



PARENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON STRESSORS AND RESOURCES: WELL-BEING AND SOCIAL SUPPORT DURING EARLY CHILDHOOD TRANSITIONS

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Izvleček/Abstract

The transition from familial to institutional early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings is a critical phase for both children and parents. In this study, we examined the stressors and resources affecting parents during nursery and kindergarten settling-in processes. Using Antonovsky's concept of coherence as the theoretical framework, we conducted fifteen qualitative semi-structured interviews with parents and analysed the emotional, organisational, and social challenges they perceived as stressors and resources during the transition phase. The findings showed that a resource-oriented approach can reduce stress and support the emotional and social adjustment of both parents and children.

Keywords:

transition from home to ECEC setting, nursery and kindergarten settling-in, parental perspective, stressors and resources, sense of coherence.

Ključne besede:

prehod iz domačega okolja v okolje predšolske vzgoje, uvajanje v vrtec, pogled staršev, stresorji, dejavniki podpore, občutek povezanosti.

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Pogledi staršev na dejavnike stresa in podpore: dobro počutje in socialna podpora med prehodi v zgodnjem otroštvu

Prehod iz družinske v institucionalno predšolsko vzgojo in varstvo predstavlja ključno fazo tako za otroke kot za starše. V študiji proučujemo stresorje in dejavnike podpore, ki vplivajo na starše med uvajanjem otrok v jasli in vrtec. Kot teoretični okvir za analizo starševskih strategij spoprijemanja s stresom služi Antonovskijev koncept koherence. Na podlagi 15 kvalitativnih polstrukturiranih intervjujev s starši analiziramo čustvene, organizacijske in družbene izzive, ki so jih starši dojemali kot stresorje in dejavnike podpore v obdobju prehoda. Ugotovitve kažejo, da lahko na dejavnike podpore usmerjen pristop zmanjša stres ter podpira čustveno in socialno prilagajanje tako staršev kot otrok.

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Introduction

Supporting early childhood (EC) transitions has been the focus of intensive research for over 30 years (Ahnert et al., 2012; Bensel, 1992; Dunlop and Fabian, 2003). The term ‘transitions’ refers to fundamental shifts in children’s life courses, accompanied by profound changes in their social, emotional, and cognitive contexts. Settling in is a pivotal process during the initial period of adjustment to an unfamiliar environment, such as an early childhood education and care (ECEC) setting (Fabian and Dunlop, 2007).

Based on attachment theory (Bowlby et al., 1992), research on hospitalism (Spitz, 1960), and studies on the settling-in process in nurseries (Bensel, 1992), specific concepts have been developed to support the transition from home to institutional settings (Laewen, 1989; Laewen et al., 2007; Winner and Erndt-Doll, 2009). A carefully designed settling-in process is crucially important for promoting children’s health and well-being by reducing separation anxiety, fostering emotional stability (Ahnert et al., 2023; Datler et al., 2012; Nystad et al., 2021), and strengthening children’s social, emotional, and cognitive skills in the long term (Fabian and Dunlop, 2007).

For parents, the settling-in phase is often characterised by emotional challenges due to uncertainties, concerns, and various stressors (Lam, 2014), including children’s separation anxiety (Griebel and Niesel, 2002), the need to establish relationships with early childhood education (ECE) professionals, and concerns about children’s well-being during their parents’ absence (Lam, 2014; Sotiropoulou et al., 2022).

Parents play a pivotal role in orchestrating their children’s transition processes, ensuring that their needs are acknowledged in the early childhood institutions (Rimm-Kaufman and Pianta, 2000; Sotiropoulou et al., 2022) and acting as a bridge between the familial environment and the new institutional setting (Gath et al., 2024; Nystad et al., 2021). Research has shown that active parental involvement in the transition process reduces children’s anxiety and enhances their adaptability to new environments (Lam, 2014). Effective collaboration with ECEC professionals can also promote the health and well-being of children while benefiting parents by alleviating stressors. Furthermore, successful cooperation between parents or guardians and ECEC professionals strengthens the sense of coherence across different spheres of life for both parents and children (Idan et al., 2019).

