

CARRYDUFF PLAY CARE CENTRE

SETTLING IN POLICY (Playgroup)

For most children, starting Playgroup is their first separation from their main carer, and recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators. Starting in a new setting is a major event in a child's life and this time of transition can be stressful for both children and parents.

Parents are encouraged to bring their child(ren) to the Playgroup open day's to help familiarise them with the surroundings and staff prior to beginning sessions. If this isn't possible they are welcome to visit during a session at a time more convenient for them.

When a child starts playgroup, it is preferable that a parent is available to stay for the first session if needed to give the child added confidence; if your child has a comforter it may be helpful to bring it along. This time also creates an opportunity for the staff to ensure all the appropriate forms have been completed. When you arrive the Playgroup Leader will introduce themselves to you and your child, and familiarise you with the preschool environment, play areas and equipment. Take time to walk around the playroom and look at the choice of play areas. When your child chooses an activity take a seat nearby.

It is important to let your child know when you are leaving. Tell your child you are going and will be back after an activity, for example story time. Although tempting, slipping away when your child is distracted can lead to the child becoming more anxious on the next visit.

Please remember you are welcome to stay for as long as is necessary for your child to feel confident with the staff, and the other children.

Open communication between parents and the Playgroup staff is crucial. It is important to share information. Parents can give the staff information about the child and in turn the staff can talk to the parents about the child's experiences in the setting.

Our staff have a vast amount of experience in helping children settle into our setting and are aware of the difficulties that can emerge during this transition period.

If your child is taking longer to settle in than you had expected and you still have concerns, discuss these with a member of staff. Together we can agree on, and put in place, strategies to support your child.

Every attempt will be made to prevent your child becoming anxious, however should your child become distressed, you will be contacted immediately.

At Carryduff Playgroup we aim to:

- Make the children feel happy and secure in their new environment in the absence of their parent/carer.
- Make the children feel confident to explore and experiment in the physical environment.
- Help the children to develop independence in the new environment and freely access all the resources.
- Support the children to develop positive relationships with both adults and other children in the setting.
- Help children to communicate their needs to others in an appropriate way.
- Promote appropriate behaviour, with clear expectations and positive reinforcements.
- Work in partnership with parents in their children's learning.
- Support and build upon the children's prior experiences and knowledge gained in their home environment.
- Encourage and welcome open and honest communication between staff and parents.
- **As a staff we aim to:**
- Show empathy and sensitivity towards new parents and children.
- Be responsive and flexible by taking into account the individual needs of the children and parents.
- Take time and space to get to know new children and their parents/carers whilst they are settling in.
- Organise and manage the environment in such a way that the children can operate independently, safely and imaginatively.
- **Guidelines and Procedures:**
- The children and parents are always welcomed warmly into Playgroup.
- Each member of staff responds sensitively to the feelings, ideas and behaviour of each of the children in their group and endeavours to meet each child's particular needs, and those of their parents.
- Information is provided to the parents to familiarize them with daily routines and an overview of the termly and yearly events.
- Parents are asked to complete a 'Family Information Sheet' before their child starts Playgroup, to give us additional information about their child.
- We welcome regular, informal discussion with the parent/carer, to enable us to build up a picture of their child and the previous experiences they arrive at Playgroup with, and how each day is progressing and how their child is settling in.
- During the settling in period, activities and experiences provided in Playgroup are geared towards helping the children settle into the new environment and routines, in response to how each child is progressing.

Curriculum

Carryduff Pre-school adheres to the curriculum provided by DENI in the Pre-school Curriculum Guidance Document. This concentrates on six areas of learning and development i.e. Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Language Development, Early Mathematical Experiences, The Arts, The World Around Us and Physical Development & Movement.

What is Expected from Your Child

1. Your child will be encouraged to make decisions, join in group activities, approach tasks independently and above all learn through his/her own initiative. Please help by encouraging your child to toilet him/herself and ensure that suitable clothes are worn i.e. no belts or braces.
2. We ask that no snacks are brought into pre-school, i.e. chewing gum, nuts, sweets etc. A healthy snack is provided and the menu for this will be displayed in the hall.
3. Each child will be encouraged to assist in tidying away toys after each activity.
4. At Carryduff Playgroup we have a detailed classroom management plan which has been developed through extensive training through SEELB and other sources. The Management Plans' key objective is to promote positive behaviour.

Please see the Behaviour Management Policy for more information.