Background

Recent years have witnessed rising numbers of working parents and increasing demands for good quality childcare. Against this background, the Key Person approach has been adopted to <u>bring the building of a secure adult child relationship into the nursery setting</u>.

The Key Person approach is based on **Attachment Theory**, which describes *the bond between an infant and an adult who is special to the child* and central to a child's well-being. There are different phases of attachment with the last phase spanning the nursery years. At this stage, the child has developed 'emotional security' whereby they can have periods of separation from their primary adult figure (parent/carer). This is the point where another attachment figure, i.e. the Key Person (KP), can play a role.

Implementation

The KP will be responsible for small groups of children and a good KP will demonstrate the following three characteristics:

- Availability
- Sensitivity
- Warmth

The KP will manage the settling-in process, as described on our online Parents Page

Building an Attachment

The KP provides the secure base from which the child can explore the nursery setting, other children and other adults. The KP attends to the child's physical needs (nappy changing, feeding, nap time) - physical contact reassures the child that they are liked and welcomed - and provides emotional reassurance and support.

Relationships with Parents/Carers

A good KP will respect boundaries and treat with utmost confidence any sensitive information they might be privy to. They may have to reassure the parent/carer that that their close attachment to the child will not replace attachments home. Attachment is not a fixed quantity in children's lives.

Nursery Organisation

The nursery has to plan to minimise disruption in children's attachments (staff job changes, staff sickness, etc.) by having a back-up person available to the child. The nursery manager has a duty to

1. Support the importance of the KP role within the setting
2. Ensure appropriate training for al Key Persons
3. Support KP's in addressing emotional and intellectual challenges
4. Provide time in staff meetings to discuss concerns and to share experiences

For further information: http://eyfs.info/articles/_/child-development/attachment-theory-and-the-key-person-approach-r64/