Settling in
How to make a good start
Dear Parents,

You have decided to entrust us with looking after your child at a daycare centre run by the City of Kiel. We look forward to meeting your child and spending time with you and, in this leaflet, we provide you with information on the upcoming settling-in period.

We all go through several transitions in life, e.g. from home to kindergarten, from kindergarten to school or from school to work. If we have positive experiences in new and strange situations as children, we develop skills and confidence that help us later on in life, too.

It is especially important for us to ensure that the initial period at daycare is arranged, with your support, as carefully and as gently as possible for your child. Starting daycare is your child’s first experience of separation from you as his/her loved and trusted attachment figures. Your child must deal with new surroundings and establish stable relationships with the daycare’s specialist staff. Children experience stress when they are confronted with situations of separation, even if they are not always able to show it. This is why they need a suitable settling-in period and the presence of their attachment figures until the new situation becomes familiar.
How is the settling-in period organised?

In order to make entering into the everyday life of the daycare centre easier for your child, we have drawn up a plan following the „Berlin Model“ proposed by the Institut für angewandte Sozialisationsforschung/frühe Kindheit e.V. – Infas (institute for applied research into socialisation/early childhood).

The settling-in period is agreed on an individual basis according to your child’s needs. The behaviour of your child demonstrates to us his/her emotional state and this determines the structure and duration of the settling-in period. This period may be longer or shorter for different children.

In all cases, your child needs to be accompanied by someone they trust. Please decide who will accompany your child during the settling-in period in advance at home. Who has enough time? Who is better at separating him/herself from the child? Our experience shows that if the same person accompanies the child throughout the settling-in period, it provides the child with a sense of security and makes arrangements with the daycare centre easier. Please ensure that you bring your child along regularly during the settling-in period. Contact and visits before your child’s official start date are an opportunity for children and staff to get to know each other and help children build up trust and confidence.
1st phase

- For the first few days, you stay with your child at the daycare centre. This gives your child the sense of security he/she needs in the new surroundings.
- After the agreed period (a short time at first, then gradually longer) you leave together with your child.
- It is helpful if you take a back seat during this phase to allow the specialist staff to build up a relationship with your child through eye contact, touch and play.
2nd phase

- Once a relationship has been formed with the specialist staff after several meetings and opportunities to play, together with you, we will agree on a first attempt at separation (5 to 10 minutes).
- A quick and clear goodbye is important.
- You can leave the room but stay within reach at the centre.
3rd phase

• If the first attempts at separation are successful, together with you, we will agree how long your child will stay each day.

• The specialist staff carefully assume sensitive tasks such as meal-times, nappy changes, naps (especially in crèches).

• Longer separation periods are agreed. We must be able to contact you by telephone at all times.
Making a good start by working together

At your chosen daycare centre, our specialist staff will conduct a detailed initial discussion with you regarding your individual situation, your child’s preferences and habits, particular features of the centre, specific times and so on. A special phase begins for you, too, as parents. This is often the first time you are separated from your child on a regular basis and it can be emotional, joyful, but also worrying. If you have any questions at all, please ask our specialist staff at the daycare centre. They are there to provide you with expert support.

Following the settling-in period, throughout your child’s time at kindergarten, our specialist staff are available for you to communicate with regularly and keep in close contact. They appreciate your interest.

We wish you a very successful start and a successful partnership at our daycare centre.

Your Amt für Kinder- und Jugendeinrichtungen
(office for child and youth facilities)