your child has special education needs and is already receiving early intervention services, talk to your key worker about what support may be available at your ECE service.

Saying goodbye

It is normal for your child to be upset or unwilling for you to leave, especially in the early weeks. This can be an upsetting time for parents and whānau too.

These things can help children settle in and reassure you:

- be positive about the day ahead and the things they will be doing
- give yourself plenty of time to settle in your child
- establish a short routine, such as reading a story together or waving to each other through the window
- always tell your child you are going, say goodbye, and then leave straight away. If you are worried arrange to phone later and see how they are
- always pick your child up at the time you have promised. For the first week or so try to be a bit early.
- Some children will settle into the new environment straight away others take longer. The teachers have lots of experience with this and will have suggestions about the best ways to help your child settle in.

Culture

The staff may not be familiar with your cultural traditions and beliefs. Teachers will provide opportunities for you to share your cultural values and views so that they can gain a better understanding. This will ensure they can more appropriately support your child and their culture in the ECE service.

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What if my child becomes unwell?

The teachers will have policies in place covering sickness, accidents and emergencies. These will be available to be viewed at all times.

After starting at an ECE service some children may initially be more susceptible to colds and other minor illnesses.

If your child shows symptoms of being unwell, the service will contact you and ask you to collect your child as soon as possible. Keep your child at home until they are better to stop illness spreading to other children. It will also help your child recover faster.

It is a good idea to have a back-up plan for times when you can't be contacted or can't get there quickly. Make sure that your emergency contact can collect your child and care for them if they become unwell during the day).

Medication

Your ECE service will have processes to ensure medication is administered correctly. ECE services have to meet the minimum standards set by the Ministry of Education.

The service will:

- identify staff members who are skilled or experienced in giving the medication
- make sure the person giving the medication follows the directions
- store the medication safely and appropriately
- keep records of when and by whom the medication is given and how much is administered.

If your child is on medication, you will need to:

- give the ECE service written authority to give your child any medication
- check dispensed medication provided to the service is clearly labelled.

If your child takes regular medication as part of an individual health plan (eg asthma inhalers) you will need to let the teachers know before your child starts at the service along with any special instructions for giving that medication.

Managing behaviour

Every early childhood education service must have a written policy on how they manage children's behaviour. The service must ensure every child is given:

- respect and dignity
- positive guidance promoting appropriate behaviour
- positive guidance, using praise and encouragement. The service must avoid blame, harsh language, belittling or degrading responses
- guidance and control. No child is subjected to any form of physical ill-treatment, immobilisation or deprived of food, drink, warmth, shelter or protection.

If you are concerned about any aspects of your child's behaviour feel free to talk to the teachers. If you feel there is a problem, early discussion and resolution will benefit your child and others.

If you and the teacher think your child's behaviour is more difficult than usual for their age, find out more about the support available for you and your child.

ECE services must not use force to correct or punish any child.

