

2.2 The role of the key person & Settling-in

Policy

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 our settings.

Procedures

The Key Person

- We allocate a key person before the child starts. However, this allocated person may change during the child's settling period if the child forms a stronger bond with another member of staff.
- The key person is responsible for:
 - Providing an induction for the family and going through the registration details step-by-step to ensure each section is completed correctly.
 - Organising settling in sessions for the child and parent.
 - 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.
 - Encouraging positive relationships between children in their key group, spending time with them as a group each day.
 - Providing a back-up 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.
- Each classroom has a visible notice board for parents/ guardians to view and contribute to. The notice board should have the following information:
 - Name and photograph of classroom supervisor and other practitioners.
 - Level and name of qualification(s)
 - Classroom/ group planning (monthly)
 - Daily routine
 - Contact information (email address, telephone number)
 - Safeguarding flowchart
- Younger children may 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 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 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 and additional visits can be provided.
- 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 compile their completing a baseline assessment.
- Within the first term parents are welcomed into the setting for a parent meeting. However, these can be done more frequently if the parent wishes it.
- We do not permit toys being brought in from home. Although we understand a child may need an object of comfort during their settling period, which can be slowly weaned away from them.

Assessments

- The key person carries out assessments whilst a child is registered in our care.
- A progress check is carried out at age two in accordance with any local procedures that are in place and refer to the supporting guidance to the EYFS *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 the setting to address any developmental concerns (including working with other professionals where appropriate) as agreed with the parent(s).
- The key person plans 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.
- We ask the parent to contribute towards a child's learning journey.
- Assessments are shared via NIAB with parents/carers who are encouraged to input their own knowledge into the assessment to ensure it has a full and rounded view of the child.

Settling-in a child

- When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in, daily routine with their 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 stay for most of the session during the first visit(s). We recommend parents gradually take time away from their child, increasing this as and when the child and/or parent is able to cope minimising any anxiety caused.