
Familiarisation concept KIDSZONE

The familiarisation period of a child in a new setting is always exciting and emotional. That is why it is important to plan enough time for this period to make sure the start in the setting is as easy as possible, for both the child and the parents.

KIDSZONE uses the “Berlin model” when it comes to the familiarisation. Following this model, the children get used to the setting step by step and in the beginning in the presence of the parents. In the familiarisation period there is also always an educator present and they will act as the child’s first attachment figure in the setting and provide the child with comfort and safety.

In advance an entrance talk is held with the parents. This talk is an exchange of information between the parents and the responsible educator about the child and their routines as well as the setting and its routines. Starting with the talk a trusting relationship is developed between both parties.

The entrance talk lasts in principle around 60 minutes and it gives the parents an opportunity to ask questions about the setting and the daily routines and to discuss any possible wishes or fears. In the end of the talk the familiarization phase is discussed and the first dates are agreed upon. The talk should be held at least a month before the starting date.

The familiarisation period takes place in three phases: basic phase, separation phase and stabilization phase and end phase.

Basic phase:

This phase starts the familiarisation period and it lasts two to three appointments. Ideally this phase starts three to four weeks before desired starting date. The appointments should be, if possible, all in a row. In this phase the parents will stay with the child in the setting.

The educator responsible for the familiarisation will spend an hour with the child, their parent/s and few other children from the group in their group’s room. Usually, these appointments are either between 10 and 11 am or 2 and 3 pm while the other children are outside to make sure it is calm in the setting.

In this phase the parents do not have to separate from their child. The child can peacefully get to know the room, the other children and the educator in the presence of the parent/s. This provides the child with safety and trust. The first two to three appointments also offer the parents an opportunity to get to know the educator better and discuss their child or the daily routines in the setting in detail.

Separation and stabilization phases:

From the third or fourth appointment on starts the separation phase. This means that the parent says goodbye to the child and leaves the room for a while, leaving the child alone with the educator and the other children.

For some children the separation from the parents is very hard and they often cry in this phase. In this case it can be agreed that the separation phase only lasts, for example, 30 minutes so that the parent/s can spend the first half hour of the appointment in the setting with the child and leave for the last 30 minutes. The parents can either exit the room and wait in another room of the setting or leave the setting completely. It is important, though, that the parents can be reached at any time and that they can be back in the setting on a short notice.

The goal is that the child can start staying longer and longer periods of time alone in the setting and that they can also visit the setting at different times of the day to get used to the daily routines.

This phase varies a lot from child to child, but it usually lasts around two to three weeks. The important thing is that the parents always feel comfortable with the development of the child and they always have trust on the educator. This trust will automatically be picked up by the child. It is also important that the parents bring up their worries or insecurities with the responsible educator and that any open questions are immediately discussed and resolved.

End phase:

As soon as the child trusts the educator and lets them comfort them when saying goodbye to the parents or in any difficult situations, starts the end phase. This phase usually consists of the last two or three appointments.

Now the child has come so far that they like to spend a whole day in the setting. In this phase the relationship between the child and the educator is deepened and the parents bring their child to the setting, say goodbye and leave immediately. The appointments last now several hours and consist of a big part of the daily life in the setting; the child eats and/or sleeps in the setting and goes outside to the playground with the other children. It is possible that the child still cries when saying goodbye to the parents but in a few minutes and with the help of their new attachment figure they can calm down. Now the child is ready to enter KIDSZONE.

The familiarization period usually consists of anywhere from 8 to 10 appointments and as already mentioned, each phase is different and should be individually adapted to the needs of the child and the parents.