



Factsheet for Families

Starting Child Care

Starting child care is often an exciting and new adventure for children and their families. Although the experience of starting and settling into child care will differ for each individual, there are some general strategies and information that all families may find helpful during this process.

Share information with child care professionals

Each service uses a variety of communication strategies to suit the needs of families using the service. It is important that families and child care professionals seek opportunities to discuss the child's experiences and interests. This can be done through:

- Informal conversations when children arrive and leave
- Daily diaries/communication books
- Telephone conversations
- Communication boards/signs for information about things such as individual children's eating, sleeping, nappy changing/toileting during the day
- Information and activity displays describing the experiences that children have been involved in

Saying goodbye

- Work with the child care professionals at the service, preferably before commencing care, to plan strategies to assist you and your child to manage separation. For example, the child may have a special toy or comfort item, or the service might have a 'waving goodbye' window that can be incorporated into the separation ritual
- Spend some unhurried time with your child at the service, and then say 'goodbye' calmly and confidently, reassuring your child that you will collect them later
- Leave when you say you are going to leave. Continuing to stay for 'one more minute' can increase your's and your child's anxiety
- Always say goodbye to your child. While it may be tempting to leave quietly, while your child is happily engaged in play, this can cause children to feel anxious and distrustful

Useful information about starting child care

- Many children experience some anxiety about separating from their parents or caregivers when they start care. This is normal, and may take a little time to resolve depending upon the child's age and temperament
- When children first attend care they are often susceptible to illnesses. This is because their immune system has not yet developed to cope with exposure to the large number of other children that they come into contact with in care
- Children may do or eat things that they would not normally at home, as they respond to the new environment and to modelling by other adults and children

Would you like information about how your child is settling

To find out how your child is settling into our service, please speak to:

Telephone:



* NCAC is currently developing Family *Factsheets*, on a range of topics including preparing for child care. Family *Factsheets* will be available to download from the NCAC website (www.ncac.gov.au) in early 2008.