Parents' pivotal role in facilitating children's transitions and supporting their settling-in processes has been extensively documented (Purtell et al., 2020; Rimm-Kaufman and Pianta, 2000). Nevertheless, few researchers of such transitions have systematically and actively involved parents in their research (Lam, 2014; Sotiropoulou et al., 2022). Although numerous studies emphasise the importance of parental involvement, the findings are predominantly based on the perspectives of ECE professionals. Direct surveys of parents are rare, and if they do exist, they usually come from older studies or are characterised by small samples (Gath et al., 2024; Lam, 2014; McIntyre et al., 2007; Sotiropoulou et al., 2022; Wildenger & McIntyre, 2011). This is particularly evident regarding the transition from family to nursery or kindergarten, for which parental perspectives have rarely been considered. Studies have confirmed that parents often feel inadequately informed or poorly prepared for their children's settling-in processes (Malsch et al., 2011), require more information and support during this period (Sotiropoulou et al., 2022), and value clear communication, practical guidance, and emotional support from ECEC professionals (Lam, 2014).

To better understand and support parents in this emotionally and organisationally demanding phase, Aaron Antonovsky's (1997) salutogenic model offers a valuable theoretical lens. Rather than focusing on deficits or risks, the salutogenic perspective centres on the identification and mobilisation of individual and contextual resources that promote coping and wellbeing. At the heart of this model lies the concept of the sense of coherence, which encompasses the dimensions of comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness. In the context of early childhood transitions, these dimensions help explain how parents interpret and respond to the challenges of the settling-in process.

In addition to concerns about their children's emotional and social adjustment (Lam, 2014; Sotiropoulou et al., 2022), parents find the logistical challenges and balancing of professional commitments particularly stressful during the settling-in period (Malsch et al., 2011). They may also experience feelings of guilt regarding the premature enrolment of their children in EC institutions. The transition from family to an ECEC setting is recognised as a critical phase for children, parents, and educators alike, characterised by organisational, emotional, and social challenges (Sotiropoulou et al., 2022). Parents, therefore, need to devise strategies to facilitate their children's adjustment to the new educational environment while managing their own complex emotional responses (Lam, 2014).

Aim and Subject of the Research

A few researchers have conducted studies on parental perceptions of transition processes in ECEC settings, predominantly focusing on the challenges and stressors they experience (Lam, 2014; Malsch et al., 2011; Sotiropoulou et al., 2022). In this study, we broadened the research scope by examining both stressors and parental resources to establish a foundation for strengthening collaboration between parents and professionals, thereby facilitating the transition process for all stakeholders.

Research Questions

In the present study, we aimed to answer the following research question: ‘What stressors and resources do parents experience during their children’s transitions or settling-in periods in an ECEC setting?’

Methodology

The study was grounded in qualitative social research. In September and the first week of October 2024, we conducted semi-structured interviews with parents who supported their children’s settling in during their transition from family environments to ECEC institutions or between two ECEC institutions. The study was conducted in Austria. At the time of the interviews, the parents had experienced separation from their children at the institution within the preceding two weeks. All interviews were conducted in German and lasted 19–45 minutes each.

Instrument

In addition to an icebreaker question, a section to collect sociodemographic data, and a concluding question, the semi-structured interview guide included fifteen specific questions divided into two thematic blocks. The first two thematic blocks focused on parents’ expectations, concerns, and hopes during their children’s settling-in periods in an ECEC setting (nursery or kindergarten), while the second block focused on their perceptions of the support provided by professionals throughout the settling-in process.

Participants

We conducted interviews in German and English to reach a diverse range of parents, collaborating with ECEC professionals and social media to ensure a diverse participant base.

All participants gave written consent to take part in the interviews on a voluntary basis. They were informed that they had the right to withdraw at any time and that all information would be kept confidential in accordance with data protection legislation. We selected parents who volunteered to participate based on a sampling plan (Mothers and fathers, different educational and professional backgrounds, different employment situations, different first languages, parents and children with and without experience of transition, parents with only one child, parents with several children) and included those who, at the time of the interview, supported their children during the settling-in period in nurseries or kindergartens. We noted that at the time of the interviews, two of the participating parents were simultaneously supporting two children through their transitions to an ECEC setting.

