Session 1.1
Essential qualities of a key person?

This session is aimed at getting practitioners to reflect and discuss what they personally feel are the most important skills and attitudes that a key person should have. This is the starting point, establishing where each of your practitioners are, in their understanding of this role.

Task 1

- What do you think are the essential qualities of a key person?

a. Ask practitioners to discuss with the person next to them.

b. Encourage practitioners to list at least 10 qualities.

These might be things like: good communicator, reliable, sensitive & caring, good team worker, good knowledge of child development, qualification, loves playing with children...etc. the list could be endless.

c. Ask practitioners to try and identify the 3 qualities on their list that they think are the most important.

This can be difficult as they will probably feel that all of them are important but it will improve and generate discussion.

d. When everyone has completed their own list, share as a group the 3 qualities each person rated the most important.

It's often useful to record these on a flip chart sheet for everyone to see and it's very likely that practitioners will come up with some of the same qualities as each other.

Task 2

Essential qualities of a key person - video clip 1

- Ask practitioners to watch the video sequence of Ava's first full day at nursery and to jot down brief responses to the observation questions.

a. How does Ava react to being dropped off at nursery by mum?

Possible observations might be: unsure, sad, hesitant, taking it all in, bewildered, interested, quite confident with support of key person etc.

b. What do you notice about how Mum and the key person respond?

Possible observations might be: tuned in to mum, tuned in to Ava, talks to Ava about something that belongs to her, from home (lunch bag), Encourages Ava 'well done', acknowledges mum's departure with Ava- doesn't just distract, suggests pick up and wave. Both key person and Mum allow pleanty of time and don't rush the experience for Ava.

- Pause the video at the end and ask practitioners to feed back their observations to the group as a whole.

You may choose to ask who would like to share their observations and then ask if anybody else has anything different they would like to add (rather than going round every person)

- If you were Ava, what would you want from your key person?

  a. Ask practitioners to spend some minutes reflecting on this question and bearing in mind how they thought Ava must have been feeling. What qualities would Ava want in her key person?

     Possible thoughts might be: attentive, knows you, understands you, knows your mum, doesn't push you too quick, let's you take your time, understands that you are feeling unsure, tunes into your feelings etc.

  b. After reflecting on this ask each practitioner to feed back their thoughts on this.

- Are there any further qualities you would add to your list now?

  a. After reflecting and discussing what Ava would want from her key person does this change their 3 most important qualities or are there any other qualities they would add to their list?

  b. If practitioners have rated organisational skills, qualifications, paperwork skills etc. highly, encourage reflection on the softer skills that are of prime importance in this role and that Ava would need.

  c. Ask practitioners to review their list and to add or change essential qualities if appropriate following this discussion.

Action to be taken

Encourage the practitioners to keep hold of their list of 'essential qualities' and remind them to udate and change it as they work through the rest of the course.