

# EAST AYRSHIRE RELATIONSHIPS FRAMEWORK

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*Scottish Ministers have set an ambition for our country: that Scotland is the best place to grow up and bring up children. To achieve that we require a positive culture towards children. One where children are welcomed and nurtured. One where we all are alert to their needs and look out for them. Where they are listened to – whatever their age – and where their views are heard and their rights protected. They should be respected as people in their own right. Not as economic units for the future. But as members of Scottish society now with rights to a present day life that allows them to fulfil their potential.*

(Scottish Government 2014)



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# East Ayrshire Children's Services' Relationships Framework

## Policy and Legislative Framework

The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) policy framework identifies eight indicators of a child's wellbeing. It aspires that every child should be Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Responsible, Respected and Included (SHANARRI). These eight indicators map on to the four capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) which states that the children and young people of Scotland should be Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Effective Contributors and Responsible Citizens. The Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act (2014) is the statutory articulation of the GIRFEC policy framework. This enshrines a Rights Based approach to all of our activity and interactions with children, young people and their families.

Recent consultation document on the above Act states:

*We are committed to addressing the challenges faced by children and young people who experience poor outcomes throughout their lives. To do this, we need services that are child-centred, responsive and joined up. Children and young people deserve services that can intervene more effectively and earlier in their lives and that listen and take full account of their views. Achieving this involves a programme of change that is not limited to any one service, but embraces a change in the culture and practice of all services that affect the lives of children, young people and their families.*

We recognise that in order to deliver upon the above, it is necessary to be more ambitious in terms of the scope of the strategic model being proposed. We recognise that we need to build upon our current good practice to develop a more coherent approach to our practice across all appropriate services which support children and young people, to build further on improving positive relationships and social, emotional and mental wellbeing for all of our young people. This Framework has a re-vitalised emphasis on early intervention, prevention and promotion of children and young people's strengths through the medium of universal services. However, where children and young people's circumstances dictate that they require support from a targeted or specialist service, the same set of guiding principles should inform their experience of the service.

The Scottish Government's Common Core of Skills, Knowledge, Understanding and Values for the 'Children's Workforce' In Scotland (Scottish Government, 2015) outlines a set of core competencies for all practitioners who come into contact with children and their families. It describes the common knowledge, skills, understanding and values that everyone should have who work with children **(Appendix 1)**.

These essential characteristics are set out in two contexts

1. Relationships with children, young people and families
2. Relationships between workers

We propose that the implementation of the Relationships Framework will support practitioners to ensure that their values, knowledge and skills fit with these essential characteristics. This has never before been nationally stated as explicitly and matched to measurable outcomes. To support all practitioners to feel skilled and positive in meeting these goals, it is necessary to develop a strategic and operational plan for the promotion and improvement of social, emotional and mental wellbeing which builds on existing strengths, but recognises the different skill sets and professional backgrounds of all staff and partners. The aim is to better build a holistic, robust service that meets the needs of all children and young people across the authority.