Table 1
Sociodemographic Characteristics of Parents and Their Children

Interviewee		N = 15	in percentages
Parent	Mother	12	80
	Father	3	20
Age	36–41 years	7	47
	30–35 years	6	40
	25–29 years	2	13
Educational attainment	Apprenticeship	3	20
	Study	12	80
First language	German	9	60
	Other first language	6	40
Employment	Parental leave	5	33
	Unemployed	3	20
	Part-time work	5	33
	Full-time work	2	13
Children's demographic data		N = 17	in percentages
Transition experience			
Sex	Yes	8	47
	No	9	53
	Female	9	53
	Male	8	47
Age of the child when entering the facility	12–18 months	6	35
	18–36 months	7	41

	3–4 years	4	24
	Nursery	Kindergarten	
Transition of family	9	4	76
Transition of childminders		2	12
Transition of nursery		2	12

Data Analysis

Subsequently, we transcribed all interviews and coded them using the qualitative content analysis method recommended by Mayring (2021), with the aid of MAXQDA software. For the coding process, we employed a deductive–inductive approach, with no use of AI tools. To ensure intercoder reliability, two researchers coded the data independently, which resulted in 202 coded statements with an observed intercoder agreement rate of 79.8%, indicating a high level of reliability. The coding discrepancies were resolved through targeted discussion, consensus-building, and data consistency through repeated reviews, ensuring intercoder reliability, validity, and traceability of results (Mayring, 2021).

Results

The findings revealed that the process of adjustment to new circumstances is influenced by various parental stressors and resources operating on contextual, emotional, and institutional levels.

Table 2

Frequency of Descriptions of Parents' Stressors and Resources During the Settling-In Period

Stressors		N	Resources		N
Organisational and health challenges (N = 40)	Assignment to a non-preferred institution	3	Peer support and communication		18
	Challenges posed by illnesses during the settling-in period	15	Social networks as resources during the settling-in period (N = 23)	Importance of familiarity for settling-in processes	5
	Challenges in reconciling work and family life	22			

Emotional stressors for parents (N = 36)	Emotional strain surrounding the staff	16	Parental strategies for dealing with resistance (N = 45)	Parental strategies for coping with the pain of separation	19
	Emotional strain surrounding the separation from their children	18		Dealing with children's resistance	26
	Emotional strain due to a guilty conscience	2			
Challenges in cooperation between parents and ECEC professionals (N = 29)	Communication between parents and professionals	18	Important factors influencing the collaboration with ECEC professionals (N = 80)	Binding agreements in advance	14
	How professionals deal with children	8		Relationship building with parents and children	12
	Lack of support from professionals	3		Communication: regular dialogue and transparent information	34
				Flexibility and individual customisation during settling in	20
N = 105					N = 148

The figure 'N' refers to the number of content-analytical codings according to Mayring, 2021.

Stressors During the Settling-In Process

Parents reported stressors during the settling-in process, including organizational and health issues, emotional strain, work commitments, and collaboration issues between parents and ECEC professionals.

Organisational and Health Challenges

A frequently cited source of stress was parents' concerns about their children being placed in nurseries or kindergartens that were not their first choice of institution. One mother articulated this sentiment, stating, "We ended up with our third choice of kindergarten. It was a cause of concern for many parents that it was not the kindergarten they had initially hoped for" (Mother, A. L. Transition to Kindergarten, 3.10.2024). Although these concerns were mitigated to some extent by positive experiences during the initial adjustment period, they persisted as recurrent themes during the interviews. Other concerns were the parents' unfamiliarity with the staff,

the pedagogical approach, and the institution's facilities prior to the start of the settling-in process.

Another significant source of stress was illness-related disruption during the settling-in process. As one parent explained, "In the second week, we had quite a setback. Things just didn't work anymore because, unfortunately, he [the child] fell ill" (Mother, C. N., Transition to Kindergarten, 18.09.2024). Staff members' illness-related absences were also a source of stress for parents during the settling-in period: On Monday of the second week, and again on Tuesday, we attempted separation. I was only away for fifteen minutes. Subsequently, the teacher was absent for a single day due to illness, but this was only on Wednesday and Thursday. Thus, full separation occurred on Friday. (Mother, K. B., Transition to Nursery, 17.09.2024) These disruptions resulted in delays and necessitated readjustment to the settling-in process for all involved. Another mother reflected, "Last week, we had the first separation, and it went well. However, the older child subsequently fell ill. This resulted in a brief period of separation" (Mother, G. B., Transition to Nursery, 24.09.2024). Such delays caused by infections were a source of profound exasperation for the participants.

