



Early years practice procedures

Prime times – The role of the key person

'Each child must be assigned a key person' (EYFS 2024)

Babies and young children need to form a secure attachment to key person when they join the setting to feel safe, happy, and eager to participate and learn.

The key person role

- A key person builds an on-going relationship with the child and their parents/carers and is committed to that child's well-being while in the setting.
- Every child that attends is allocated a key person before they begin settling in - it is not the responsibility of the child to choose their own key person.
- A buddy key person is also used at times during your child's time within the nursery so that they can fulfil the role in the absence of the main key person, for example, during annual leave or sickness.
- Staff within each allocated room work closely together and all staff build connections with the children but the key person has a duty of care to ensure the monitoring of their key children.
- The key person conducts the progress check at age two for their key children.
- The role is fully explained to parents/carers on induction.
- The key person is central to settling a child into the setting. The setting manager and key person explain the need for a settling in process and agree a plan with the parents.
- Shift patterns and staff absence can affect a child who is just settling in; where possible, settling in should be matched to when the key person is on duty.
- The number of children for each key person considers the individual needs of children and the capacity of the key person to manage their cohort; it is also influenced by part-time places and part time staff. The setting manager should aim for consistency i.e. matching part-time staff to part-time children; full-time children should not be divided between key persons during the week.
- Photographs of key persons and their key groups are displayed clearly.
- The key person spends time daily with his or her key group to ensure their well-being.

Policies & Procedures for the EYFS 2024/25 (Early Years Alliance 2024)

Parents/carers

- Key persons are the first point of contact for parents regarding matters concerning their child and any concerns parents/carers may have been addressed with the key person in the first instance.
- Key persons support parents/carers in their role as the child's first and most enduring educators.
- The key person is responsible for the child's developmental records, completing the progress check at age two, and for sharing information about progress with the child's parents/carers.

Learning and development

- The key person helps to ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. This is achieved through regular observation and assessment of children, using information gathered about their achievements, interests and learning styles to plan for each individual child's learning and development.
- If a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, the key person must discuss this with the setting management or SENCO and the child's parents/carers.

Prime times

The key person role is explained further in the prime-time procedures, the key person also maintains other responsibilities for key children where suitable including administering medication and signing accident records.

Buddy key person

- The role of the buddy key person is to step in when the main key person is absent or unavailable to provide a stable and consistent care relationship for the child.
- The buddy key person ensures information is shared with the key person.

Safeguarding children

- The key person has a responsibility towards their key children to report any concern about their development, welfare, or child protection matter to the setting management and to follow the procedures in this respect.
- Regular supervision with the setting management provides further opportunities to discuss the progress and welfare of key children.
- All staff members also have a duty of care to the children and to report any concerns about their development or welfare.