

Introducing Child Development

Tony Bertram and Chris Pascal

Joe is 13 months old. He has been attending the day nursery since he was 6 months old and is settled and happy there. He has developed a close friendship with Shalia who is his chosen companion for most things, and when they are together there is lots of interaction. He particularly likes hiding from her and waiting for her to find him, when he chuckles infectiously. He also has a strong relationship with Parmy, his key person, who has worked with Joe for the last 6 months. He is a resilient, exploratory, social child who has bags of curiosity and enjoys challenges. He also likes to give and receive a cuddle. One morning his dad drops him off at the nursery and explains that Joe's mum has had to leave for the north of England to look after her mother who has fallen and needs nursing. She is the only daughter and she feels she must be there to provide the care her mother needs. She may be away for a couple of weeks. Dad will be at home during this time but he works long and sometimes erratic hours and so his home routine will clearly be disrupted. Some evenings Joe may have to stay over at a friend's house, which means he will not be able to attend the nursery on some mornings. Dad is clearly concerned that Joe is well supported during this difficult time.

Reflective questions

- How would you reassure Joe's dad that his son will be especially nurtured during this time?
- What kinds of additional support would you provide for Joe?
- What kinds of activities might help Joe explore and express his feelings during this time?
- How would you ensure Joe's mum keeps connected to what is happening with Joe at the nursery?
- How far do you think it is possible to balance Joe's needs with the needs of his wider family?