

## **MANAGING SEPARATION ANXIETY**

### GENERAL

Separation anxiety can be identified when signals are clearly understood by staff. Signals include those showing anger and those showing withdrawn resignation:

- Crying inconsolably for extended periods of time; the distress causing coughing, difficulty in catching breath or vomiting
- Holding breath
- Head banging or rocking
- Ambivalent feelings towards the key person – e.g. wanting to be picked up then struggling to get free
- Frantic movement or lashing out with arms and legs
- Biting and tantrums; snatching from others
- Jealousy shown towards other children in the key group
- Refusing food or drink or showing signs of digestive problems
- Temporary interest in toys or others, then crying again
- Prolonged periods of sleep
- Switching off – staring blankly
- Being held but not responding or smiling
- Crying when the parent collects them or cheering up and eager when parent collects
- Indiscriminate seeking of attention from any adult who comes into the room.

Completing the day sheets provides a picture of evidence that builds up which may suggest that the child is experiencing separation anxiety.

The parent/carer and the key person discuss the reasons that the separation anxiety has developed or been made worse.

The goal of any action is to ensure the child is secure through forming an attachment with the key person.