

Dear parents!

We warmly welcome your family at the DAY-CARE CENTER ZOO!

We are aware that the transition from the family life to the mostly still unknown world of the day care is a huge change for the whole family. This is often accompanied by insecurity and many questions.

During the first months of its life the child develops a close relationship to its parents, also known as the primal faith. If the child feels unsafe, e.g., in the foreign surrounding of the day-care center, it searches the nearness of an attachment figure or is signaling the need for it. If the self-confidence rises, the child departs from the attachment figure and discovers the new surrounding as well as new people around him or her. In spite of that process the parents are still going to be the most important people in the life of the child. That's why you parents are indispensable during the familiarization process to help your child to cope with all the new impressions.

The familiarization lasts about 2 weeks, depending on the needs of the child.

The basic aim of the familiarization is, in cooperation with the parents and under the protection of the attachment figure, to allow the child to become acquainted with the new surrounding and to build up a relationship with the new care person. The fear of losing the child to the new care person is groundless. Various studies show that children, if they have a choice, they prefer the parents to the educator in an overpowering majority. The parents always remain the main attachment figure.

A well-organized familiarization is the base for a successful, trusting and supporting relationship between child, parents and day nursery.

The basis for the following leaflet are the book „The first days in the day-care center“ / Laewen, different, Hédervàri / Luchterhand publishing company in 2000 as well as our long lasting experience from our daily experience with children.

1 Basic phase

The basic phase usually lasts for 3 days. In this time the child remains for about 2 hours with a parent in the DAY-CARE CENTER ZOO. The presence times are agreed on the group leader.

In the basic phase no separation attempts are undertaken. Even if the mother or the father wants to leave the space only briefly, they take their child. The first 3 days of the familiarization are very important for process of separation and should not be disturbed by a separation. The self-assurance of the child with the investigation of the new environment is based on the presence of mother or father. It is most likely that the interest in the new would be distracted if the child had to master the new situation suddenly by itself.

1.1 The role of the parents in the basic phase

The task of the parents is to be a secure base for the child while investigating new surroundings. If the child can already crawl or walk, the parents leave it to the child to decide, when it wants to go away and separate

and when it would like to come back. The child should not be pushed to any behavior. If the child moves away from the parent, it, by a quick look now and then, reassures itself to still have the attention of the main attachment figure. Therefore the parents sit at a comfortable place in the field of vision of the child and simply are there. They react to approaches and eye contacts of the child positively and confirming, otherwise the parents behave passively. They do not initiate any contact with the child - it will give clear signals if it needs nearness or confirmation. The parents can enjoy observing their child in this passive time. At the same time this is the possibility to mutually getting to know our team and also to get to know more about the everyday life and rituals in the DAY-CARE CENTER ZOO.

1.2 The role of the care person in the basic phase

The care person observes the situation and reacts to contact attempts like eye contact, smiling, acceptance of toys etc. which every child will undertake sooner or later. The child determines speed and the kind of contact. The attachment figure will make play offers to the child and leaves it to itself to respond to it. It is important for the child to freely determine its play, discover activities and not to be pushed to any behavior.

1.3 The first separation

Probably on the fourth day the first separation attempt of max. 30 minutes is undertaken. The accompanying parent waits immediately after the arrival at the DAY-CARE CENTER ZOO until the child turns to an activity, to toys, the educator or other children. At that moment the parent goes to the child and says goodbye. It is very important that the mother or father says goodbye briefly and clearly and does not simply "sneaks away". Otherwise the parent risks the child's trust. It will possibly not be interested in a play or another person the next time because it anticipates that the parent leaves again without saying goodbye.

Now two different separation reactions are predictable:

- 1 The child already protests during the farewell and starts to cry. Or it hardly reacts first and begins weeping after some time without visible occasion. It can also happen that a child remains in a strained position, does not play anymore and does not react to the care person. If these children cry, they cannot be comforted by the educator at all or only for a short time. In these situations the attempt is called off and the educator will ask the parents back into the room. Therefore, they should remain during this first separation in the house or, otherwise, on call.
- 2 The child shows only little or no reaction if the father or mother leaves the room. It may follow them with its eyes and then continues playing without limiting his activity perceptibly and remains accessible.

If it protests by the farewell or after a little while or starts to cry, it can be comforted by the educator permanently. In this case the parent stays away for 30 minutes and then returns to the room.

The parents can use this half an hour during the first separation to visit our other child groups, or they can make themselves comfortable in the office. It is important that the parents can be called back into the room if required by the situation.

Moreover, on the fourth day the care person takes over increasingly the care of the child (feeding, changing the nappies, brushing the teeth etc.). While at the beginning of the familiarization process these actions should take place in the presence of the parents, they possibly should now be accomplished by the attendant figure of DAY-CARE CENTER ZOO.

2 Final phase

2.1 Next steps

At the end of the fourth day the temporary next steps of the familiarization are planned by the group leader and the parents. Then after the start of short absences of the parent after bringing the child in, the period in which the child remains alone in the DAY-CARE CENTER ZOO is extended daily. Nevertheless, the parents should be accessible in case of an emergency for about 2 weeks.

The experience shows that personal things of the child (like security blanket, comforter, soft animal, favorite toys or similar) which are brought from home can be very helpful to the child during the separation process and while falling asleep in the still unknown surroundings.

2.2 Termination of the familiarization

The familiarization is completed when the child accepts the care person at DAY-CARE CENTER ZOO as an attachment figure and can be comforted by her. Although, by now and then it can happen that the child still protests against the leaving of the parents - and this is his good right. His grief and his fury should have space. It is vital that the child can be calmed by the care person and still is interested in the offered activities.

Our goal of a successful familiarizing process is achieved when the child experiences the bringing and picking up from one sure base to another.

Furthermore...

... it is of great importance that a good relationship between the parents and the DAY-CARE CENTER ZOO staff can be developed. The familiarization does not happen exclusively at the level of the child. The creation of a triangle of mutual respect between parents, the child and the educator is the aim of this process.

We are happy about a colorful, intensive and diverse time with your child and your family.

We are open to your suggestions and are happy to discuss them with you.

Many thanks for your cooperation and trust.

Your DAY-CARE CENTER ZOO team