



SETTLING IN TO PRESCHOOL

Children tend to settle into preschool in different ways. Some will walk in confidently and have no problems with saying goodbye to you. Others may be nervous and anxious about leaving you. It is a very normal part of your child's development to be apprehensive and we recognise that it can be a very difficult for you also. Our aim is to settle your child into preschool as easily as possible and make the experience a really positive one!

Prepare your child for going to Montessori school:

- Speak about school and the teachers and speak about making new friends.
- Go and visit the building and have a look around.
- Speak about activities s/he will be doing: painting, music, trains, dolls, arts & crafts, etc.
- Tell him/her what you will be doing while s/he is at school (e.g: making beds, washing, etc – don't make these activities too exciting so s/he doesn't feel like s/he is missing out on something).
- Let him/her pick out a new schoolbag and lunchbox.
- If your child is unfamiliar with being away from you, you might think about leaving him/her with a carer (Grandparent, Aunty or friend) for a short time.
- Help him/her to become as independent as possible with clothing as this will help when toileting. Also encourage handwashing and good personal hygiene.
- Read books about starting preschool such as "Going to Playschool" by Sarah Garland, "Maisy Goes to Preschool" by Lucy Cousins or "What to Expect at Preschool" by Heidi Murkoff.
- You could also do roleplays with dolls or lego and act out what will happen.

On the first day:

- Stay confident and cheery. Your child will pick up on any anxiety that you are feeling. If you feel that your child would benefit from having you stay for a while you are more than welcome to. Please try to set a time limit with your child so that they do not expect you to stay all day, every day (E.G.: "I will stay to do two puzzles and then I have to go to the Chemist").
- Never leave without saying goodbye. Reassure your child that you will be back at a time (eg: 12.30 and not "later" as later can be an endless time or no time at all to a small child. When leaving, don't linger around as this could upset your child. If your child does not settle myself or another class leader will call you.
- Please try not to be late when collecting your child as this could add to your child's anxiety.
- Bring in a family picture so that your child can speak about family, siblings, pets. This helps us to connect to your child's life outside preschool and we can use this to comfort them should they become upset.
- Don't be surprised if your child loves the first few days and then says that they have had enough. This is just a phase and it will pass.
- Make sure that you start a good routine of 10 - 12 hours sleep a night and a good breakfast in the morning. Your child will be very tired from all the activity so it's best not to put too many demands on them in the afternoons for a while.



- Open communication with myself and all the teachers. We are here as your partners and want to make it a positive and pleasant experience for both you and your child.

We can't wait to see you and your little one in September!

Settling your child:

At Ballybrack Killiney Montessori & Afterschool we want to make the start of your child's educational life a positive one and wish to set a good foundation for future learning. The settling-in period is a time of collaboration between the child, parents and teachers.

We hold an open day for new children in May/June each year for new children and their parents to come and familiarise themselves with the classes and teachers.

Parents/guardians/carers are encouraged to bring their child into the classroom on the first day and to familiarise themselves with the classroom, teachers and routine.

Parents/guardians/carers are encouraged to stay until their child has settled.

We do not recommend that parents or caregivers stay during the session as this can be disruptive to both the child and other children. At this stage you should explain to the child that you are leaving (always saying goodbye is a very important step) and that they will be back at lunchtime. Giving a specific time rather than "later" is important to the child as later can mean a short or very long time period.

Some children may require a gentler settling-in period and this can be arranged with the teachers. For example, some children need to attend for only a short period of time each day at the beginning. Staff will always contact a parent or caregiver if a child becomes very upset or does not settle.

Drop off/ Collection of children:

Parents/guardian/carers of the child must accompany the child to the door in the morning and they must ensure that the child is in the care of a teacher before they leave.

