

09 Childcare practice procedures

09.3 The role of the key person

'Each child must be assigned a key person' (EYFS 2021)

Children need to form a secure attachment to 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 - it is not the responsibility of the child to choose their own key person.
- Where possible a 'back up' key person is also identified 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 and the name of the child's key person is shared.
- The key person is central to settling a child into the setting.
- 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.

Parents

- Key persons are the first point of contact for parents with regard to matters concerning their child and any concerns parents may have are addressed with the key person in the first instance.
- Key persons support parents in their role as the child's first and most enduring educators.
- The key person is responsible for the child's developmental records and for sharing information about progress with the child's parents.

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. All staff contribute to all children's observations and provision.
- If a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, the key person must discuss this with the setting leader or SENCO and the child's parents.

Back-up key person

- The role of the back-up key person is to step in when the main key person is absent or unavailable to provide a stable and consistent care relationship for the child. Senior staff will take on this role, as required.

Safeguarding children

- All staff has a responsibility towards the 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 discussions with the setting leader provides further opportunities to discuss the progress and welfare of key children.