

## Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Key Person

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, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents



### 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. We are committed to the key person approach which benefits the child, the parents, the staff and the setting. It encourages secure relationships which support children to thrive, give parents confidence and make the setting a happy 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 manager and assistant manager hold a presentation for all new starter parents/carers to attend, providing an induction for the family and giving the parents/carers information on settling in their child into our setting. All our policies and procedures are explained at this presentation, with particular focus on safeguarding and our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.
- All relevant forms are handed out to new starter parents and returned before their child starts at our setting.
- The key person is responsible for:
  - 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.
- 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.

### *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 newsletters and displays about activities available within the setting, information days and evenings.
- During the half-term before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the setting at play mornings.
- 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.
- Each family receive a new starter booklet that includes a story/photographs about a child's first visit to our setting and a questions/answer section.
- 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 leave their child as soon as possible to encourage bonding between the key person and child. Although will welcome parents/carers to stay with their child if their child needs them to during the first week, gradually taking time away from their child; increasing this time as and when the child is able to cope.
- 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, if a child is showing signs that they need their parent/carer to stay with them, we ask the parent/carer to leave their child for at least a few minutes during a session, returning and staying to play for the remainder of the session. We will increase the amount of time the parent/carer leaves their child so they gradually get used to being left. We feel it is important that the parent/carer does not take their child home immediately on their return during a session, as we do not want the child to associate crying/distress with going home.
- 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.

#### *The progress check at age three and a quarter*

- The key person carries out the progress check at age three and a quarter in accordance with any local procedures that are in place.
- 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).
- 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.

#### **Wraparound care**

The above policy also applies to those who attend any of the wraparound sessions provided by Pippin Pre-School.

#### **Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications**

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: With non-statutory supporting documentation (2014)
- Being a Key Person in an Early Years Setting (2015)
- Creating a Learning Environment in the Home (2015)



# Pre-School