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The Nursery Settling-In Toolkit 2026

A Manager's Guide to Supporting Confident Transitions in Early Years

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The Settling-In Readiness Check

Before you build your plan, see where your setting stands. Score each statement from 1 (not yet) to 5 (consistently true), then total your score.

1	Every family gets a named welcome before their day one	
2	We capture the whole child: languages, culture, comfort items, medical needs	
3	We ask what each child enjoys, and use it to plan their first week	
4	We collect the key words each child uses at home, in every home language	
5	We know each child's routines before they walk through the door	
6	Families are guided to share their hopes and concerns, not left with an 'Other' box	
7	Every plan sets out what we will do while the child settles	
8	We review settling regularly, and families see the record	

MY TOTAL

out of 40

32 to 40	Strong start. Keep refining.
20 to 31	Solid start. Close the gaps this term.
8 to 19	Start here. Build your plan page by page.

Scores tell you where to start. A conversation shows you how to finish.

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The Child's Story

For families, before day one. The details that help us prepare for your child's arrival with sensitivity and awareness. Manager: share this page with every new family, and with returning children moving to a new class.

Child's name

Preferred name

Date of birth

Parents' names

Who will collect the child

Home languages

Cultural or religious considerations

Medical or allergy information

Comfort items

I ENJOY...

Favourite toys, preferred play types, beloved books or characters, and the activities that help your child feel calm. We use this to plan a personalised first week.

Capture every child's story digitally, so nothing is lost in a paper file.

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Key Words We Use at Home

Especially important in multilingual communities. The words and gestures your child uses reduce frustration, support emotional regulation and build trust with their new teacher. Add the home-language word exactly as your child says it.

THE CHILD NEEDS	WORD OR PHRASE WE USE	HOME-LANGUAGE WORD OR GESTURE
Toileting		
Comfort		
Hunger		
Thirst		
Anything else		

Teacher: learn these before the child's first day, and use them from the first hello.

Bilingual Arabic and English communication, built into every family's experience.

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Routines at Home

Settling is deeply connected to predictability. When teachers know what your child is used to, they can create a daily rhythm that feels familiar and reassuring, and anticipate emotional triggers before they arrive.

Sleep patterns

Naps, timings, how your child settles to sleep

Eating habits

Mealtimes, appetite, likes and dislikes, how they like to be helped

Toileting routines

Nappies or toilet, words used, level of independence

Sensory sensitivities

Sounds, textures, busy spaces, anything that overwhelms

Separation rituals

How goodbyes happen at home, and what helps most

Familiar rhythms from day one. See how settings keep every routine visible to the team.

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Family Expectations & Notes

Not a vague 'Other' box. Guided space for what matters to you, so you feel heard and we start as partners.

Your concerns

Anything you are worried about for the settling period

Your hopes for the settling period

What a great first month would look like for your child

Cultural considerations

Anything we should understand and respect

Medical notes

Beyond the essentials already shared on The Child's Story page

Siblings in the nursery

Names and rooms, so we can connect the dots

Every family heard, every note on record, nothing lost in a handover.

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While I Settle, We Will...

Teacher and manager: turn the plan into practice. A practical roadmap the whole team can follow, shared with the family, a living document rather than a static form.

Comfort strategies

What we will do when the child needs reassurance

Attachment-building rituals

How the key person builds the relationship, day by day

Planned activities

First-week experiences built from what the child enjoys

Goodbye routines

The consistent goodbye we will use with this family

Communication methods

How and when the family hears from us while their child settles

Transition supports

Anything extra this child needs to feel safe and understood

A roadmap your whole team can see, in one place, for every child.

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The Settling-In Review

Settling is not a one-day event. Track progress, adjust strategies, and keep families part of the record. Manager: review entries across classrooms to see how every child is settling.

DAILY / WEEKLY RECORD	WHAT WE NOTICED AND AGREED
Emotional observations	
Engagement in play	
Relationship building	
Eating and sleeping	
Parent feedback	
Agreed next steps	

Teacher reflection

What is working, and what we will adjust

Parent feedback

How settling feels from home

Returning child? Revisit last year's plan so their story is never lost.

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Every child's story matters.

When managers invest in a thoughtful, emotionally intelligent settling-in plan, they strengthen the entire culture of the nursery: every family feels valued, and every teacher is empowered to provide nurturing, personalised care. A well-crafted settling-in document is not just a tool for transition. It is a foundation for trust, connection and confident beginnings.

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