



## **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 Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. *3.27. 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 (in accordance with paragraph 1.10), to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents.*

### **Procedures**

- We allocate a key person before the child starts based on information gathered during All About Me meeting and sessions child is due to attend.
- The key person is responsible for settling the child into our setting along with the Manager.
- The key person offers unconditional regard for the child and is non-judgemental.
- The key person works with the parent to plan and deliver a 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 along with the Manager co-ordinates the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.

- A key person is responsible for 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.
- We promote the role of the key person as the child's primary carer in our setting. The key person encourages positive relationships between children in the setting, enabling their key child to develop relationships with their peers and other adults in the setting.

### **Settling-in**

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we use a variety of ways to provide their parents with information. These include written information (including our prospectus and policies via the website), displays about activities available within the setting, information days and evenings and individual meetings with parents.
- During the half-term before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and their parents to visit the setting for a stay and play session where we also complete an all about me discussion and record this information for future reference.
- We allocate a key person to each child and their family before they start attending the preschool; the key person welcomes and looks after the child and their parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.
- When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with their parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the setting.
- We offer parents and carers the opportunity to stay to help settle their child within their first weeks of preschool.
- Younger children may take longer to settle in, as may children who have not previously spent time away from home and their parents. Children who have had a period of absence may also need their parent to be on hand to re-settle them when they return.
- 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, some children prefer to wave at the window.
- We do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle any quicker. We believe that a child's distress may prevent them from learning and gaining the best from being in 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.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of ..... (name of setting)

Held on ..... (date)

Date to be reviewed ..... date

Signed by .....

Name of Signatory .....

Role of Signatory (ie manager) .....