

Two-Week Settling-In Plan

A gradual start reduces tears — for both of you. Adjust days if your center allows visits. Print and check off each day.

Week before starting

- Visit the classroom together (even 15 min helps)
- Talk about daycare positively at home — name the teacher, name a friend
- Read a 'first day' book together
- Start the future wake-up and bedtime by Wednesday
- Pack the bag together the night before
- Label everything (see Packing List)

Day 1 (short visit — 1–2 hours)

- Stay through drop-off routine, then say a clear goodbye
- Don't sneak out — always say goodbye
- Pick up early; ask teacher for one specific observation

Day 2 (half day — through lunch)

- Same drop-off routine (predictability = safety)
- Bring the lovey / comfort item if allowed
- Pickup right after lunch

Day 3 (half day — through first nap)

- Send a family photo for the cubby
- Check daily app / report at lunch, not all morning
- Pickup after nap

Days 4–5 (full days)

- Full drop-off and pickup times
- Keep evenings calm — no big outings, early dinner, early bath
- Expect regression: more clinginess, weird sleep, extra tears. Normal.

Week 2

- Same predictable drop-off routine every morning
- Ask the teacher one specific question at pickup, not 'how was your day?'
- Track sleep, appetite, mood — call the pediatrician if any red flags

- Don't compare to other kids — every child adjusts differently

Signs it's going well (by end of week 2)

- Cries at drop-off but calms within 5–10 minutes
- Eats and naps at least somewhat at daycare
- Talks about a teacher or friend by name
- Sleeps hard at night (good — they're processing a lot)

Signs to talk to the director

- Still inconsolable after 30+ minutes for a week straight
- Regression in eating / sleeping that's getting worse, not better
- Unexplained marks, or child says something concerning
- You feel dismissed when you ask questions