



The Role of the Keyworker & Settling-In Policy

Date reviewed: 18.09.2023

Policy statement

We believe that children settle best when they have a keyworker to relate to, who knows them and their parents well, and who can meet their individual needs. Research shows that a keyworker approach benefits the child, the parents, the staff, and the Pre-school by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents have confidence, our staff are committed, and the Pre-school is a happy and dedicated place to attend or to work in.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated, and happy in the Pre-school 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 the Pre-school. We aim to make the Pre-school 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 Keyworkers role is set out in the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each child must have a keyworker. These procedures set out a model for developing a keyworker approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children.

Procedures

- We allocate a keyworker to each child before they start to attend.
- The keyworker welcomes and looks after the child and their parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.
- The keyworker explains our policies and procedures to parents with focus on policies such as safeguarding and our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.
- Offering unconditional regard for the child and being non-judgemental.
- Acting as the key contact for the parents.
- The keyworker 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 the Pre-school 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.
- The keyworker encourages positive relationships between children in his/her key group, spending time with them as a group each day.
- We promote the role of the keyworker as the child's primary carer in the Pre-school, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.

Settling-In

- Before a child starts to attend the Pre-school, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our prospectus, procedures, and policies on Pre-school website) verbal communication with parents on their child's first day, and direction to our Facebook Page/Website to get a feel for the Pre-school.
- We provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to meet their keyworker before they are enrolled.
- We offer a home visit by the Practice Manager, Deputy Practice Manager or Key Person before the child starts to ensure that all relevant information about the child can be 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 the Pre-school.
- If we feel necessary, we welcome parents, carers, or close relatives to stay for most of the session during the first week, gradually taking time away from the child, increasing this time as and when the child can cope.
- 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 parents to be on hand to resettle them.

- We judge a child to be settled when they have formed a relationship with their keyworker; for example, the child looks for the keyworker 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 we explain to the child that their parent will be coming back to collect them and when.
- We recognise that some children will settle more readily than others, but some children who appear to settle rapidly are not ready to be left.
- 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 Pre-school.
- We reserve the right not to accept a child into the Pre-school without a parent or carer if the child finds it distressing to be left. This is especially the case with young children.

The progress check at age two

- The progress check at age two is completed on Tapestry.
- The key person is central to the progress check and must be the person completing it.
- We take guidance from their local authority as to when the progress check at age two is completed; if no such guidance is provided, the progress check is completed when the child is between 26 and 30 months old. The child should be attending the setting for at least 1 term before the check is completed.
- Once the timing of the child's progress check is confirmed, parents are invited to discuss their child's progress at a mutually convenient time.
- The setting must seek to engage both parents and make allowance for parents who do not live with their child to be involved.

Completing the progress check at age two

- On-going observational assessment informs the progress check and must be referred to.
- Children's contributions are included in the report. Staff must be 'tuned in' to the ways in which very young children, or those with speech or other developmental delays or disabilities, communicate.
- Where any concerns about a child's learning and development are raised these are discussed with the parents, the SENCO, and the Practice Manager.
- If concerns arise about a child's welfare, they must be addressed through Safeguarding procedures.
- The key person must be clear about the aims of the progress check as follows:
 - to review a child's development in the three prime areas of the EYFS
 - to ensure that parents have a clear picture of their child's development
 - to enable practitioners to understand the child's needs and, with support from practitioners, enhance development at home
 - note areas where a child is progressing well and identify any areas where progress is less than expected
 - describe actions the provider intends to take to address any developmental concerns (working with other professionals as appropriate)

Other useful Early Years Alliance publications

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: With non-statutory supporting documentation (2021)
 Being a Key Person in an Early Years Setting (2015)
 Creating a Learning Environment in the Home (2015)

This policy was reviewed by Hanslope Pre-school on 18th September 2023

Date to be reviewed 11th September 2024

Signed on behalf of Hanslope Pre-school

B. Mudaliar

By Brittany Mudaliar

Chairperson on

23rd September 2023