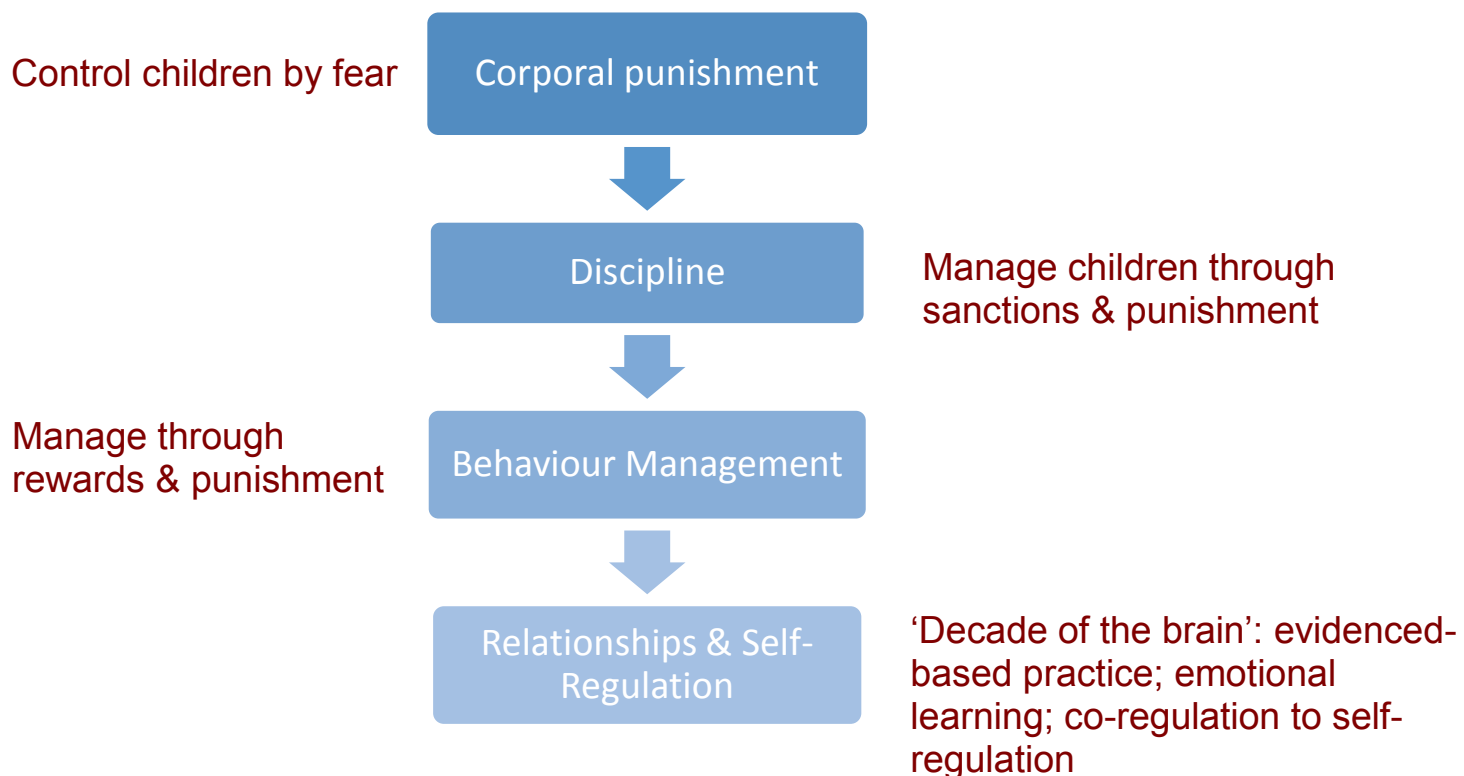
As such, it is incumbent upon all to ensure that our policies and practices align in order to best meet the needs of our children and young people to enable them

*'...to be the most successful they can be and provide them with a full passport to future opportunity'*

Scottish Government (2015)

### 1.1 Behaviour and Developing Practice

A brief history of approaches aimed at managing behaviour over the past few decades can be seen below, illustrating where we are now in utilising effective relationship-based approaches:



## Why a Relationships Framework?

Decades of research in the behavioural and social sciences have produced a rich knowledge base that explains why some people develop the adaptive capacities to overcome significant adversity and others do not. The single most common finding is that ***children who end up doing well have had at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult.*** These relationships provide the personalised responsiveness, scaffolding, and protection that buffer children from developmental disruption. They also build key capacities—such as the ability to plan, monitor and regulate behaviour, and adapt to changing circumstances—that enable children to respond to adversity and to thrive. This combination of supportive relationships, adaptive skill-building, and positive experiences constitutes the foundations of what is commonly called resilience.

Science now tells us that it is the reliable presence of at least one supportive relationship and multiple opportunities for developing effective coping skills through these relationships that are essential building blocks for the capacity to do well in the face of significant adversity. Thus these attachment relationships, are key not only in the early years but across the lifespan. A growing body of evidence shows that the coping skills that support effective adaptation in the face of adversity are built through a developmental process that occurs over an extended period of time, from infancy through adolescence and into the adult years.

The Harvard Centre for the Developing Child (2015) states that

*‘Productive innovation is likely to have its greatest impact when family-based programs are designed to complement teacher-student programs with a common goal of assuring supportive and caring relationships as well as child skill-building. School-based programs that focus explicitly on enhancing children’s executive function skills and preventive interventions that foster secure attachment in infants where there is risk for maltreatment are promising examples of applying such knowledge.’*

## The National Picture – What do we know about our Children and Young People?

**Scotland’s Mental Health Children and Young People 2013 (NHS Health Scotland)** measures the wellbeing of Scotland’s young people over time. The data gathered suggests that there is considerable scope for action with regards to improving the emotional wellbeing of children and young people living in Scotland as mental wellbeing appears to be at a relatively low level.

For example, being happy improved over time but was still only reported

- by around half of P7 children
- less than half of S2 young people
- a third of S4 young people

In addition, approximately a quarter of young people in S2 and S4 are reported to experience ‘emotional and behavioural problems and conduct problems’.

- 14% of 16-19 year had results indicating likely presence of a common mental health problem
- 26% of S4 pupils had scores in the borderline or abnormal range indicating likely mental health difficulties.

Amongst school-aged children, in general, children's mental health deteriorates with increasing age and in particular as children transition to secondary school and progress through adolescence. Hence, whilst the majority of our children and young people have good mental health, substantial numbers clearly do not.

