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Key Person

The role of the Key Person and settling-in

We believe that children settle best when they have a key person to relate to, who knows them and their parent well, and who can meet their individual needs. Research shows that a key person approach benefits the child, the parents and the staff and the setting by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents have confidence, the staff are committed and the setting is a happy and dedicated 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 is assigned a key person.

- A key person is allocated prior to the child starting.
- The key person is responsible for the induction of the child and their family.
- The key person offers unconditional regard for the child and is non-judgmental.
- The key person acts as the key contact for the parents, and has links with other carers involved with the child such as a child-minder.
- The key person is responsible for developmental records and for sharing information on a regular basis with the child's parents.
- The key person encourages positive relationships between the children in their key group.

Settling-in

- Parents with/or without the child visit the Nursery for a show-around.
- Before a child starts to attend the setting we provide written information about the setting to the parents (e.g. contract, starter pack, policies and procedures).
- A key person is allocated prior to the child starting and they support the child and his/her family in a settling-in programme. (I've just re-ordered these three statements slightly)
- Parents complete an 'All about me' outlining some clear information about the child and how to best support them in the setting as well as contact information etc.
- The first stage of settling-in involves the parent staying for the whole session, as a stay and play with the child and parent in the child's future room with their key person. If the child is playing happily parents may move back away from their child giving them the chance to build confidence and play independently and with peers/key person. Towards the end of the stay and play if the child and parent feel comfortable parents may leave the room before entering again to outline to their child that they may leave but they will always come back again.
- This first stay and play should last at least for one hour. This can be repeated as many times as is needed for the child to become used to the setting and feel confident in their room.
- The next stage of settling-in involves the parents leaving for a short period of time, one or two hours. The parents should firstly start the session as with the stay and play, moving back from the child as they become more confident. When the time comes for parents to leave they should say goodbye confidently to their child, clearly stating they will be back soon. Children need to build trust with the key person and the setting and therefore they should be clearly told their parent is leaving and then coming back shortly.
- We expect parents to follow our settling-in procedure as it is very important in ensuring children can be properly settled and learn and develop in the setting as quickly as possible.

The progress check at age two

The key person carries out the progress check between their second and third birthday.

- The progress checks aims to review the child's development and ensures that parents have a clear picture of their child's development.
- The key person will note areas where the child is progressing well and identify areas where progress needs more support.
- The progress check is shared between the key person and parents at a parent meeting. Next steps are then agreed upon between the two parties for both the home and Nursery environment.
- The key person will then plan activities within the room to support these next steps.

