

## SETTLING YOUR CHILD

A child's first day at Tots On The Rock is a big step into a new environment, some children find this step easy to take and embrace it full of confidence, other children are a little more uncertain about the process. It is for this reason that we ask for visits prior to enrolment starting to allow a child to happily adapt to their new surroundings. We always ask for a minimum of 3 visits however the length of time and number of visits can vary as this is a process that can not be hurried.

The visits to the centre allow for the following:

- The child becomes familiar with the teaching team and the other children at the centre
- The child becomes familiar with the environment and the routines
- It equally allows the parent to become familiar with the above

How can you help your child settle?

- It is important that you and your child feel comfortable before leaving your child at Tots, increase the number of visits if necessary
- Be positive about the day ahead and the things they will be doing
- Always reassure your child that you will return
- Always collect your child at the time promised or a bit earlier in the first few weeks
- Make sure you say goodbye to them before you leave. If you suddenly disappear they may become more anxious as they have not been reassured that you will be returning
- A comforter or special toy may assist in making a child feel more comfortable
- Once you've said goodbye, leave. Prolonging the process only makes your child's anxiety worse.
- Spend quality time with your child when you collect them from Tots, ask them how their day was. Maybe they will tell you something we can work on together to make the settling process smoother
- Provide the teachers with as much information as you can to ease the process, routines, toileting, homelife, names of family, pets, cultural traditions and beliefs
- Parents are welcome to stay during the first stages of transition, until your child is settled into an activity or happy with a teacher

Remember this is a process, the staff at Tots On The Rock will do everything within their power to make it work for you and your child and will always call you if your child does not settle, we also welcome you calling us to see how their days is going.

## WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT?

Michelle Hewlett (BTchg ECE) identifies 3 child types when it comes to settling into childcare.

1. **“The perfect story:** *Your child slots right in to the centre, makes friends, participates in routines, and shows no signs of issues in settling. This is quiet abnormal, but does happen for some children who have had a lot of social experiences already.”*
2. **“Fine initially, then flip out:** *On the first few sessions alone, your child is fine, seeming to have settled well into care, then... MELTDOWN! What is going on? They were fine last week!*<sup>[1-7]</sup>*This is hugely alarming for parents and they often feel that something must have gone wrong for their child to suddenly change. What is actually happening is that your child has just realised that you're really gone and the novelty of coming to this new place has worn off. Don't be alarmed if this happens; it is a perfectly normal part of transitioning. Refer to the section below on how to settle your child when this happens.”*<sup>[1-7]</sup><sup>[SEP]</sup>
3. **“The loud transition:** *This really is a parent's heartbreak; a terrible, heavy feeling of emotional pull on your heart as you pry your screaming child's fingers from your hair and shoulder and hand her over. As terrible as this is for all parents, once you have made the decision to leave, you must leave, and preferably quickly. Prolonging the process or returning when they are upset is only going to make things worse, as this confuses your child. You need to work closely with the teachers and caregivers so they can be ready to assist you through this process. It is perfectly natural for you to become emotional throughout the process, but please, if you are going to have leaky eyes, it's a good idea to wait till you are out of sight of your child (since you've already told them how happy you are that they are going to be in this new place!).*<sup>[1-7]</sup><sup>[SEP]</sup>  
*After your child has attended a couple of sessions, the crying may start the morning of daycare or in the car on the way there. This is also normal, as anxiety rises at the thought of you leaving. Maintaining calmness during this time encourages your child to realise that you are confident in their ability to settle and have fun with you gone. If the same procedure is carried out prior to arriving and during the drop off, your child will begin to understand that you will come back for them, and it actually starts to become fun to be at childcare. Once your child gains a sense of belonging, they will start exploring their surroundings, and begin to engage in social activity and develop a passion for knowledge that sets them up for a lifetime of learning.”*