

# The Role of the Key Person and Settling-In

## Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Key Person

**Each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to 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.**

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

As we have a strong team of practitioners, each child is allocated a key person. This benefits the child and family in many ways.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in our 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. By sharing with and gathering information from parents relating to individual children, staff will be able to develop a full and accurate picture of each child's level of skill, knowledge and understanding, and their interests. This will enable staff to closely match provision to each child's individual needs. 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 offer 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.

## EYFS key themes and commitments

The Themes and Principles describe the features of our practice on which the Early Years Foundation Stage is based. They emphasise that the child is of first importance and that all relationships, experiences and the environment together influence how the child will develop, plan and learn.

[http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2011/10/EYFS\\_Principles1.pdf](http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2011/10/EYFS_Principles1.pdf)

This policy is linked to the following Themes and Principles.

**A Unique Child – 1.2 Inclusive practice, 1.3 Keeping safe, 1.4 Health and well-being**

**Positive Relationships – 2.2 Parents as parents, 2.3 Supporting learning, 2.4 Key person**

**Enabling Environments – 3.1 Observation, assessment and planning, 3.2 Supporting every child, The learning environment, 3.4 The wider context**

**Learning and Development - 4.1 Play and exploration. 4.2 Active learning, 4.3 Creativity and critical thinking, 4.4 Personal, social and emotional development**

## Our aims

- To work closely with parents/carers.
- To support children in the move from home, family and familiar people, into the new community of the pre-school.
- To help the children make strong attachments to their key persons, enabling them to feel secure and confident in our pre-school.
- To work together with the parents/carers and children to overcome any difficulties that might arise.
- To develop secure trusting relationships and respond to a child's individual needs – each child's and family's individual needs.
- To share the child's development with regular observations and reports via their 'Tapestry Learning Journey'.

## Procedures

- We offer at least two induction sessions for each child. Parents can fill in the 'All About Me' booklet with their main key person from the second session. This gives the child, parents and key person time to get to know each other. The key person is responsible for explaining the Early Years Foundation Stage, our roles and responsibilities, and our work with other professionals.

- We allocate key persons (main & secondary) before the child starts. The main key person is responsible for welcoming the family and settling the child into our setting.
- The key persons offer unconditional regard for the child and are non-judgemental.
- The key persons encourage positive relationships between children in their key group, spending time with them as a group each day.
- We provide a secondary key person so the child and the parents/carers have a key contact in the absence of the child's main key person.
- We promote the role of the key person as the child's primary carers in our setting, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.
- **If we feel that a child demonstrates a stronger bond with another member of staff other than their assigned key person we may decide to change their main key worker. We will only do this in consultation with parents/carers.**

### Relationships with parents/carers

- Key persons should develop a good relationship with parents/carers, ensuring that the child is cared for appropriately at pre-school and accommodating their individual needs within the daily routine.
- The key person needs to develop a two way flow of information between themselves and the parent/carer to help them become aware of any significant aspects of family life that maybe important to the child.
- The key person has responsibility for sharing their key children's development profiles with parents/carers and other professionals as required, in cases of children with additional needs or identified children in need they will be called upon to attend reviews and core group meetings with the support of the Team Leader.

### Records

- The key person is responsible for observational records of their key children, using these to inform next steps, individualised planning, IEP's and completing development profiles for each of their key children.
- Where a child is supported by another member of staff who is not their key person e.g. SEN support record keeping then becomes a joint responsibility.

### Welfare and Safeguarding

- Key persons are responsible for the welfare of the children in their care monitoring patterns of absence, injury and development referring them on where necessary.

### Transition

- The key person plays an integral role in the transition, aiding this by introducing the children and their parents/carers to their new key person and helping them to become familiar with their new environment.
- It is the responsibility of the key person to pass on records during transition and to ensure that these records are all up to date.
- In the case of a staff members absence it is the responsibility of a secondary key person to cover the role of the primary key person.

### Team Leader's Responsibilities

- To arrange induction mornings and parents evenings.
- Allocate a main and secondary key person for each child.
- Ensure children's physical needs are met sensitively by their key persons, or another significant person, to create continuity of care.
- Provide opportunities for staff to give regular feedback and support them in their roles as key persons, ensuring that all developmental needs are met.
- Monitor staff observations skills to ensure they are planning effectively to extend children's learning and development.
- Review policy and practice with the staff and administration manager in group and staff meetings.
- Collate transition/leavers reports.
- Attend transition meetings with reception teachers prior to children attending school.

## **Settling-in**

We want children to feel safe and happy in the absence of their parents/carers, to recognise other adults as a source of authority and to share with their parents/carers the new learning experiences they have enjoyed at our pre-school.

We believe children cannot play or learn if they are anxious or unhappy. Our settling in procedures aim to support parents/carers in helping their children to feel comfortable in our preschool, to benefit from the opportunities it has to offer and to feel that their parents/carers will return to collect them at the end of the session.

- Before a child starts to attend the pre-school, we use a variety of ways to provide their parents/carers with information. These include written information (including our website address for parents to view our prospectus and policies), displays about activities available within the setting, open days and individual meetings with parents/carers.
- During the half-term before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and their parents/carers to visit the pre-school.
- We allocate a main & secondary key person to each child and their family before they start to attend; the main key person welcomes and looks after the child and parents/carers at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.
- We use pre-start visits and the first session at which a child attends to discuss with parents/carers any questions or concerns they may have about their child starting with us.
- When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with their parents/carers and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into our pre-school. Children are welcome to bring comforters along from home.
- We make clear to families from the beginning that they will be supported in the pre-school for as long as it takes to settle their child. Each child's settling in period is different, and we will happily work with parents/carers to find the best way for their child to settle in.
- 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 persons; for example the child looks for the key person when they arrive, 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/carers leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child, and to tell them they will be coming back. We also advise them to tell the child their plans for the day whilst the child is in preschool.
- 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 our pre-school.
- 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.
- We offer a flexible settling in period, should your child have difficulties settling in.

## **The progress check at age two**

- The child's key person will carry out the progress check at age two in accordance with our local procedures, referring to the guidance *A know how Guide: The EYFS progress check at age two*.
- This progress check aims to review the child's development and ensures that parents/carers 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 us the pre-school to address any developmental concerns (including working with other professionals where appropriate) as agreed with the parent/carers.
- The child's key person will plan activities to meet the needs within the setting and support parents/carers to understand the child's needs in order to enhance their development at home.