Balancing work and family responsibilities strains parents managing multiple children, especially when one parent is on leave. This organizational challenge is particularly challenging. The need to coordinate work schedules with the demands of the settling-in period was another challenge for many parents. One father stated, "We agreed that I would work two afternoons, and my wife would work two afternoons, keeping Fridays flexible" (Father, A. L. Transition to Kindergarten, 3.10.2024). A lack of planning certainty and the occurrence of unforeseen events exacerbated these difficulties. As one parent articulated:

We had to be very flexible because of the uncertainty of our schedule, and unexpected events often disrupted our plans. I could only take three days off, and on the fourth day, he was in kindergarten until 3:00 p.m. He did not sleep that day (Mother, K. R. Transition to Kindergarten, 24.09.2024).

Emotional Stressors for Parents

Parents reported emotional uncertainties as significantly impacting their children's settling-in experience, particularly concerning the adaptation to established educational and care routines. One mother explained, "I am concerned that she will not engage and that the staff may be inclined to suggest her continued home attendance" (Mother, A. B. Transition to Kindergarten, 30.09.2024).

In addition to concerns regarding their children's capacity to assimilate into group dynamics, parents frequently expressed reservations about the timing of their children's enrolment and questioned whether it was premature. One parent articulated this initial ambivalence, stating, "On Monday, I briefly wondered whether it was really a good decision to send him to kindergarten and not wait another year" (Mother, T. F. Transition to Kindergarten, 18.09.2024).

Furthermore, many parents reported being profoundly affected by their children's emotional responses during the initial separation period. One mother recollected, "The first hour in kindergarten was the worst hour for me. My daughter was the only child who sat beside me the whole time, clinging to me" (Mother, A. L. Transition to Kindergarten, 3.10.2024). Furthermore, parents reported distressing emotional outbursts from their children: "She screamed loudly, cried bitterly, and it was just so upsetting because this kind of behaviour never happens at home" (Mother, G. B., Transition to Nursery, 24.09.2024). Such situations often led to feelings of being overwhelmed and uncertain.

In the interviews with parents, feelings of guilt about placing their children in institutions too early also played a vital role. One mother articulated this, stating, "I feel really bad when I think about leaving my child somewhere when I'm not ready to let them go" (Mother, K. B., Transition to Nursery, 17.09.2024). These internal conflicts were frequently exacerbated by social and/or professional pressure.

Challenges of Cooperation Between Parents and Professionals

Institutional factors also contribute to parental stressors. A significant proportion of the parents reported a lack of information regarding their children's daily schedules and developmental progress. One parent articulated discontent with the quality of communication with the professionals involved, expressing dissatisfaction with the professionals' level of engagement and perceived lack of responsiveness: "Beforehand, we found it somewhat frustrating that neither the management nor the educators seemed to proactively engage with us" (Mother, K. B., Transition to Nursery, 24.09.2024). Changes in staff during the settling-in process were also viewed critically because these made it difficult for children to establish stable relationships. One mother noted, "During the settling-in period, there were new people. On the third day, a new person was present, which was not beneficial for the child." A period of adjustment is required for children to become accustomed to new caregivers, and the parents identified clear and transparent agreements prior to the settling-in process as having great importance. However, one parent criticised the lack of planning reliability:

“We were assured that he would be placed in the same group as his friend. However, during the parents’ evening, we found that this was no longer the case” (Mother, C. N., Transition to Kindergarten, 18.09.2024). Such occurrences led to uncertainty, emphasising the significance of reliable information during the settling-in process. Furthermore, certain parents voiced their discontent regarding the way professionals addressed sensitive situations involving their children. One parent explained, “Occasionally, an excessive amount of drama is generated: ‘Oh my God, why did you wet yourself?’ I find that a bit shaming and not very diplomatic” (Mother, M. F., Transition to Nursery, 24.09.2024). Such experiences exacerbated feelings of uncertainty among parents, thereby diminishing their trust in the ECEC institution and its staff.

Parents also identified an absence of support and communication from professionals as a stressor: “I would say the communication was simply lacking” (Mother, M. F., Transition to Nursery, 24.09.2024).

Resources for the Settling-In Process

Resources like social networks, resistance strategies, and professional collaboration can help parents and children effectively navigate the transition phase in ECEC settings.

Social Networks as Resources During the Settling-In Period

Exchanges with other parents were perceived by many as reassuring and helpful. The parents significantly emphasised the value of engaging in dialogue with fellow parents to mitigate feelings of uncertainty. One mother commented, “Talking to other parents reassured me, especially when they said their children enjoyed going there” (Mother, K. R. Transition to Kindergarten, 24.09.2024).

