



Sutton Outdoor Preschool

Settling-in and Transition Policy Including Key Person

Reviewed October 2020

Reviewed by Elizabeth Leddy - Preschool Manager and DSL for Sutton Outdoor Preschool

Introduction

At Sutton Outdoor Preschool we are committed to meeting and supporting the needs of each individual child. We aim to make sure that the transition process into and within our preschool is a positive and happy experience.

As Early Years Practitioners' we play a key role in working with parents to support their child.

Transition into Preschool

At Sutton Outdoor Preschool we understand the importance of the settling-in process and are committed to making it as stress free as possible. We also see this as opportunity to work with parents to find out more about their child's interests, learning styles, likely behaviours in certain situations and if they feel the child (or family) need support in any area of the child's life. We try to find out what works for each individual child.

How it will work – Initial Enquiry and Visit

- Parents/carers make enquire about the Preschool and receive an Information Pack containing details about the Preschool, the team, daily routine, food and drink requirements, clothing kit list and information about the Preschool policies including links to the full documents.
- Families are invited to visit the Preschool, to meet the team, see the Preschool in action and discuss their individual requirements. The manager conducts the tour making it clear to parents the safety rules and expectations we expect from all participants (staying in sight, staying within the boundary).
- Families pay a Registration Fee which includes the cost of a set of (brightly coloured) Didrikson waterproofs – these must be worn during Preschool sessions as added protection from the weather and brambles etc, but also as a safety requirement so that children are easily seen and recognised.
- The Registration Fee also covers the cost of the child's first two sessions which are the Trial Period, during these sessions the child will attend for a shorter session and receive increased supervision, they will also be required to wear a "ladybird locator" as an added precaution.

How it will work – The Trial Period

- On the child's first trial period session the parent/carer will stay with the child. The key person will be introduced to the family. The parent/carer, key person and the child (if they wish) will complete an All About Me form providing information on the child's interests, likes, dislikes, and how they may behave in certain situations such as falling over, seeing a dog or walking within the group – this provides us with an insight into the child and helps us to plan for future session to further develop and support the child's interests, skills and abilities. During this session the child will be given their Didrikson waterproofs, they will wear a "ladybird locator" and an extra staff member may "shadow" them while they explore and become familiar with the site. The child may chose to join in with any group activity, they may use any of the resources or activities available or they may prefer to observe and "suss out the situation".
- On the child's second trial period session the parent/carer will be encouraged to leave the child for a short (predetermined) time. The familiar adult may chose to stay close but out of sight, go for a stroll or return to their car but always within a close distance – just in case. We will always contact you if your child becomes over anxious or distressed. During this session the key worker will interact and observe the child to determine a few key safety factors such as does the child respond to their name? does the child respond to simple instructions such as "come here" and "don't touch". The key worker will "tap into" the child's interests using the information gather from parent/carers in the previous session. During this session the child will wear their Didrikson waterproofs and the "ladybird locator".

The key worker will “shadow” them while they explore and become familiar with the site. The child will be encouraged but not forced to interact with activities, resources and other children. On parent/carers return, the key worker will feed back from the observations and a decision will be agreed whether end the trial period and start contracted hours or whether to extend the trial period for another two sessions. The trial period can be extended indefinitely but if sessions are causing distress to the child or parent, or affecting other children within the group it may be detrimental to continue and an alternative setting may need to be considered.

- We have an open door policy and encourage families to have two-way communication with the child's key worker (and other staff) including sharing information on how your child is settling in, progress and any concerns relating to the child. This is usually done daily on drop off and collection but if you require longer or more privacy you may choose to make an appointment.
- Sometimes after a holiday or absence your child may need support to settle again. We will help you with this.

What to expect

It may be a smooth, easy process, but the more you are prepared, the easier it will seem. It's very common for a child to cry at moment of separation from their main carer and be fine moments afterwards. It's a normal response until your child learns through experience that you are leaving, but you are coming back.

