

# Lockdown Babies

For many babies born in the last year they will only have known the physical interactions and connections of their primary carers at home. For some parents this will have been a joyful time between them and their baby with no distractions; For other families it may have been a struggle not being able to share some of the care with other family members such as grandparents as might usually be the case. Either way babies born during this time will have had less physical interactions with people other than their immediate primary carer.

So what about when the time comes for parents to return to work? Understandably many parents are concerned about this transition as the baby will have not been used to being in busier environments with unfamiliar faces.

The good news is that we are well prepared for this and hope to reassure you that making this important transition of settling your baby into nursery will be a carefully crafted process that will be tailored to the needs of you and your baby.



## How we will help your baby settle

I would like to start by telling you that one of our values is 'Children First, Every time'. This means that meeting the needs of every individual child is our number one priority. Everyday. Regardless of lockdown, every baby will settle in a different way and at a different rate and we have processes in place to support this.

The process of meeting children's individual needs starts before *they* start at nursery. This will begin with us gathering as much relevant information about your baby as possible, so we can make sure we are well prepared for the first moments we spend with them. After all, a good start can make a real difference to how quickly babies settle.

We know that babies need to develop strong and trusting attachments with adults to feel safe and secure. This attachment lays the foundation for building baby's confidence in their new surroundings, eventually building up the courage to move away from their care giver and explore their environment.

Attachment begins with cuddles, eye contact, singing songs, playing together and getting to know each other so that the adult can then begin to read baby's smallest cues and communications in order to respond to their needs as quickly as possible.

## Your baby's Key Person

The person your baby will have most regular contact with at nursery will be their Key Person. As babies take their cues for safety and security from you (the people they have spent all of their time with), it is vital that you and the key person develop your own strong and trusting relationship in order that the baby can see that you are happy and comfortable with the situation. In other words babies can read from your face and body language if you are happy, worried, upset etc and it is likely that they will react in a similar way. Yes babies brains are amazing!



## Working together

It is so important (now more than ever), that nurseries and families work closely together to make sure that the transition to nursery is smooth, with as little disruption to baby's routine as possible.

### With this in mind, we will ensure:

- Your baby's Key Person is chosen in advance by the manager and they will introduce themselves to you before baby is due to have their first settling in session
- Settling in sessions will be flexible to ensure you feel comfortable
- We gather detailed information from you about your baby's routines, support needs, likes and dislikes so we can prepare to tailor their first session to their needs and routines
- We feedback how your baby's day has been and share any ideas to further support the settling process
- We will contact you during the day if we have concerns or questions that won't wait until you arrive to collect, likewise we welcome your calls for updates about how your baby is settling

### You can help your baby settle by:

- Sharing as much information as possible about your baby and keep us updated with any changes to baby's routine, interests or wellbeing. Also making us aware of any significant events or changes happening at home will help us prepare for or just be aware that baby may be unsettled and need extra support
- Bringing family photos and any comforters that will help baby feel safe and familiar
- Letting baby see you smile during handover so they feel secure knowing you trust us (we appreciate this can feel very difficult those first few times)
- Saying goodbye to baby (kiss/cuddle) before you leave as this will help them build trust over the first few settles, that you will return for them. Sneaking off without saying goodbye can leave babies anxious and unsure.

## Training our teams

Over the last year, during lockdown, we have devised a three-part training course called 'Amazing Babies' that all of our practitioners have attended or are in the process of attending virtually. This training includes:

- Neuroscience - How babies brains are built and develop
- The importance of nurture, attachment and emotional wellbeing
- The importance of the Key person process
- Planning for babies
- Environments for babies
- Physical development in the baby room
- Resources and activities for babies

In addition teams working with babies are trained by the management team on intimate care routines such as nappy changing and bottle feeding. The manager ensures there are first aiders in the setting appropriately trained and there is a designated person to oversee the support of children with additional support needs. All staff attend regularly supervision 121 meetings with their manager to ensure they feel well supported and have opportunity to talk about their professional development.

We understand that your baby is your world and we feel incredibly privileged to be asked to share their care with you. We look forward to getting to know you and your baby and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Nursery Manager.

