

Key Person Guidance in Relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Birth to Five Service has compiled this document which may be:

- Used as guidance on statutory requirements
- Used to inform and guide staff when planning for children's care and safety
- Used to inform and guide staff in 'Birth to Five Settings' on routines, communications, and, teaching and learning
- Used to ensure that the key person is an integral part of all practice in supporting children with additional needs
- Communicated to parents, carers and the wider community
- Used as a basis for policy writing and guidance
- Incorporated into job descriptions, as appropriate.

Statutory Guidance to which Providers must have Regard

Each child must be assigned a Key Person. The Key Person should help the baby or child to become familiar with the provision and to feel confident and safe within it, developing a genuine bond with the child (and the child's parents) and offering a settled, close relationship.

The Key Person should meet the needs of each child in his/her care and respond sensitively to their feelings, ideas and behaviour, talking to parents to make sure that the child is being cared for appropriately for each family.
(Statutory Framework for the EYFS p.37)

Patterns of attendance should be a key factor in practitioner's planning (Statutory Framework for the EYFS p.10)

Settings must keep a daily record that shows the names of the children's Key Person (Statutory Framework for the EYFS p.40)

What is the Key Person?

The Key Person is the named member of Staff assigned to an individual child to support his/her development and act as the key point of contact with that child's parent/carers. This is the *named* member of staff with whom a child has more contact than other adults. The Key Person has special responsibilities for working with a small number of children.

What is the Key Person approach?

'Children learn to be strong and independent from the base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.'
Positive Relationships, EYFS

The Key Person system helps build positive relationships with the children and between parents/carer and staff. This is achieved by:

Shared Care

- An adult who is 'tuned in' to the child and family, and actively builds positive relationships and communications.
- An adult who oversees and builds the shared record of a child's development and progress with staff, parents and other professionals.

Secure Attachment

- An adult who cares and responds sensitively to a child's feelings, ideas and behaviour.
- An adult who is primarily responsible for personal care routines, e.g. nappy changing, toileting, sleep periods, shared eating times.
- An adult who helps the child to become familiar with the setting and to feel confident and safe within it.

Independence

- A trusted and supportive adult who enables independence.
- A supportive adult during new situations and times of anxiety or illness.

Further Key Person Guidance in Relation to Children with Additional Needs

Key Person Guidance:

- Ensure that all children in their care, irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender or ability, experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.
- Ensure positive attitudes to diversity and difference for the children in their care.
- Remove or help to overcome barriers for children where these already exist.
- Communicate regularly with parent/carers to ensure that additional needs are being met appropriately within the setting.
- Ensure that records of development and progress, in relation to additional needs, are available within the setting to be shared with parents and support agencies as necessary.
- Understand and work within the guidance of the SEN Code of Practice.

- Understand and work within the guidance of the setting's policies which make reference to children with additional needs e.g. SEN, Medication, Safeguarding Children, Behaviour Management.
- Plan and attend appropriate training in order to be proactive in supporting additional needs.
- Be able to identify where there may be concerns regarding learning and development and to know procedures for further referral.
- Contribute to the writing, monitoring and review of Individual Education Plans.
- Have access to and take account of appropriate documentation in relation to children's additional needs (eg. Speech & Language Targets, Individual Education Plans, Physiotherapy Programme, Ethnic Minority Achievement Support Service Report)
- Have regular shared communications with the named SENCo /manager and be available for meetings and SEN reviews as required.
- Ensure that, when there are increased staffing ratios related to a child's Statement of SEN or Inclusion funding, the child's needs are understood and supported by all practitioners in the setting.
- Plan for shared communications and transfer of all relevant documentation, in relation to additional needs, when transition to a new Key Person or setting is due.

Key questions for the setting to consider;

These questions are intended to provide a starting point for the development of a consistent approach within a Birth to Five Setting. Practitioners may choose to use the following questions as a discussion tool in forthcoming staff meetings. Individual detail will be dependent upon the nature of each setting.

- How will you reassure parents who may be concerned that children may be more attached to the Key Person than to them?
- What systems do you have in place to support children, families and other staff if the key person is away?
- Is there a second Key Person system in place so that when the main Key Person is away, there is a familiar and trusted person who knows the child well?
- How do you inform parent/carers who their child's Key Person is?
- During which periods of the day is it essential that the Key Person is with a child e.g. nappy changing and feeding?
- How do you ensure that rotas are based on when a Key Person is available for each child?
- Who will be the Key Person if there is more than one member of staff supporting children in one week?

- How will the Key Person obtain observations and assessments made by other staff in the setting?
- What systems are in place for the Key Person to make, store and record observations and assessments?
- What contact will the Key Person have with parents/ carers who visit the setting on a regular basis, or, never visit the setting? How will he/she communicate/ share information with parents?
- How will the Key Person communicate during transition periods?
- How will managers ensure that as children move groups or settings, time is given for them to become familiar with the Key Person?
- What induction support do you have for a new Key Person in your setting?