

GUIDE TO PARTICIPATORY SETTLING-IN

Dear family,

Starting nursery is an important milestone for your child and for the whole family. It is a new experience: the first time being apart, the first encounters with other children and adults in a setting different from family life. That is precisely the reason it deserves time, attention and sensitivity.

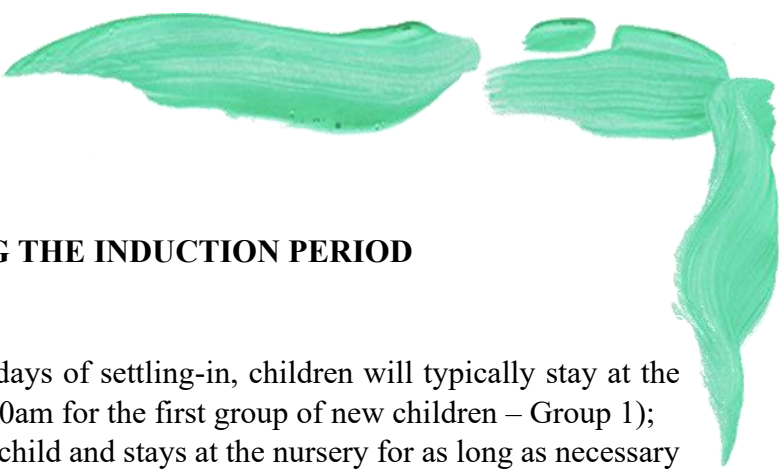
For us, it is essential that the settling-in process takes place **gradually and with respect**, taking into consideration both the child's needs and your needs as a parent. The transition into nursery will be easier for a child if they sense a calmness and confidence from the person accompanying them. Getting to know the environment, the nursery staff the daily routine and the educational programme helps to build this confidence.

The families and educational team share a common goal: the child's wellbeing. For this reason, we believe that mutual understanding and cooperation are important, particularly during the difficult time of separation.

Based on these considerations, the municipal nurseries have introduced a new settling-in process known as '**participatory settling-in**' (or the '**three-day approach**'). Over three consecutive days, you and your child will experience the nursery's daily routine together, taking part in the various activities of the day: arrival, playtime, diaper changes, lunch and for the youngest children, nap time.

This time spent together allows your child to experience their new environment alongside a trusted adult, feeling welcomed and supported at their own pace. Meanwhile it gives you the chance to get to know the nursery up close, observe the educational activities and feel like an active part of the process.

You will find some practical guidelines to help you navigate the day-to-day running of the nursery on the following pages as well as some reflections on how to approach the educational environment. Sharing schedules, rules and values for us is an integral part of a journey of **shared responsibility**, in which families and the nursery work together, whilst respecting each other's roles.



ORGANISATIONAL GUIDELINES DURING THE INDUCTION PERIOD

- **Attendance time:** During the first three days of settling-in, children will typically stay at the nursery from 9:00am to 1:00pm (from 8:00am for the first group of new children – Group 1);
- **Fourth day:** The parent accompanies the child and stays at the nursery for as long as necessary to ensure a calm transition. The time for goodbyes and leaving will be agreed with the nursery staff. Pick-up is scheduled for around 1:00pm;
- **Parent availability:** From the fourth day, it is important that the parent **remains contactable** so they can intervene if necessary, whilst respecting the child's wellbeing;
- **Clothing:** comfortable clothes are recommended for both the child and the adult to encourage movement, play and exploration;
- **Naptime:** children in Group 1 may have naptime as early as the morning during the first few days of settling-in. Children in Group 2 and 3 will have naptime introduced at a later stage, in consultation with the family in accordance with each child's individual rhythm;
- **Primary caregiver:** only one adult can be present at a time and the adult may vary from day to day, provided that the child is guaranteed a sense of continuity and consistency.

HOW CAN I SPEND THREE DAYS AT THE NURSERY? SHARING EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES

- **Be present:** genuine presence is important, avoiding distractions such as using your mobile phone;
- **Offer attentive eye contact:** a warm and welcoming gaze helps the child feel safe and explore with greater confidence;
- **Follow the child's lead:** let the child guide the play and exploration, accompanying them without anticipating or directing them. Supported autonomy builds confidence and competence;
- **Respect the guidance of the teaching staff:** agreeing on rules, how to behave and how to interact helps to create a calm, consistent and respectful environment for everyone;
- **Support without taking over:** Remain physically and emotionally available, whilst leaving the child space to do things for themselves;
- **Acknowledge emotions:** Recognise the child's emotions (and your own), without downplaying them or offering excessive reassurance. Putting emotions into words helps the child understand these emotions;
- **Respect the child's pace:** Every child develops at their own pace; it is important not to force interactions, routine, mealtimes, separation or sleep;
- **Pay attention to the goodbye routine:** Goodbyes should be clear and consistent, as agreed with the teaching staff. Avoid leaving without saying goodbye: predictably it builds emotional security.