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49%

of parents give their child's settling-in period a perfect 10

As we move into the New Year it is timely to reflect on how well children are settling after joining your setting last autumn. Ceeda introduced a 'settling-in survey' for early years organisations in May 2013, and since that time 4,120 parents have given feedback on this key stage in their child's journey at nursery.

For the vast majority, this is a very positive experience with almost one in two parents (49%) rating their overall satisfaction an impressive 10 out of 10, and 84% saying their child is settled (45%) or very settled (39%). Parents particularly value the friendliness and approachability of staff (rated 9.31 out of a maximum score of 10) and the reassurance and support they provide (9.28).

There is, however, scope for improving the input of setting managers in the settling-in period (rated 7.81 out of 10). Often the setting manager is the person a parent makes most contact with during

the enquiry and visit period, and early impressions of the manager can be an important influencing factor in making childcare choices; 37% of parents say their impression of the nursery manager influenced their nursery choice. Finding ways to maintain this important relationship during the settling-in period can give parents continued reassurance.

Valuable feedback

One setting has found the settling-in information particularly beneficial. Toad Hall Nursery, Woking (toadhall-nursery.co.uk) has recently re-opened after a devastating fire, and found themselves in a situation where all children and all staff were new. They regularly sent out the settling-in survey over the course of their first 12 months of operation. Katrina Omotoso, the setting's manager, explains how valuable this has been:

"As a new nursery we were really conscious that we needed to get the children settled quickly and positively. It has been incredibly useful to learn from parents about what they think has worked well and not so well," she says. "One of the best parts of this process was sharing parent feedback with staff, which was overwhelmingly positive. We used the research in staff induction and performance management, helping to feed back to staff what a good job they are doing. Where feedback has not been so positive, the nursery has been able to address the concerns and use this as part of our continued development."

The settling-in survey has also proved a useful part of the bigger picture across the 16-setting Toad Hall group, according to its CEO, Ruth Pimentel: "Having a structured approach to research across our settings is a very useful way for me to get under the skin of the nurseries

and look at our performance across the group," she explains. "Getting the settling-in process right is at the heart of building a trusting relationship with parents, which will hopefully reassure them that they have made the right choice."

Why here?

Capturing parental feedback at the settling-in stage is also an excellent opportunity to look at why families choose your setting: vital information to inform your future marketing tactics. The Ceeda survey presents a range of response categories and invites open feedback; some of the results are a little surprising.

Whilst inspection reports are a factor in parents' choices (just over one in three say this influenced their choice), price comes close to the bottom of the table at just 11%. Location (75%), staff (60%), and indoor and outdoor facilities (58% and 57% respectively) top the list of influencing factors. We have already heard that managers can make an impact too!

To find out more about research from Ceeda, email Jo at enquiries@ceeda.co.uk or call 0845 680 0631. Visit ceeda.co.uk or share your thoughts on this research by tweeting @ceeda_uk



KEY FIGURES

What factors influence parents' choice of setting?

75% choose their child's nursery based on its location.

11% say they are swayed by the cost of places.

37% cite the views of Ofsted's inspectors.

36% received a personal recommendation.

57% were attracted by outdoor facilities.