



4.1 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, and the setting by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents have confidence, our 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 our staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with our setting. We aim to make our 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.

Procedures

In accordance with the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the EYFS, at the Rocking Horse each child is allocated a Key Person during their settling in period and the parent will be informed of the name and role of the Key Person.

Which key person is assigned to a child depends on the age/stage of development of the child and therefore which group suits them best. 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 adults and children.

The role of the Key Person is as follows:

- Help the child become familiar with, and comfortable in, the setting.
- Offer a settled relationship for the child as well as unconditional and non-judgemental regard for him/her.
- Be observant of the child's well-being at all times at nursery.
- Build a relationship with their parents (eg. contact via the door rota system; the Unique Story sheets; answering any questions sent in from parents by telephone call, email or in person; 1-1 parent/key-person meetings and daily support as requested), and support parents in guiding their child's development at home.

- Ensure that their key child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs (observations; next steps planning etc).
- Help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate.
- Keep the child's Learning Journey Folder and paperwork up to date with developmental records, next steps planning, observations and Unique Story.
- Share information on a regular basis with the child's parents.
- Share information as appropriate with other carers involved with the child.
- Encouraging positive relationships between children in his/her key group, spending time with them as a group each day.

Each Key Person is assigned a second member of staff to support them with the above duties. The supporting staff member knows the key children as well as the Key Person and can support by taking observations, giving input to their Unique Stories and, as well as being the support on a daily basis they can 'step in' if the Key Person is absent.

Settling-in

- Before a child starts to attend our setting, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include showround dates at the nursery; written information (including our prospectus and policies); a taster session in the weeks before the child starts at nursery.
- 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 may offer a home visit by the person who will be the child's key person if this would benefit the child to ensure all relevant information about the child can be made known.
- Prior to their child starting, we give parents documents to complete and return which include a 'New Starter Questionnaire' and 'Registration Form' so that we can have key information about the child as well as tips from the parent on their likes/dislikes, comforters etc.
- 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.
- A parent, carer or close relative is welcomed in to the nursery for part of the session during the first week, gradually taking time away from their child; increasing this time as and when the child, and they, are comfortable.

- Each child is treated as an individual and some take longer than others to settle. Often younger children will take longer to settle in, as will children who have not previously spent time away from home, however this is not always the case. 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 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 support staff with the settling process 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 2-3 weeks of starting, in conjunction with the parents we write a child's 'Starting Points'. This begins the child's 'Record of Development' and is kept in the child's Learning Journey Folder.

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.

This policy was adopted by

Linda O'Brien

On

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