

General Welfare Requirement: Organisation

Providers must plan and organise their systems to ensure that every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience that is tailored to meet their individual needs.

Child care practice

4.4 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. 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 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.

The key person role is set out in the Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each setting must offer a key person for each child.

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

EYFS key themes and commitments

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
1.2 Inclusive practice 1.3 Keeping safe 1.4 Health and well-being	2.2 Parents as partners 2.4 Key person	3.2 Supporting every child 3.3 The learning environment	4.4 Personal, social and emotional development

Procedures

- We allocate a key person within the first couple of weeks.
- The key person offers unconditional regard for 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 keeping those records up-to-date, reflecting the full picture of the child in our setting.
- The key person encourages positive relationships between children in their key group, spending time with them as a group each day.
- We provide a back-up key person, who is usually one of the managers, so the child and the parents have a key contact in the absence of the child's key person.
- 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.

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), displays about activities available within the setting and individual meetings with parents.
- During the half-term before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the setting. Where any questions or concerns can be addressed before the child starts. We also provide the parents with a brochure with photos and information about St Luke's to take home and share with their child before they start.
- We may offer a home visit by the person who will be the child's key person, to ensure all relevant information about the child can be made known (usually only done with children with SEND).
- We use pre-start visits and the first session at which a child attends to give the parents the base line entry form.
- 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.
- 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 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.
- Within the first four to six weeks of starting we start to create their child's record of achievement as set out in the EYFS (**E**arly **Y**ears **F**oundation **S**tage).
- All children during their second year of age now require a 2 year old check to be carried out as set out in the New Revised EYFS 2012. We have as a staff team agreed that if a child turns 3 years of age within their first 6 weeks at our setting then we will not carry this check out. It is felt that a key person can take up to 6 weeks to really get to know a child and to do the check before this time would not be a fair reflection of that child.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of _____

name of setting

Held on _____

(date)

Date to be reviewed _____

(date)

Signed on behalf of the management _____

Name of signatory _____

Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner) _____

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Play is What I Do (2010)