

Settling in policy

Approved: 27 Feb 2019
Reviewed: 2 Sept 2019
Review due: 2 Sept 2020

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline how YMCA East Surrey staff ensures that all children feel safe, secure and comfortable with staff in settings. Staff provide a welcoming environment where children settle quickly and where consideration is given to the child's individual needs and the parents/carers wishes.

Responsibilities and monitoring

Monitor: Head of Children's Services
Approve: Board of Management
Endorse: Children's Services Committee
Propose: CEO
Draft and review: Children's Services Development Manager

Policy and procedure

Prior to first attendance at a YMCA Children's Services setting, parents/carers are provided with information through leaflets and a welcome pack. Registration forms/individual care plans are also completed by the parent/carer before a child can attend any setting (see Admission policy). These provide the staff teams with additional information regarding the child's needs and interests. Children's Services staff teams will ensure that all information regarding first attending a setting is relayed to the children in ways suitable for them as an individual, taking into account their age and stage of development at all times.

Visits to settings

Parents/carers and children are invited to visit before the child starts at a time that suits them, which provides them with an opportunity to see the setting, meet the staff and the other children in attendance. Home visits can be arranged with the approval of the Head of Children's Services, who will decide if this is an appropriate course of action, which will then be carried out by the relevant setting Coordinator or Manager.

In addition to the above, YMCA East Surrey's Pre-schools will employ a settling in process, which will be:

- ▶ Visit one: parent stays with child for 1 hour
- ▶ Visit two: child stays for 2 hours on their own, however it can be adjusted depending on the individual child's needs

Settling in

During the child's first few sessions, a key person will be assigned to welcome the parents/carers and child.

The scheme Coordinator will work together with the parents/carers to create a bespoke settling in process for the child.

The YMCA's expectation of the parents/carers during the settling in process is to prepare the child as best they can, to offer encouragements and be prepared to stay for a while, if this is appropriate. Appropriate level of support and supervision will be judged according to the child's age, maturity and previous experiences.

Parents/carers are welcome to stay for part or all of the session in the first week, if it is in their child's best interest. Setting Coordinators/Leaders will explain and reassure parents/carers that younger children may take longer to settle.

Parents/carers are welcome to say goodbye straight away or to stay and settle their child at an activity before leaving them, whatever method is best for their individual child.

If a child is distressed, we will offer shorter sessions or enable parents/carers to stay for part of the session. Within Y-Kids settings, we offer a buddy system, which enables children to settle in with the support of their peers.

We will presume a child has settled when they independently enter the setting and appear comfortable in that setting, with little or no support from parent/carers.

If it seems that a child is taking a long time to settle in, this will be discussed with their parents/carers at the earliest opportunity. Likewise, if the parent/carers feels that there is a problem during the settling in period, they should raise this with the key person or setting Coordinator/Manager any time they wish.