The presence of familiar playmates was another important advantage for children. Parents reported that familiar contacts facilitated their children’s adaptation to the new environment. One father stated, “Fortunately, one of the children we’ve known for a very, very long time also moved to that kindergarten She [my daughter] already knew someone when she started” (Mother, A. L. Transition to Kindergarten, 3.10.2024).

Parental Coping Strategies

A considerable number of parents reported strategies they employed to counteract the emotional strain of separation. One mother (Mother, M. T. Transition to Nursery, 2.10.2024) described the initial period as “extremely challenging,” even though the proceedings had gone smoothly. She also expressed profound concern for the well-being of her children, describing it as a state of serious distress. The desire to remain at home was strong, but as time went on, the situation improved, although she experienced a wide spectrum of emotions during this period. The mother explained that becoming acquainted with the professionals and establishing trust in them over time helped her cope.

In contrast, other parents sought to rationalise their fears. One mother said, “I kept reassuring myself that it was the right decision and a positive step towards the future. If my child is doing well, I’m doing well too” (Father, R. M. Transition to Kindergarten, 3.10.2024).

Regular communication with professionals, along with updates via instant messaging or WhatsApp, also proved beneficial. A parent of a kindergarten child who commuted by bus shared the following: “The bus driver sent me a message saying everything was fine.” Such communication served as a source of reassurance for the parents, since, in rural areas, bus drivers who transport children daily to and from the institution are also involved in the settling-in process.

The use of established rituals and the provision of support by professionals tended to alleviate children’s resistance, such as crying or protesting, in the morning. One mother stated, “My daughter requires someone to encourage her, saying, ‘Let’s do this together.’ After that, it’s fine” (Father, L. K. Transition to Nursery, 27.9.2024). Brief farewells or gestures of acknowledgement at the threshold helped in establishing a structured routine and fostering a sense of security:

When I perceive that she is engaging with the caregivers and has acclimatised, I reopen the door, offer a brief farewell, and she waves at me. This sequence of events has become an established routine over the past few days. (Father, L. K. Transition to Nursery, 27.9.2024).

Important Factors Influencing Collaboration with ECEC Professionals

Close and trusting relationships, based on transparent information, between parents and professionals were perceived as a fundamental resource. One mother reported,

“I felt very well supported by the main caregiver. She explained the steps to me and provided daily feedback” (Mother, A. L. Transition to Kindergarten, 3.10.2024).

Furthermore, many of the parents reported that they found the parents’ evenings and written information provided prior to the settling-in process beneficial. One mother praised the programme, stating, “We had a parents’ evening where everything was explained, and two weeks before the settling-in process, we received detailed information again” (Mother, T. F. Transition to Kindergarten, 18.09.2024). The parents particularly appreciated professionals’ provision of regular feedback, whether verbal or written. One mother explained, “The teacher kept a notebook in which she recorded her observations daily: ‘Today was great’ or ‘Please note this and that.’ I found this to be a commendable practice” (Mother, A. B. Transition to Kindergarten, 30.09.2024). However, parents also expressed dissatisfaction with instances of absent feedback, citing the example of substitute teachers. One parent described the experience of interacting with a substitute teacher who failed to provide any information about the child’s day: “A substitute teacher just handed me my child without reporting how the day went” (Mother, A. B. Transition to Kindergarten, 30.09.2024). The parents found such experiences unsettling.

The use of a caring and professional approach by staff was especially valued, as it contributed to building meaningful relationships between all parties involved: “The staff were consistently exemplary in their care and professionalism. This aspect was particularly important because it fostered a sense of security and confidence that my child was in competent hands” (Mother, A. L. Transition to Kindergarten, 3.10.2024).

The parents also perceived flexible settling-in processes as particularly supportive. One mother shared the following:

On the first day, we separated for just an hour, and then we gradually extended the separation time because the teacher said he was coping well. By the fourth day, my child was able to nap, and by the fifth day, the settling-in process was complete. (Mother, C. K. Transition to Nursery, 28.09.2024).

Another family adopted a contrasting approach, characterised by caution and gradual progression:

We initiated the settling-in process in a gradual manner. In the first week, we remained until 11:00 a.m.; in the second week, we separated for an hour. From the third week, she remained until 3:00 p.m. and took a nap there. (Mother, C. K. Transition to Nursery, 28.09.2024).

