

Eingewöhnungsbroschüre

Getting acclimatized at the Kinderhaus Knirps & Co.

Acclimatization at Knirps & Co.

1. Many questions
2. Reasons for a successful acclimatization
3. Groups at Knirps and child care workers
4. Schedule for the acclimatization
5. Detailed process of the acclimatization
6. General information about the acclimatization
7. Further information

Imprint and Contact information

Knirps & Co. e.V.

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Consultation-hour (please book in advance via phone +49 (0)7531 88 43 21)

every first Thursday of the month: 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. – initial interview and tour

all other Thursdays of the month: 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. – regular consultation

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Dear parents,

you have been getting to know our pedagogical focus and the environment in which your child will be cared for in the initial interview and the following tour of the Kinderhaus.

Our pedagogical concept also includes an acclimatization phase for new children. You will learn why this is important and how this phase is thoughtfully designed on the following pages.

It is our heartfelt wish that all of us – your child, you and we – can start into a wonderful time at Knirps.

1. Many questions

You have chosen to let your child be cared for by Knirps & Co. from now on. This is a new phase of life for you and your child and means a huge transition.

If you have cared for your child at home until now, you have spent a great deal of intensive time with him or her, and know all about his or her needs and rhythms. You were able to instantly react to his or her signals. It is perfectly natural to wonder whether your child will now be one among many, and has to wait until the child care worker can attend to its needs. Maybe the facility will be too loud and busy? How will the other children react to your offspring – especially to a toddler? Is the facility taking enough care of your child's safety?

Possibly you are also unsure about what your relationship with the child care workers will look like, in particular the individually attached worker. Is he or she likeable? Can you trust him or her with your child? What happens if he or she reacts differently to you? Perhaps you are also worried whether you can voice what concerns you.

On the other hand you might ask yourself what it means if your child gets acclimatized very fast, and does not miss you. Is your child more attached to the child care workers or does it prefer the facility over home?

We would like to assure you with this leaflet that we are aware of all possible concerns and conflicting feelings. This is why it is very important to us to work closely together with you starting with the beginning of the acclimatization.

2. Reasons for a successful acclimatization

Child care at Knirps & Co. will pose a challenge for your child in the beginning: unfamiliar adults, many and new children, a foreign environment, different toys, unfamiliar food, a new place to sleep, new rituals, an unknown garden and many things more. It is a great achievement of your child to orientate him- or herself here.

This is why we estimate a period of some weeks in which your child can get slowly acquainted with its new surroundings. In the beginning this means only a few hours of child care with the same child care worker each day.

You can support your child by accompanying this acclimatization phase actively. In an unfamiliar situation, your child sees in you a trusted base, and you can help by conveying the necessary safety it needs to watch, explore, and accept new things.

You play a vital part in the acclimatization and are the key to the new environment for both your child and the child care workers.

Have the last months been very intensive, for example have you felt very close while breastfeeding or carrying your child around in a sling? Do you already trust him or her with being content while being cared for by e.g. the father or grandparents? Are you happy if your child explores things further away from you or moves towards other people? Your readiness to let go and your trust in your child's abilities are key to a successful acclimatization.

You can practice saying goodbye by saying e.g. “I will fetch something to drink from the kitchen and will return right away” when you leave the room. You should come back reliably so your child can build up trust in your safe return.

3. Groups at Knirps and child care workers

At the moment, 145 children distributed in ten groups are being cared for at Knirps & Co. Each group has a core team of three to four child care workers.

Each child is individually attached to one child care worker. He or she is responsible for your child during the acclimatization phase and will remain your first contact person for the following time. Before child care starts, he or she will get in touch with you for a first interview.

The most important aim of the acclimatization is the slow building of an intensive and sustainable relationship with this individually attached child care worker.

Little by little, the exposure to the other child care workers in the group will be expanded so they can become your and your child’s confidantes.

4. Schedule for the acclimatization

The acclimatization phase usually lasts four to five weeks. As you can see in the following graphic, your child will be cared for by us two hours each day for the first two weeks. The first three days, you will be present the whole time. Your child is meant to slowly get to know the new environment and the attached child care worker.

