

Tip sheet from the series

# Getting started in early childhood education and care

## My child's first day

*Settling into an early childhood education and care service can be stressful for you and your child. Here are some ideas to help you prepare for this new experience which can be adapted to suit the age and development of your child.*

### Preparing your child

- Before starting care and education, talk to your child about:
  - where they will be going
  - what they will be doing
  - who they will meet
  - why they will be going.
- Explain that they will stay at the service for a period of time until you pick them up.
- Answer your child's questions openly and honestly and reassure them they will be fine.
- You could read some books about new experiences to prepare your child.
- Drive or walk past the service to show your child where they will be going.
- Visit the service with your child a number of times before you leave him or her there for the first time. This will give your child an opportunity to get to know the staff and surroundings.

### When you enrol

When enrolling your child, services are required to ask for information about your family background, emergency contacts, doctor's details and other details relevant to the care of your child. Sharing this information with your service helps to ensure the

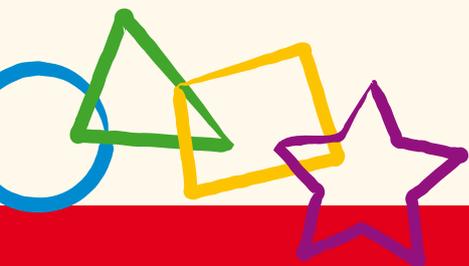
safety and wellbeing of your child while in care. It is important you keep your emergency contact details up to date.

Services are required to keep this information confidential, and parents and carers must be given access to records about their child.

Share information with educators about your child, their likes and dislikes and important events in their lives, or any circumstances which may affect your child in care. Educators also need to know of any concerns you may have in relation to the service.

### The first day

- If possible, gradually increase the time your child spends in care and education during the first few weeks. Start with short visits and increase the time to include a lunch and a sleep or rest.
- If your child has special dietary requirements or allergies, make sure the educators are aware of these. Make sure your child is provided with sufficient nutritious food to keep them going through a busy day.
- Try not to rush in the mornings. Spend time signing in, putting belongings away and settling your child into an activity.





- Once your child is involved in the activity, this is your chance to hug and kiss them goodbye before you leave.
- Always say goodbye to your child and reassure them they will be picked up at a certain time. For example: 'I'll be back to pick you up after afternoon tea.' Ensure you come back when promised.
- If your child is upset when you leave, do not prolong your departure as this may upset your child further. Reassure your child that you will be back at a certain time. You could also add that you look forward to hearing about their day with their friends when you return. Once you are at work, you can telephone the service or educator to ask whether your child has settled down. Don't be afraid to call the service or

educator if you are worried or concerned about your child during the day.

- Ask educator to call you if your child continues to feel upset throughout the day.
- When picking up your child, talk to educators about how your child has gone on their first day.
- You could also talk to your child about their first day, for example, who they met and what they enjoyed. Ask your child to show you what they have been doing.

### Next few days

- Continue with your goodbye routine. When you leave, say goodbye and reassure your child by telling them when you will be back to pick them up.
- Find out the activities your child enjoys at the service by asking your child and the staff. You can then involve your child in the activity before you leave.
- Your child might settle in with more ease on some days. This can depend on what's been happening in their life, for example, late nights, visitors or other children crying.
- Talk to the staff about important events in your child's life such as how well they slept the night before or what they did on the weekend.
- Always talk to your child about what they have been doing during the day.

### Following weeks

- Once your child has settled in, you could spend some time with your child at the service. Families are encouraged to play an active role in the care and education of their child. Every family has something to offer to enrich the care of all the children in the service.

## Further information

The Office for Early Childhood Education and Care has developed a series of practical tip sheets for parents, carers and families on topics including: *General parenting, Babies and toddlers, Children 4-12 years and Early childhood education and care services.*

The Office's free, 24-hour Early Childhood Information Service provides families with up-to-date information about local early childhood education and care services, advice on what to look for in a quality service, what to expect as a consumer and how to access support and assistance.

### For free tip sheets and information

Freecall 1800 637 711\* (24 hrs)

\*Calls from mobile phones are charged at applicable rates.

Email: [ECIS@deta.qld.gov.au](mailto:ECIS@deta.qld.gov.au)

Web: [www.education.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood)

### Early Childhood Education and Care Services Search

Visit the Office's website to locate early childhood education and care services in your area.

### [mychild.gov.au](http://mychild.gov.au)

Helpful information about assistance with fees and other issues is also available at [www.mychild.gov.au/](http://www.mychild.gov.au/).

### Disclaimer

The information in this tip sheet is offered as a guide only and should not be treated as an exhaustive statement on the subject.

### Other languages

For assistance with other languages call Translating and Interpreting Service National on 131 450 and ask to be connected to 1800 637 711.

### National Relay Service

If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment you can call through the National Relay Service:

TTY users phone 133 677 then ask for 1800 637 711

Speak and Listen (speech-to-speech relay) users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 1800 637 711.