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My Child & Childcare

Preparing for Childcare

It is important to discuss with your childcare provider any opportunities for you and your child to visit the centre a few times before starting permanently. Also discuss the possibility of introducing your child to the new childcare environment gradually. This may mean that in the first week your child only attends in the mornings.

First day

Your child and you will have mixed emotions on their first day of care. Expect that you will both be excited and nervous with this new experience. Your child will look to you for what to do and how to respond:

Be calm

Children of all ages can feel your emotional levels and they respond to these. If you are anxious they will feel this and respond the same way. Try to be as calm and positive as possible.

Introduce yourselves

- Approach the Educators and introduce yourself and your child. This reinforces that you trust the Educator and your child can too.
- Talk about something exciting your child has recently experienced - this is especially important for toddlers and pre-schoolers. For example you may have walked past a train on your way to care. This creates an opportunity for your child to converse with the Educator while having the physical support of mum and or dad present.

Recognise their feelings

- If your child or baby is cuddling you tightly, soothe them and calmly talk about what is happening.

- If your child begins to cry take a moment to sit with them and calm them down. Reading a book together can be a good distraction and help settle them into the environment.

When it's time to say goodbye

- It's likely that your child could become distressed when separating from you.
- Always say a clear goodbye. If your child is happily playing and you disappear without saying goodbye, this can create feelings of mistrust and they can become anxious that you will disappear at other times.
- Explain to your child where you are going and be honest about this. Don't tell your child you are going to work if you aren't. Children recognise subtle differences for example clothes/uniforms and know if you are actually going to work or not.
- Reassure them that you will return and give an identifiable timeline. For example 'after afternoon tea you will have a play and then mum/dad will be back to pick you up,' rather than saying you will be back "soon".
- Once you have said goodbye to your child, if they are distressed make sure an Educator is close by to give them a cuddle, and then leave. It's not a good idea to return if they become overly distressed and call out for you as this gives them mixed messages. If you return or repeatedly say goodbye this can lead to mistrust,

confusion and create further separation anxiety in the future.

- Leave a comforter from home to be used at rest time.

Call the Centre

- Don't feel guilty or worried all day that you left your child distressed as they have mostly likely settled and engaged in the experiences in care by the time you have arrived at work.
- Do call the Centre and talk to your child's educator about how they settled in.

At pick up time comfort them

- Don't be alarmed if your child becomes distressed when you return to pick them up. It has been a big and emotional day for them on their first day of care and they are happy to see their parents return for them.

Talk about what they did

- Ask the Educator what activities your child participated in during the day. This reassures them that you trust their Educator.
- Talk to your child positively about their experiences and the possibility of repeating this experience. For example 'I can see you did a beautiful painting at childcare today, would you do another one tomorrow?'.

Say goodbye to your educator

- Encourage your child (all ages) to wave or say goodbye to their educator to continue to foster the relationship.
- Remind your child they will be returning to childcare tomorrow or another day.

Be prepared for the next day

- If your child has had a great first day with no tears when you left, be prepared that it may be different on the next day you come to care. The first time it was all new and exciting, the second time they recognise a routine is forming and might not want another day away from mum and dad. If they do become upset follow the same routine and be consistent in your approach.



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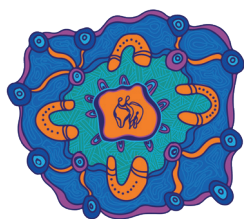
Visit **tresillian.org.au**, fill in the short
online contact form and one of our
Nurses will call you back



Ask your local Health Professional,
Child & Family Health Nurse, GP or
early parenting support service to
refer you and your child



Tresillian Parent's Help Line
FREECALL 1300 272 736



Acknowledgement of Country

Tresillian acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People as the First Peoples of Australia, the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land in the countries on which we live and work in NSW, the ACT and Victoria. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past and present and acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the communities we serve.



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