

The Role of the Key Person and Settling In Policy

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 can meet their individual needs. We are committed to the key person approach which benefits the child, the parents, the staff and the setting. It encourages secure relationships which support children to thrive, give parents confidence and make the setting a happy 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 the 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 Pathways a welcoming place where children can 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 child must have a key person. The procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children.

Procedures

- We allocate a key person for each child.
- The key person is responsible for:
 - Providing an induction for the family and for settling the child into our setting.
 - Completing relevant forms with parents.
 - Explaining any policies or procedures that the parents may be unsure of.
 - Offering unconditional regard for the child and being non-judgemental.
 - Working with the parents to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
 - Acting as the key person for the parents.
 - 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 the setting and at home.
 - Having links with other carers involved with the child and co-ordinating the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.
 - Encouraging positive relationships between children in their key group, spending time with them as a group.

Settling-in

- Before a child starts to attend Pathways, we use a variety of ways to provide their parents with information. These include written information in our parent pack, including important policies, meetings with parents as we show them around the nursery and our website.
- Before the child starts we provide opportunities for the child and their parents to visit the nursery and arrange free inductions for them to attend.
- The key person will welcome and look after the child and their parents and the first settling-in induction.

- We use pre-start visits at which a child attends to explain and complete, with the parents, the child's developmental records (all about me).
- When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with their parents and jointly decided on the best way to help the child to settle into our setting.
- We introduce flexible admission procedures if possible to meet the needs of individual families and children.
- 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.
- Where inductions are more than one we will try and get inductions at different times of the day so the staff are able to dedicate time to the child and they experience the different routines of the day.
- Introduce flexible admission procedures if possible to meet the needs of individual families and children.
- Encourage parents where appropriate, to separate from their children for brief periods at first, gradually building up to longer absences.
- 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 they arrive, goes to them for comfort, and seems pleased to be with them. The child is familiar with where things are and is happy to see other children and participate in activities.
- 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 would always comfort a child that was distressed.
- Parents are able to ring or call in to see how their child is getting on.

Children are unable to play, or learn successfully if they are anxious and unhappy. Our settling in procedures aim to help parents help their children to feel comfortable at Pathways, to benefit from what it has to offer and to be confident to be left until the parent/carer returns at the end of the session.