



The role of the key person and settling-in

'Each child must be assigned a key person' (EYFS 2023)

Babies and young children need to form a secure attachment to key person when they join the setting to feel safe, happy, and eager to participate and learn.

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. 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 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.

The key person role is set out in the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk). Each child must have a key person. These procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children.

The key person role

- A key person builds an on-going relationship with the child and his/her parents and is committed to that child's well-being while in the setting.
- Every child that attends is allocated a key person before they begin settling in - it is not the responsibility of the child to choose their own key person.
- Where possible a 'back up' key person is also identified for each child so that they can fulfil the role in the absence of the main key person, for example, during annual leave or sickness.
- The key person conducts the progress check at age two for their key children.
- The role is fully explained to parents on induction and the name of the child's key person and 'back up' key person is recorded keypersons list and also held in the register.

- The key person is central to settling a child into the setting. The setting manager and key person explain the need for a settling in process and agree a plan with the parents.
- Shift patterns and staff absence can affect a child who is just settling in; where possible, settling in should be matched to when the key person is on duty.
- The number of children for each key person takes into account the individual needs of children and the capacity of the key person to manage their cohort; it is also influenced by part-time places and part time staff. The setting manager should aim for consistency i.e. matching part-time staff to part-time children; full-time children should not be divided between key persons during the week.

The key person spends time daily with his or her key group to ensure their well-being.

Parents

- Key persons are the first point of contact for parents with regard to matters concerning their child and any concerns parents may have, are addressed with the key person in the first instance.
- Key persons support parents in their role as the child's first and most enduring educators.
- The key person is responsible for the child's developmental records, completing the progress check at age two, and for sharing information about progress with the child's parents.

Learning and development

- The key person helps to ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. This is achieved through regular observation and assessment of children, using information gathered about their achievements, interests and learning styles to plan for each individual child's learning and development.
- If a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, the key person must discuss this with the setting manager or SENCO and the child's parents.

Responsibilities

The key person also maintains other responsibilities for key children including administering medication, and toileting.

Back-up key person

- The role of the back-up key person is to step in when the main key person is absent or unavailable to provide a stable and consistent care relationship for the child.
- The back-up key person is identified when the child starts but is not introduced to the child until an attachment is beginning to form with the key person.
- The back-up key person gradually forms a relationship with the child until the child is happy to be cared for by this person.
- The back-up key person shares information with parents in the key person's absence and makes notes in the child's records where appropriate.
- The back-up key person ensures information is shared with the key person.

Safeguarding children

- The key person has a responsibility towards their key children to report any concern about their development, welfare or child protection matter to the setting manager and to follow the procedures in this respect.
- Regular supervision with the setting manager provides further opportunities to discuss the progress and welfare of key children.
- The back-up key person has a duty likewise.

Settling-in

- During the half-term before a child is enrolled, we offer opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the setting, for pre-arranged settling in session prior to the child's start date to help the children to become familiar with the environment (this is not possible during the Covid-19 pandemic). The family will also be invited to the open morning at the beginning of the autumn term which gives the families a chance to meet their key person, other mums and dads and their children, there is also the opportunity to pick up their child's book bags and uniform. Information packs are given to the new family's and consists of their key person's name, settings telephone number, a list of the settings policies and procedure and where these can be found, it also contains information about the setting, the Early Years Foundation Stage and the settings routines. Information is also given about the change in collection procedures, and complaints procedures.
- 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.
- 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.
- We have an expectation that the parent, carer, or close relative, will stay for a short period at the beginning of each session during the first week, gradually taking time away from their child; increasing this time as and when the child is able to cope.
- 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 a positive goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when.
- 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 two weeks of starting we will complete a baseline assessment, showing us the child's starting points in all areas and we will begin to create the child's record of achievement.

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	Chipstead Pre-school	<i>(name of provider)</i>
On	2018	<i>(date)</i>
Date to be reviewed	12/19	<i>(date)</i>
	1/21	
	Amended 5 th January 2023	
	Amended 2-1-24	
Signed on behalf of the provider	_____	
Name of signatory	_____	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	_____	

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: With non-statutory supporting documentation (2014)
- Being a Key Person in an Early Years Setting (2015)

Creating a Learning

Further guidance

[Being a Key Person in an Early Years Setting](#) (Alliance 2015)

- Environment in the Home (2015)