

Key person – The Role of the Key person and Settling in

Introduction

At Eckington Under Fives Preschool we understand that children thrive from a base of loving and secure relationships. Attachments are the emotional bonds that young children develop with parents and carers, these attachments benefit children in so many ways;

- Children with strong early attachments cry less when separated.
- They engage in more pretend play and sustain attention for longer.
- They are less aggressive and are popular with other children and with adults.
- Their sense of who they are is strong.
- Children need to be safe in the relationship they have with parents or carers.
- They are vulnerable but will develop resilience when their physical and psychological well-being is protected by an adult.
- Being emotionally attached to such an adult helps the child feel secure that the person they depend on is there for them.
- When children feel safe they are more inclined to try things out and be more independent.
- They are confident to express their ideas and feelings and feel good about themselves.
- Attachment influences a child's immediate all-round development and future relationships.

Our Aim

At Eckington Under Fives Pre-school we want children to feel safe, stimulated 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 our pre-school. We aim to make our pre-school 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.

Procedures

- Before a child starts to attend our pre-school, 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 our preschool, website, information days and stay and play sessions to settle children into the setting.
- During the half-term before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit our pre-school through stay and play sessions.
- We allocate a member of staff to each child and his/her family when she/he starts to attend; the member of staff 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 early years profile.

- 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 our preschool.
- 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 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 member of staff; for example, the child looks for that 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, so we expect that the parent will honour the commitment to stay for at least the first week.
- 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 our pre-school. We will seek support where necessary and complete a separation anxiety audit.
- We reserve the right not to accept a child into our pre-school without a parent or carer if the child finds it distressing to be left. This is especially the case with very young children.

Key-Person

We use the key-person system at Eckington Under Fives Pre-school and each child and family are allocated a key-person as soon as they start with us. Families are given a key person introductory sheet which explains more about the role. And details the following information;

Definition

- ✓ A key person has special responsibility for a set amount of children.
- ✓ A key person will ensure that your child's needs are recognised and met at each session.

Main duties

- ✓ To help your child settle into the setting smoothly, helping them to integrate into the group.
- ✓ To be a point of contact so we are able to discuss and support both the child and family.
- ✓ To provide emotional needs to your child and to ensure the child's race, culture, religion, language and family values are being met.

- ✓ To observe, keep records and monitor the child’s progress and talking and encouraging parents to participate in their child’s development.
- ✓ To feed-back information that might be important to parents or any worries the key worker has come across.
- ✓ To work in conjunction with the parents in a statutory and professional manner.

It is important to note that a Key-person does not;

- ✓ Shadow the children throughout the session.
- ✓ Only work with the key children they have been given.
- ✓ Prevent other adults from developing a relationship with the key children they have been given.

Changes of Key-person

Sometimes it may be that a key-person needs to be changed, this may be due to a change in staff on the child’s days, or that we have identified that a child needs support in a specific area that another person may be more equipped to help and support.

Babysitting

We understand that sometimes parents are looking for reliable babysitters, who are known to their child and DBS checked and may wish to ask their child’s key-person or other pre-school employees to babysit. We have therefore put together these guidelines for families and pre-school employees to follow;

- the Pre-school will not be responsible for any private babysitting arrangements or agreements made between staff and parents/carers.
- Out of hours babysitting arrangements must not interfere with a staff member’s employment at the Pre-school.
- Confidentiality by staff regarding other staff and children at the Pre-school must be adhered to and respected at all times.
- The Pre-school will not be held responsible for any health and safety or other issues that may arise from these private arrangements.
- No member of staff will take a child away from the setting unless they are a named person on the child’s records.

This policy was written by Maria Smith and Donna Saunders on 8th November 2017	
Approved by Eckington Under Fives Committee	
Name:	Position:
Date:	Signature:

