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Preparing for Childcare

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Childcare is a big transition for a child of any age. Once you confirm that your child is starting care, there are some helpful things you can do to prepare them for this transition, prior to starting:

Walk past the Child Care environment and point it out:

- Before your child starts in childcare, try and walk past the Centre to familiarise them with the environment. Point out the children playing and talk about the activities they will be doing.

Visit the Centre:

- Go inside the Centre grounds and introduce your child to the Educators. If your child sees that you are comfortable around the Educators they are more likely to be open to them.
- Let your child have a play in the Centre's playground. This is an opportunity for your child to become familiar with the Centre while having the safety of a parent with them.
- Take some photos of your child at the Centre either on the play equipment or with an Educator. At home this provides a good talking point with your child in the lead up to starting care.

Have discussions about differences and similarities:

- Bathroom toilets are smaller so they won't have a step or seat attachment like they do at home but they work the same.
- Often meals are made at the Centre and may look different to how they appear at home and they will be presented on a different plate.
- Remind your child that mum and dad won't be with them during the day. Name the educators who will be,

and reassure your child that the Educators can help them with problems that mum and dad usually would while they are in care.

- Give your child an idea of what to expect, explaining that there will be times for playing, times for eating meals and times for sleeping or resting.

Pack a bag with your child:

- Talk about the different items as you pack them, labelling what they are and the routine times they will be used (all ages).
- Some ideas include: bed sheets for rest time, a sun hat for playing outside, a change of clothes for after messy or water play (some children need to know it is ok to get "dirty" and that they can change if needed), a water bottle and a comforter toy.

Liaise with the Centre and provide additional information:

- Write out your baby's individual routine at home so it can be followed at the Centre to provided consistency.
- Write a list of your child's interests, likes, dislikes and fears (all ages) so the Educators are familiar with your child.
- Provide a copy of your child's immunisation history statement and any medical conditions/allergies with the relevant action plans (all ages).

Baby's sleeping and feeding:

- If your baby is breastfed and you plan to express breastmilk for your child while in care, it's a good idea to start this process prior to starting care. If your baby has only ever breastfed with mum it can be confronting and confusing when they start care as it is all different.
- It can help to have dad or another trusted adult, bottle-feed your baby expressed breastmilk so they become familiar with it.
- If you plan to transition to formula as an alternative, it's a good idea to try this at home so your child has an opportunity to become familiar with the change.
- If your baby is used to sleeping in silence try playing some soothing music or 'white noise' while they sleep. There are often noises in the care environment sleep room and if your child is used to silence, this might mean they have difficulty settling to sleep.

Tresillian Day and Residential Services support families experiencing a range of early parenting challenges including:

- Sleep and settling difficulties
- Adjustment to parenthood
 - Breastfeeding
 - Infant nutrition
 - Toddler behaviour
 - Multiple babies
- Emotional and psychological health & wellbeing
 - Postnatal depression and anxiety

For Parenting Support or to Self Refer to a Tresillian Service call:

Tresillian Parent's Help Line
1300 272 736

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