

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Key Person

Each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents.

4.1 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 is aware of and 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 us. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with our setting. We aim to make our 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 child must have a key person. These procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children.

Procedures

- We aim to allocate a key person before the child starts (following first visit).
- The key person is responsible for:
 - Helping the child settle into our setting, by offering continuity of support.
 - Offering unconditional regard for the child and being non-judgemental.
 - Letting parents know that they are their child's first and most important teacher and that they can help to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning by sharing information about their child.
 - Acting as the key contact for the parents.
 - 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.
 - Having links with other carers involved with the child and co-ordinating the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.
 - Liaising with the setting SENCO (Nikki Warner) where necessary and understanding the need to seek parental permission and keep them fully informed of and involved in any individually tailored programmes.
 - Liaising with other professionals and outside agencies if necessary.

Settling-in

- During the half-term before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents/ carers to visit the setting.
- The key person welcomes and looks after the child at their first session and during the settling-in process.
- We may offer a home visit by the person who will be the child's key person to ensure all relevant information about the child can be made known and a relationship with the keyworker can develop in familiar surroundings.
- We use pre-start visits to explain and complete, with his/her parents, the child's registration records.
- 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 welcome parents, carers or close relatives to stay for most of the session during the first week, gradually taking time away from their child; increasing this time as and when the child is able to cope.
- Younger children may take longer to settle in, as may children who have not previously spent time away from home. Children who have had a period of absence may also need their parent to be on hand to re-settle them.
- 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, we ask them to 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 and we may insist that the parent stays for several sessions (see above) and then gradually builds up time away so the child develops a good understanding and feels safe and secure knowing and trusting that their parent will go and come back.
- 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 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 begin to create their child's record of achievement. We complete an assessment of the child's developmental stage and a 2 year progress check (see below) if appropriate.

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 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 check, the key person and the setting manager / SENCO 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 us 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 by _____ *(name of provider)*

On _____ *(date)*

Date to be reviewed _____ *(date)*

Signed on behalf of the provider _____

Name of signatory _____

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

Other useful Pre-School Learning Alliance publications

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage; with non statutory supporting documentation.(Pre- school learning alliance 2017)
- Being a key person in an Early Years setting. (Pre-School learning alliance 2015)
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: With supporting documentation (2014)