

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 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.

Procedures

- We allocate a key person before the child starts.
- The key person is responsible for settling the child into our setting.
- 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 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.
- The key person encourages positive relationships between children in their key group, **spending time with them as a group during the week.**

- We provide 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.

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), displays about activities available within the setting, an open day 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 and attend a taster session together.
- We allocate a key person to each child and their family before they start to attend; the key person welcomes and looks after the child and their 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 check all details on the child's registration forms with his/her parents.
- 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.
- 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 will support the child and parent in whichever way we can to settle the child as quickly and smoothly as possible.

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.

- review a child's development in the three prime areas of the EYFS: Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development and Communication and Language
- The progress check aims to review the child's development and ensures that parents have a clear picture of the child's development.
- Enable the key person to understand the child's needs and plan activities to meet them in the setting;
- enable parents to understand the child's needs and, with support from practitioners, enhance development at home;
- Note areas where a child is progressing well and identify any areas where progress is less than expected; and
- Describe actions the provider intends to take to address any developmental concerns (including working with other professionals where appropriate).

Who should be involved in the check?

The person who knows the child best should complete the check; this will normally be the key person. It is important that other practitioners, parents and carers give their views and, where relevant, other professionals working with the child. Where a child attends more than one setting, the views of all practitioners need to be taken into account and a decision made as to which setting will take the lead.

Other useful Pre-School Learning Alliance publications

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2017) with supporting documentation.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Witchford Rackham Pre-school

Held on _____

Date to be reviewed _____

Signed on behalf of the
Management Committee _____

Name of signatory _____

Role of signatory _____