



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, our 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 Safeguard and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Procedures

- We allocate a key person before the child starts.
- 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 parent to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
- 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.
- A 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.
- The key person encourages positive relationships between children in her/his key group.

- We provide a buddy key person, 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

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information about the setting. For example, via our website, Prospectus and policies. Parents/carer are given opportunities to visit the setting with their children, this includes being shown around the setting, talking to the manager/s, observing staff work with children and some of the activities and experiences children have access to.
- We provide further opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the setting, to support settling-in.
- A Key person to each child and his/her family before she/he starts to attend; the key person welcomes and looks after the child and his/her parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.
- Parents complete and 'Enrolment' form and the Key Person completes an 'All about me' form with the parent, which ask for key information about the child and their family. For example, languages they speak at home, the child's current stage of development and interests to support the key person in planning for when the child's starts.
- When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with his/her parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the setting.
- We judge a child to be settled when they have formed a relationship with their key person; for example, the child looks for the key person when he/she arrives, goes to them for comfort, and seems pleased to be with them. The child is also familiar with where things are and is pleased to see other children and participate in activities.
- When parents leave, if they judge it appropriate, they say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when.
- We recognise that some children will settle more readily than others but that some children who appear to settle rapidly are not ready to be left.
- We do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle any quicker. We believe that a child's distress will prevent them from learning and gaining the best from the setting.
- We reserve the right not to accept a child into the setting without a parent or carer if the child finds it too distressing to be left. This is especially the case with very young children.
- Within the first four to six weeks of starting we discuss and work with the child's parents to start to create their child's record of achievement.

Supporting children's care, learning and development

- For younger children (2yr olds) or those with additional needs, such as SEN, English as a second language, the key person completes daily contact sheets that are shared with parents. The form provides an opportunity for parents to include their own comments and return the form to school the next time the child attends. Older children may have daily contact sheets if the parent/carer so wishes.
- The key person carries out regular observations and assessments on the child to support their care and development need and maintains regular communication with parents. Parents are encouraged to share information about their child's development at home with the key person.
- The key person carries out termly progress checks on their key children which are shared with parents. They also complete a check at age two in accordance with any local procedures that are in place and referring to the guidance A Know How Guide: The EYFS progress check at age two. 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 checks, the key person will note areas where the child is progressing well and identify areas where progress is less than expected.
- The progress checks 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.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of

NWPS

Held on

May 2024

Date to be reviewed

Signed on behalf of the provider

Name of signatory

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)

Chair