



The Role of the Key Person and Settling In **POLICY**

Circulate to all Directors, Senior Managers & Nursery
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4.1 The role of the key person (including settling in, 2 year progress check and transition to school)

Policy statement

At Hungry Caterpillars 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. Research shows that a key person approach benefits the child, the parent, 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 or 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 well-being and their role as active partners with the setting. 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. Each setting must 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 our settings.

Procedures

- We allocate a key person either before the child starts or during the settling in period.
- In some settings where a home visit is carried out before the child starts, this is done by the manager and the key person.
- 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, and 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 parent's to keep those records up-to-date, reflecting the full picture of the child in our setting and at home.

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- The key person encourages positive relationships between children in her/his key group, spending time with them as a group each day.
- We provide a back-up key person so the child and the parents have a key contact in the absence of the child's key person.
- 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 staff and children.

Settling-in

- Before a child starts to attend Hungry Caterpillars, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our prospectus and policies), displays about activities available within the setting, information days and evenings and individual meetings with parents.
- During the settling in period, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the setting.
- We allocate a key person to each child and his/her family before she/her to attend or during the first session and during the settling-in process.
- 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.
- We use pre-start visits and the first session at which a child attends to explain and complete, with his/her parents, the child's registration records.
- 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 most of the session during the first week, gradually taking time 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 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 to be left. We expect that the parent will honour the commitment to stay for at least the first week, or possibly longer, until their child can stay happily without them.
- 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.

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- 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 record of achievement.
- We remain flexible and if it would benefit the child to be allocated a different key person then with consultation with the parents the key person will be changed. An action plan will be put in place to ensure a smooth transition for the child.

The progress check at age two

- The keyperson 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 the setting to address any developmental concerns (including working with other professionals where appropriate) as agreed with the parents
- 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.

Transition to School

- We work in partnership with local schools and settings to ensure a smooth transition which promotes and supports the continued well-being and development of all children.
- The Key Person's role is to ensure all paperwork and trackers are up to date.
- The Key Person should make contact with the new school/teacher to arrange a handover of all paperwork.
- Our aim is to outreach to all local schools and settings which children are leaving to or coming from.
- We invite the children's new teacher/staff to visit the nursery whilst the children are still in attendance.
- For all children joining the nursery we may offer parents a home visit. For all Children in Need, Children on the children protection register and 2 year funder children joining the nursery a home visit is normal practice.
- We book visits with the new teacher/staff for children to visit the new setting with their Key Person and become familiar with the environment and staff.
- We request development records from settings when children move to our nursery.

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- Children who attend our nursery and a school setting will be primarily tracked by the school, however we will continue to observe the child and share information with the school. This will be done via a communication book which will pass between the nursery and school on a daily basis.
- We also seek information from local and national agencies to promote the well-being of children where necessary.