09.6 Prime times – arrivals and departures

Prime times of the day make the very best of routine opportunities to promote 'tuning-in' to the child emotionally and to create opportunities for learning. Arrivals and departures are key times in the day when children need support from their carer to make the transition smooth and happy; these times of day also pose a certain level of risk as parents and carers come and go. All staff at Rainbow Pre-school are aware of the potential risks and take measures to minimise them.

Arrivals

- Whenever possible the pre-school lead or key person always greets young children. This ensures that young children are received into the setting by a familiar and trusted adult.
- The person who greets the child marks their presence and time of arrival on the tick sheet, office administrators then update the register in the office.
- If a child who is expected fails to arrive, this is recorded on the child's tick sheet and the pre-school lead is immediately notified so that they can contact the child's parents/carers to find out why the child is absent following procedure 09.2 Absence.
- The pre-school lead/key person ensures that the child has been signed in by the parent/carer and there is a clear indication of who will be collecting the child, and at what time.
- The pre-school lead/key person greets the parents/carers and takes time to hear information the parents/carers need to share. They inform the parents/carers of aspects of the day, such as if there is an agency member of staff or flexible worker in, which members of staff will be around later when parents/carers collect their child, any planned outings, or special planned event. Any consent forms are signed.
- The pre-school lead/key person receives the child physically and tunes in to how he or she is feeling and prepares to meet his/her needs.
- Parents/carers should spend a few minutes with their child and key person before leaving. Many parents/carers will be in a hurry, but this can have an unsettling effect.
- Always ensure that the parents/carers say goodbye to their child and say when they are coming back, such as 'after tea', rather than just 'later'.
- If the member of staff receiving the child is not the key person, the member of staff will hand over the information shared by the parents/carers to the key person when they arrive.

Injuries noted on arrival

- If a child is noted to have visible injuries when they arrive at the setting an “Existing Injuries” form is completed and signed by the parent/carer.
- If a child is noted to have visible injuries when they arrive at the setting procedure 6.1 is followed.

Changing shifts and handing over information

- When the key person leaves or goes on a break, they handover the care of the child to a ‘back-up’ key person.
- If someone other than the key person receives the child, he/she will share any information from the parent/carer and write a note for the key person. Confidential information should be shared with the pre-school lead to pass on.
- The key person shares information with the back-up key person; in this way they ensure that all information is passed on to the parent/carer in the key person’s absence.

Departures

- Children are prepared for home, with clean faces, hands and clothes if required.
- The key person always aims to greet parents/carers when they arrive, ensuring that the person who has arrived to collect the child is named on the signing in/out form. They hand over the child personally and enter the time of departure on the tick sheet, office administrators then update the register in the office.
- Only persons aged over 16 years can collect children. If a parent has no alternative, then this is agreed with the pre-school lead and a risk assessment completed and signed by the parent/carer. In all cases the pre-school lead will ask the parents/carers to ensure that in future alternative arrangements are made. If the parent/carer is under 16 years of age a risk assessment will be completed. No child will be collected by anyone who has not reached 14 years of age. The risk assessment should take account of factors such as age/vulnerability of child, journey travelled, arrangements upon leaving the setting to go home/elsewhere.
- Educators verbally exchange information with parents/carers.
- If someone other than the key person is with the child at the end of the day, the key person should pass general information to the other staff or write a note for the parents/carers. Confidential information should be shared with the pre-school lead to pass on.

Maintaining children's safety and security

Arrivals and departures pose a particular threat to the safety and security of the children, particularly when parents arrive at the same time or when in shared premises. To minimise the risk of a child leaving the building unnoticed, the pre-school lead conducts a risk assessment that identifies potential risks, and the measures put in place to minimise them, such as staff busy talking to individual parents/carers or doors left ajar. The risk assessment is shared with their committee chair and is updated as and when required. View procedure 01.1 Risk assessment and 01.1a Generic risk assessment form for further guidance.