

# YOUR CHILD'S TRANSITION TO PRESCHOOL

## Information for GISW Parents

We are excited to welcome your child to preschool during the coming academic year! Although it is a joyful time, it may also be difficult for your child to separate from familiar people and surroundings. It is normal for children to be a little upset, but our teachers have assisted many children and parents through this transition phase and are ready to provide the support necessary for a successful process.



During the transition, your child will master the multi-hour separation from their closest caregivers and accept another daily routine. They will build trusting relationships with other adults. These relationships are the basis for exploring the world when the parents are not present. However, they do not replace the close ties to the parents. Just as the teachers respect and support the relationships between the children and their parents, it is important for the parents to respect the relationship which their children develop with their preschool teacher.

At the GISW, parents may accompany children during the transition from the family to the preschool. They support the integration of their children into the new situation by their presence in the group during the first few days (as previously coordinated with the preschool teacher).

During the integration process, the preschool teacher is guided, in part, by the individuality of the child: S/he respects the presence of the parents during this phase. S/he is sensitive, accepts the needs and interests of the child and guides the parents, helping them determine the right time to leave.

In order to make it easier for the child to enter the preschool routine, we have established a gentle integration procedure (based on the Berlin model). The parents play a very important role in this process.

The integration phase can last a couple of days to a few weeks, depending on the individual child. Some children adjust quickly to the new environment while others react with separation anxiety and uncertainty. If a child cannot calm down, one of the parents must be easily reachable either to calm down the child or take the child home. It is therefore very important to us that the adjustment begin with a parent or caregiver) and that it be for a limited period of time.

We ask parents or caregivers to remain available during the first week of school. In the daily discussion between the caregiver and the preschool teacher, the teacher will identify the timing for the parents to slowly withdraw and the best method for doing so.

Please come to preschool with your child the first day and be prepared to stay for a bit. You will become familiar with the preschool, and the preschool teacher will get to know both you and your child, including your child's habits and stage of development.

Generally, by the third day (and in coordination with the preschool teacher), separation can occur (if it has not already). Initially, the caregiver will leave the preschool for a short time -after saying goodbye -and will remain reachable by phone.



On the last day of the integration phase, the child will accept the preschool teacher as a caregiver and will be comforted by him/her.

Every child's adjustment period is distinct and must fit the needs of the child and the family.

The interests and the needs of the child are our primary focus. Something familiar to your child (such as a stuffed animal) is welcome and will make his/her first days in preschool easier. During the adjustment period, there will be regular discussions between teachers and parents.

## NAP TIME

We recommend that the child takes his/her nap at home through the second week - if possible - until the child feels secure in the group.

## Important ground rules

Please bring your child to school regularly during the integration phase and avoid extended absences. Long absences may lengthen the integration phase.

- Abide by the recommendations and directions of the preschool teachers.
- Say goodbye after the agreed upon time.
- Try to remain in the background during the adjustment period. You can stay nearby but remember that you are not a playmate at this time. Through your presence, you demonstrate to your child that, "I'm aware of what you are doing and I'm there if you need me. Everything's okay; you are safe to explore."
- Your child's teacher will coordinate the separation steps with you.
- Further steps will be discussed with you in detail. Longer separations will be discussed. Please make sure that we will be able to reach you by phone should the need arise.



We rely on a lively exchange of information with you to become more familiar with your child. Please don't hesitate to ask us questions.

We look forward to getting to know you and welcoming your family to our community!

Phase	Length	Expectations
1. First contact with teachers and a new environment.	2-3 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent/caregiver remains nearby, and is available if needed..</li> <li>• Children may visit with the parent/caregiver as they like.</li> <li>• The parent/child visit last a couple of hours.</li> <li>• Children bring a familiar object from home for comfort and to build trust.</li> </ul>
2. Primary care shifts to teachers.	3+ days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents begin to leave for separations of increasing length, but the child builds trust that the parents will come back again.</li> <li>• The duration between separations is day-by-day based on the individual child.</li> <li>• The child may feel sad, or cry.</li> <li>• Please remain close by and available by phone so you can arrive back to school quickly as needed.</li> <li>• Goodbyes are important. Be clear about where you are going, and that you will return.</li> </ul>
3. Teachers assume the role of primary caregiver during the child's time at the preschool.	As needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The child becomes comfortable staying with their group for the entire program.</li> <li>• Children may still be leaving at different times.</li> <li>• Please be prompt to collect your child. If they see others leaving, they may feel forgotten.</li> </ul>