

## ***Role of the Keyperson and Settling In Policy***

### Aim:

We believe that children settle best when they have a keyperson to relate to, who knows them and their parents well, and who can meet their individual needs. Research shows that a keyperson 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 and 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 wellbeing and their role as active partners with the setting.

We aim to make Playdays a welcoming place where children settle quickly and easily because consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of children and families.

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

The procedure models a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children who are in setting's.

### Method:

At Playdays a keyworker is allocated after the child starts in the setting. This allows for a more natural partnership to be created with who the child responds best to. Prior to a keyworker being allocated the Preschool Leader and their deputy are responsible for the child.

The Preschool Leader is responsible for the induction of the family into the setting and for settling the child in. Where home visits are carried out before a child starts, this is done by the Preschool Leader and the Deputy.

A keyperson should be assigned to a new child within 2 weeks of induction. It is their role to offer unconditional regard for the child and is non-judgmental. They will work with parents to plan and deliver a personalized plan for the child's well-being, care and learning. They will act as a key contact for the parents and has links with other carer's involved with the child e.g. childminder, and coordinates the sharing of information about the child's development with those carer's.

A keyperson is responsible for the implementation and upkeep of 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.

They will encourage positive relationships between children in their key group, spending time with them as a group each day.

A back-up keyworker (the Preschool Leader) so the child and the parents have a key contact in the absence of the child's keyperson.

We promote the role of the key person as the child's primary carer in the preschool, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.

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### Settling In

Before a child starts to attend the preschool, we use a variety of ways to provide their parents with information. These include written information, including policies and prospectus, displays about activities available within the setting, information days and evenings and individual meetings with parents.

During the half term prior to the child being enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child to visit with their parents. We may offer a home visit to ensure all relevant information about the child can be made known. We use this time to familiarize the parents and child with the setting and complete registration forms. We also explain the settling in process and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the setting.

We have an expectation that the parents, carer or close relative will stay for most of the session during the first week, gradually taking time away from their child, increasing this as and when the child is able to cope.

We know that 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 parents to be on hand to re-settle them.

We judge a child to be settled with they have formed a relationship with a member of staff (usually their keyperson) for example, the child looks for the staff member 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 pleased to see other children and participate in activities.

When parents leave, we ask that they say goodbye to their child and explain they will be coming back and when.

We recognize 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 honour the commitment to stay for at least the settling sessions, or possibly longer, until their child can stay happily without them.

We do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them settle any quicker. We believe that a child's distress will prevent them from learning and gaining the most of the time they are at preschool.

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.