

The role of the key person and settling in procedure

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement 2017

Key person

1.10. Each child must be assigned a key person⁷ (also a safeguarding and welfare requirement - see paragraph 3.27). Providers must inform parents and/or carers of the name of the key person, and explain their role, when a child starts attending a setting. The key person must help ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. The key person must seek to engage and support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. They should also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate.

3.27. Each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs (in accordance with paragraph 1.10), to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents.

The role of the key person and settling-in

Fennies allocates each child a key person prior to the child starting, who will gain trust with both child and parents. The key person will observe and interact with that child daily and support the child's daily care and needs.

"The Key Person approach recognises that an infant is distressed by differences and comforted by the familiar. A Key Worker, whose task is generally administrative and organisational, is not the same as a Key Person, who's role embodies 'an emotional relationship as well as an organisational strategy'" Elfer, Goldschmeid

Policy statement

Fennies Nurseries 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, the staff 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.

Fennies Nurseries want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the setting and to feel secure and comfortable with our staff. Fennies Nurseries also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with our setting. Fennies Nurseries 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.

What the Key Person role means

The following extract is taken from the guidance Effective practice: Key Person, 2008.

For the baby or young child

The key person is responsible for ensuring that, within the day-to-day demands of the setting, each child for whom they have special responsibility feels individual, cherished and thought about by someone in particular while they are away from home.

For parents and close carers at home

The key person is responsible for ensuring that they have the opportunity to build a personal relationship with individual children rather than all children as a group in the setting. The benefits are likely to be peace of mind for parents, and the possibility for them to build a partnership with professional staff who may share with them the pleasures and stresses of child rearing. It provides an opportunity for them to liaise with someone else who loves their baby or child too. Sometimes parents speak about having to choose between being part of their child's day, and knowing the details of how she or he spends time. The key person can make sure that parents do know about their child's day and do not have to miss out.

For the key person

The key person approach is intense, involving hard work and a big professional and emotional commitment. However, the benefits of being and becoming a key person are that you really matter to a child and to their family. You are likely to have a powerful impact on the child's well-being, their mental health, and their opportunities to think and learn. These powers and responsibilities will bring feelings of pleasure and pain, the joys and relief of partings and reunions and the satisfactions and anxieties of being the key person in a child's formative early years.

For the setting

The key person approach also has benefits for the early years setting as an organisation, making staff feel more satisfied and engaged, providing better care and learning for the children and their parents. Parents are likely to develop a more trusting confidence in the competencies, qualities and devotion of professional staff. There are indications that this approach reduces staff sickness and absence and develops involvement and positive attitudes to professional development within staff teams.

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. These 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 before the child starts.
- The key person is responsible for:
 - Providing an induction for the family and for settling the child into our setting.
 - 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 contact for the parents.
 - Greeting the child when he/ she arrives and saying goodbye at the end of the session/day; the key person shows he/she is pleased to see the child and does this in affectionate ways.
 - 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.
 - 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 her/his key group, spending time with them as a group each day.
 - Attending to personal care routines including feeding, changing nappies and clothes, supporting children at sleep time.

- Comfort the child in times of upset or distress.
- Fennies Nurseries promote the role of the key person as the child's primary carer in our settings, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other adults and children. However, this does not mean the key person has to be with the child all the time. One of the main roles of the key person is to support the child's social and emotional development to enable them to socialise with other adults and peers.

Settling-in

- The first few weeks when a child is settling into a nursery setting is a time of crucial importance to their later happiness in the setting. Both parents and early years practitioners can take steps to ensure that the transition goes as smoothly as possible.
- Open communication between parents and the nursery team is crucial, and our settling in procedure has been developed with this in mind. It allows time for the important sharing of information. Parents can give the key person information about the child and in turn the key person can talk to the parents about the child's experiences in the setting.
- Before a child starts to attend our setting, Fennies Nurseries use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our website, prospectus and policies), displays about activities available within the setting, information days, visits and individual meetings with parents.
- When a child starts to attend, Fennies Nurseries 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 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.
- 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.
- To ensure a gentle and smooth transition a flexible schedule of short settling in visits is agreed between the nursery and parents in the week prior to the child's enrolment. The parent is expected to stay on site with the child during these visits. For part time children, these visits may be planned across two weeks, on their allocated days.
- At the first visit, the key person and parents complete the child's registration records together.
- Once the child is enrolled, there is an option for parents to book half day sessions during the second week if they feel their child requires shorter days to begin with.
- Younger children may 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.
- Fennies Nurseries 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, Fennies Nurseries ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when.
- Fennies Nurseries 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. Fennies Nurseries expect that the parent will honour the commitment to stay for at least the first week, until their child can stay happily without them.
- Fennies Nurseries do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle any quicker. Fennies Nurseries believe that a child's distress will prevent them from learning and gaining the best from the setting.
- Fennies Nurseries 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 four to six weeks of starting, Fennies Nurseries discuss and work with the child's parents to begin to create their child's learning journey.

- During the first week of settling in visits, the key person and parents complete the 'All About Me' Starting Points document together.

Key person buddy system

Ideally, the key person should be there for the majority of the time that the child attends but when this is not possible we operate a buddy system, where by each child has a nominated buddy key person who also has a strong bond and sound knowledge of the child and their family. The buddy system is implemented in the absence of the child's key person.

In the unlikely event that both the key person and buddy are absent, the manager in charge will nominate another member of the nursery team who knows the child well to stand in for the key person, informing the parents and child as and when the changes occur.

With regards to bank / agency staff, only those staff who are qualified and on long term placements with the nursery may be utilised to as key persons, and only then if deemed competent in this area by the nursery management team.

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.

Internal use only

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date disseminated to staff	Date for review
<i>November 2018</i>			<i>November 2019</i>