

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 the parents.

4.1 The role of the key person and settling-in

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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 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 Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each setting must assign a key person for each child.

All children are allocated a key person and a child with additional needs will be allocated two key persons.

The procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children who are in the setting.

Procedures

- We allocate key person before a child starts. The first six weeks of a child starting will be a settling in period for the child and key person to build a relationship. However, this could be subject to change.
- As well as a key person, every child will have a 'key buddy'. This is so that if a child's key person is off then the child and family have a point of contact. It also makes it less stressful for the child as they should still feel secure and comfortable as they would have built a relationship with their key buddy as well.
- The key person is responsible for the induction of the family and 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 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 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 his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our prospectus and policies) and notifications about activities available within the setting.
- During the half-term before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the setting.
- 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 registrations 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 settle into the setting.
- We have an expectation that the parent, carer or close relative, will stay for most of the sessions during the first week, gradually taking time away from their child increasing this as and when the child is able to cope. We work closely with parents regarding the individual needs of their child; parents can stay until they feel confident to leave their child in our care. We recognise for some parents this may take time.
- 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 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.
- Within the first four to six weeks of starting we discuss and work with the child's parents to start 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 expected.
- The progress check will describe the actions that will be taken by the setting to address any developmental concerns (including working with other professionals where appropriate) as agreed with the parents.
- 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.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of **Stepping Stones play and learn group**

Held on **10th September 2013**

Signed on behalf of management committee: **C Nice**

Name of signatory: **Carol Nice**

Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner): **Chair**

Date checked and updated when required.	Date to be reviewed.	Checked by	Date checked and updated when required.	Date to be reviewed.	Checked by
September 2014	September 2015				
September 2015	September 2016				
October 2016	October 2017				
February 2020	February 2021	S Townsend			