



Orientation and the settling in process at Sacred Heart Early Learning Centre

Why should my child do orientation?

For most children, entry into Sacred Heart ELC will be the first experience of being separated from their parents. Most children will experience some anxiety leaving their parents for the first time and it will be important that both parents and educators work together to build the special relationship necessary for successful transition and adjustment for all parties involved.

Even if a child has been in care before she/he will still need time to adjust to the new staff and environment. Orientation also allows families to see what we do on a day to day basis and become comfortable with the centre, routines lay out, procedures and staff of the centre.

What is orientation?

Parents are encouraged to help their child's transition by taking the child to visit the Centre a few times prior to leaving them. These visits may be for half an hour to an hour at a time and at different periods of the Centre day. Both parents and child then receive an overall picture of the Centre day and have plenty of opportunity to ask questions and "absorb" the Centre environment together. This is also an ideal time to go over enrolment forms together – the Centre Director will help parents to complete forms and answer any questions you have.

You will need to stay with your child, however we recommend on the second orientation you encourage your child to move into activities, routine sessions etc. without you if they feel comfortable.

PLEASE NOTE: We recognise that sometimes parents do not have time for a period of orientation due to health, work commitments or other circumstances, but we will work together with families to ensure positive alternative strategies are put into place, e.g. a friend or family member may be able to assist. Whilst we aim for both parents and children to slowly and gently get to know the Centre, we realise that flexibility within the orientation period is essential.

How do you help your child settle in?

Initially, try to leave the child for shorter periods during the first week of enrolment. The first day the child is left for a longer period of time i.e. more than two hours, we recommend that she/he be left for only half the day and be collected after lunch. Be confident yourself -if you are anxious this will negatively influence the way your child feels.

Ensure your child has a security object, such as a teddy, blanket or something that belongs to you. These objects help support the child through the day - they come from home and are familiar.

Always tell your child when you are going and when you will be back. It is best to first warn one of our educators that you will be leaving soon. Then when it is time, tell the child you will be back after lunch, afternoon tea, etc. and say a quick goodbye. Leave the Centre promptly. Our educators will support your child to join the program.

Remember: you are welcome to telephone the Centre during the day for reassurance that your child has settled in!