

Gradual Entry to Preschool

Starting preschool is a big transition for young children. A gradual entry process gives children the time and space they need to become familiar with their new teachers, classroom, routines, and surroundings in a gentle and supportive way.

Rather than expecting children to immediately manage a full preschool day, gradual entry allows them to build confidence and develop a sense of security at their own pace. Shorter initial visits can help reduce feelings of overwhelm and give teachers an opportunity to learn each child's individual needs, interests, and comfort level.

Gradual entry is a **best practice that we strongly value** and is an important part of creating a positive start to the preschool year. It allows our educators to thoughtfully support each child's transition and helps children establish a strong sense of comfort and belonging within their new environment.

Suggested Gradual Entry Schedule

Day	Suggested Schedule	Focus
Day 1	1 hour	A short introduction to the classroom, teachers, routines, and new surroundings.
Day 2	2 hours	More time to explore, play, and become comfortable with the preschool environment.
Day 3	Half day – pick up at lunch	Experience a longer morning routine and participate in lunch before heading home.
Day 4 onward	Half days or regular full days	Based on the child's adjustment, the main ECE will determine when the child is ready to transition to the regular full-day schedule.

Supporting a Successful Transition

The gradual entry process will be **assessed by the main ECE in your child's program**. While some children may be ready to move into their regular full-day schedule after the first few days, others may benefit from continuing with half days for a longer period.

The main ECE will consider how the child is managing the classroom environment, separating from their caregiver, participating in routines and activities, engaging with educators and peers, and demonstrating comfort and confidence throughout the day.

Families can expect communication from their child's main ECE regarding their progress through gradual entry and when it is appropriate to move to a full-day schedule.

Gradual entry is an important part of our preschool practice, and we ask families to plan for and support this process at the beginning of the school year. Our shared goal is to give every child the best possible foundation for a happy, secure, and successful preschool experience.