

The role of the key person and settling-in

Policy statement

We at Chudleigh Pre-school 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, staff are committed, and the pre-school is a happy and dedicated place to attend or work in.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy at Chudleigh Pre-school and to feel secure and comfortable with staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with us.

We aim to make the 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. We assign a key person for each child.

The procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children who are in settings.

Procedures

- We allocate a key person during the settling in period.
- The key person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into Chudleigh Pre-school. The key person offers unconditional regard for the child and is non-judgemental.
- The key person works with the parents to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
- The key person acts as the key contact for the parents and has links with other carers involved with the child, such as a childminder. The manager co-ordinates the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.

- The key person is responsible for 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 Chudleigh Pre-school and at home.
- The key person encourages positive relationships between children in preschool
- We provide a back-up key person (Buddy), so the child and the parents have a key contact in the absence of the child's key person.

Settling-in

- 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 welcome pack), displays about activities available within the setting and individual meetings with parents.
- During the week a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the setting for a stay and play session.
- We may offer a home visit, to ensure all relevant information about the child can be made known.
- Before 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 Chudleigh Pre-school.
- We have an expectation that the parent, 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.
- 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 goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when.
- We recognise that some children will settle more readily than others and will support the child and family within this settling in period.
- 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 four to six weeks of starting, we discuss and work with the child's parents to begin to create their child's learning journal.

The progress check at age two

- The Manager carries out the progress check at age two in accordance with any local procedures that are in place.
- 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 manager 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 the setting 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.