

The role of the key person and settling-in

Policy statement

At The Play Cabin, 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 preschool. It encourages secure relationships, which support children to thrive, give parents confidence and make the setting a happy place to attend or work in. 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 when the child starts.
- The key person is responsible for:
 - Providing an induction for the family and for settling the child into the preschool.
 - Completing relevant forms with parents.
 - 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 her/his key group, spending time with them as a group each day.
- We promote the role of the key person as the child's primary carer in our preschool, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other adults and children.

Settling-in

- Before a child starts to attend our preschool, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (welcome booklet, website, email updates, policies and procedures), displays about activities available within the setting and pre-start 'stay and play' visits.
- 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 the child's registration records 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 preschool.
- We expect that the parent, carer or close relative, will stay for most of the session during the first week, gradually taking time away from their child; increasing this time until their child is settled.
- 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 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 stay 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 four to 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).
- 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.