The family reported that they engaged in brief discussions on the day before each visit, and that these visits were planned at short notice—a system they found to be highly satisfactory.

Discussion

An analysis of parental perspectives revealed a wide range of challenges and supportive factors that played a role during this phase.

The need to balance professional commitments with the demands of the settling-in process was a considerable burden for many parents. Malsch et al. (2011) also identified this as a stressor, since the parents in that study reported logistical challenges in coordinating the settling-in process, adjusting to new schedules, and reconciling these with work obligations.

Parents faced emotional uncertainties during the settling-in phase, including concerns about their children's adaptability, well-being, and the timing of enrolment. The children's emotional responses, including crying or clinging, frequently resulted in feelings of being overwhelmed or parental guilt. Sotiropoulou et al. (2022) reported a similar phenomenon, with parents expressing feelings of guilt about enrolling their children in institutions prematurely, at a too-young age.

Parents often experienced stress due to inadequate communication with professionals, particularly regarding their children's daily schedule and developmental progress. Changes in staff during the settling-in period, and inadequate support in sensitive situations heightened uncertainties and hindered the development of trust. Concerns about the ability of children to thrive in an institutional environment without their parents, as well as the desire for enhanced support from early childhood professionals, have also been reflected in international studies (Lam, 2014; Malsch et al., 2011; Sotiropoulou et al., 2022).

While international research highlights the importance of collaboration between parents and professionals during the kindergarten transition, little attention has been paid to interactions between parents themselves within institutional contexts (McIntyre et al., 2007; Wildenger and McIntyre, 2010; Rimm-Kaufman and Pianta, 2000). Sharing experiences with other parents provides emotional reassurance and normalizes transition challenges. Familiar peer relationships ease children's transition, providing parents with security and continuity.

Parents developed coping strategies for stress, fear management, routine establishment, and confidence enhancement through professional feedback, fostering trust and trust in the process.

Conclusion

Parental transitions are not solely influenced by stressors but also by available resources and individual coping capacities. To reduce stress and provide targeted support for parents, it is essential to identify resources and develop measures that promote coping. This aligns with Aaron Antonovsky's (1997) salutogenic model, which shifts the focus from risk factors and illness to health-promoting conditions. At its core lies the sense of coherence – a global orientation that enables individuals to perceive life as comprehensible, manageable, and meaningful. A keen sense of coherence helps individuals to mobilise internal and external resources in challenging situations, such as the transition into ECEC.

Analysis of the qualitative data revealed that the implementation of targeted measures can transform the numerous stressors experienced by parents into resources. A pivotal resource identified in this study is open and transparent communication with professionals. Regular feedback on children's settling-in processes and clearly articulated information about organisational procedures enhance a sense of predictability and comprehensibility. Flexible settling-in plans, stable professional relationships, trust in the pedagogical team, parental involvement, and prior written information can ease separation for children and provide parents with control and security. Social networks are particularly important for parents. Interacting with other parents and familiar children in an institution provides emotional relief and a sense of belonging. This social support is a valuable resource that not only reduces stress but also strengthens parents' coping abilities.

The sense of coherence, comprising the dimensions of comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness (Idan et al., 2019; Meier Magistretti, 2022), is a useful model for analysing parental experiences during the settling-in period:

Comprehensibility is enhanced through clear information and transparent communication. When parents understand what to expect and why specific procedures are necessary, they can better contextualise the situation.

Manageability arises when parents receive support, whether through flexible planning, empathetic professionals, or social networks. This reassures

parents that they have the resources needed to handle the challenges of the settling-in process.

Meaningfulness is strengthened by recognising the importance of the settling-in period as a developmental step. Parents are likely to view the transition to an ECEC setting as a valuable phase for their children's development when they feel that the children's well-being and the relationship between family and professionals are prioritised.

A robust sense of coherence can facilitate parents' perceptions of the challenges of the settling-in period as manageable and meaningful, thereby ensuring more effective coping mechanisms. Despite the limitation of being a small sample and, moreover, a qualitative study, (Lam, 2014) highlights the significance of a resource-oriented approach for supporting the settling-in phase for both parents and children. Empowering parents during the transition phase can reduce stress and improve well-being, fostering trust in educational institutions and establishing foundations for successful collaboration and partnerships.

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