After a few days you will discuss with the child care worker whether you can leave the room for a few minutes. The length of these absences slowly increases from day to day.

Deliberately saying goodbye strengthens trust in your child and a short goodbye shortens the pain.

The time your child spends in child care can be increased bit by bit starting from week two or three.

The slow increase of your absence and the time of child care ensures that the separation progresses gradually and you can gently get acquainted with the new situation.

All periods mentioned above are for guidance purposes only. The decision when and how long your child will stay with the child care worker is always discussed individually. Many factors come into play here (e.g. how old your child is or whether it has been in child care before). Our goal is the same for all children: your child is able to spend the whole time in child care without parents and experiences no emotional strain from the separation in any way. Your child will only be able to grow and prosper when he or she is comfortable in the new environment.

First phase	Day 4 (and 5)	Day 6
Your child and one parent come for three days and stay two hours each day. The parent is present the	Two hours in the group. Depending on your child’s trust: parent leaves the room for 10 minutes.	Depending on your child’s trust: parent leaves for 30 minutes (parent can be reached by phone).

whole time.	It is also possible the parent cannot leave the room yet.	It is also possible the parent cannot leave the room yet.
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From Day 7/Week 2	Week 3	Week4 and 5
Depending on your child's trust: parent leaves for 1 ½ hours (parent can be reached by phone) and the time your child spends in child care is slowly increased (possibly more than two hours).	Attempt to let your child stay in the facility for two hours without parents; if this is successful, the parent's time of absence is increased to two to four hours and the time your child spends in child care is increased as well. If it hasn't been possible for the parent to leave the room until now, the attached child care worker and the parents will meet to discuss this.	Your child spends almost the full time in child care without parents. If full day care has been booked, your child is being picked up at 3 or 4 p.m. We recommend not leaving your child in child care for more than eight hours except in emergencies.

based on the Berlin infans model (H.-J. Laewen, B. Andres, E. Hedervári)

5. Detailed process of the acclimatization

First phase

The first phase lasts for three days in which you and your child will spend two hours each day at Knirps & Co. Together you will get to know the facility in order to get better acquainted with the surroundings. Your child will be cared for only by his or her attached child care worker, who will be its first contact from now on. Your child will slowly get to know the other child care workers after fourteen days. We do this so your child can more easily deal with the many new impressions from the first few days. The room always stays the same in the first phase and you can bring your own baby carriage so your child can sleep in a familiar environment.

This intense care in the first days aims to build a lasting relationship between your child and the child care worker. Your child will be the only one getting acclimatized by this particular child care worker in this group. This one-on-one care lasts for two weeks. There are several children being acclimatized at the same time in different groups in the whole facility which means the times of acclimatization are being set by Knirps & Co.

The first three days of the acclimatization pass as follows: the attached child care worker will sit next to you and your child on the floor with various toys. Toddlers will be placed on a so-called "island" with suitable toys in order to give them a manageable space to cope with. This area will be separated from the rest of the room optically. From experience it is likely the other children of the group will cautiously get in touch with your child as they usually show guarded interest in new members of the group.

The attached child care worker uses this time to get to know your child, you and how you interact with each other. He or she is especially aware of your child's signals: if your child shies away from meeting his or her eyes at welcome, he or she respects your child's reserve

and keeps back. If your child stays attached to you and looks at you often, it is apparent that it still needs you very much.

It is likely your child is more open if he or she looks at other children and watches them intensely. This is a good opportunity for making first contact by the attached child care worker (for example by rolling a ball towards it). It is important how your child reacts now: the attached child care worker stays in the background if it behaves passively or looks to you for support. If your child starts to play, it is open for new experiences and the attached child care worker can enter the game. The role of the attached child care worker is active yet sensitive from day one, meaning he or she offers contact and play offers in a suitable manner.

You are present during the first phase, but we kindly ask you to not get involved in the play between your child and the attached child care worker and the play of the other children in the room. This passive stance does not mean you cannot be there for your offspring: if it looks at you for support or wants to be held, offer comfort. This is a challenging situation in which it needs to be able to show and act out all of its feelings – you are a safe haven, a place to calm down. Unfamiliar situations like this help your child to develop strategies to cope with critical conditions. You help your child by emanating trust in the situation, in yourself and your child.

