

## **Returning to work following the birth of your child**

Returning to work following the birth of your child can be a difficult time, you will have many worries and concerns. There is no conclusive evidence to show whether children of working mothers do better or worse than those whose mothers stay at home. There are obviously advantages and disadvantages to both. Mothers return to work for various reasons following the birth of their child:

- for financial reasons
- to continue their career thus boosting self esteem and self confidence
- gives the freedom to be independent

When you have made the decision to return to work, you will have to decide if you should:

- leave your child with family/friends
- use a childminder/nanny
- use a nursery

You will, I'm sure, have looked at length into these three options and only you can decide which option is best for you and your child.

Good childcare can provide many benefits:

-your child learns to share and to interact with other children in a considerate and thoughtful way

-Helps with your child's development and communication skills as he/she has planned activities to develop learning.

-keeps your child stimulated by taking part in activities which are used to help development and learning

-helps with the transition when the time comes for your child to start school.

You may feel upset and guilty about leaving your baby, and you may be feeling torn between your child and your commitment to work. These feelings are natural and it may help to alleviate the anxiety by preparing yourself and your child for this change in your routine a few weeks prior to the transition. As you are no doubt aware children react to change in different ways. Your child will have to adjust to spending time away from you in a new environment with new faces. To help your child deal with this, you could leave him/her with relatives, family and friends initially for a short period, gradually increasing the period. You could also join mother and toddlers groups or visit friends with children to get your child used to the company of children. Once you have agreed a start date for your child at Leaps and Bounds you will be contacted to arrange a settling in period for your child. This usually takes place the week before your child's start date. It lasts for one hour each day and is free of charge. Do not be too upset if your child seems very upset or, conversely – if your child does not seem upset at all. Each child reacts in a different way. You are welcome to remain on the premises or to leave the building as long as you leave a mobile phone number. When your child begins nursery you may find it helpful to have everything

organised the night before so you are not feeling stressed in the morning. You should also leave enough time to ensure you can settle your child before leaving for work. Try not to let your child see you upset as you leave as this could cause them distress after you've left. Please don't go to work and worry about feeling upset and guilty – these feelings are a natural reaction and you should give yourself time to adjust to balancing work and child responsibilities. Neither should you feel guilty about enjoying going back to work and regaining some of your independence especially as your child will have had a day full of fun and activities which you will be told about when you call to collect him/her.

Returning to work following the birth of your child can be a stressful and upsetting time however if you follow the advice on this page it may help to reduce the worry and make it a positive experience for you and your child. Feel free to call the nursery if you have any concerns during the day.