Tips for preparing your child

- Maybe they are already used to this separation and have experience of being looked after by adults other than you. If not, you could try this with a close friend that they know well for short periods before they start preschool. It's important to always emphasise that you are coming back. Be specific as possible. “I'm going to the shops, Liz will look after you, I'll be back when you have had your lunch.”
- Always say goodbye to child before you go. It's tempting to leave quietly when they are happily playing, as you don't want to disturb them and risk upsetting them. But if they look up and you have gone, they are left with the insecure feeling that you could disappear at any time.
- Keep goodbyes as brief as possible – decide you are going then a quick kiss, reminder when you'll be back and leave. The more drawn out it is, the longer that feeling of separation lasts.
- We recognise that this transition can be just as stressful for you as parents, particularly if this is the first time your child has been looked after by someone who is not related. We are happy for you to phone or text to check how your child is doing and rest assured if your child is upset for long or there are any issues we WILL contact you.

Remember we are used to settling children into preschool and will be very patient and know how to help them through it. It sometimes takes a while, but in the end most children will be running happily every day. Many parents take their children to the woods to get them familiar with the environment before they start, and it's great if you can do that.

What is a key person?

The welfare requirements from the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 1.10 states that “*Each child must be assigned a key person*” Providers must inform parents and/or carers of the name of the key person, and explain their role, when a child starts attending a setting.

The key person must:

- help ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs.
- seek to support parents and/or carers in guiding the child's development at home.

The framework also states ‘Each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents.’ Paragraph 3.27. The Key person should also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate.

The key person should meet the needs of each child in their care and respond sensitively to their feelings, ideas and behaviour, talking to parents to make sure that the child is being cared for appropriately for each family.

Your Child's Key Person

As we are a small preschool, all the adults will be part of your child's experience, however your child will be designated a member of staff that is their 'key person'. A key person will be chosen for your child within the first few weeks of them starting preschool, based upon who the child has formed a bond with thus far. Parents will be introduced to their child's key person and will be advised this key person will be their initial point of contact at the preschool and will be responsible for updating the children's records and updating parents about their child's progress within the play environment.

Key Person Responsibilities

Relationships with key children

- The key person provides a secure attachment for their key children in the preschool.
- They help their key children settle in and become familiar with the setting.
- The key person meets the needs of their key children responding sensitively to their feelings, ideas and behaviour.
- The key person provides a 'secure base' for the children by being there to support them and allowing them to explore at their own pace.
- They are primarily responsible for their key child's care routines.
- As part of our weekly meetings, our managers will provide support and time for their staff to talk through any difficult issues and feelings that may arise as part of the key person role.

Relationships with parents/carers

- Key persons should develop a good relationship with parents / carers, ensuring that the child is cared for appropriately at preschool and accommodating their individual needs within the daily routine.
- The key person needs to develop a two-way flow of communication between themselves and the parent/carer to help them become aware of any significant aspects of family life that maybe important to the child.
- The key person has responsibility for sharing their key children's development profiles with parents and other professionals as required, in cases of children with additional needs or identified children in need they will be called upon to attend reviews and core group meetings with the support of a senior manager.

Records

The key person is responsible for observational records of their key children, using these to inform next steps, planning, and development profiles for each key child. Where a child is supported by another member of staff who is not their key person e.g. SEN support, record keeping then becomes a joint responsibility.

Welfare and Safeguarding

Key persons are responsible for the welfare of the children in their care monitoring patterns of absence, injury and development, referring them on where necessary. Any concerns should be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead as outlined in the Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection procedure.

Transition to school

At the end of the pre-school age, children will go off to school, usually within the local community. We like to make sure a smooth transition ensues and to help this along we work closely with the child's new school/teacher wherever possible. The new teacher has the opportunity to visit Sutton Outdoor Preschool to enable the child to become familiar with him/her and talk to the child's key person. Assessments and Learning Journals are forwarded to the new school setting.

Children who have additional needs: We will ensure that all paperwork is passed on to a new school and any other relevant information regarding the children's additional needs and will liaise with staff to ensure the child's needs are still being met.

It is our aim that no child shall be disadvantaged due to transition. They will be allowed to settle at their own pace. Children who are settled and happy will demonstrate involvement and wellbeing and continue to make progress in their learning.

Policy last reviewed <i>October 2020</i>	Signed on behalf of the preschool <i>E.Leddy (Elizabeth Leddy)</i>	Date of next review <i>October 2021</i>
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