

### The following rule of thumb applies for the end of the transition period:

The settling-in period ends when the childcare staff can comfort the child.

This description is only an approximate basis for you, your child and his/her childcare staff. Every child is unique. As a result, the transition period has to be structured individually. The age of the child must also be borne in mind during the transition. Previous experience with older siblings is helpful. Last but not least the children already at the centre give the child important guidance and provide important support in the settling-in process – even if they don't realise it.

### Mutually developing the child's well-being

Your child's childcare staff or childminder will ask you a lot of questions in the early stages of joint care for your child. They do this to find out what is necessary to make the child feel at home when you are not present.

As important as your answers are, it is also important that you receive all the information you need to feel reassured. You have the right to know the daily schedule, how the childcare staff and child get along with each other, what new things they discover with your child and much more.

Some questions can be answered during the settling-in period by observation, while you can ask other questions directly while you are in the group. For other questions, you can agree a separate meeting, so that the childcare staff has enough time to look after the children and enough peace and quiet to answer your questions.

Even though integrating new children is part of the everyday work of a childcare institution or a childminder, this situation is never just a routine. The transition from the family to a new world of children is always a challenge which the parents, childcare staff and child can best overcome together.

Information on child day care in the Federal State of Brandenburg can be found online at:

[www.mbjs.brandenburg.de/kita-startseite.htm](http://www.mbjs.brandenburg.de/kita-startseite.htm)



## Time to settle in

The start and basis  
of all child day care

Zeit zur Eingewöhnung –  
der Beginn und die Grundlage  
jeder Kindertagesbetreuung

**Publisher:** Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport  
(responsible under German Press Law)  
Press and Public Relations  
Heinrich-Mann-Allee 107, 14473 Potsdam  
Tel.: 0331/866 35 21, Fax: 0331/86635 24  
E-mail: [poststelle@mbjs.brandenburg.de](mailto:poststelle@mbjs.brandenburg.de)  
Website: [www.mbjs.brandenburg.de/kita-startseite.htm](http://www.mbjs.brandenburg.de/kita-startseite.htm)

**Printing:** GS Druck- und Medien GmbH, Potsdam

**Circulation:** December 2013



### Dear parents,

You will soon have to make a decision about whether your child will go to a childcare centre or visit a childminder. This transition from the family to a childcare centre or childminder represents a challenge not only for your child, but also for you as parents.

This information sheet is intended to support you in this transition,

as a successful transition from the family to the childcare centre or childminder is important for the further development of your child.

In his/her new environment, your child is subject to a lot of new impressions, which he/she must first get used to. And of course the child's daily routine and circle of trusted people also change. Your child will experience a lot of new stimuli, get to know other children and discover his/her own free space. It is important that your child feels comfortable and in good hands during this process.

This information sheet provides you with information and suggests how you can make the settling-in phase successful, how the first days with a childminder or at the childcare centre will be, how long the settling-in period is likely to last and how the cooperation between you as the parents and the childminder or childcare centre staff will work.

I would like to wish you and your child every success in the next major development stage and your child lots of fun in meeting new friends and discovering a „new“ world.

Dr. Martina Münch  
Minister of Education, Youth and Sport of the Federal State of Brandenburg

### How should the settling-in phase be structured?

Young children cannot cope with abrupt separation from their parents, even if it only lasts a few hours. Above all, an ideal transition needs time – time which you might not think you have, if you have to return to work quickly. However, especially if this is the case you should view this time as an investment. It pays off:

**First**, a transition without pressure is more pleasant.

**Secondly**, the settling-in period is generally shorter, as pressure increases the probability that the settling-in process will have to be interrupted. Then the whole process starts again from the beginning.

**Thirdly**, research has shown that after a successful settling-in period, children feel at home, develop better and are not as often ill as children who miss this phase. However, if the child does become ill, the parents have to stay at home and really start to feel under pressure.

Accordingly, a gradual settling-in process supported by the parents is now seen as the standard in child day care and is expected by every institution and all childminders. This time also has to be incorporated when concluding the childcare agreement.

Only choose a childcare institution or childminder that values a smooth transition. It is important that you are told clearly and in an understandable way what happens in this period. It is important that your presence is prioritised. It is important that they ask about the habits and preferences of your child. Such questions are essential to ensure a good „division of labour“ between you and the childcare staff, as they do not ask these questions out of curiosity. The childcare staff wants to benefit from the parents' experience. The parents are the experts on the child, they know his/her preferences and idiosyncrasies and they form the secure basis for the child's introduction into the new world at the childcare institution or with a childminder.

### Experiencing the first days together at the childcare centre or with the childminder

On the first, second and third day you go to the childcare institution or childminder with your child at the agreed time. It helps

the child settle in if he/she always has to deal with the same situation. The childcare staff awaits you and your child, welcomes you and asks you to stay for around one hour. In this time the childcare staff goes through their work with other children, while also trying to talk to your child, to make contact with him/her and invite him/her to play games. Your child's reactions provide important signals for what comes next:

How close are the childcare staff members allowed to come to your child?

Are facial expressions, gestures or the volume of contact suitable or do they have to be more careful?

Does the child show interest to the other children in the room or is he/she confused by them? How far does the child move away from you and when does he/she come back to you to „recharge his/her batteries“?

In this phase, all parents have to do is just be there. All you have to do is watch the child attentively. Do not force him/her to do anything. Enjoy your child's journey of discovery and stay seated in one place as his/her secure base, until he/she comes back.

If you change the child's nappy or feed him/her, the childcare staff is there to help you. The childcare staff will try to learn how to do the familiar, small ritual, so that they can do it themselves at a later date.

Normally, the first separation from the parent is attempted on the fourth day. You say a quick goodbye and leave. The childcare staff will then observe your child. If the child reacts with confusion or starts to cry, come back immediately and comfort him/her. Do not demand anything; simply give your child a feeling of safety. Otherwise you can wait up to half an hour.

In the course of the next few days, the separation attempts are repeated in the same way and the time is extended.

### How long does the settling-in period take?

Expect the settling-in process to take around 10 days in total. During this time, the childcare staff also takes on more and more of the care and feeding. The childcare staff and child develop their mutual relationship in this way.