



A world in which Autism is celebrated.

Registered Charity No. 1152188

Childcare Practice

54. The Role of the Key Person and Settling-in.

Policy statement

We believe that children settle best when they have a key person to relate to, who knows them and their parents/carers well, and who can meet their individual needs. Research shows that a key person approach benefits the child, the parents/carers, the staff and the setting by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents/carers have confidence, staff is committed and the setting is a happy and dedicated 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 staff. We also want parents/carers to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with the setting.

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

Procedures

- Sunbeams allocate a key person after the child starts, to see which staff member is best suited to the child's needs due to their qualifications, experience and if the child and the staff member gel well.
- The key person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into our setting.
- The key person will be non-bias and non-judgmental and will establish a positive supportive relationship.

- The key person works with the parent/carer to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning, in a way that is suitable for Sunbeams and the time the child spends there.
- The key person acts as the key contact for the parents/carers.
- A key person is responsible for sharing information on a regular basis with the child's parents/carers and to take part in a collaborative process to establish areas of need for development. Thus reflecting the full picture of the child in our setting.
- Sunbeams promote the role of the key person as the child's primary carer in our setting, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.

Settling-in

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we offer a variety of ways to provide his/her parents/carers with information. These include written information such as our policies, displays about activities available within the setting, information days and evenings and individual meetings with parents/carers.
- Sunbeams provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents/carers to visit the setting before enrolling to Sunbeams.
- Sunbeams allocate a key person to each child and his/her family after she/he starts to attend. The key person looks after the child and his/her parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.
- Sunbeams use pre-start visits and the first session at which a child attends to explain and complete with his/her parents/carers the child's registration records.
- When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with his/her parents/carers and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the setting.
- Sunbeams understand younger children will take longer to settle in, as will children who have not previously spent time away from home.
- Sunbeams judge a child to be settled when they have formed a relationship with their key person. For example, the child looks for the key 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/carers leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when if necessary.
- Sunbeams 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.
- Sunbeams reserve the right not to accept a child into the setting without a parent or carer if the child finds it too distressing to be left. This is especially the case with very young children.

This policy was adopted on

20th April 2015

Policy updated

August 2025

Date to be reviewed

April 2026

Signed on behalf of the management committee

Name of Signatory

Role of Signatory

Reviewed By	Date
Sue Carr	24/04/2024
Sue Carr	18/08/2025