

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 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.
- The key person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into the setting.
- The key person offers unconditional regard for the child and is non-judgemental
- The key person works with the parents to plan and deliver 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.
- The key person is responsible for development records and 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, spending time with them as a group each day.
- We provide a back-up key person (significant other) 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. These include written information including a list of our policies and procedures, the daily routine and general consent forms.
- Before the child starts the setting we arrange some settling in sessions to support the child's transition from home to nursery.
- We allocate 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.
- We use the settling in sessions at which the child attends to explain and complete, with his/ her parents the registration records.
- We explain the process of settling in with his/her parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child settle into the setting.
- We have an expectation that the parent, carer or close relative, will stay for the first session gradually taking time away from their child, increasing this as and when the child is able to cope.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

The progress check at age two

- The key person carries out the 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 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 parents.
- 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.