



Settling in Policy and the Role of the Key Person

We believe that children settle best when they have a Key Person to relate to, who knows them and their parents/guardians well, and who can meet their individual needs. Research has shown that a Key Person approach benefits the child, the parents, the staff and the setting by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents/guardians have confidence, staff are committed and the setting is a happy and dedicated place to work and attend.

We want children to feel safe and stimulated and happy in the setting 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 the setting.

Parents/guardians will play a key part in the staff assessing their child's development and will be asked to share and celebrate their achievements and developmental milestones through a special 'Learning Journey', All About Me and a Profile shared by parents, staff and the child. The Key Person will also do a Progress Check between the ages of 2 years and 3 years old again parents are part of this process.

Forest Park Day Nursery and Preschool will be a welcoming place where children settle quickly and easily because consideration has been given to individual needs and circumstances of children and their families.

We offer each child a Key Person and a Buddy who supports the child when a member of staff is absent.

Procedure

- A Key Person will be allocated before the child starts but if when the child settles they 'prefer' to go to another member of staff then where possible they will then be the child's Key Person
- The Key Person is responsible for settling the child into our setting.
- The Key Person offers unconditional regard for the child and their family and is non judgemental.
- The Key Person works with the parents to plan and deliver activities that the child has an interest in and supports their well-being, care and learning.

- The Key Person is the key contact for the parent/guardian and has links with other carers for the child such as a childminder. They will share appropriate information about the child's development. They will support transitions to school.
- A Key Person is responsible for keeping developmental records and for sharing information on a regular basis with the child's parents/guardians to keep those records up to date. Children may do different things at home than they do in the setting, so we need to build a full picture.
- We promote the role of the Key Person as the child's primary carer in the setting and as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.
- A Key Person will change, feed and respond to a child's needs on a daily basis to establish a secure relationship for the child.

We recommend reading/researching: The Attachment Theory by John Bowlby

Settling-in

- Before a child starts at Forest Park Day Nursery and Pre-school we will give you a variety of information. This includes written information (including our welcome pack and policies in the reception), displays about children's learning, information evenings and individual meetings with parents/guardians.
- Before a child registers they can visit the setting with the parent/guardian and be shown round the setting. We recommend that an appointment is made to ensure a member of staff is available to conduct the show around but will accommodate an on the spot visit if possible.
- The Key Person will ensure the registration forms and permission forms are all signed and completed and information shared with any of the team if necessary e.g. allergy.
- We will arrange a series of settling in sessions, normally consisting of 3 depending on the child's age. Parents/guardians can stay for a while and gradually reduce the time they spend with the child.

- We appreciate that parents/guardians have different situations and staff will work with you to overcome any challenges and support your child the best way we can.
- Babies and youngsters can take longer to settle in, as will children who have not been away from home before. Children who have a period of absence may take time to settle again. Please work closely with your child's Key Person and acknowledge their experience in this field to support your child settling in. Parents can initially stay with their child a while until they feel happy they have settled and have formed a relationship with their Key Person. They become familiar with their surroundings and are pleased to see other children and staff.
- When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye and wave goodbye to their child and that they explain in simple terms they will be coming back. Staff use 'visual timetables' to support children with the routine of the day so that they can come to realise that after certain events, such as lunch or story time the parent/carer will be coming back, as they have no concept of time.
- All children are different and we will do all we can to support your child to settle in. They may cry for a while but if when you have gone they stop straight away or if they become too distressed we will **contact you** to put your mind at ease. We would not let a child continue to cry inconsolably but ask you return if possible to settle them. Because babies use their senses to investigate and feel secure, parents who have babies will be encouraged to bring in a **muslin or soft toy** that has been washed at home, or put their perfume on so that their baby has a familiar smell to feel safe and secure, or they may have a favourite teddy/toy they like to hold. **Photos of family and parents** can be displayed too as they would at home.
- Within four to six weeks of your child starting at Forest Park Day Nursery and Pre-school we will start to create your child's Learning Journey and record of achievement.