

Settling in and Key Carer

Purpose

We aim for children to feel safe, stimulated, and happy in the nursery and to feel 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 child being able to benefit from what the nursery has to offer. We believe that a key carer has special responsibilities for working with a small number of children, giving them the reassurance to feel safe, cared for and building relationships with parents.

Policy

Settling in

We aim to help parents and other carers to help their children settle quickly and easily by considering the individual needs and circumstances of children and their families.

The nursery staff will work in partnership with parents/carers to settle their child into the nursery environment by:

- providing parents/carers with relevant information regarding the policies and procedures of the nursery.
- encouraging the parents/carers and children to visit the nursery during the weeks before an admission is planned.
- planning settling in visits and introductory sessions. Three sessions will be provided free of charge, increasing from 1 hour where a parent stays, to 2 hours and then 3-4 hours covering a sleep/lunch, dependent on individual needs, age and stage of development.
- welcoming parents/carers to stay with their child during the first few weeks until the child feels settled and the parents/carers feel comfortable about leaving him/her. Settling in visits and introductory sessions are key to a smooth transition and to ensure good communication and information sharing. We encourage parents to bring any form of soothers or comforters to aid the settling process.
- reassuring parents/carers whose children seem to be taking a long time settling into the nursery
- encouraging parents/carers, where appropriate, to separate themselves from their children for brief periods at first, gradually building up to longer absences
- allocating a key carer to each child and his/her family before he/she starts to attend. The key carer welcomes and looks after the child and his/her parents during the settling in period, and throughout his/her time at the nursery to ensure the family has a familiar contact person to assist with the settling in process. The key carer will ensure that all the relevant information about the individual child is obtained so that the child is happy, safe, and secure at nursery and all their needs are met.
- respecting the circumstances of all families, including those who are unable to stay for long periods of time in the nursery and reassure them of their child's progress towards settling in.
- The key carer will ensure that the child has a meal card created prior to their start date.
- ensuring that children will not be taken on an outing from the nursery until he/she is completely settled.

Key Carer

A key carer develops a genuine bond with children and offers a settled, close relationship.

A key carer should:

- Meet the needs of the child in their care and respond to their feelings, ideas, and behaviour.
- Talk to parents to make sure the child is being cared for appropriately, with the parental preferences considered.
- Ensure that a close relationship with the key carer does not undermine children's ties with their own parents.
- Spend time with their key children, individually and as part of a group. Planning within the setting ensures that all individual children's needs, next steps, and interests are clearly tracked, to ensure that the on-going cycle of formative assessment takes place, to support learning and development through observation, planning and assessment.
- Intervene early if there is an area of development which needs support, through regular observations and monitoring progress.
- Keep records of the child's development and progress (Learning Journeys) and share these with parents, the child, and other professionals as necessary. The parent should always have access to these records which can be passed on to school to support transitions and to share understanding of a child's abilities and interests (permission form should be signed).
- Welcome parental contributions and use this information to feed into planning to support the individual child's learning and development, sharing both learning at home and in the setting.
- Ensure a two-way flow of information between other providers that are involved in the care and education of the child, e.g. childminders etc, through summative assessments.
- Ensure there is a named second key carer 'buddy' in case of their absence. There should be consistency and continuity of care as much as possible to ensure stability for the child.
- Be able to provide the following information on each key child upon request –
 - Age of the child
 - Specific group, e.g. EAL, SEN
 - Assessment/development records, 2-year-old progress check, summative assessments
 - Activities and observations
 - Planning

Key carer lists are displayed in each room, and on the parent notice board.

Key carers may be changed during the child's time at nursery in the event of the child developing a special bond with a different member of staff.

Associated documents:

- [Child permission form \(part of Child Registration process\)](#)
- [Marvellous Me \(part of Child Registration process\)](#)
- [Key Carer guidance](#)