

Good Practice Guidelines: Key Person

7.01

“A key person has special responsibilities for working with a small number of children, giving them the reassurance to feel safe and cared for and building relationships with their parents.”

EYFS, DCSF 2007

The Unique Child

- The key person ensures each child is made to feel individual and important, and that their feelings and needs are being looked after by a specific person

Positive Relationships

The Key Person:

- Has special responsibility for working with a small number of children
- Builds positive relationships with children and the parent/carers
- Develops a genuine bond with children ensuring a settled, close relationship
- Helps children feel comfortable, confident and safe within the setting
- Supports children through transition periods within the setting and beyond
- Gets to know the parents/carers before the children join the setting or on entry
- Is the first point of contact but ensures parents/carers feel able to approach any adult within the setting
- Arranges ‘settling in’ meetings or ‘family group’ meetings within six weeks then every three months thereafter
- May communicate with parents/carers daily, in person or through diaries, etc
- Plans dedicated time to work with parents/carers

Enabling Environments

- The key person builds a trusting relationship with individual children and partnerships with parents/carers
- All practitioners are attentive, responsive and considerate
- Time is taken to develop the key person approach
- All practitioners regularly reflect on their practice
- Managers support practitioners by obtaining regular feedback

Learning and Development

The Key Person:

- Makes regular observations of the children and analyses the information gathered
- Contributes to observations made by colleagues
- Plans learning and teaching based on observations of interests and needs
- Meets the needs of each child by responding sensitively to feelings and behaviour
- Works to improve language skills, social skills, physical and intellectual abilities
- Records progress and shares findings with parents/carers and other professionals
- Leads or contributes to the writing of individual education plans
- Arranges a transition meeting when a child is transferring to another room or to a new key person at another setting



Leaders and managers

- Arrange a 'back-up' key person who is known to the parent /carer in case of absence
- Arrange appropriate non-contact time for the key person
- Regularly review policy and practice and ensure support and appraisal of the key persons

A few tips...

- The key person does not have to be with their key children all the time. Children need, and benefit from, interactions with other adults and children
- The key person approach does not mean that attachments with parents will be undermined; attachments at home and in the early years setting can support each other
- The key person approach does not mean that children are not allowed to make close relationships with other adults. Children often choose who they want to be attached to and these choices should be respected

Further information

We have provided shortcuts to these documents on the EYFS page of our Publications section at www.childrenscentres.org.uk

EYFS (page 15) DCSF 2007

<http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/eyfs/resources/downloads/practice-guidance.pdf>

EYFS Principles to Practice 2.3

http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/eyfs/resources/downloads/card2_3.pdf

EYFS Principles to Practice 2.4

http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/eyfs/resources/downloads/card2_4.pdf

P. Eifer Close Encounters: the task of remaining professional under the emotional pressures of nursery work, Nursery World January 2003

J. Lindon, Understanding Child Development - Linking Theory and Practice
Hodder Arnold 2005

For further information visit www.childrenscentres.org.uk
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