

# **The role of the key person and settling in**

## **Policy statement**

We at Happy Adventures Preschool and Forest School 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 parents, the staff and the setting by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents have confidence, staff are committed and the pre-school is a happy and dedicated place to attend or work in.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy at Happy Adventures Preschool 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 us.

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. We 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 settings.

## **Procedures**

- We allocate a key person after a child has been attending preschool for 6 weeks dependent upon the relationships the child has made with staff.
- The key person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into Happy Adventures Preschool. 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 parents to keep those records up-to-date, reflecting the full picture of the child in Happy Adventures Preschool and at home.
- 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, usually the supervisor 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 the setting, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our welcome pack and policies), displays about activities available within the setting, information days and individual meetings with parents.
- ✦ During the half-term before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child to visit the setting.
- ✦ 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 Happy Adventures Preschool.
- ✦ Younger children may take longer to settle in, as may children who have not previously spent time away from home. Children who have had a period of absence may also need a staggered entry back into preschool
- ✦ 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.
- ✦ When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when.
- ✦ 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 will always make arrangements with parents to collect their children earlier from a settling in session if the child becomes too distressed.
- ✦ 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.
- ✦ 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 parent(s).
- ✦ 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.
- ✦ Whilst undertaking a 2-year check, staff will invite parents into the setting to discuss their child's development.. **Due to COVID restriction this will now take place with a phone call until further notice**
- ✦ Under local guidance, parents that do not attend their child's 2-year review will have their details passed onto their health visitor.
- ✦ With parental consent, all 2-year reviews will be forwarded onto Locala.