



## **LITTLE ELLIES**

### **The Role of the Key Person & Settling-In Policy**

<b>Policy Creation &amp; Review</b>	
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### **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 wellbeing 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 "*Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*". The procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children who are in settings.

A key person has a special responsibility for working with a group of children, giving them the reassurance to feel safe and cared for, keeping development records on their key children and also building relationships with their parents. All key persons must strictly follow this policy to maintain the quality of care for all children and their parents, which is also the EYFS requirement.

#### **Procedures**

- We allocate a key person before the child starts, at times this may be after the child starts and makes a natural attachment with an adult in the room.
- The key person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into our setting.
- The key person offers unconditional care regarding the child and is non-judgemental.
- 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 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 setting, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.

#### **A key person should:**

- Help the child to settle in the nursery and to become familiar and to feel confident and safe within it.
- To work towards developing and sustaining a genuine bond with the child and their family and offer a settled, close trusting relationship.
- Meet the needs of each child in their care and respond sensitively to their feelings, ideas and behaviour.
- Share the profile of the child's development and progress during termly parents evenings and upon parents request.

- Track the child's on entry development and continuous learning using the online tracker and summative assessments, this data will be used to inform the child's progression and reports.
- Key persons should develop a good relationship with parents and carers, ensuring that the child is cared for appropriately at nursery and accommodating their individual needs within the daily routine.
- The key person needs to develop a two-way flow of information between themselves and the parent or carer to help them become aware of any significant aspects of family life that may be important to the child.
- The key person has responsibility for sharing the key children's development profiles with parents and other professionals as required, in case of children with additional needs or identifying children in need they will be called upon to attend review and core group meetings with the support of a senior manager.
- It is the duty of all staff in the nursery to work collaboratively and support the needs of each child and family.

#### **A key person should understand:**

- Babies in children become independent by being able to depend upon adults for reassurance and comfort.
- Children's independence is most obvious when they feel confident and self-assured, such as when they are in their own home with family, or with friends and familiar carers such as a key person.
- Babies and children are likely to be much less independent when they are in a new situation, such as a new group or when they feel unwell or anxious.

#### **Key person's responsibilities will involve:**

- Observing and keeping an accurate record of the child's development, following the guidelines for children's profiles.
- Liaising with parents and staff about the child's achievement and development.
- Providing comfort and reassurance to the child if they are distressed or unsure.
- Developing children's confidence and helping them feel secure in their environment especially if they are new to the nursery.
- Encouraging children to join in activities, becoming secure and independent.
- Explain to parents how the key person system operates and be available for consultation with parents if requested.
- In cases of children with additional needs the key person has responsibilities for sharing information to relevant agencies, the team and parents.
- Ensuring children's profiles are displayed in a suitable place for parents to access when required and being prepared to have discussions with the parents at any given time.
- To make sure that key documents are completed in a timely manner, 2 year old checks, settling in observations, weekly observations, transition forms and early years support plans.

#### **Key person responsibilities with supporting transition:**

The key person plays an integral role in the transition, aiding this by introducing the children and their parents or carers to their new key person and helping them to become familiar with their new environment.

- It is the responsibility of the key person to pass on records during transition and to ensure that these records are up-to-date.
- To involve the parents and carers in the transition period.  
To arrange visits when possible.
- Transition forms to be completed on the child and passed on to the relevant rooms or external settings.
- The child's contact details and any paper work such as busy books and reports should be transferred over with the child.

- To plan activities that promote successful transition into other settings.
- To support the child for school readiness working with the family.

### **The Manager's role and Processes to support the key person in their role:**

- Managers must provide opportunities for staff to give regular feedback and to support staff in their role as key person, ensuring that the key person is able to meet the developmental needs of the child.
- Managers to ensure and check that profiles and trackers are up to date to enable data to be monitored, reviewed and analysed to identify any gaps in children's learning.
- Managers to provide relevant continuous professional development CPD.
- Managers, staff and key person to share information on key children regularly to meet their individual needs.

### **Settling-in**

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our handbook), parent notice board / displays about activities available within the setting, information days and evenings and individual meetings with parents.
- Before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the setting (stay and play).
- We allocate a key person to each child and his/her family before she/he starts to attend. 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 with his/her parents the child's registration records.
- 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 stay for most of the session during the first week, gradually taking time away from their child, increasing this 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 parents 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 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.