

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Key Carer

Each child must be assigned a key carer. 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

4.1 The role of the key carer and settling-in

Policy statement

Little Fingers Pre-school believe that children settle best when they have a key carer to relate to, who knows them and their parents well, and who can meet their individual needs. We are committed to the key carer approach which benefits the child, the parents, the staff and the setting. It encourages secure relationships which support children to thrive, give parents confidence and make the setting a happy place to attend or work in.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the setting and to feel secure and comfortable with our staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with our setting. We aim to make our 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 carer role is set out in the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each child must have a key carer. These procedures set out a model for developing a key carer approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children.

Procedures

- We allocate a key carer before the child starts.
- The key carer is responsible for:
 - Providing an induction for the family and for settling the child into our setting.
 - Completing relevant forms with parents/carers, including consent forms.
 - Explaining our policies and procedures to parents/carers with particular focus on policies such as safeguarding and our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.
 - Offering unconditional regard for the child and being non-judgemental.
 - Working with the parents/carers to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
 - Acting as the key contact for the parents/carers.
 - 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 in our setting and at home.

- Having links with other carers involved with the child and co-ordinating the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.
- Encouraging positive relationships between children in her/his key group, spending time with them as a group each day.
- We promote the role of the key carer as the child's primary carer in our setting, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other adults and children.

Settling-in

- Before a child starts to attend our setting, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our welcome pack 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 to visit the setting.
- The key carer welcomes and looks after the child and his/her parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.
- We may offer a home visit by the person who will be the child's key carer to ensure all relevant information about the child can be made known.
- 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 the parent, carer or close relative, will stay for most of the session during the first week, gradually taking time away from their child; increasing this time 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 judge a child to be settled when they have formed a relationship with their key carer; for example, the child looks for the key carer 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 that the parent will honour the commitment to stay for at least the first week, or possibly longer, 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/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/carers to begin to create their child's record of achievement.

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The progress check at age two

- The key carer carries out the progress check at age two in accordance with any local procedures that are in place and referring to the guidance *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 carer 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 us to address any developmental concerns (including working with other professionals where appropriate) as agreed with the parent(s).
- The key carer 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 by

Little Fingers Pre-school

On

March 2022

Date to be reviewed

Signed on behalf of the provider

Name of signatory

Carolyn Coleman

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)

Chair

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: With non-statutory supporting documentation (2014)
- Being a Key Person in an Early Years Setting (2015)
- Creating a Learning Environment in the Home (2015)

4.1 The role of the key carer and settling-in COVID-19 Addendum

After time off, children will feel different about returning, some children will be really excited and may not need any settling in, whereas other children will have separation anxiety and be quite upset/distressed on their return. We will aim to try and find a suitable balance that ensures social distancing from adults but meets children's individual emotional needs and ensure they feel settled once again at Little Fingers Pre-school.

We will work with all families that are new or have not attended the setting for several months to arrange suitable settling times. These may include video calls to begin with, to minimise the time spent in the setting. Setting visits may be planned based on individual needs, taking in to account the age/stage of development and how the child feels about returning.

Where settling visits are required, different options will be considered such as:

- Virtual show rounds
- Online video calls
- Set times for example first thing in a morning or late afternoon when other children are not present
- Settling visits outdoors
- Shorter sessions to begin with building up to the full session

Most of the information for new children/children returning will be gathered over the telephone to limit the time spent in the setting.

Any new families will be asked to sign a health declaration to confirm the child or no one in the family has any symptoms of coronavirus.

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