With regards to the Learning Environment, the majority of children report feeling generally positive about school and having supportive friendships but there is a clear deterioration in these indicators as children progress through secondary school. Substantial numbers of children also report feeling under pressure with respect to having adequate free time, having control over how they spend their free time, and having a manageable volume of school work.

*'It has only recently become clear that mental ill health among children and adolescents is not confined to only a small proportion of young people, but is surprisingly common. Although mental disorders may not constitute catastrophes that disrupt young people's lives and futures, they cause much suffering, worry and disturbance and they can be precursors of severe disorders in adults.'* (World Health Organization, 2004)

A survey based on the Wellbeing indicators has been implemented across establishments in East Ayrshire over the past three years. This has provided useful baseline information with extension into focus groups and semi-structured interviews.

In summary, the responses from children and young people to the surveys were very positive with high levels of agreement being recorded in relation to most of the statements.

However there are some aspects which require a closer focus, particularly in relation to how young people feel about:

- Being listened to
- Choices
- Talking about feelings
- Belonging to the community

## Transforming Our Relationship with our Communities

East Ayrshire Council is committed to 'transforming our relationship with the communities we serve' and creating a culture of 'working with, rather than doing to' our communities. In 2013 Vibrant Communities was introduced with the aim of:

- Harnessing the enthusiasm, talent and 'can do' spirit which exists across East Ayrshire;
- Changing culture and unlocking the knowledge, skills and experience of local people and employees;
- Valuing local people and recognising them as assets;
- Embedding co-production, building social networks and promoting reciprocity, inclusion and equality.

One of the key outcomes of this work is simply that communities are coming together more. There are more people involved in shaping the future of their community, there are new community groups and events being created, and more people are joining existing groups, organisations and events. Benefits for communities that are more connected can include increased companionship and new, stronger friendships; feelings of belonging, adventure and challenge; improved self-image, hope and enthusiasm for the future. Better relationships with and between our communities will provide more positive and nurturing experiences for the children and young people growing up there, whose first experiences with their families will be in their local community. There is recognition of the importance of continuing to grow and develop our relationship with communities, especially with our young people as the future of East Ayrshire. Feedback from the young people of East Ayrshire via their Youth Conference highlighted they felt in East Ayrshire:

- young people are confident, resilient and optimistic for the future
- young people express their voice and demonstrate social commitment
- young people consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control.

## Adverse Outcomes

The **Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions into Crime (2010)** has sought to ascertain the factors that combine to lead a young person into criminality. Of particular interest is the transition to adolescence.

*'...the critical moments for youngsters in terms of conviction trajectory appear to be linked to truancy and school exclusion in the early years following the transition from primary to secondary school'*

The authors go on to state,

*'While current Scottish policy does highlight educational inclusion as a key target, there is an urgent need to develop more imaginative ways of retaining challenging children within mainstream educational provision'*

Within the Learning Environment they identify key factors that may result in involvement in Self Harm and Violence. These were

- Poor attachment to school
- Truancy
- Bullying Others
- Being Bullied
- School exclusion

As such, we have a challenge to ensure that we meet the needs of our children and young people and ensure we support them to develop the resilience they require to deal with life's knocks and *'provide them with a full passport to future opportunity'* (Scottish Government, 2014). While this may seem like an impossible task, the evidence tells us that there are many domains of protective

factors that we can shape in order to impact upon a young person’s behaviour and emotional wellbeing. As such, in East Ayrshire we take a strengths-based approach where we attempt to minimise risks and maximise protective factors for our children and young people. See below for a summary of protective factors:

| <b>Domains of Resilience – Protective Factors</b>   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Families</b>   | <b>Community</b>  | <b>Educational Establishments</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family harmony</li> <li>• The presence of at least one unconditionally supportive parent or parent substitute.</li> <li>• A committed mentor or other person from outside the family</li> <li>• Nurturance and trust</li> <li>• Lack of separations</li> <li>• Lack of parental mental health or addiction problems</li> <li>• The ability or opportunity to ‘make a difference’ by helping others</li> <li>• Encouragement for autonomy (girls)</li> <li>• Encouragement for expression of feelings (boys)</li> <li>• Close grandparents</li> <li>• Sibling attachment</li> <li>• Four or fewer children</li> <li>• Sufficient financial and material resources</li> <li>• Not to be excessively sheltered from challenging situations that provide opportunities to develop coping skills</li> <li>• sources of informal support such as members of the extended family, peers, neighbours, informal mentors or role models</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighbour and other non-kin support</li> <li>• Peer contact and strong social support networks</li> <li>• Positive adult role models</li> <li>• Sources of informal support such as members of the extended family, peers, neighbours, informal mentors or role models</li> <li>• Participation in a range of extra-curricular activities</li> <li>• The ability – or – opportunity – to ‘make a difference’ by helping others</li> <li>• Not to be excessively sheltered from challenging situations that provide opportunities to develop coping skills</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage and empower students as valued members and resources in the school community. Particularly by providing opportunities for meaningful participation</li> <li>• Increase pro-social bonding</li> <li>• Set clear, consistent boundaries understood by all staff and children and young people for academic achievement and appropriate behavior</li> <li>• Teach life skills</li> <li>• Provide caring and support</li> <li>• Set and communicate high expectations</li> <li>• Ensure a feelings of safety among staff and students</li> <li>• Develop supportive relationships within the school</li> <li>• Ensure trust, respect, and an ethos of caring</li> <li>• Participation in a range of extra-curricular activities</li> <li>• Not to be excessively sheltered from challenging situations that provide opportunities to develop coping skills</li> <li>• sources of informal support such as members of the extended family, peers, neighbours, informal mentors or role models</li> <li>• A committed mentor or other person from outside the family</li> </ul> |



## Play

Children's play provides a primary behaviour for developing resilience, thereby making a significant contribution to children's well-being' (Lester and Russell, 2007). This is a key concept in the GIRFEC approach.

Importantly, children's play is crucial to Scotland's wellbeing; socially, economically and environmentally. *'The experiences children have in early life – and the environments in which they have them – shape their developing brain architecture and strongly affect whether they grow up to be healthy, productive members of society'* (Harvard University, 2007).

Play is an essential part of a happy, healthy childhood and *'when children play their brains do two things: they grow and they become organised and useable'* (Hughes, 2013). Children and young people need adults to encourage and facilitate their play, whilst not inhibiting their opportunities for freedom and choice. This means that everyone involved in planning, designing and managing local streets, open spaces and parks such as early learning and childcare staff, youth workers, teachers and play practitioners, parents, carers and local residents, particularly those willing to offer their services as volunteers, can all have a major impact on children and young people's play opportunities, and thus on their outcomes.

## Our Key Aspirations for our Children and Young People

Our key aspirations for our children and young people are outlined in the figure below.



These aspirations are the outcomes of secure relationships with key adults and peers. They are the foundation to emotional wellbeing, active participation and achievement and the foundation to the SHANARRI indicators - Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Responsible, Respected and Included.

GIRFEC is the national approach to improving the wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland. Through policy and the delivery of services at both national and local level, the approach

- Puts the best interests of the child at the heart of decision making
- Takes a holistic approach to the wellbeing of a child
- Works with children, young people and their families on ways to improve wellbeing

- Advocates preventative work and early intervention to support children, young people and their families
- Believes professionals must work together in the best interests of the child

GIRFEC recognises that how well a child can achieve or how healthy they are may be linked to how safe or respected or included they feel. We believe that children and young people learn and grow best in settings in which they feel happy, confident and safe, and that central to this is the experience of positive relationships among all members of the community.

In order that our children and young people grow up feeling Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Responsible, Respected and Included (SHANARRI) we aspire to ensure that all of our children and young people grow up viewing

1. Other children and adults as trustworthy
2. Themselves as valuable and worthy
3. Themselves as effective when interacting with others.

Ensuring our young people have this view of themselves and others to help them navigate life is crucial. Education is a social endeavour. Across the school years, children who are prosocial tend to have higher levels of attainment and achievement than less prosocial children. Research shows us that if our children and young people are equipped with the above internal 'road map' they will have the resilience to both cope well with adversity and to achieve to the best of their ability. It also tells us that when children have such a 'road map' they are more

- |                               |                           |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Curious                     | • Emotionally positive    |
| • Independent                 | • Socially competent      |
| • Willing to Accept Challenge | • Enthusiastic            |
| • Empathic                    | • Persistent              |
| • Compliant                   | • Self-confident          |
|                               | • Tolerant of Frustration |

The impact of having such an outlook has been found to be a protective factor from Early Years to Secondary School and from low-risk to high-risk populations. The negative impact of not having the protection of the above outlook, however, is thought to be greatest for children in areas of multiple deprivation.

In addition to the above, we aspire to ensure that our children and young people are able to regulate their own emotions and seek support appropriately from others. When children can manage their own emotions well, known as the ability to *self-regulate*, it is the key to:

- Accepting challenges at school
- Raised academic achievement
- Managing anxiety in order that it does not interfere with learning.

## The Role of Practitioners – what difference can we make?

In order to ensure our children and young people have the above qualities and skills, we need to ensure that all practitioners are effective in supporting them to develop such qualities and skills. To be effective all practitioners who come into contact with our children and young people must build strong relationships and connect with and care for children with warmth, respect, and trust.

*Why are practitioner-child relationships so important for improving outcomes?*

Research shows us that a positive adult–young person relationship influences

- Growth in language and conceptual knowledge
- Social competence
- Engagement in academic activities
- Positive relations with peers
- Challenging Behaviour
- Attitudes toward school
- Engagement in the classroom
- Higher scores on achievement tests

Positive teacher-pupil relationships have also been found to result in fewer referrals for Additional Support and, in adolescence, research has found that young people who reported strong positive relationships with their teachers were less likely to use drugs and alcohol, attempt suicide, engage in violence, or become sexually active at an early age.

As such, the impact that practitioners can have on children and young people cannot be overstated. As previously stated we believe that children and young people learn and grow best in settings in which they feel happy, confident and safe, and that central to this is the experience of positive relationships among all members of their communities. Furthermore we believe this will be achieved by ensuring our staff are skilled, feel supported, and are committed to working within the framework provided in this document.

It is possible to identify the attitudes and skills that contribute to successful practice in developing effective relationships and in managing behaviour. Practitioners will vary in the extent to which their natural repertoire will be effective. While all staff will benefit from professional support and development, this will be most useful when it is tailor-made and responsive to individual need.

As previously stated above, the Scottish Government’s Common Core of Skills, Knowledge, Understanding and Values for the ‘Children’s Workforce’ In Scotland (Scottish Government, 2015) sets out a set of core competencies for all practitioners who come into contact with children and their families (**Appendix 1**).

These essential characteristics are set out in two contexts

1. Relationships with children, young people and families
2. Relationships between workers

The implementation of the Relationships Framework will aim to support practitioners to ensure that their values, knowledge and skills fit with these essential characteristics.

## Key Assumptions of our Community of Practice

The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions of Crime states that both emotional wellbeing and offending behaviours in adolescence are shaped by the context in which our young people grow and learn.

*'Adversity...more often stem(s) from close interactions in respect of peers, family and other adults in the young person's milieu and the mechanisms which they use to cope with the negative consequences of such interactions (such as self-harming behaviours).'*

As such, we are likely to impact most effectively on our children and young people when we try to improve the relationships between young people and their peers and young people and the adults in their lives.

The study also states

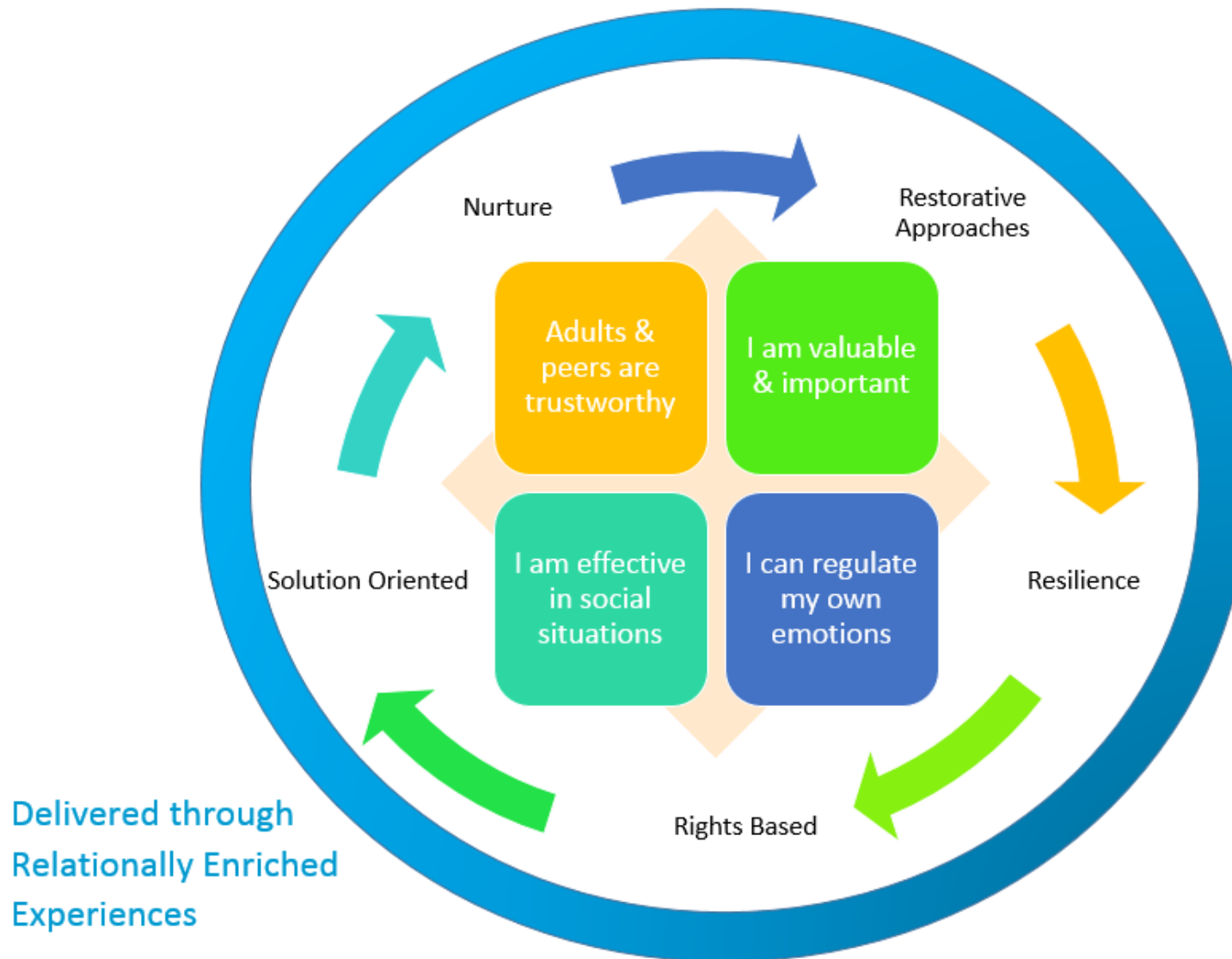
*Taken together these findings suggest that a chronic conviction trajectory may be aggravated by increased exclusion from school.*

As such approaches that seek to promote inclusion should also reap dividends.

**This framework is founded on eight key assumptions:**

1. Where a child or young person is experiencing difficulties we do not give up on them. They are a member of our community and they need our ongoing support. Our view is always child centred and governed by the question - is this decision or approach in the best interest of the child?
2. Practitioners do make a difference to children and young people's sense of self, their mental wellbeing and behaviour, which in turn impacts on attainment.
3. Behaviour is learned and, therefore, can be shaped by social context
4. Practitioners can develop effective skills to help build positive relationships with children and young people and their families, and model such relationships themselves. We work in collaboration with children, young people and their families. We interact rather than transact.
5. Approaches are most likely to be effective where they are
  - Underpinned by an evidence base
  - Based upon solid psychological, sociological and/or educational theory
  - Preventative and focussed on early intervention
  - Supported by an Implementation model
6. Planning for children and young people, at all levels, should be built upon a robust assessment of need.
7. Strong and effective relationships, shared knowledge and skill base between practitioners, across agencies and with parents, carers, children and young people are crucial in ensuring we best meet need
8. The attitudes and skills that contribute to successful practice in effective relationships and positive behaviour management will be part of ongoing self-evaluation, at individual, establishment and service levels in order to ensure that the systems in which our children and young people exist and learn in are continually attuned and retuned to meet their individual need.

## Our Approaches



## What do we mean by Relationally-Enriched Experiences?

Children and young people learn and grow best in the context of safe and secure relationships. The following approaches help to create that environment for them. The Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research (2009) confirmed the use of a wide range of support and provision. 75% of Secondary Head Teachers indicated that they frequently or sometimes used Restorative Approaches.

| Our Approaches and Rationale  |  |
|---|--|
| What's Our Approach?  | Why?   |
| <p><b>1. Restorative Approaches</b></p> <p>Restorative Approaches build upon the notion of positive regard which is based on the premise that we all need to be regarded for who we are. This moves our thinking away from only our actions/achievements having value. It also helps us differentiate between the person and their behaviour.</p> <p>Significantly restorative approaches are grounded in the understanding that individuals are responsible for their actions, and within our communities when an action has caused harm, those involved have a responsibility to put things right. This moves us on from the language and culture of crime and punishment.</p> <p>Restorative approaches are fundamentally grounded in 'relationships' and in repairing, restoring and consolidating relationships when they have been harmed. They are about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing, maintaining and repairing positive relationships</li> <li>• helping people learn and develop the skills to make good choices now and throughout their lives</li> <li>• Enabling us to acknowledge when we have harmed someone and think about what to do to put it right</li> <li>• Encouraging us to consider our feelings and those of others (emotional wellbeing)</li> <li>• Encouraging us all to consider our behaviour and the effect it has on others</li> </ul> | <p>The research on Restorative Approaches shows evidence of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive impact upon relationships and behaviour</li> <li>• Development of essential life skills</li> <li>• Calmer learning environments</li> <li>• Young people making more good choices, more often</li> <li>• Higher self-esteem and increases in prosocial values</li> <li>• An increase in willingness to take responsibility for misbehavior by young people</li> <li>• Two-thirds reduction in offending rates after targeted youth offending programme, as well as two years after discharge</li> <li>• Reduction in exclusions, when implemented effectively in schools</li> </ul> |

