



POLICY: Orientation and Settling for Children and Families

For many children and their families, starting child care is the first time they have been separated for any length of time. At Stepping Stones Child Care Centre, we recommend that families plan orientation times to allow the settling in process to occur gradually.

Initially the family should visit the Centre as often as possible. This will enable the child to explore the environment and allow families to become familiar with the routine of the Centre. It also provides families with the opportunity to talk to staff about their child's needs and to develop trust in the staff.

The following policy will give families information about what to expect during the settling in process and how the Centre will support families:

- Families must complete an Enrolment package prior to enrolment and must be returned before your child can be left alone at the Centre. Families must sign their child in and out on arrival to and departure from the centre. Centre staff will show families this process during orientation.
- For the first visit to the centre, families should stay in the room with their child to familiarise themselves with the Centre.
- On the second visit we suggest the parent/guardian leaves the premises for 1-2 hours.
- On the third visit we encourage the child to visit the centre for approximately 3 hours, preferably over a rest time. This will allow the child to sleep at the centre before commencing care. We ask that families do not use this time to attend appointments, if your child is distressed they may need to be picked up, and a booked appointment may delay this.
- When a child has been left for a period of more than four hours during orientation, a fee will be charged.
- Families are asked to complete the centres "Child's Routine and Update to Routine Form" prior to orientation to enable the centre to cater for each child's individual requirements.

Please note that all children cope differently with orientation and we as child care staff are here to make the child's settling in process smooth and be sensitive to their needs.

Some children may take longer than others when settling into the Centre, but by visiting your child's new room more regularly before they commence care, can help ease the separation anxiety children and families may experience during this time. Our orientation routine is flexible and we are more than happy to extend children's orientation times, if required.

Staff understand that putting your child in care is an upsetting time for families, and children need time to adapt to their new surroundings, even if they appear upset. Families need to give children the time and space to adjust, staff will support families and assist them with techniques for saying goodbye at arrival time. This by no means is telling families they are not welcome to stay but delaying the separation process can sometimes make letting go even harder.

Transitioning to a New Room:

Each child will become developmentally ready to move to the next age group during their time at Stepping Stones Child Care Centre. A vacancy needs to be available in the next room before transitioning can begin. When a child is almost ready to begin transitioning this will be discussed with the family to ensure they feel comfortable with the child moving to their new group. Before a child officially moves into their new room, children are provided with orientation time to visit the next age group. This time is dependent on the individual child. Families will be given a letter detailing when their child will move into the next age group, information on staffing in that room etc. Families are encouraged to visit and tour their child's new room prior to them moving, to ensure families are aware of the room routine, location of lockers, sign in and out sheets etc.

We encourage families to phone the Centre as often as they like throughout the day for updates on their child. Families are welcome to come back and visit their child throughout the day.

Families will be encouraged to complete the centre's Orientation Feedback Form, after their orientation process has finished providing us with feedback and suggestions for future improvements.

This policy links to the following CCQA Principles:

Quality Practices Guide (2005) – Principle 2.1 & 2.3

Source:

- NCAC Quality Practices Guide www.ncac.gov.au
- Choosing a Child Care Centre www.oneworldforchildren.com.au
- Multicultural Resource Centre www.fka.com.au

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