



# Settling-in Guidance for Families

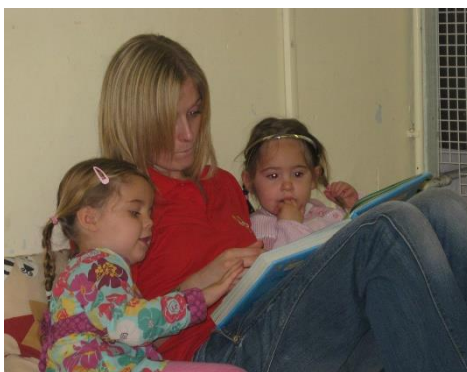
Your child will be introduced to her/his key person when s/he starts at Hopscotch.

We have a policy detailing the role of the key person and our approach to settling-in. It is available to view at [www.hopscotchplaygroup.com](http://www.hopscotchplaygroup.com) or we have a copy at Hopscotch.

We want your child to settle quickly and to build a positive, warm relationship with her/his key person. To achieve this we will work with you to get to know your child and to support him/her and you as you make this transition into playgroup.

Please remember:-

1. All children are unique and will react differently to the experience of starting playgroup. Please try not to make comparisons with siblings, friend's children or other children you see at Hopscotch.
2. Some children have had a lot of experience of being in groups or of being away from their family; for others it is a new experience. But for all children starting at a new playgroup is a big step.
3. You know your child best and we need your help to get to know and understand them. Any information you can give us with regard to previous experiences away from you, special words s/he uses or activities s/he enjoys will be useful.
4. It may take some time for your child to settle. Or your child may settle initially and then become unsettled again. Don't worry about this but please keep us informed of any concerns or comments your child makes.



### Tips and things to try:-

- ✚ Please prepare your child by chatting naturally about going to playgroup. Perhaps look out for a book about playgroup at the library.
- ✚ Be positive. If you are confident it will be fun and talk about all the good things s/he will enjoy, your child will come along with a positive expectation.
- ✚ Do come along for a visit or two prior to the start date.
- ✚ Do be honest about the fact that you are going to leave him/her if s/he asks about this.
- ✚ Be prepared to stay for most of the first session or two, although it can also be helpful to pop out briefly after the first time - just so your child gets the idea that it is the aim for them to stay alone!
- ✚ Please say 'goodbye' when the time comes to leave! Creeping away instead of saying 'goodbye' can lead to a lot of anxiety for your child and prolong the process.
- ✚ Once you have said 'goodbye' you do then need to leave, no matter what the reaction. If your child cries and you then change your plan and stay, it only leads to confusion.
- ✚ Be consistent. Stick to what you've said you are going to do and do it each time you come - build a routine for your child so s/he knows what to expect.
- ✚ Try to minimise other changes for your child around the time s/he starts playgroup, e.g don't plan to start toilet training or stop giving a dummy within a month or so of starting. Of course, some changes cannot be anticipated but aim to keep things as routine as possible to begin with.
- ✚ If your child does have a comfort object such as a special teddy, blanket or dummy, that s/he is used to having with them when out of the home, do please bring it along to playgroup. Now is probably not the time to discard it!
- ✚ Keep in touch with your child's key person - we need to know how you and your child feel the settling-in process is going.