



YMCA Childcare Key Worker Policy (June 2020)

The key worker is the person with whom the child can relate to in a special way. The staff member is assigned a small number of children so that they can pay close attention to the child's development and it is this person's responsibility to make a connection with the child's family. The key worker will help the child manage their day transitioning from one activity to another and build on their relationship ensuring the child feels cared for.

The key worker system is not about working with your group but about working with the individuals in those groups.

Role of the Key Worker

The role is to develop a relationship with the child and their family. Each child is different and will need different things from their key worker. Being adaptable and attentive to the child will help ensure this special relationship is given the nurture it needs. Here are a few basics to the role:

Below are some suggestions as to how you can initiate bonding and start to build trust with a child.

- Ask families for photographs of important people in the child's life that you and the child can look at and discuss together.
- Greet the child by name each day with a smile and a few words of welcome.
- Touch, hold and speak to the child in a warm, attentive and leisurely manner.
- Give the child attention when they demand, signal or request it and when they pause in exploration/play. Interact with the child at their own preferred pace.
- Recognise and value what the child does by attending to and describing for them the activities that they are involved in.
- Provide time for the child to complete activities in an unhurried way. Ensure that they can complete activities.
- Take photos of the child involved in an activity that you can look at later together to start discussions.
- Give the child objects of interest from the service environment or outdoors, such as leaves, acorns, conkers, to begin conversations.
- Find out what books the child likes either from home or in the setting and read them during a one-to-one interaction.
- Support the child in their interactions with peers and other adults.

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- Make only positive comments about the child and others around them.

Don'ts

- Key worker system does not mean taking your group of 10 or 11 and only working with them in isolation.
- The system is about the individual within the context of the group. Think about seamless play with all the children while keeping an extra eye on your key children.
- Early Childhood Educators (ECE) cannot and should not ever diagnose a child. Although ECE's have lots of experience and may see something a parent does not, it is vital if you have a concern that it is expressed to the family with facts and not a label. Only a recognised professional can assess or diagnose a child.
- Don't be worried about spending time with the other children. It's important to build a trusting relationship with the other children as their key worker may be out sick or on holiday.

More information on the Key person approach can be found [here](#)

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