

## Adaptation Process – Summary of Recommendations for Parents

Dear parents,

Adapting to daycare is not something that concerns only your child – it represents a transition for the whole family. We would like to offer you some recommendations for the period before your child starts attending the childcare group, as well as for the beginning and course of their attendance.

### Preparing at Home

- Set clear **rules** for your child and stick to them (inconsistency, frequent changes, and giving in can be confusing for the child).
- Encourage your child to be **independent**, especially regarding hygiene, dressing, and eating habits.
- Practice with your child how to ask for **help** or assistance.
- Look for opportunities for your child to **meet other children** (playgrounds, play dates, play areas).
- Talk to your child **about the daycare group in a positive way** – focus on things they can look forward to (friends, toys). Take a look at and talk together about [how the daycare looks like](#).
- Introduce repeated daily activities, so-called **rituals**, into your child's routine.
- Set up a **daily routine similar** to the one in the children's group (waking time, snack/lunch/nap time) according to the [Education and Childcare Plan](#) (in Czech).
- Practice an afternoon **nap or rest** ritual (e.g. with a bedtime story or a cuddly toy).
- Prepare your child for **separation**. Introduce a **farewell ritual** (e.g. a hug or kiss). Avoid leaving in a rush, secretly, or in anger. Don't draw out the goodbye – if your child is crying, be kind but firm. Long goodbyes and negotiations aren't helpful for either you or your child. **Keep your promises** so your child can trust that you will return for them (e.g. "after snack time").
- Let your child know you understand any worries they might have about starting daycare. Reassure them that you believe in them and that they can handle it – this helps build their **confidence**.
- **Avoid planning additional major life changes** during the adaptation period (such as moving house or starting a new extracurricular activity).
- **Prepare yourself, too** – feeling confident about your decision to place your child in a children's group, and trusting the staff, will help you and your child succeed during this transition. Parental uncertainty often transfers to the child.

### Getting Ready for the First Day

- Try to be calm and relaxed the night before, so the morning can go smoothly.
- Make sure your child knows where they are going, who will pick them up, and when.
- Talk together on the way to daycare.
- Bring a comforting item for your child such as a favorite (cuddly) toy or a family photo.

## The Adaptation Process

During the adaptation period, your child will begin to realize that they are no longer the **sole focus of attention** as they were at home, but that they are now part of a group of similarly aged children, where certain **shared rules must be followed**. The child will go through a wide **range of emotions** during this time and will need to learn how to process them.

- We recommend establishing a **morning ritual**, such as singing a song on the way to daycare or telling a story (this can make arrival easier).
- **Avoid unnecessary absences** during the adaptation period (i.e., vacation or scheduled doctor visits). If needed, it is better for the child to postpone their start of attendance.
- Stay **calm** and be a source of support for your child – a sensitive and patient parent helps the child feel secure.
- If a **crisis** arises, try to redirect your child's attention to something more positive or neutral.
- Reassure your child that you will be back **soon to pick them up**.
- Don't prolong the **goodbye** or accompany it with emotionally loaded statements like "I'll miss you too" or "I'll be so sad without you." Do not return after saying goodbye. Even if your child is crying, try not to be thrown off. (Letting go of your own anxiety helps relieve your child's anxiety.) The daycare staff are qualified and equipped to handle such situations. If applicable, you can also agree with the other co-parent(s) that the parent who finds separation easier will handle drop-off.
- Don't make attending daycare conditional on **rewards** (toys, candy, etc.).
- Always **keep your promises**.
- **Pick up your child on time, according to what you have agreed with the daycare staff**.
- **Do not leave** your child in the daycare for **longer than necessary**.
- **Ask** for any needed information **when picking up** your child.
- **Actively listen** when your child shares their day with you and validate their feelings.
- **Make time for your child** so you can enjoy relaxed and peaceful moments together.
- **Speak positively** about the daycare staff.
- Your child's adaptation to this new situation is essential for successful attendance of daycare, so make sure to set aside **adequate time** for it in your family. Not every child adjusts immediately – they need the chance to get to know the new environment, the other children, and the caregivers. **Don't rush the process**.