



## Early Years and Childcare



What does having a  
**Key Person**  
really mean for **your**  
**child** and **you**?





## What is a Key Person?

A Key Person is someone who helps your baby or child to become familiar with their early years setting and to feel confident and safe within it. They will develop a bond with your child and offer a settled, close relationship. This is important because when children feel happy and secure they are confident to explore and to try out new things.

Even when children are older, and can hold special people in mind for longer, there is still a need for them to have a Key Person to depend on, such as their teacher or a teaching assistant.



### **When will I find out who my child's Key Person is?**

During the settling-in period you will be introduced to your child's Key Person or during part of the transition arrangements when visiting your child's school.

### **Does my child have to have a Key Person?**

The Early Years Foundation Stage sets a framework for learning, development and care in all registered early years settings and schools, for children aged from birth to five. It also requires that, "Each child must be assigned a Key Person. In childminding settings, the childminder is the Key Person."

(The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2008). It describes the Key Person as "The named member of staff assigned to an individual child to support their development and act as the key point of contact with that child's parents."

### **How often will I get to talk to my child's Key Person?**

They should be available either at the beginning or the end of the day and share with you any observations of your child. This will give you an opportunity to ask questions or pass on relevant information. In school this may mean making an appointment.





### Comment from a Nursery Manager

*“The Key Person approach allows strong links to develop between parents, carers and the nursery.”*

**For your child, their Key Person is someone who they can trust and who will get to know them. They will:**

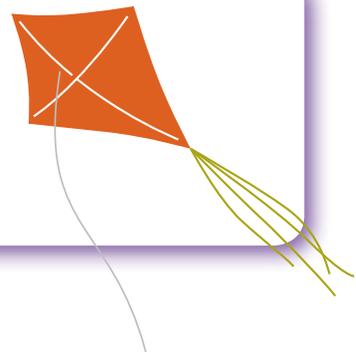
- offer comfort and reassurance
- show them affection and help them with daily routines
- make sure their needs are planned for and met, and that they are known within the group.

When they start school, a Key Person can help your child to feel welcome and show them where, for example, to hang their coat and where they will eat their dinner.

**A Key Person supports your child to have a sense of belonging and emotional well being. They ensure that your child is well cared for, healthy and has every opportunity to develop and learn.**

### Comment from an Early Years Practitioner

*“We feel that the relationship between staff and parents has grown and continuity of care has improved due to the Key Person approach.”*





## **A Key Person is the important link between home and the early years setting. They will:**

- share with you what your child has been doing during the day and hear what they can do at home
- identify where and when your child might need additional support
- help maintain familiar surroundings whilst offering challenge and support
- provide opportunities for your child to express their feelings and emotions, and to build healthy emotional attachments with adults and other children.

### **They will:**

- work alongside you, as a parent, listening, valuing and sharing your wishes
- tune into your child's changing needs and requirements
- respect the rights of your child
- encourage independence through a responsive environment
- offer individualised, flexible care
- advocate children's wishes, feelings and needs
- jointly support planning any additional support, if a child has more complex needs.

### **Comment from a Parent**

*“ I feel much happier knowing that my child has one special person who looks after them at nursery. I am able to talk to her about anything relating to my child and I feel that I am always supported by her.”*





## **Benefits of the Key Person Approach**

*“ It provided me with the reassurance that my child has bonded with a special person at the nursery, who understands her little ways and encourages learning and playtime away from home. ”*

**Fiona, Parent**

*“ I think the Key Person approach works well because you develop a bond with the child and a deeper understanding of the child’s skills. ”*

**Soraya, Practitioner**

*“ We have found that having a partnership with one member of staff, rather than several, often makes it easier for parents to develop peace of mind and trust within the nursery. ”*

**Setting Manager**

*“ We decided that from the moment a child starts we would appoint a Key Person and not wait for a bond to develop with someone in the settling-in period. In doing this we found that parents instantly felt more relaxed, children knew who they were going to be greeted by when they arrived on their visits, and staff could forward plan, prepare and provide for the child from the moment they arrived. ”*

**Grace, Nursery Manager**

*“ When parents and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on children’s learning and development! ”*

**The Early Years Foundation Stage  
Positive Relationships 2.2 Parents as Partners**

**Our thanks to the settings and parents who worked with us on the production of this leaflet.**

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