| Our Approaches and Rationale  |  |
|---|--|
| What's Our Approach?  | Why?   |
| <p><b>2. Resilience</b></p> <p>Resilience can be defined as<br/> <i>'Normal development under difficult conditions'</i> (Fonagy et al. 1994)</p> <p>A resilience-based approach fits closely with the aim of Getting It Right For Every Child to build on the strengths in the child's whole world, always drawing on what the <u>family, community and universal services</u> can offer.</p> <p>A child or young person's resilience is fostered when their <u>internal and environmental</u> protective factors are strengthened.</p> <p>Ensuring that a child or young person's strengths and protective factors are realised to their full potential is likely to help to improve outcomes by building their protective network (Daniel and Wassell 2002) and supporting their capacity to cope under adverse life experiences and day to day stressors.</p> <p>At the same time, it is crucial to be alert to whether any adversity of vulnerability is putting children's well-being at risk and whether these risk factors can be ameliorated by action at an individual or environmental level.</p> <p>There are many factors associated with resilience, but Gilligan (1997) suggests that there are three fundamental building blocks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A <b>secure base</b> whereby the child feels a sense of belonging and security</li> <li>2. Good <b>self-esteem</b>, that is an internal sense of worth and competence</li> <li>3. A sense of <b>self efficacy</b>, that is a sense of mastery and control, along with an accurate understanding of personal strengths and limitations</li> </ol> | <p>Resilience theory underpins the Getting it Right for Every Child approach and associated Children and Young People's Act (2014).</p> <p>Research shows that promoting protective factors can buffer, ameliorate, and mitigate the effects of risk and stress, propelling the child or young person to academic and life success (O'Dougherty Wright, Masten, and Narayan, 2013). Conversely, it also shows that reducing risk factors can also have a significant impact.</p> |

| Our Approaches and Rationale   |   |
|--|---|
| What's Our Approach?   | Why?  |
| <b>3. Rights Based</b>   |   |
| <p><i>Getting It Right for Every Child</i> translates the UNCRC approach to special care and assistance by embedding UNCRC Articles within the GIRFEC values and principles. Most importantly, GIRFEC requires every practitioner to apply a UNCRC approach in day-to-day practice by putting children at the centre.</p> <p>Children everywhere have the right:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to survival</li> <li>• to develop to the fullest</li> <li>• to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation</li> <li>• to participate fully in family, cultural and social life</li> </ul> <p>Although it is easy to acknowledge the importance of children's rights, it is more difficult to make sure they are reflected in the practical approaches we adopt every day to support children and families. <i>Getting It Right For Every Child</i> has 16 values and principles that endorse fully the UNCRC approach to the upbringing of children. <i>Getting It Right For Every Child</i> is the methodology for ensuring that any practitioners helping children and their families work in a way that fully embraces UNCRC.</p> <p>Fundamentally, the approach promotes practitioners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to consider each child as an individual with their own needs, risks and rights</li> <li>• to engage and involve the child as far as practical in discussions and decisions which affect his or her future</li> <li>• to seek out and consider the voice of the child</li> <li>• to plan and review activity to improve outcomes, based on well-being.</li> </ul> | <p>The Wellbeing indicators, outlined by GIRFEC, capture the range experiences that children should have in a society which values them and which properly respects their rights (Education Scotland, 2013). The CYP Act (2014) enshrines these indicators in statute and ensures that each child's individual rights are activated. See Appendix II.</p> <p>Examples of this would be the statutory assessment of wellbeing that the CYP Act advocates. The following is taken from UNCRC <i>The Foundation of Getting it Right for Every Child</i> (Scottish Government, 2013):</p> <p><i>Scottish Ministers have set an ambition for our country: that Scotland is the best place to grow up and bring up children. To achieve that we require a positive culture towards children. One where children are welcomed and nurtured. One where we all are alert to their needs and look out for them. Where they are listened to – whatever their age – and where their views are heard and their rights protected. They should be respected as people in their own right. Not as economic units for the future. But as members of Scottish society now with rights to a present day life that allows them to fulfil their potential.</i></p> |



