

Top Tips

Crèche



Offering a free crèche is an incentive for some parents and carers to attend a HENRY Programme, but for others, leaving children in a crèche could be a barrier to attending.

All parents and carers will need to feel confident in your crèche provision in order to attend sessions each week and be able to focus on session content and their own learning. So how can we create this confidence and ensure crèche provision meets everyone's needs?

- Make clear in any promotional materials/recruitment process that a free crèche is provided so that parents and carers can focus on their own learning and get peer support
- Remember empathy is key – start building warm and welcoming relationships from the outset in any contact with parents and carers and listen to/look out for any feelings about using the crèche so that you can talk these through and offer reassurance
- Where possible, hold a taster session so that parents and carers and children can start to build relationships and trust with crèche staff, Facilitators and other parents and carers/children. They can also fill in crèche paperwork, see the crèche room etc. This will reduce apprehension and anxiety about leaving children and start the settling in process
- Some areas have found it helpful during either the taster session or during session 1 for children to be able to move freely between the crèche and the room where the programme is delivered. This helps them understand where their parents or carers are. Of course, this depends on whether the venue and the location of the crèche allows for this
- Consider holding Family Time at the end of Parent Time. This may be helpful in terms of shortening and simplifying the transition at the start of the session
- Speak to crèche staff before programmes to brief them about HENRY if they are unfamiliar with the content/approach. Empathise how important their role is in working with children, modelling active play and offering choices etc. The HENRY leaflet would be useful to share
- Ideally, crèche rooms should be near enough to the room where parent time takes place for crèche staff to inform parents and carers easily if their child is not settling, but not so near that parents and carers can hear/see their children who may naturally take a while to settle. Crèche staff will be used to managing this, but parents and carers may not!
- It can be helpful, particularly where parents and carers seem anxious about leaving their children in crèche, for whichever Facilitator is not delivering a section of a session to 'check in' with crèche staff periodically for the first few weeks (it's helpful if this is in the form of a 'thumbs up or down' to crèche staff through a window, to avoid disruption, or a brief verbal check at the crèche door) and feedback all is well to parents and carers. In case children don't settle, mutually agree a time period from taster/Week 1 with parents and carers and crèche staff, after which time crèche staff will inform the relevant parent/carer so they can return to crèche

- Many children gain independence and benefit from attending creches (e.g school readiness) so it may be helpful for parents and carers to be made aware of this outcome, which they may not have considered. Rewards can be used during parent sessions to reinforce this