



## **The role of the key person and settling in**

### **Policy statement**

Key person approach - Each child must be assigned a key Person.

- the key person should help the child to become familiar with the provision and to feel confident and safe within it, developing a genuine bond with the child (and the child's parents) and offering a settled, close relationship
- the key person should meet the needs of each child in his/her care and respond: sensitively to their feelings, ideas and behaviour and talk to parents to make sure that the child individual needs are met
- patterns of attendance should be a key factor in practitioner's planning
- settings must keep a daily record that shows the names of the children's key person.

The Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage describes the key person duties as:

*"The key person must help ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. The key person must seek to engage and support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. They should also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate".*

### **What is the key person?**

The key person is the named member of Staff assigned to an individual child to support his / her development and act as the key point of contact with that child's parent/carers.

This is the named member of staff with whom a child has more contact with than other adults.

The key person has special responsibilities for: tracking, monitoring, assessing and caring for a small number of children.

The key person should not: prevent any child building and forming relationships with other practitioners in the setting; the key person should not shadow their key children and prevent independence.

However, it is essential that all practitioners respond to and react to all the children in the setting, keeping them safe, secure and stimulated.

If the absence of the main key worker the co-worker will ensure that the child's needs are continued to be met.

### **What is the key person approach?**

*'Children learn to be strong and independent from the base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.'* Positive Relationships, EYFS

The key person system helps build positive relationships with the children and between parents/carer and staff. This is achieved by:

#### **Shared Care**

- an adult who is 'tuned in' to the child and family, and actively builds positive relationships and communications
- an adult who oversees and builds the shared record of a child's development and progress with staff, parents and other professionals.

#### **Secure Attachment**

- an adult who cares and responds sensitively to a child's feelings, ideas and behaviour
- an adult who is primarily responsible for personal care routines, e.g. nappy changing, toileting, sleep periods, shared eating times
- an adult who helps the child to become familiar with the setting and to feel confident and safe within it.

#### **Independence**

- a trusted and supportive adult who enables independence
- a supportive adult during new situations and times of anxiety or illness.

Further key person guidance in relation to all children with additional needs:

- ensure that all children in their care, irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender or ability, experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development
- ensure positive attitudes to diversity and difference for the children in their care
- remove or help to overcome barriers for children where these already exist
- communicate regularly with parent/carers to ensure that additional needs are being met appropriately within the setting
- ensure that records of development and progress, in relation to additional needs, are available within the setting to be shared with parents and support agencies as necessary
- understand and work within the guidance of the SEN Code of Practice
- understand and work within the guidance of the setting's policies which make reference to children with additional needs e.g. SEN, Medication, Safeguarding Children, Behaviour Management
- plan and attend appropriate training in order to be proactive in supporting additional needs
- be able to identify where there may be concerns regarding learning and development and to know procedures for further referral
- contribute to the writing, monitoring and review of Individual Education Plans
- have access to and take account of appropriate documentation in relation to children's additional needs (eg. Speech and Language Targets, Individual Education Plans, Physiotherapy Programme, Ethnic Minority Achievement Support Service Report)
- have regular shared communications with the named SENCo /manager and be available for meetings and SEN reviews as required
- ensure that, when there are increased staffing ratios related to a child's Statement of SEN or Inclusion funding, the child's needs are understood and supported by all practitioners in the setting
- plan for shared communications and transfer of all relevant documentation, in relation to additional needs, when transitioning to a new key person or setting