

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Key person

Each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents.

The role of the key person, transitions and settling-in

Policy statement

We believe that children settle best when they have a key person to relate to, who knows them and their parents 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 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 and happy at Hopscotch 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.

We aim to make Hopscotch 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 Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each setting must assign 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.

Procedures

- We allocate a key person when the child starts.
- The key person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into Hopscotch.
- The key person offers unconditional regard for the child and is non-judgemental.
- The key person works with the parent to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.



- The key person acts as the key contact for the parents 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.
- The key person is responsible for developmental records and for sharing information on a regular basis with the child's parents to keep those records up-to-date, reflecting the full picture of the child at Hopscotch and at home.
- The key person encourages positive relationships between children in her/his key group.
- We promote the role of the key person as the child's primary carer at Hopscotch, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.

Settling-in

- Before a child starts to attend, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our prospectus and policies) and individual meetings with parents. We operate an 'open door' policy and welcome prospective parents and their children to call in at any time.
- If time allows and as appropriate, during the half-term before a child starts, we encourage the child and his/her parents to visit the setting.
- We allocate a key person to each child and his/her family when she/he starts to attend; the key person welcomes and looks after the child and his/her parents 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, the child's registration records.
- When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with his/her parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the setting.
- We have an expectation that a parent, carer or close relative, will stay with the child as necessary and as agreed, gradually taking time away from their child, increasing this as and when the child is able to cope.
- Younger children will take longer to settle in, as will children who have not previously spent time away from home. Children who have had a period of absence may also need their parent to be on hand to re-settle them.
- We also recognise that periods of change and transition for a child, such as a new baby, a prolonged holiday or family upheaval, may also be unsettling. If so we would seek to work with parents and

carers to overcome this and would ask for the support and commitment of parents to stay with their child again should this become necessary.

- 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 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 but that some children who appear to settle rapidly are not ready to be left. We expect to work together with the child's family to review the settling in process as necessary 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.
- Within the first four to six weeks of starting we discuss and work with the child's parents to begin to create their child's learning journey.

The progress check at age two

- The key person carries out the progress check at age two in accordance with the procedures, guidance and materials put in place by Leicester City Council. We also take account of the supporting guidance in the EYFS '*A Know How Guide: The EYFS progress check at age two.*'
- The progress check aims to review the child's development and ensures that parents have a clear picture of their child's development.
- Within the progress check, the key person will note areas where the child is progressing well and identify areas where progress is less than expected.
- The progress check will describe the actions that will be taken by Hopscotch Playgroup to address any developmental concerns (including working with other professionals where appropriate) as agreed with the parent(s).
- The key person will plan activities to meet the child's needs within the setting and will support parents to understand the child's needs in order to enhance their development at home.

This policy was adopted at a board meeting of Hopscotch Playgroup, held on the 27th November 2012.

Reviewed 17th September 2013

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Reviewed 18th November 2015

Reviewed 19th September 2017

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