



## The Role of the Key Person and Settling In - Policy

## Little Owls Role of the Key Person and Settling in Policy

### Version Control Log

Date	Date agreed with Managers	Overview of changes
February 2019	February 2019	Review of policy in line with the Pre-School Alliance revised Policy

## Policy

At Little Owls we believe that children settle best when they have a key person to relate to, who knows them and their parents/carers well, and who can meet their individual needs. Research shows that a key person approach benefits the child, the parents/carers, the staff and the setting by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents/carers have confidence, our 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/carers 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. Each child must have a key person and 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. Where appropriate, we may carry out a home visit before the child starts. This would be undertaken by the Manager and the key person.
- 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/carers to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
  - Acting as the key contact for the parents/carers and has links with other carers involved with the child, such as a child-minder, and co-ordinates the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.
  - Developmental records and for sharing information on a regular basis with the child's parents/carers to keep those records up-to-date, reflecting the full picture of the child in our setting and at home.
  - 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.
  - Where required, we provide a back up key person so the child and the parents/carers have a key contact in the absence of the child's key person.

## Settling-in

- Before a child starts to attend our setting, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents/carers with information. These include written information (including our prospectus and policies), newsletters, individual meetings with parents/carers etc.
- During the half-term before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents/carers to visit the setting.
- The key person welcomes and looks after the child and his/her parents/carers at the child's 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/carers, the child's registration records.
- When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with his/her parents/carers 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 away from their child; increasing this time 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/carer 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 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/carers 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, but that some children who appear to settle rapidly are not ready to be left. We expect that the parent/carer 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.
- 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.

### **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/carers 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)/carer.
- The key person will plan activities to meet the child's needs within the setting and will support parents/carers to understand the child's needs in order to enhance their development at home.