



## 09 Early years practice procedures

### 09.3 Prime times – The role of the key person

*'Each child must be assigned a key person'* (EYFS 2023)

The setting implements a clear and consistent key person system to ensure that every child forms a secure attachment and experiences continuity of care. This system is strengthened by a shared-team approach, ensuring that children are known well by all adults and receive consistent support even when their key person is not present.

#### **Key Person Role**

- Each child is allocated a key person prior to starting. This adult leads on the child's emotional security, developmental tracking and communication with parents.
- A back-up key person is identified to ensure continuity during absence, annual leave or sickness.
- The key person conducts the progress check at age two, maintains the child's developmental records and leads on parent reviews.
- The key person works with the manager to plan and deliver a structured settling-in process.
- Allocation of key children considers staff capacity, part-time patterns and children's individual needs.
- Key persons spend dedicated time with their key children daily to monitor wellbeing and progress.

#### **Shared Responsibilities Across the Room Team**

To ensure consistency for children in a setting with part-time staffing patterns, the key person system is complemented by a shared-responsibility model across the room team.

- While the key person leads on learning journals, observations, reports, developmental assessments and parent communication, all staff contribute to the child's daily experiences, interactions and learning.
- Staff work as a close, collaborative team, ensuring children are familiar with all adults and experience secure, predictable relationships.
- When the key person is not on duty, other room staff confidently meet children's needs, follow routines and maintain continuity of care.
- Shared observations and professional dialogue ensure that information about children's interests, progress and wellbeing is communicated effectively across the team.

- This approach reduces the impact of part-time staffing on children's emotional security and ensures that no child is disadvantaged by their key person's working pattern.

This model aligns with Ofsted expectations that all staff know children well, contribute to their learning and demonstrate consistent, high-quality practice.

## **Parents**

- The key person is the primary point of contact for parents regarding their child's development, progress and wellbeing.
- Parents are supported in their role as their child's first educator, with the key person leading on information sharing and developmental updates.
- In the key person's absence, the back-up key person or another familiar member of the room team shares relevant information to maintain continuity.

## **Learning and Development**

- The key person ensures that each child's learning and care are tailored to their individual needs through regular observation, assessment and planning.
- All staff contribute to high-quality interactions, shared observations and enhancements, ensuring a holistic understanding of each child.
- Concerns about a child's progress in any prime area are discussed promptly with the manager or SENCO and with parents.
- The shared-team approach ensures that learning opportunities are consistent and responsive, regardless of which staff members are present.

## **Prime Times**

The key person role is further detailed in procedures 09.4/6/7/8/10/14. The key person also maintains responsibilities for administering medication and signing accident records for their key children.

## **Back-Up Key Person**

- The back-up key person provides stability when the main key person is unavailable.
- They are introduced gradually once the child's primary attachment is forming.
- They maintain communication with parents in the key person's absence and ensure information is passed on accurately.

## **Safeguarding Children**

- The key person has a duty to report any concerns regarding their key children's development, welfare or safety to the manager and follow safeguarding procedures.
- Regular supervision provides opportunities to discuss children's progress and wellbeing.
- The back-up key person and all room staff share responsibility for safeguarding and remain alert to any concerns.

### **Further guidance**

[Being a Key Person in an Early Years Setting](#) (Alliance Publication)