

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, 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 our staff. 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 allocate a key person before the child starts.
- The key person is responsible for:
 - Providing an induction for the family and for settling the child into our setting.
 - Offering unconditional regard for the child and being non-judgemental.
 - Working with the parents to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
 - 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

- All key people at the setting will be experienced and qualified, where possible. New and/or unqualified team members will be mentor-linked.
- The key person will greet their new key children and families on their first settling-in visit. The key person will spend time interacting with the child, as well as talking to the parents/carers.
- The key person will discuss the routine of the day with the parents/carers and gather as much information about the child and their family as possible.
- The key person will complete an initial profile, 'all about me', on the child with the parents/carers. The key person will then complete an assessment tracking document three times per year, ensuring that the child is developing as expected for their chronological age, and putting a graduated approach in place if additional support is required.
- The key person will talk to the parents/carers about their role as a key person and liaise with them about the children's learning and forms of assessment the key person carries out on their child.
- At the preschool we recognise that each parent/carer is their child's main caregiver and educator so we believe that working in partnership with parents/carers is paramount for us to meet the needs of each child.
- Effective communication will take place between the key person and the parents/carers at all times to ensure that information is passed between each other.
- The key person will take the lead role in ensuring all your child's needs are met during their time at preschool.
- 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 adults and children.

The role of the key person (linked to job description)

- To ensure that all key children and families settle into the preschool through a smooth transition.
- To welcome children into the preschool and settle the children into the session.
- To form a good relationship with the child and their family to gather as much information as possible.
- To take the lead role in ensuring all the needs of each key child are met during their time at preschool.
- To observe key children and record details in their personal 'learning journey'.
- To plan activities to support and enhance the children's learning and development.
- To use a range of observations, photographs, examples of children's work and information from parents to compile a 'learning journey' for each child.

- To keep each key child's learning journey up-to-date.
- To complete individual tracking assessment on each key child.
- To ensure that the Childcare Managers are kept informed on all issues regarding key children and their family, and other staff members are aware of any issues that they need to know.
- To maintain a constant two-way flow of information between the key person and the child's parents/carers.
- To be available to discuss any concerns that a parent/carer may have.
- To meet with parents/carers on a regular basis to share information about the learning and development of their child.
- To liaise with outside agencies when involved with their key child.
- To liaise with the child's key person from any other setting which he/she may attend.
- The key person will liaise with the child's buddy key person to share information in the key person's absence.
- To liaise with other settings to promote a smooth transition for the child into a new environment.

Settling-in

- Before a child starts to attend our setting, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our Information for Parents pamphlet and Curriculum/Learning Policy, together with any other policies on request), displays about activities available within the setting and individual meetings with parents.
- During the half-term before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the setting.
- 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 pre-start visits and the first session at which a child attends 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 have an expectation that the parent, carer or close relative, will be available/on hand during the settling-in period, if appropriate. This may mean shortening the child's sessions.

- Younger children will take longer to settle in, as will 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. We expect that the parent will honour the commitment to be available for at least the first week, or possibly longer, until their child can stay happily without them.
- 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 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 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 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).
- If necessary, an Integrated Review at Two meeting will be held jointly with the child's parents, keyperson, SENCo and Health Visitor.
- 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	ARPS&K	<i>(name of provider)</i>
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On	<u>28/09/2016</u>	<i>(date)</i>
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Date to be reviewed	<u>June 2025</u>	<i>(date)</i>
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Signed on behalf of the provider

Name of signatory

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

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