If your child is still a toddler, you will feed him or her and change the nappies in the first few days. The attached child care worker will accompany you during this time, and maybe you can already share these tasks by the second or third day.

Day 4 (and 5)

On day 4, you and the attached child care worker will discuss whether your child has built up enough trust so that you can leave the room for ten minutes. You say a quick goodbye and tell your child that you are leaving but will be back. Sometimes it only becomes apparent how your child reacts to your absence after you have left. If your child continues to play, or cries but can be soothed by the child care worker, it is slowly getting used to the new group. Leaving your personal items in the room can help since it gives your child the impression that you will come back soon.

It is also possible you cannot leave the room yet. In our experience children sense very well if parents have a hard time letting go. Parents need to develop trust first before their children can start to develop their own.

You and the attached child care worker will reflect during the daily acclimatization what works and where new strategies seem more rewarding.

On day 5, you will again try to leave the room for ten minutes.

Day 6

Depending on your child's behavior it is now decided whether you can leave for about half an hour. In order to make this decision, it has to be clear that your child is okay with being held by the attached child care worker (without turning away), that he or she can distract your child, and that it maybe even comes to him or her looking for comfort. It explores its surroundings unselfconsciously, meaning it actively interacts with the attached child care worker and the surroundings.

If your child starts to cry after you have left the room and cannot be calmed down by the attached child care worker, he or she will call you and you will return. It may be necessary for you to stay in the room the whole time if your child is still very fixated on you and cannot play freely. Sometimes it makes sense for you to leave the room nevertheless as this offers the child care worker an opportunity to make contact with your offspring. However, this decision is dependent on many things like body language, facial expressions and gestures but also on the experience of the child care worker. This phase absolutely requires open discussion.

Day 7 (Week 2)

You can now leave for one and a half hours if your child has played well during your absence of 30 minutes before (you can be reached by phone). If you have returned after the specified time and your child has been comfortable, it is possible your child does not want to go home. It is important to go now nevertheless and let your child anticipate the next visit.

The attached child care worker now introduces your child to the other children by playing name and welcoming games. The remaining hours in child care are carefully designed taking into account your child's needs, interests and wishes so he or she is comfortable.

Week 3

The time of your absence is increased from one and a half hours to two hours at the beginning of week 3, maybe even four hours later on. If it is clearly evident that your child reacts positively to the acclimatization, the daily amount of time it spends in child care will be increased as well.

If on the other hand you have not been able to leave the room until now, you and the attached child care worker will meet to discuss possible reasons. A successful acclimatization is heavily dependent on whether you feel like you can trust the attached child care worker. Think about your feelings towards him or her. Please do not hesitate to talk about it. Maybe you feel like something is missing overall? Is there anything that makes you uncomfortable? We will work together to find a solution. Your concerns are very important to us.

Week 4 and 5

In week 4 and 5 your child will spend almost the whole time in child care without parents. If you have booked full day care, he or she will be picked up at 3 p.m., by agreement at 4 p.m.

Acclimatization final interview

After the acclimatization, a final interview will take place in which you will reflect the past weeks. The following child care in the crib will be discussed by you the parents and the attached child care worker.

6. General information about the acclimatization

Infantile tiredness

Your child can appear more tired and “whiny” during the acclimatization. Many new impressions have to be processed and the unfamiliar level of noise at the facility can also be exhausting for your child after some time. This does not necessarily mean your child will sleep more. We at Knirps & Co. are striving to make it possible for your child to go home when it is still rested.

Sleeping and eating routines at home

Starting with the acclimatization, the sleeping and eating routines that your child knows from home may need to be changed. For example if your child gets up at 6 a.m., it may already be tired when it arrives at Knirps & Co. at 9 a.m. You will discuss this with the attached child care worker.

Stability

In order for the acclimatization to be effective, we would like to ask you to be reachable at all times for at least five weeks and to be available when needed. Please do not make plans for any holidays during this time and the following two months. We also recommend that always the same person accompanies the acclimatization. If a change cannot be avoided, the acclimatization will continue either way. However if the acclimatization proves problematic, a different person may help the process.

