

Acclimatisation Concept

KiTas Bethanien

As of November 2020

1 Acclimatisation Concept KiTas Bethanien

“With the child’s entry into the day-care centre, a new period begins for both child and parents. We offer them a gentle transition into their new life in the day-care centre by providing a professional, individually designed acclimatisation period for the welfare of the child. During the acclimatisation period with one of the parents, the child is given the necessary time to become familiar with the caregivers and the new environment. This intensive acclimatisation, which is adapted to the child, has a positive long-term effect on the child's well-being.” (Pedagogic Concept/KiTas Bethanien, 2022).

1.1 Before Entry

"During the initial interview with management, the parents receive information on contractual and operational provisions and on the acclimatisation period, which is carried out by the caregiver responsible for the group. The acclimatisation period lays the foundation for a trusting cooperation between parents, child and caregiver. The parents gain intensive insight into the daily routine and can experience KiTas Bethanien’s family-friendly climate. A gentle acclimatisation period is the first building block of an educational partnership.” (Pedagogic Concept/KiTas Bethanien, 2014).

We offer parents an entry interview with the caregiver responsible for the group two weeks before the child's entry. However, the entry interview must take place on the first day at the latest. In this case, more time should be planned for acclimatisation.

Among other things, the entry interview lets everyone get to know each other and answer any questions. The caregiver will support the child during the acclimatisation period and is the contact for the parents.

1.2 Acclimatisation

The parents are involved in the settling-in process. For the child’s healthy development, it is therefore advisable that the child settles in to the new group gradually and with sufficient time. Many parents find the separation from their child and the uncertainty of how they will find their way in a new environment very difficult. This makes it all the more important for the child to be accompanied by someone familiar, as this will help them get accustomed to the rules and daily routine in the day-care centre, and to build up a solid, stable relationship with the caregiver. This also helps parents gain a first impression of their child's new living environment. During this time, the intensive exchange between parents and caregiver is an important foundation stone for a trusting and educational partnership between parents and the day-care centre.

1.2.1 Process of Acclimatisation

Phase 1

- The acclimatisation begins with the contractually agreed date of entry and usually lasts between one-and-a-half to three weeks. The settling-in period must be adapted to the individual needs of the child. The parents accompany the child an hour at a time. In our facilities the ideal time for this is between 9 and 11 am or 2 and 4 pm.
- After each acclimatisation day, a check is made to see whether adjustments need to be made to the further process.

- Regardless of the age of the child, parents and child should not be separated during the first two days. They play an important role for the child and should not be burdened by separation. It is easier for the child to familiarise itself with the new environment if their parents are present.
- The parents serve as a "secure base" where the child can go if something unexpected happens or if they feel they need support for some reason.
- The parents take a passive role, but pay attention to the child's signals.
- The caregiver carefully tries to make contact with the child in a playful way.
- As infants have a distinct sense of smell, the caregiver should not wear perfume – or only a subtle fragrance. They should not change their appearance during the acclimatisation period.
- It is helpful if the parents bring an object for the child that smells like them (e.g. mother's or father's scarf).

Phase 2

- An initial attempt at separation takes place between the second and third day at the earliest.
- Immediately upon arrival in the group, the parents wait for the moment when the child turns away from them towards the new environment. The parents then go to the child, say goodbye – briefly and clearly – and leave the room. They must do this even if their child protests. The parents stay close by but invisible to the child.
- If the child can be easily soothed by the caregiver or if they hardly react at all, the separation should take about 30 minutes.
- If the child is disturbed or difficult to calm, the separation should not last longer than two to five minutes.

Phase 3

- The caregiver now increasingly takes over the care of the child (changing diapers, feeding). In the beginning, parents are involved in these intimate tasks.
- The caregiver specifically offers to play with the child and reacts to their signals.
- The separation times are extended daily.
- The child is ready to sleep at the day-care centre. At least the first time, the child is put down by the responsible caregiver and is greeted by the same caregiver upon waking up.

Phase 4

- During this phase, the parents are no longer present at the day-care centre, but are available at any time.
- The acclimatisation process is generally completed as soon as the child accepts comfort from the caregiver and shows interest in the daily routine of the day-care centre (people, play offering) while parents are absent.
- A short evaluation meeting takes place after the acclimatisation period as a formal conclusion.

1.3 Three-Month Meeting

Once the settling-in period has been completed, the child is cared for on the contractually regulated day-care days. The child is now strongly involved in integrating into the group and finding their own role in it. The day-care centre becomes an important part of the child's life and the child opens up more and more.

The initially very close contact between caregiver and parents is now reduced to daily door-to-door talks. However, the trust and the relationship must continue to be built up and maintained.

In order to share initial observations and experiences, KiTas Bethanien offers a short meeting with parents three months after the child has acclimatised. At this meeting, the caregiver tells the parents about their initial experiences with the child, describes observations and answers any questions.

1.4 Charging of Settling-in Period

Due to the higher amount of effort required during the acclimatisation period (usually 1:1 care) and its effects on the caregiver and the group, the full rate will be charged from the first day in accordance with the care contract.