VEKiS
Vereinigte Evangelische
Kindertageseinrichtungen im Saarland

Evangelisch im Saarland

Übersetzungshilfe Englisch

SETTLING INTO OUR DENOMINATIONAL DAYCARE CENTRES

Settling-in takes account of child development science insights, the needs of families and their cultural backgrounds.

Being safely nurtured and curious about discovering the world

…is the same for all children

That's what VEKiS stands for with the paedological concepts for its Protestant childcare centres

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We look forward to being able to welcome you and your child into one of our childcare centres.
When you child starts going to a childcare centre, you will both start a new important part of your lives. Starting in a childcare centre means joining a community and entering our educational system.

In order to make your children feel secure and safe and give them the confidence to explore the 'world', we need to continue supporting the child's ability to relate and bond. The child can therefore be **accompanied** by a parent or other important attachment figure in the child's life during the **settling-in** period.
We enable that for you! And trained childcare experts are there to accompany you and give you advice.

The ability to relate and bond is the emotional bond between the child and its main attachment figures (parents) that develops from the moment of birth in a trust-based relationship for the child. This is essential for the social, emotional and cognitive development of a child.

Bonding is activated when children make it known (by gripping, hugging, crying, calling) that they need closeness and comforting, that they want reassurance, and that they want to establish protective nearness to a trusted person.
Children have this basic need in daily situations, for example when they are tired or experience something new/unfamiliar.
The child would like to feel safe again at that moment and needs **its own** attachment figure. Children who **feel safe and comfortable explore** i.e. they check out their surroundings and play. Stable relationships between children and adults are the **bed rock of educational processes.**

Challenges of the new situation…

The initial transition from being at home to going to the childcare centre makes demands on everyone concerned like for example:

- children learn to do without trusted attachment figures, in other words you! And they build other relationships.
- As parents, you learn to trust the fact that the new relationships mean that your child is thriving in the childcare centre; this is a process of separation that demands a lot of you.
- Children may be confronted for the first time with new surroundings with:
  - a different daily routine
  - different mealtimes and foods
  - a new place to sleep
  - a different noise level, a lot of smells, a new atmosphere
  - …and suddenly: a lot of children!

What matters for you parents*:
As parents, you need to know that your child is being looked after properly. You are entering an educative partnership and are allowing your child to receive care and attention from the childcare centre expert. You need to know that you are and remain the experts for your child and **cannot** be replaced.

*'parents' also means accompanying attachment figures

Settling-in Phases

The childcare experts put the settling-in process on a professional footing by providing scientifically proven settling-in models for planning the settling-in process **with you.** The focus is on the uniqueness of every single child. In other words: **What does the child need?!**

We suggest a 3-day initial phase:
According to scientific studies, children up to the age of three and a half normally need between 6 to 14 days to build up a relationship in an initially strange environment. The parents remain the child's main attachment figures. On the first day, a parent goes into the childcare centre with the child. A questionnaire has allowed us to discuss and keep a written record of the child's habits and rituals. Already during this conversation, the child is aware that an interaction between the parent and the childcare expert is taking place. In these first 3 days you spend up to 2 hours with your child in the new environment.
The childcare expert needs to see how you interact with your child so that the child can then follow routines that the child is used to.

This settling-in time is part of the normal daily routine of the childcare centres and is part of the timetable because settling-in takes up the time of a lot of people. Adjustments to cater or personal circumstances may have to be made.

In this initial settling-in time, the childcare expert makes contact with the child according to the signals received from the child but without stressing the child. Physical contact between the carer and the child does not occur until the child wants it and signals that it wants it. The parent plays an increasingly passive role. **No** attempt at separation is made during this time and care is provided by the parent or attachment figure.

The schedule is as follows but is tailored to what the child indicates it needs.

The first attempt at separation normally occurs on day 4:
If the child is playing and busy, you take your leave openly but stay in the childcare centre. The first separation lasts about half an hour. If the child consciously accepts your leaving the room and goes on with what it was doing, the first separation attempt was successful. If the child won't calm down and cries after you have left the room, come back. A second separation attempt can then be made the next day.

The stabilisation phase normally occurs from the fifth day
The separation attempt is extended. If the child is happy and seems calm, the childcare expert takes over care, at first together with you.
In week two, the stay is further extended and the child spends longer without the parent. The parent remains if possible inside the childcare centre.

Final phase: the parent and child take conscious leave of one another successfully. The parent leaves the childcare centre but can be reached.
How much time the child needs is discussed individually. If the child can adapt to the childcare centre's routine step-by-step and the child accepts the childcare experts and the children's group as a safe environment, settling-in has been successful.

What you need to know as parents:

You are helping your child when you do this:

- let the child settle in in its own good time
- react to the child's approaches and eye contact but don't be the first to make contact
- don't pressurize your child to do something or to distance itself from you
- don't bother about the other children so as not to irritate your child
- don't feel you are responsible for the childcare centre's rules
- regularly taking your child to and collecting your child from the childcare centre will make it easier for him or her to fit in because a **structured** daily routine makes your child feel secure
- saying goodbye and coming again instil confidence and trust in your child
- after the settling-in period, do not linger on the premises when taking your child to and collecting your child from the childcare centre because you are not an attachment figure for the other children
- favourite objects like dummies, comfort blankets or soft toys are encouraged and help your child
- make sure you can be contacted by the experts at the childcare centre!

The aim of gentle settling-in:

- making the new situation easier for the child
- building up the child's confidence whilst the trusted attachment figure is nearby to reassure the child
- the child meets other children, children help one another
- helping the child learn about its unique qualities and characteristics
- building trust between parents and childcare experts
- avoiding competition
- laying the foundations for a long partnership based on trust in the interest of the child!

...by the way …
Do children learn in the childcare centre?!

- **getting along with a lot of children in a community**
- **making friends**
- **being self-aware; I'm important and am taken seriously!**
- **expressing their needs**
- **dealing with arguments and conflicts**
- **saying NO and defending oneself; getting help**
- **consequences of breaking rules that make sense paedologically**
- **discovering themselves and their own bodies**
- **going to the toilet in a collective facility**
- **discovering their own body and bodily functions**
- **slipping into other roles and trying them out; a sense of self increases self-esteem and develops even at the age of 3!**

All this and much more helps develop a kindergarten child's sense of identity.