**The role of the key person**

*‘Each child must be assigned a key person’* (EYFS 2021)

Young children need to form a secure attachment to a key person when they join the setting to feel safe, happy, and eager to participate and learn.

**The key person role**

* A key person builds an on-going relationship with the child and his/her parents and is committed to that child’s well-being while in the setting.
* Every child that attends is allocated a key person before they begin settling in - it is not the responsibility of the child to choose their own key person.
* Other staff may be used as a a ‘back up’ key person for each child so that they can fulfil the role in the absence of the main key person, for example, during annual leave or sickness.
* The key person conducts the progress check at age two for their key children.
* The role is fully explained to parents/carers on induction and the name of the child’s key person and ‘back up’ key person is recorded on the child’s registration form.
* The key person is central to settling a child into the setting. The setting manager and key person explain the need for a settling in process and agree a plan with the parents/carers.
* Shift patterns and staff absence can affect a child who is just settling in; where possible, settling in should be matched to when the key person is on duty.
* The number of children for each key person takes into account the individual needs of children and the capacity of the key person to manage their cohort; it is also influenced by part-time places and part time staff. The setting manager should aim for consistency i.e. matching part-time staff to part-time children; full-time children should not be divided between key persons during the week.
* Photographs of key persons and their key groups are displayed clearly.
* The key person spends informal time daily with his or her key group to ensure their well-being.

**Parents/carers**

* Key persons are the first point of contact for parents/carers with regard to matters concerning their child and any concerns parents/carers may have are addressed with the key person in the first instance.
* Key persons support parents/carers in their role as the child’s first and most enduring educators.
* The key person is responsible for the child’s developmental records, completing the progress check at age two, and for sharing information about progress with the child’s parents/carers.

**Learning and development**

* The key person helps to ensure that every child’s learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. This is achieved through regular observation and assessment of children, using information gathered about their achievements, interests and learning styles to plan for each individual child’s learning and development.
* If a child’s progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, the key person must discuss this with the setting manager or SENCO and the child’s parents/carers.

**Safeguarding children**

* The key person has a responsibility towards their key children to report any concern about their development, welfare or child protection matter to the setting manager and to follow the procedures in this respect.
* Regular supervision with the setting manager provides further opportunities to discuss the progress and welfare of key children.

**Key person Responsibility**

Children have a key person who keeps developmental observations and next step planning ideas on Famly (an online personal journal). A key person’s main responsibilities are:

* Close contact between parents/carers and staff are encouraged. They are informed about the key person system and a key person is selected taking all variables into account, e.g. child’s preference
* During a preliminary visit, key persons complete sharing information and build up a close partnership including ‘All about me’ booklet.
* An ECAT form is completed and shared with the practitioner
* An online personal journal is completed for each child. The key person consistently records observations on each area of the curriculum to support individual learning experiences and aid next step planning fulfilling the statutory requirements of the early learning goals and EYFS stages of development. Parents/carers are also encouraged to add to this.
* Evidence is collected by key persons and all staff continually in the form of written observations, photos and videos
* All records are confidential. Summaries are shared between parents/carers, key persons and other settings (permissions allowing)
* Be aware of the interests and preoccupations of each of the children in the group and plan experience for the child based on these interests
* Share with other practitioners the observations made of children in the group to support planning and assessment.
* Share any particular concerns about a child’s welfare, learning and development confidentially with the supervisor

**Keyperson Specification**

The important personal attributes of a key person are:

* A broad understanding of the role and a belief that it is important
* The ability to communicate well with a wide cross section of people
* An open and inclusive attitude, valuing difference and individuality
* A calm, confident manner that instils confidence
* A sensitive nature, able to empathise with the worries and concerns of others
* Being good organiser and time manager, able to find the time to talk to parents/carers and build up a relationship with them
* Being open to forming relationships with young children
* The ability to be friendly but still professional in approach and comfortable to ‘let go’ when it is time for a child to move on
* An enthusiasm for professional development and keenness to find out more about how to carry out the role successfully

**Further guidance**

[Being a Key Person in an Early Years Setting](https://portal.eyalliance.org.uk/Shop#!prod/c425e3b2-7364-ea11-a811-000d3a0bad7c/curr/GBP) (Alliance 2015)

Updated and implemented Autumn Term 2023 reviewed regularly and the procedure monitored and evaluated

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