

LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI

KEY PERSON SYSTEM AND SETTLING-IN POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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SETTLING-IN Policy Statement

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the setting and to feel secure and comfortable with all members of staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's wellbeing and their role as active partners with the setting.

Aim

We aim to make Little Sponges Montessori a loving, warm and welcoming place where children feel secure, loved and settle easily because consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of children and their families.

Role of the Key Person Policy Statement

Each child at LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI will be assigned a key person although all members of staff at Little Sponges Montessori will be involved in the care and education of the child and the Head will oversee the general working and development of the Key Person system. The Key Person has special responsibilities for working with a small number of children, giving them the reassurance to feel safe and cared for and building relationships with their parents.

The Key Person's role involves:

- supporting the settling-in procedure
- observing developmental progress and planning learning opportunities to meet individual needs
- keeping records on daily activities and routines, developmental progress, accidents, the administering of medicines, etc and sharing these with parents and other professionals as necessary
- communicating with parents on a daily basis in person

SETTLING-IN Procedure

When a child is admitted to LITTLE SPONGES, communication with parents and continuity of care are paramount. It is a Key Person's responsibility to support this and provide a vital link from home to setting. The Key Person will aid the "settling-in" process and consequent monitoring of play and learning experiences and support and promote the child's all-round development. The settling-in process helps to develop secure and trusting relationships and respond to a child's individual needs.

The process can take a minimum of two-weeks; this could be longer depending on how a child progresses. Children need time to bond with the Key Person and other staff and to become familiar with the Nursery routines and the environment in order to feel happy and safe. Parents are welcome to stay for a short time with their child when first introduced to Nursery life so that they can settle comfortably.

In order to help children settle comfortably in LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI, we use the following procedure.

- We allocate a key person to each child and his/her family when 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.
- By way of the Settling-In form, information on the child is collected beforehand and used to enable the child to settle in more easily and to ensure that all relevant information about the child is made known.
- Parents will be contacted immediately if staff is unsuccessful in settling a child and other strategies will be tried.
- Children are encouraged to bring in a comfort object (clearly labelled with their name) if it will enable them to settle.
- Some children take longer to settle. This can be for a variety of reasons; maybe they have not been left before or have had an unhappy previous experience when parted from their main carers. The key person will work with the parents to try different settling techniques. These might include bringing in photographs of their family.
 - When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with his/her parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the setting.
 - When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back to collect them. We 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 setting.

Training

All staff will be trained appropriately on the key person role. Training will include: -

- explanation of the key person role
- links with the EYFS
- recording information
- working and communicating with parents
- planning and assessment
- attachment theory
- reflection on practice.