- It is the policy of Ballybrack Killiney Montessori & Afterschool that children may only be collected by the person(s) named on the registration form. This will be checked to photo ID should the teachers be unfamiliar with the collector.
- The parent/guardian/carer of the child must notify the staff in advance if an alternative named person is to collect the child. They must provide the person's name, contact number, address and relationship to the child to the staff.
- It is very important for young children that they are collected on time so as not to cause the child any undue stress. If for any reason you are late, if possible, please text or call a staff member on the class phone or call Eve to inform us so that we can make arrangements to stay with your child.
- After collection, it is the responsibility of the person collecting the child to ensure that they are safe in the carpark prior to leaving the church grounds. We ask that all parents/guardians/carers



hold their child's hand while in the carpark to ensure their safety. This is particularly important at busy times.

- **Parental Involvement:**

- We like to be honest and open with parents and we always encourage them to come to us with any concerns or questions that they may have. We are always available after school or by appointment as we would prefer not to disrupt the session. At all times we like to keep a constant and informal discourse on the children's progress with the parents and this is normally done at the beginning and end of each school day. If the need arises, we will contact a parent during school.
- The policy and procedures will be available to all parent/guardian/carers. Parents will be supplied with information on the type of care and programme provided by our service. Parents will be provided with details of children's ongoing issues and progress.
- In the case of a sick child with an ongoing illness, where it is essential for the parent to know if there is anything contagious going through the school, Eve will text the parent once all the children are in, to report on any sickness in the class. The parent can then make their own decision whether to send their child to school or not.
- We would prefer not to discuss a child's issues in front of them and will arrange another member of staff to supervise your child if needs be.
- If there is an incident at school, the parent (or person collecting the child) is informed at home time. If this is not possible, the teachers make a point of phoning the parent at home in the evening to report the incident to them. All incidents and meetings are documented.
- We operate an open-door policy with children, parents/guardians/carers and any relevant Health Board Officials. We are delighted to see you at any time, however we ask you to understand that sometimes we are very busy with the children, so it may not be possible to come directly to a knock on the door or to a ringing phone.
- We are always very happy to have parents/guardians/carers come into the preschool to share anything with us that may benefit the children, for example, cultural, jobs, arts and crafts, cooking, etc. Please contact Eve if you feel you have anything that would be of interest to share with the group.
- Each class has a class phone and a whatsApp group is set up for each class to send group/individual photos and activities and news from each class.
- A newsletter is sent out via email each Season and we also have a group Aistear Learning journal and individual learning journals to share with parents.
- There is a notice board inside the main door for current information, leaflets, Health Service Executive Information, contact numbers and other relevant information.



Outings:

Ballybrack Killiney Montessori & Afterschool service is committed to planning and undertaking appropriate and well-supervised outings. Outings provide an opportunity for children and adults to share in active learning experiences, which can then be used to enhance many area of the curriculum and develop areas of interest for the children.

1. It is the policy of Ballybrack Killiney Montessori & Afterschool to seek signed permission from parents/carers/guardians for proposed outings.
2. Prior written information about proposed outings/visitors to the service will be given to parents/guardians/carers. A risk assessment will be carried out prior to the outing to ensure the safety of everybody involved.
3. Ballybrack Killiney Montessori & Afterschool will encourage parents/guardians/carers to take active part in the planning, preparation and participation of outings.
4. At least one member of staff with current First Aid training (relevant to children) will be included on the outing.
5. A first aid box will be taken on outings.
6. The correct child to adult ratios will be adhered to, one adult to every three children.
7. A plan of action/timetable will be arranged between the staff prior to the outing to ensure the children's safety and a checklist of items needed and people involved will be included.
8. A charged Mobile phone along with a list of contact details for parents will be taken on the outing.
9. A roll call will be taken prior to leaving for the outing, at regular intervals on the outing and prior to departure back to school from the outing. A roll call will also be taken when the children re-enter the classroom as we do when coming in from the garden. Two staff members will take the roll calls to avoid human error.
10. Eve will ensure that details of management of a critical incident are revised and reviewed before the outing and that all staff are aware of the procedures.