

9.1 The role of the key person and settling in session policy

Policy statement

Our aim is to work in partnership with our parents/cares. 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 (2021). 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.
- Ensuring all relevant forms are completed.
- Explaining our policies and procedures to parents with particular focus on policies such as safeguarding and our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.
- 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.

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.

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 adults and children.

Settling-in

At Perins Pre-school, we aim to support parents and other carers to help their children settle quickly and easily by considering the individual needs and circumstances of every child and their families. Our aim is for children to feel safe, stimulated, and happy in the setting and to feel secure and comfortable with all staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's continued well-being and their role as active partners, with the child being able to benefit from what the pre-school has to offer.

All our staff know about the importance of building strong attachments with children. They are trained to recognise the different stages of attachment and use this knowledge to support children and families settling into the pre-school.

Our setting will work in partnership with parents to settle their child into the pre-school environment by:

- 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) and individual meetings with parents. When a child is signed up with us, we send a welcome pack out with all relevant information and forms.
- Two or three weeks before a child is due to start, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to engage in short visits of which the number will be planned to depend on the need of the child and or parent.
- Allocating a key person to each child and his/her family before he/she starts to attend. The key person welcomes and looks after the child, ensuring that their care is tailored to meet their individual needs. He/she offers a settled relationship for the child and builds a relationship with his/her parents during the settling in period and throughout his/her time at the pre-school, to ensure the family has a familiar contact person to assist with the settling in process.
- We use the first session at which a child attends to gather, with his/her parents any additional information to add to or update the child's registration records.
- We have an expectation that the parent, carer, or close relative, will stay with their child during their first settling in session which is an hour long. The duration length of the pre-start visits can be extended or shorten depending on the needs of the child.
- 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.
- 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. We expect that the parent will honour the pre-start visits commitment to continue the process possibly longer, until their child can stay happily without them.
- Within the first four to six weeks of starting, we discuss and work with the child's parents to begin to create their child's record of development.
- Assigning a buddy/back-up key person to each child in case the key person is not available. Parents will be made aware of this to support the settling process and attachment.
- Respecting the circumstances of all families, including those who are unable to stay for long periods of time in the pre-school and reassure them of their child's progress towards settling in
- Not taking a child on an outing from the setting until he/she is completely settled.

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 to enhance their development at home.

Transitions

We recognise that young children will experience transitions in their early years; some planned and unplanned. We are sensitive to the impact of such changes. Some examples of transitions that children may experience are:

- Starting school or a different early years provision.
- Attending another early years provision (shared care).
- Family breakdown.
- New siblings.
- Moving house .
- Death of a pet or family member.

Staff observe their key children and are sensitive to any changes in the child's behaviour and personality. Starting school is an important transition and some children may feel anxious about the move. We do all we can to facilitate a smooth transition and minimise potential stress. We build relationships with the local schools and invite new teachers into the setting. We provide the new school with a report about their child, their development, any needs that the school may need to meet, and any safeguarding concerns.

This policy was adopted by

Perins Pre-school

On

28th April 2023

Date to be reviewed

28th April 2024

Signed on behalf of the provider

Michelle Osman

Name of signatory

Michelle Osman

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)

Pre-School Manager