

Guide Childcare in the place of residence

1. Childcare at home

If a family is looking for a caregiver in house, an employment contract will help to regulate the legal side of the relationship. However, in order to prevent misunderstandings, we would like to draw the attention to other aspects which it makes sense to regulate in advance.

It is important to be prepared to cooperate intensively and in a spirit of trust with the caregiver in the best interests of the child, in order to make it easier for the child to accept the change of caregiving person (family and external caregiver) and to achieve continuous, stable care. This includes that you agree on an acclimatisation period with the caregiver who is adapted to the child before concluding the employment contract.

We recommend allowing sufficient time for the handover of a child to the caregiver. Perhaps the parents would sit down with the caregiver for a cup of tea or coffee when they come home. Such a ritual is a good opportunity to talk about current activities, exchange ideas and thus prevent unspoken problems.

2. Duration and organization of the acclimatization

The acclimatization process is essential. During this phase, the child can gently get used to the new caregiver and build a relationship with him or her. The child does not feel pushed away, but slowly grows into the new situation and has time to adjust to the hourly absence of the parents. Parents can go to work with more confidence once they have gotten to know the caregiver better, knowing that their child is in good hands.

How much acclimatization time a child needs, depends on various circumstances:

- It is important that the parents come to terms with their decision to have their child cared for by another person and able to detach themselves from the child. The caregiver should also firmly agree to become an employee.

The length of the acclimatization depends on the character of the child, but often the child's age also plays a role. Caregiving in the first six months is usually easier than after that until the second year of life. In this phase, children often treat the new caregiver as a "stranger". They react to new caregivers by turning away, they protest against being touched and they cry quickly. Of course, not all children are the same. But this sensitive early childhood phase of life is not a reason for children to be cared for exclusively by their parents. It rather shows that the acclimatization to a new caregiver should be oriented towards the child's needs. In most cases, the acclimatization lasts about 14 days, in some cases even three weeks, but for some children even one week is sufficient.

Ideally, the acclimatization could be structured like this:

- On at least three consecutive days, the caregiver, child(ren) and at least one parent is present together for one or two hours. This allows a child to engage with the new caregiver curiously, but from a safe position. It is not recommended to make any attempts at separation during these days. Just try to be there calmly. Let your child come and go as he or she wishes. Do not push him/her to behave in a certain way and keep an eye on him/her. Support the child's interest in the caregiver.
- The following day is the time for a first brief attempt at separation by the accompanying parent. If the child cannot be comforted by the caregiver in this situation, the separation attempt should be aborted and repeated at a later time.

- The parent's absence can be slowly extended when the child has settled in, is familiar with the caregiver and the caregiver can also comfort the child in difficult situations. One parent should always be available by phone.

3. Why is the acclimatization process so important?

- The parents get an insight into how the caregiver interacts with their children.
- The caregiver experiences the parents in their dealings with their children. They learn to assess them and gain an insight into the child's personality, stage of development and habits.
- It creates contact between parents and caregiver.
- The acclimatization should provide a gentle atmosphere, in which children - often for the first time in their lives - experience the pain of separation from their parents. As a mother or father, it is especially important to face this "painful" situation, not to "sneak away", but to say goodbye to the child. However, long farewell ceremonies should be avoided.

4. Possible difficulties during the acclimatization

It is important that parents and caregivers can talk openly about this. Perhaps the parents have fundamentally unpleasant feelings towards the caregiver during the acclimatization. It is important that you are brave in this situation and try to talk about it. Perhaps this will only trigger disagreements. In any case, it is better to decide against a care relationship than to get involved half-heartedly! It can also be that parents have difficulties handing over a child, for example if the child has not yet been weaned. Perhaps a mother does not really want to part with the child yet, but external circumstances make it necessary. Talking about this with the caregiver, but also with other people close to the family is essential.

5. Acclimatization overnight?

Sometimes an acclimatization, as described above, is not possible, for instance when a care relationship has to start in short order. In these circumstances, the remaining time of acclimatization should be intensified, i.e. it should take place daily and over several hours. For the caregiver, this means not being able to take over any other (household) duties in order to devote themselves entirely to the child for the time being. As we state in our own pedagogical concept, we see children as independent, active personalities whom we accompany and support individually on their life and educational path. Should you have any questions in this regard, please do not hesitate to contact our pedagogical director at any time.

6. Payment during the acclimatization

We recommend paying the normal hourly rate during this time. The caregiver has greater burden during this time, because she/he devotes her-/himself intensively to your child and its needs. In addition, the caregiver lays the foundation for a future joint upbringing of your child with you.

7. Termination of the childcare relationship

When the childcare relationship is to be terminated, it is extremely important for a child to be prepared for the farewell and the change. Explain the reasons for the farewell to the child in a way that is appropriate for the child's age. Celebrate it i.e., with a small party.