

9.4 The role of the key person and settling-in

Policy statement

We believe that children settle best when they have a key person to relate to, who knows them and their parents well, and who can meet their individual needs. Research shows that a key person approach benefits the child, the parents, the staff and the setting by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents have confidence, staff are committed and the setting is a happy and dedicated place to attend or work in.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the setting and to feel secure and comfortable with staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with the setting.

We aim to make the setting a welcoming place where children settle quickly and easily because consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of children and their families.

The key person role is set out in the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each setting must assign a key person for each child.

The procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children who are in settings.

Procedures

- We allocate a key person before the child starts.
- Where a home visit is carried out before the child starts, this is done by the manager and the key person.
- The key person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into our setting. The key person offers unconditional regard for the child and is non-judgemental.
- The key person works with the parents/carers to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning ensuring that account is taken of each child's

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race, culture, religion, language and family values by observing, keeping records and monitoring the child's progress, also liaising with parents, encouraging them to contribute expertise. .

- The key person acts as the key contact for the parents and has links with other carers involved with the child, such as a childminder, and co-ordinates the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.
- The key person is responsible for developmental records and for sharing information on a regular basis with the child's parents to keep those records up-to-date, reflecting the full picture of the child in our setting and at home.
- We provide a back-up key person/buddy so the child and the parents have a key contact in the absence of the child's key person.
- We promote the role of the key person as the child's primary carer in our setting, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.

Settling-in

We want children to feel safe and happy in the absence of their parents, to recognise other adults as a source of authority, help and friendship and to be able to share with their parents afterwards the new learning experiences enjoyed in the pre-school.

In order to accomplish this, we will:

- Encourage parents to visit the pre-school during the weeks before admission is planned.
- Make available the opportunity for a home visit from the child's key-person and the pre-schools Manager/Deputy Manager, should the parent feel this will be of benefit to the child.
- Introduce flexible admission procedures, if appropriate, to meet the needs of individual families and children.
- Encourage parents, where appropriate, to separate from their children for brief periods at first, gradually building up to longer absences.
- Operate an open door policy which allows parents to call in at the pre-school at any time during the day without an appointment.

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- Invite all new parents to events being held at the pre-school, such as the summer picnic, to help with the 'getting to know you' process.
- Give each child an 'Online Learning Record', which will be shared on a regular basis.
- Provide parents with information about the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Children cannot play or learn successfully if they are anxious and unhappy. Our settling procedures aim to help parents to help their children to feel comfortable in the pre-school to benefit from what it has to offer and to be confident that their parents will return at the end of the session/day.

The progress check at age two

- The key person carries out the progress check at age two in accordance with any local procedures that are in place.
- The progress check aims to review the child's development and ensures that parents have a clear picture of their child's development.
- Within the progress check, the key person will note areas where the child is progressing well and identify areas where progress is less than expected.
- The progress check will describe the actions that will be taken by the setting to address any developmental concerns (including working with other professionals where appropriate) as agreed with the parent(s).
- The key person will plan activities to meet the child's needs within the setting and will support parents to understand the child's needs in order to enhance their development at home.