



# The role of the key person and settling-in Policy & Procedure

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We believe that children settle best when they have a key person to relate to, who knows them and their parents well, and who can meet their individual needs. Research shows that a key person approach benefits the child, the parents, the staff and the setting by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents have confidence, staff are committed and the setting is a happy and dedicated place to attend or work in.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy at Millie's 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 Millie's.

We aim to make the 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 person role is set out in the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each setting must offer a key person for each child.

At Millie's we operate a key worker system.

A key worker has specific responsibilities for a group of children who have been designated by their room leader. Although room leaders choose who the key workers will be before the children start at Millie's, if a child prefers and bonds with a particular adult the room leader will allocate that adult to that child.

Parents/Carers and their children will meet their key worker when they start the settling procedure and will develop a relationship with them. The key worker will assist the child during their settling period and ensure that the needs of the child are recognised within the class and suggest activities to meet the individual needs of the child. The key worker will also raise any concerns to the room leader.

The procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children who are in settings.

## Procedures

We allocate a key person before the child starts.

In preparation and before the child starts at nursery the named key worker will familiarise themselves with the information received on the child and their family.

The key person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into our setting.

As the child's key worker it is your responsibility to build a special but professional relationship with the child and family.

- The key person offers unconditional regard for the child and is non-judgemental.
- The key person works with the parent to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
- The key person acts as the key contact for the parents and has links with other carers involved with the child, such as a childminder, and co-ordinates the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers, although the overall responsibility lies with the room leader
- A key person is responsible for 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 at Millie's and at home.
- You will attend any meetings concerning your key children or the manager will.
- The key person encourages positive relationships between children in her/his key group, spending time with them as a group each day that they attend.
- In the event of absence the room leader or one of the other staff that the child is particularly fond of will become responsible and be their temporary key person.
- We promote the role of the key person as the child's primary carer, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.
- If any problems or concerns arise you will immediately discuss these with your room leader or management.
- The key person is responsible for changing the nappies of their key children where this is best practice and suitable to be followed.

## Settling-in

For many small children this will be their first nursery experience away from their families and the security of their home. We therefore endeavour to build strong and trusting relationships with the child and family before the parent/carer leave them at Millie's.

Every child will settle in their own time. For some it can be quick and easy, they will be happy to be left within a few days, others will take longer to adapt to nursery life.

Settling your child into Millie's will consist an agreed timetable given out by Management for which there is no fee.

Millie's will then decide if your child is ready to start their sessions and occasionally children work towards their main session attendance pattern as their emotional well being will always come first. This will always be discussed and chargeable fully as per the fee list.

Further settling sessions will be offered if we feel it is necessary.

Alongside our own professional judgement we will be seeking advice from the parent/carer as to the way in which they wish us to settle their child.

Before a child starts to attend the nursery, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information.

When parents come for a show around the nursery we show them our displays, talk about activities available within the setting, talk to them about information days and evenings and individual meetings with parents, as well as answering any questions that they may have

We allocate a key person to each child and his/her family before she/he starts to attend; the key person welcomes and looks after the child and his/her parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.

We use settling in visits and the first session at which a child attends to go through and if necessary help his/her parents complete the child's welcome pack.

Before a child starts we email or write to the parent to explain and allocate settling in days for the parent and child to attend.

We have an expectation that the parent, carer or close relative, will stay for most of the first session but each family and child have different needs. Some children are happy for parents to leave straight away others need to have their parents/cares with them for the whole session and for a longer period of time.

We judge a child to be settled when they are happy to be with either their key person or other staff, when they are generally happy to play and like to explore their environment without looking around to see where their parent/carer is.

When parents leave, it is their choice as to whether they feel it is right to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back and when, or if they have already done this and would rather leave without reiterating it again to their child.

We recognise that some children will settle more readily than others but that some children who appear to settle rapidly sometimes find it more difficult to be left a few weeks later. We expect that parents are aware that tears and upset may occur at a later date and need to be prepared to re do settling and to take advice from the room leader or key person. We do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle any quicker, we certainly would never let a child become distressed

We believe that a child's distress will prevent them from learning and gaining the best from the setting.

Sometimes children do not like an adult invading their space and trying to comfort them. We need to respect their decision if they walk away from an adult or prefer to sit in the corner and watch until they are ready to join in.

In the event a child is not settling we will do our utmost to help that child by offering as many settling sessions as we think is acceptable. If a child still does not settle we reserve the right not to accept that child until they are older or ready. However before doing so we will discuss the best way to help that child and the parents/carers

We suggest that for the first week the parent/carer collects their child early, although parents do not have to do this.

Within the first four to six weeks of starting we discuss and work with the child's parents to start to create their child's tapestry achievements.

It is the room leaders responsibility to ensure a key-worker is assigned to all new children and their parents.

### **Discuss the following with parent/carer**

- \* Show the child/parent around the room
- \* Show coat peg and tray
- \* Discuss what the child needs to bring to Millie's: like their day bag etc
- \* Fruit rota / we encourage children to bring and share whole fruits
- \* Discuss planners, topic and the tapestry system
- \* Introduce key-worker and role to child/ parent/carer
- \* Show and talk them through the welcome / parents board

### **Key-worker**

- \* To build relationship with child and parent
- \* Introduce activities
- \* Discover child's likes and dislikes
- \* Play and interact with child
- \* Key-worker to discuss with room leader about parent staying and leaving
- \* To work on building sound relationships with the peer group they are joining

### **The two year progress check**

The key person 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 person notes areas where the child is progressing well and identify areas where progress is less than expected.

The progress check 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 person plans activities to meet the child's needs within the setting and supports parents to understand the child's needs in order to enhance their development at home.

## **'Family', the online learning journal**

Staff record your child's time with us on a nursery digital scheme called Family. Managers will securely set you up with an email link you follow and set a password that is confidential - we will not know this. All children's observations, starting points, assessments with images and videos will be uploaded for your information and pleasure. All data compliance is followed.

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