Please also avoid big changes like a move or a new job during the acclimatization as this would destabilize your child’s familiar environment at home. If a change cannot be avoided, we will look for a better time for the acclimatization.

Reasons for a successful acclimatization

Children react differently to being cared for at Knirps & Co. and will take different amounts of time to get used to it. Generally speaking it always helps if parents can let go from the beginning, preferably even before acclimatization starts. It is perfectly normal to find this hard. Many parents feel this way and we are very understanding of it. However the separation anxieties of their parents make it harder for the children to get acclimatized. A successful acclimatization is also dependent on how parents communicate with their children and the child care workers. Even if parents seem to verbally support their child’s acclimatization, body language and phrasing can infer differently. Phrases like “You don’t have to be afraid of the child care worker”, “I’m not leaving” or “Everything’s fine” can be counterproductive as they tend to unsettle your child. It is more helpful to comfort your child but at the same time divert your child’s attention to toys or the child care worker.

Maybe your child has already experienced another form of child care, for example a child minder, and if this went well, it can be another reason for a quick acclimatization. The chances for success are less good if your child is going through a phase in which it is not open to new experiences. In this case, the acclimatization will be postponed.

The attached child care worker

Acclimatization is not only a challenging time for you and your child but also for the attached child care worker. He or she does not know in advance how things will work out, if your child will be willing to be cared for by him or her, whether you will accept him or her or you are ready to work together and how you will judge their work.

7. Further information

Please speak up about everything that is important to you.

External influences

Is one of the parents away on a business trip? Has your child not slept well last night? Are you having visitors? Situations like these can influence your child's acclimatization. Short notices help us to gauge your child's mood and behavior and act accordingly.

Financial aids

The Jugendamt (= youth welfare service) offers financial aids for families with low income. You can apply for a reduction or waiver of the expenses. Please contact us, we have the necessary forms ready.

Money for baby food jars¹

If your child is aged under one and is still fed with food from baby food jars, you can buy these jars themselves and we will refund you with 23€ per month.

Lunch

The Kinderhaus has its own kitchen in which food is prepared fresh daily. The meals offered are seasonal, hearty and balanced and aim to appeal to all senses. We strive to mostly use produce from organic farming and try to keep the meals as unprocessed as possible.

The prices for lunch are 70€ a month and it is included in extended morning care and full day care.

Sickness/Absence

If your child is sick or otherwise absent, please call until 9:30 a.m. to inform us.

Emergency care

If you or your child get sick or you have an important business appointment at the university and are in short-term need of child care, please contact the emergency child care at +49 (0)174 839 12 66 or +49 (0) 162 54 99 149.

Parking spaces

¹ Baby food is often sold in jars made of glass in Germany

There are short-term (up to 45 minutes) parking spaces for dropping off and picking up your children at the university. You need a permit to use them, which you can get from yunuen.mann@uni-konstanz.de (please state your license number).

Trial period

The trial period of eight weeks starts with the first day of child care and is a time in which you and we as well decide whether Knirps & Co. is the right kind of child care for your child. A cancellation is possible for the next day anytime during this period. Please note that you will have to pay for each full month once it has started no matter when you decide to cancel.

Snacks

During free play, the children get healthy snacks in the morning and the afternoon. Please provide your child with fruit, rice crackers, bread and cheese in a sealed container. Drinking glasses are provided by Knirps & Co. except your child wants to drink from its own bottle.

Clothing

Please provide your child with comfortable slippers, preferably ones he or she can put on by him- or herself. In order to play in the garden, your child needs weatherproof clothing and rubber boots. Please also provide a change of clothes. For children under three years please also provide a sleeping bag.

“How was it?”

Your questions are willingly answered by the child care workers, not only during the acclimatization but of course also afterwards. They give you feedback on what the day was like for your child.

Further information about Knirps & Co. can be found in our brochures, on our website or you can personally ask any questions you might have at one of our regular meetings of parents and child care workers (“Elternabend”). Please do not hesitate to contact us anytime!