



Settling In and Transition Policy

At WildTime NaturePlay we are committed to meeting and supporting the needs of each individual child. We aim to make sure that the transition process into our full day NaturePlay provision is a positive and happy experience. We acknowledge that as your child will only be attending one day a week they will have a large gap between visits and we have been conscious of this in producing this policy.

Transition into playgroup

We understand the importance of the settling-in process and are committed to making it as stress free as possible. Our intention is to support you and your child so that you are able to leave a happy child in our care for the day. We also acknowledge that some children may find the temporary separation of child from parent more difficult than others. With this in mind we have created guidance for parents to help their child settle into NaturePlay.

How it will work

WildTime NaturePlay is a full day provision but we require that your child be able and happy to stay for a half day before they can transition to full days. This should be seen as a temporary state while your child settles in.

Settling In will take different lengths of time for each Child and Parent/Carer (we acknowledge Settling In is for Parents too) and should be done in a gentle fashion. In some cases, a 'gentle fashion' may mean the Child is almost immediately happy in the environment and the Parent/Carer steps away, while for another child a very slow process for Settling In may be needed. In this case, it is necessary for the Parent/Carer to incrementally withdraw themselves from the immediate vicinity of the Child so they become less present without causing the Child distress. Examples of this incremental stepping back can be found below.

1. Can the Parent/Carer be present with the Child and encourage them to engage in activities with the Parent/Carer's support?
2. Can the Parent/Carer be present while the Child engages in activities without the participation of the Parent/Carer?
3. Can the Parent/Carer step back from the immediate vicinity of the Child and/or activity?
4. Can the Parent/Carer return to the building during an outside activity, leaving the Child with their peers?

5. Can the Parent/Carer remain in the building while the Child heads outside with staff and their peers?
6. Can the Parent/Carer spend prolonged periods of time out of view in large dormitory bedroom (perhaps getting some work of their own done)?
7. Can the Parent/Carer leave site for increasing periods of time?
8. Can the Parent/Carer arrive with the Child, settle them in during drop-off period (9.30-10am) and leave, returning at 12.30?

NB: When the Child is settled in and the Parent/Carer is able to leave the site, the child can begin to attend full days (9.30-3.30pm).

In addition to the above steps to being settled, it may be possible to negotiate, in advance with Kerri (NaturePlay Team Leader), that children only attending mornings may be able to stay for a set period after 12.30 if it is felt to be beneficial to the child's settling in process.

- We have an open door policy and encourage you to have two-way communication with us including sharing information on how your child is settling in, progress and any concerns relating to the child. This is usually done daily on drop off and collection but if you require longer or more privacy you may choose to make an appointment.
- Sometimes after a holiday or absence your child may need to be helped to settle again. We will support you in this.

What if the Settling In process is not working for the Child and Parent/Carer:

In the event that after 2 half terms the Parent/Carer has not been able to step back from the provision and must stay on site for the period the Child is at WildTime NaturePlay a judgement will need to be made about whether the provision is currently suitable for the Child and Parent/Carer. In the event your child is not yet ready for the NaturePlay provision we will guarantee a place for you and your child at our WildTime Stay&Play session with the intention of beginning the Settling In process again at a future time should it be your wish.

Preparing your child

- At WildTime we believe that honesty is definitely the best policy when leaving children in another adults care for any period of time.

Maybe they are already used to this separation and have experience of being looked after by adults other than you. If not, you could try this with a close friend that they know well for short periods before they start NaturePlay. It's important to always emphasise that you are coming back. Be specific as possible. "I'm going to the shops, (*name of WildTime team member*) will look after you, I'll be back when you have had your lunch."

- Always say goodbye to your child before you go. It's tempting to leave quietly when they are happily playing, as you don't want to disturb them and risk upsetting them. But if they look up and you have gone, they are left with the insecure feeling that you could disappear at any time.

You know your child best, leave when you feel comfortable and when they feel comfortable. We want children in our care to be happy, secure and confident. We will follow the lead of you as parent or carer.

Why do Parents/Carers need to be able to step away at WildTime NaturePlay?

- Additional adults without DBS certificates for the setting pose a safeguarding problem and their presence cannot be permanent.
- Other children at the setting can be affected by the presence of their peers parents/carers. It may result in them becoming less secure in the environment and require greater presence of their parents/carers after their settling in process has been completed.
- The presence of additional adults in the setting can be confusing for children present and may be considered strangers to these children.
- The presence of additional adults in significant number can impair the ability of the staff to perform their roles, compromising the standards of delivery aspired to, and the practical delivery of activities.
- At the right time, the parent's absence will help the child develop independence skills and interdependence skills with the peers and WildTime team members.
- To limit the spread of Covid-19 we can help by limiting the number of adults present during WildTime NaturePlay sessions.

Transition to WildTime NatureSchool

For those children leaving WildTime NaturePlay and continuing their adventures with us at WildTime NatureSchool we have a flexible transition programme that allows each individual child's needs to be taken in to account. While NaturePlay will operate as a separate provision your child will have the opportunity to interact with the NatureSchool children on a regular basis on a planned and unplanned basis and will become familiar with all members of the WildTime team as well as the older children attending on the same day as your child. Kerri will liaise with Dominic (WildTime NatureSchool Lead) regarding children who may soon be ready to move up to the NatureSchool provision and your child will have the opportunity to spend ever-increasing pockets of time in the older provision until all parties (parents, child, Kerri, Dominic) agree they are ready to fully transition to an older provision, spaces permitting.