

Am I doing the right thing by placing my child at a centre?

As a parent, you may use many forms of child care, depending on your needs, the temperament of your child and your financial capability. Whatever the form of care you select, it is very important that you spend individual time with your child whenever possible. The quality of your parent-child relationship is important.

What are the benefits of child care?

A child care centre can provide the social and emotional experiences, which will help him/her develop into a mature and capable adult. A good child care environment provides the opportunity for play, discovery and imagination, which are the building blocks for successful school education. The child care curriculum helps your child to develop physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.



A service provided by

Child Care Division
Ministry of Social and Family Development
510 Thomson Road, #13-00, SLF Building
Singapore 298135

Child Care Information Line: 6258 5812
Email : MSF_child_care_link@msf.gov.sg
Website: <http://www.childcarelink.gov.sg>

Guidelines for first-timers

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The decision to enrol your child in a child care centre is a momentous occasion for you and your child.

This will be the first time your child is away from you, in a totally unfamiliar environment, meeting new people, acquiring new skills and establishing a different routine.

As a parent, it will be an equally significant decision as you opt to share both physical and emotional controls of your child with a new caregiver, beyond the familiar confines of your home.

This brochure contains helpful tips to parents who are considering placing their children in child care centres. It explains how your child may react to a child care centre, clarifies some common misconceptions and highlights the benefits of centre-based care.

How can I prepare my child for the child care experience?

Before admission, prepare your child by explaining how enjoyable the experience at the child care centre will be. Emphasise that it will be fun to meet other children, make new friends, see a new place, play with new toys and have a teacher who will look after him/her during the day.

To familiarise your child with the centre, arrange to bring him/her for one or two brief visits.



Should I accompany my child to the centre?

It is advisable that you accompany your child for only a few days and not more than a week. Once your child begins to interact with other children, leave and allow him/her to settle down on his/her own. Your continued presence may make the adjustment difficult as your child would become dependent on you. Subsequent visits will be useful to reassure your child and allow you to assess the centre environment.



What should I do if my child refuses to attend the centre, or has fears and nightmares about going there?

Be calm and direct with your child and emphasise all the fun he/she will have. Reassure your child that he/she will soon settle down in the new environment and make new friends.

If your child continues to be distressed, talk to the teacher and discuss ways to help your child overcome his/her fears. However, if you still feel uncomfortable, you may need to reconsider the child care arrangement. As far as possible, avoid changing child care arrangements too frequently as this will be unsettling for your child.

Is it normal for children to cry when they are in a new child care environment?

This is perfectly normal as children placed in a new environment often fear that their parents will not come back for them. Reassure your child that you will pick him/her up later in the evening. Your child should become familiar with the daily routine once he/she realises that he/she will be reunited with you at the end of the day.

How will my child behave during this adjustment period?

Children react in different ways. Most will find the new environment exciting and challenging. They will excitedly tell you about their new friends and show off what they have learnt in the centre. Some children, however, will be sad for a week or two because they feel that they are no longer the focus of attention as when they are at home. Others may become angry, cry and throw tantrums.

The solution is to recognise that your child is undergoing a transition and encourage him/her to talk about the experiences. Firmly but gently reassure your child that this is just an initial adjustment period and that he/she will eventually settle down and enjoy the experience.



How long does it take for my child to adjust?

The time frame for adjustment varies for each child. A great deal depends on your attitude as a parent. If you are happy and confident about the arrangement, your child is more likely to settle down easily. It is advisable to allow your child about two weeks to adjust. If you feel uncomfortable about the length of time your child takes to adjust, talk to the child care teacher about it.

Will the anxiety of adjustment affect my child when he/she enters school later on?

Once your child has adjusted to the child care centre, it will be easier for him/her to adjust in school later on.

