



# Settling In Policy

At Brightsparks, our aim is to work in partnership with parents to help them become familiar with the setting and offer a settled relationship for the child. We know children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure. We build positive relationships with parents to ensure we can meet children's individual needs and help them settle quickly into nursery life.

Our settling in procedure includes:

- Allocating a key person to each child and his/her family, before he/she starts at Brightsparks. The key person welcomes and looks after the child, ensuring that their care is tailored to meet their individual needs.
- Reviewing the nominated key person if the child is bonding with another member of staff to ensure the child's needs are supported
- Providing parents with relevant information about the policies and procedures of the nursery
- Working with parents to gather information before the child starts on the child's interests, likes and dislikes and their favourite things available at settling sessions, e.g. their favourite story or resource, as well as completing a baseline of the child's current development to plan and meet the individual needs of the child from the first day
- Asking parents and children to visit the nursery before an admission is planned, to view the setting and understand what services we offer.
- Planning tailored introductory sessions, during the week before the child is due to start, so that the child becomes familiar with the setting.
- When appropriate, welcoming parents to stay with their child for a short period of time, during the first few days of starting. However, we are also mindful that prolonged goodbyes can cause more stress and anxiety for the child, and that usually keeping drop-offs quick and functional is a better approach.
- Encouraging parents to send in family photos to display to help settle the child
- Creating photo books of the setting, including photos of staff for the child to take home and share with their parent, and become familiar with the staff and new environment
- Reassuring parents whose children seem to be taking a little longer to settle in and developing a plan with them, for example, shorter days, where possible
- Providing regular updates and photos of the children settling
- Encouraging parents, where appropriate, to separate themselves from their children for brief periods at first, gradually building up to longer absences
- Respecting the circumstances of all families, including those who are unable to stay for long periods of time in the nursery and reassure them of their child's progress towards settling in
- Not taking a child on an outing from the nursery until he/she is completely settled.

<b>This policy was adopted on</b>	<b>Signed on behalf of the nursery</b>	<b>Date for review</b>
September 2025	<i>Emma Jones</i>	August 2026

## Tips for Parents

- **Always say goodbye**, and having a familiar phrase that you say each time can help with familiarity and reassurance. Once you have said your goodbyes, you need to leave. Try to avoid going back, as this can upset your little one more.
- **Don't drag out the leaving/dropping off process** as this can cause your child to get more upset. Try to make drop off quite a quick process so settle them into their room (if you are able to), and then you say your goodbye phrase and leave. If the drop-off process is too long, this can cause your little one to get more upset as they are building up anticipation for it to happen, which can be more distressing for them.
- **Upbeat and happy reunion.** When coming back to collect, make sure that you are upbeat and say, "I said I would come back and have big cuddles, and here I am!"
- Take in a **comforter or familiar object** which they might provide them with reassurance. This might be something like a cuddly toy, muslin or blanket, etc, as this can smell of you/home, which can really offer comfort when they are going through the separation.
- **Give an explanation of the day** so that they know what is going to happen. This might be saying something like "we are going to nursery, you will have breakfast, a play, then lunch, a nap and then I will pick you up". This helps your little one prepare themselves for the day (it can even help babies), and when you come back at that time, it helps them to have that reassurance and trust in what you say.
- **Talk positively about the nursery** when you are at home. We can feel like not talking about nursery when our children are at home in case it makes them upset but it can really help to talk about it (not all the time) but occasionally as this can make the connection between home and nursery, it can also give your child the opportunity to talk to you about what is causing them to be upset if they are at that age.
- **Don't trick or not tell them the truth**, if you are going to nursery and they ask if that is where you are going, be honest. Yes, it might make your little one upset, but in the long term, this helps to build their trust in what you say. If they feel tricked or not told the truth, then they are going to question what you say, lack trust, and this can then lead to them being more upset, not only with nursery but with other things that you say you are doing.
- **Look to provide some distraction** on the way to nursery, play games or talk about what you can see. If your little one is anxious about going to nursery, acknowledge that you know they are feeling a bit sad about it, but then provide them with something to take their mind off it. This might be games, music in the car, toys to play with – anything that you know your child might like!
- **Keep positive** so that your little one can see that you are feeling ok with the whole process. Children pick up on a lot of our body language and emotions, so if you are feeling anxious, worried or upset, then your little one might be picking up on this too. Take some deep breaths, look at what distraction techniques might be good for you, and if you do have concerns or worries, then talk to us at the nursery so that you can feel more comfortable and happier – this will help your child in the long term.
- **Don't be afraid to use emotional language** around the whole situation, such as saying things such as "I can see you're feeling sad about going to nursery, it's ok to feel sad, as saying goodbye can be tricky. I am coming back later and we will have lots of cuddles/we can play in the garden, etc."

