Childcare practice

The role of the key person and settling-in

Policy Statement

At Tywardreath Pre-School Playgroup we believe that children settle best when they have a key person to relate to, who knows them and their parents/carers 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/carers have confidence, staff are committed, and the setting is a happy and dedicated place to attend or work in.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated, happy, secure and comfortable with staff. We also want parents/carers to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with the setting.

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 Statutory Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each setting must offer 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 before the child starts, but are also flexible if a child leans towards another member of the team.
The child and family will also have a secondary key person.
A list of all children's primary and secondary key person is displayed in the porch.
The key person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into our setting.
The key person offers unconditional regard for the child and is non-judgemental.
The key person works with the parents/carers to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and leaning.
The key person acts as the key contact for the parents/carers 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.
A key person is responsible for developmental records and for sharing information on a regular basis with the child's parents/carers to keep those records up to date, reflecting the full picture of the child in our setting 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, so the child and the parents/carers 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/carers with information. These include written information (including our prospectus and policies), displays about activities available within the setting, information days and evenings and individual meetings with parents.
During the half-term before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents/carers to visit the setting.
We allocate a key person to each child and his/her family before they start to attend, the key person welcomes and looks after the child and his/her parents/carers at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.
We use pre-start visits and the first session at which a child attends to explain and complete with his/her parents/carers the child's registration records.
When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling in with his/her parents/carers and jointly decide on the best way to help the child settle into the setting.
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/carers leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when.

We recognise that some children will settle more readily than others. We are happy for parents to stay with their child if they are not ready to be left, until their child can stay happily without them.

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 reserve the right not to accept a child into the setting without a parent or carer if the child finds it distressing to be left. This is especially the case with very young children. This right will only be reserved when we have tried a variety of settling techniques, advice has been sought from the parents/carers, and we believe the child's distress cannot be pacified.