



Focus On...

The role of the Key Person – Safeguarding element

A Child Safeguarding Practice Review has recently been completed in Lancashire. This refers to Child LX who had siblings attending nursery. The following recommendation was made: **Whilst staff consistency can never be mandated because of inevitable issues such as sickness or staff changing roles, managers must be aware of the associated risks. Whenever possible, changes of professionals should be avoided. When possible, full and timely handovers should be completed, and families kept updated.** We considered this recommendation with respect to consistency of the Key Person and their working relationship with children and families and the importance of this in terms of safeguarding.

The importance of being a key person

- Children thrive when their needs are met by special people that they know, trust and respect. When children are comfortable with their key person they are more likely to make a disclosure if they are worried about anything or experiencing abuse or neglect.
- The key person works alongside parents and carers to ensure that there is continuity of care for the child thus supporting the child's emotional well-being.
- The key person observes the child to identify how they learn through their play, their next aspect of development, what their interests are, whether there is any cause for concern or need for extra support.

Why is a key person approach important?

Children's personal, social and emotional development is helped by familiarity, predictability and knowing they feel supported by someone that cares about them.

- Being a key person means having robust safeguarding procedures in place and being familiar with what to do if you are worried about a child. The key person may be directly involved in safeguarding cases for individual children.
- Being able to signpost families for help and support. This may be highlighting the importance of routines or parenting advice. The key person will be able to signpost families for further support.
- Make links with the child's family, find out about who lives at home with them, who are special in their lives, do they have a pet, what do they like doing at home.
- Build upon the relationship with families by talking to them at drop off and pick up times about what is happening at home and share what the child does at the setting.

How can I be an effective key person?

- Adopt a professional, mature and sensitive approach to children and families.
- Get to know the child well through liaison with parents and carers. This can be done by home visits, meetings and discussions on induction.
- Communicate effectively with parents and carers either verbally or through home/setting diaries each time the child attends
- In group settings through supervision, share any thoughts, concerns and issues with the manager of the setting to ensure any additional support is provided and that your emotional needs are taken into consideration.
- In childminding settings, talk to peers about any issues or concerns remembering to respect confidentiality.
- Be a good communicator, calm and sensitive with a sensitive and tactful approach.
- Take time every day to spend with individual children where you are their key person.

Reflective task - You attend a function/event for the first time where you don't know anyone. You don't know where to hang your coat or where the toilet is. You don't know the routine or how you are supposed to behave. How would you feel? What would make you feel better?

Early Years Foundation Stage 2024 [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for group and school providers \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) and [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for childminders \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

A lovely creative task to complete with individual children to support their wellbeing: [a-cuddle-box.pdf](#)

