

# Birth to Three

*Ann Langston and Lesley Abbott*

The centre, to which young mum, Sarah, has taken her daughter, Raffa, aged just 6 months, seems to be a warm, welcoming, lively and vibrant place. The staff are sensitive and caring towards a rather tearful mum and a somewhat bewildered baby. After all, this is a first for both of them and this day constitutes a major change in their lives. Sarah is returning to work after six months at home with Raffa and this is the first time that she will be away from Sarah for any length of time.

On the wall there are photographs of babies and young children grouped into particular age ranges – birth to 11 months, 8 to 20 months, 16 to 26 months and 22 to 36 months – the age range catered for in the private nursery provision within the Children’s Centre. Beneath these are short descriptions of how children grow, learn and develop during these phases – but what do these groupings really mean and how, Sarah wonders, will she be helped to support Raffa as she grows and develops? She makes a mental note to ask the staff about this at a convenient time – but right now her priority is to make sure that Raffa is settled and happy in her new environment. Many questions continue to go round in Sarah’s head as she observes the ‘busyness’ of the setting; the number of children of widely different ages and abilities, the range of activities on offer, the colours, sounds, sights and smells which invade her senses. She thinks: How will Raffa fit into all this? Who will take particular care of her? How will Raffa’s needs be met? Will she be lonely in all this bustle?

Having read the case study, outline the steps you would take in order to reassure Sarah that her baby is in safe hands. Write down the answers to Sarah’s questions as if they referred to what happens in your own setting.

- It all seems so busy, who will take special care of Raffa?
- Raffa has a particular routine for sleeping, eating, playing with me at home, will all this change now she is here?
- Will Raffa forget me once she is spending a lot of time with other adults? How can I be involved with you in her care?
- I am interested in the information covering Raffa’s age group on the wall – who decided on these age ranges, what will it mean for Raffa and should I be worried about it?
- You seem to be very knowledgeable about babies – how do you know so much about how they develop?