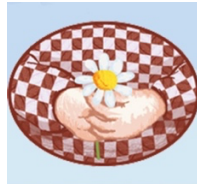


## Stone Bay Montessori and Beach School



### Settling in Policy

Every child is required to attend three settling in sessions prior to their first enrolled day at nursery.

Settling in sessions are free of charge and are one hour each, taking place the term before your child's scheduled start in the weeks leading up to the holidays. We schedule these sessions towards the end of the term before their start date so that children can experience the nursery for their settling in sessions alongside an established group of children. This helps new children to have a positive experience around children who are confident in the setting. It also allows for them to have 1:1 time with their key carer to bond. The settling in process does of course continue the next term when they officially start which is outlined further below.

If your child becomes upset during the settling in sessions and we aren't able to distract or comfort them we will call you to ask you to return in order to support them whilst continuing to play and build bonds with their key carer. Please ensure you have your phone with you at all times during settling in sessions.

Naturally some children will need more time and support to settle. We can offer a personalized settling in plan for each child if needed and we are open to discussing how you as a family would like to approach the settling in process. Of course this process continues after the three sessions and we will organize to adapt drop off / pick up times and enrolments when needed for the benefit of the child.

Please trust us! Rest assured we have been through the transition process many times and have never had a child attend our nursery who we couldn't settle. We want your little one to succeed - work with us and trust that we will contact you if your little one is struggling. We will then put a plan in place to best suit your child / family.

### The first session:

For the first session one parent / carer is required to come into the nursery with the child. It is important that you are present to begin with so that your child can experience the space alongside you, as their safe base. You will spend some time either talking to the manager or your child's key carer and filling out paperwork whilst your child is supported in play alongside their key carer. Give your child's key carer as much information as you can about your child, including their likes and dislikes so they can have their favorite toys out to help make them feel happy and comfortable. If they have a comforter or a special toy, bring it with them. It is recommended that you leave your child with us for a short period of time during the first settling in session towards the end for a minimum of 15 minutes or to help them with the understanding that parents/ carers don't stay at nursery.

### The second session:

It's common for the second session to be more difficult than the first as your child knows that you don't stay for the whole session. We would again invite you in to help your child with the transition. You are free to go, and we would recommend you do, if your child has walked away from you and started playing independently. It is of course beneficial for them to have as much time in the session without you as possible ahead of their official start next term with much longer hours. If your child requires more support, join them in play alongside their key carer and when they are comfortable try to gain some distance. Try to leave them for at least 30 minutes in this session.

### The Third session:

If your child was left successfully last time, drop them off at the door for this session so that they can experience this before their start date. Once again, if your child requires more support join them in play alongside their key carer and when they are comfortable try to gain some distance and leave. The goal is for them to have as much independent time without you at the nursery for this session during which they will have full 1:1 support from their key carer.

We appreciate that leaving your little one for the first time can be daunting.

Below you can find some advice you may wish to follow:

- If you are staying for some, or all of the session, try to gain some distance from your child if they allow it. This is so that your child's key carer has the opportunity to bond with them - often if parents are next to the child it is natural for them to interact with you and therefore creating a bond can be difficult. They will still have you close if they need you, often just a little look and smile can be enough to reassure them.
- If your child suffers from separation anxiety, if they have never been left before, or if you feel leaving may be difficult for either of you, introduce the routine of leaving to desensitize your child to it, but to also build on the trust that when you say you are leaving and coming back they know you will be back soon. You can do this at home in the weeks leading up to their start at nursery, for example when family or another primary care giver is around. e.g. "I'm going to go and (go to the shop, have a shower etc) and then I will be back, you stay and play with (Persons name)". You can use this language during the settling in sessions too, for example when they are playing with their key carer, you can pop to the loo, or go and hang up your coat, again using this language so that they know you will come back and it is reinforced. Each time you return ensure you go over to your child and say, "I'm back from (place), I always come back." You can do this multiple times at the settling in sessions if you would like, gradually increasing the amount of time you are out of eyesight from you child until you see that they are comfortable before transitioning to leaving the settling for a short while.
- When dropping off your child at the door at the last session or once enrolled, a parent lingering can make a child unsure and knock their confidence. Try your best to act confident and smile reassuringly whilst saying a quick goodbye, reassuring them that you will be back soon. If your child walks in confidently and forgets to say goodbye don't call them back, say goodbye and let them go in independently.
- It's completely normal for a child to enjoy their settling in session and then cry when you return, please don't worry if this happens. You are their safe space and to begin with some children may hold their emotions until you return.