| Our Approaches and Rationale  |  |
|---|--|
| What's Our Approach?  | Why?   |
| <b>4. Solution Oriented Approaches</b>  |  |
| <p>Solution Oriented Approaches (SOA) have psychological principles that can be applied to a wide range of fields. The approach aims to help individuals, teams and organisations to develop constructive, customised solutions which have a higher likelihood of leading to change. SO aims to reduce 'problem talk' that can become stuck. The approach tries to move from individuals and organisations' default 'solution-patterns' – recurring ways of coping with difficulties - to develop solutions most likely to work for their own context.</p> <p>SOA aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer a way of working described as 'solution-building'</li> <li>• Offers principles and a structure for talking to someone who is experiencing difficulty</li> <li>• Help people develop goals and solutions rather than analysing current problems</li> <li>• Focus on the present and future, on goals and how to achieve them</li> <li>• Focus on 'what works' and amplifying strengths rather than analysing weaknesses</li> </ul> <p>SOA have some of the following key principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. People have the necessary resources to make changes</li> <li>2. Everyone has their own ways of solving problems</li> <li>3. Collaboration enhances change</li> <li>4. Language shapes and moulds how we make sense of the world</li> <li>5. There are always exceptions to the problem</li> <li>6. Small changes can lead to bigger changes</li> <li>7. If it works do more of it; if it doesn't, do something different</li> <li>8. The problem is the problem, not the person</li> </ol> | <p>De Jong and Hopwood, (1996) found SOA can be effective for depression, suicidal thoughts, anxiety, sleep problems, eating disorders, withdrawn behaviour, financial concerns, parent-child conflict, communication problems, family violence (actual or threatened), sexual abuse, physical abuse, marital/relationship problems, sexual problems, bereavement, self-esteem problems and sibling issues.</p> <p>Solution Oriented Approaches in establishments involve a process that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduces time spent reacting to indiscipline, by renewing whole-establishment efforts to promote positive behaviour and positive relationships</li> <li>• improves learning, motivation, problem-solving and creativity – by staff as well as learners</li> <li>• enhances relationships with parents and carers</li> <li>• promotes the most effective partnership working on a multi-agency basis</li> </ul> |

| Our Approaches and Rationale   |   |
|--|---|
| What's Our Approach?   | Why?  |
| <b>5. Nurturing Approaches</b>   |   |
| <p>Nurturing approaches are based on psychological theory, including, child development and attachment theory. The approach aims to provide children and young people with attachment figures from whom they develop safe and secure relationship. With this attachment securely in place, the child or young person can fully develop their social and emotional skills, which in turn impact on their academic attainment and mental wellbeing. Boxall (2002) suggests that when a child feels safe, these attachment behaviours are accompanied by explorative behaviours. Furthermore, once children successfully develop secure social and emotional skills, they can go on to develop effective cognitive functioning and successfully engage in learning.</p> <p>Nurture has six underlying principles (Lucas, Insley and Buckland, 2006):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children's learning is understood developmentally</li> <li>2. The learning environment offers a safe base</li> <li>3. The importance of nurture for the development of self-esteem</li> <li>4. Language is a vital means of communication</li> <li>5. All behaviour is communication</li> <li>6. The importance of transition in children's lives</li> </ol> <p>The above principles are based on Attachment theory and child development and aim to support a child or young person develop self-regulation skills. Nurture aims to use these principles not only as part of a targeted intervention, but also to help create a nurturing and inclusive community. Nurture seeks to permeate the vision, values and ethos of the community and contribute systemically to supporting social and emotional and development (Lucas, 1999; Doyle, 2003).</p> | <p>Nurture has a growing evidence base with over sixty-two academic studies carried out over the past twenty years (Nurture Group Network, 2015). Outcomes include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• long-term mental health improvements (O'Conner and Colwell, 2002)</li> <li>• greater academic attainment (Reynolds et al, 2009; Seth-Smith et al, 2010) and</li> <li>• improved attendance (Cooper, 2011)</li> </ul> <p>Cooper, Arnold and Boyd (2001) found that children with social, emotional and behavioural needs who received Nurture made more academic progress than similar children in a control group who had not received Nurture. They were also found to be more likely to remain within mainstream education.</p> <p>Cooper and Whitebread (2007) found that significant improvements were demonstrated in social and emotional functioning. They also found stronger effects where Nurture had been established for at least two years.</p> <p>Effects found in the research have shown to be sustained over time.</p> |

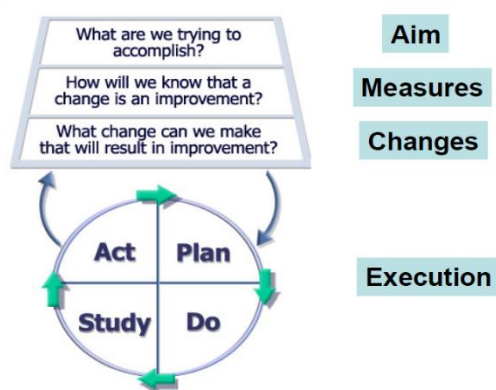
## Culture of Improvement

Within East Ayrshire there is an embracing of a culture of improvement, through adoption of a range of innovative practice through the Early Years Collaborative and Raising Attainment for All now encompassed in the Children and Young People's Improvement Collaborative. We aspire to create a community which continually strives to improve outcomes for our children and young people through meaningful reflection. Improvement planning, informed by self-evaluation, is the means to achieve such effectiveness. Self-evaluation will be informed by evaluative feedback from practitioners, parents and children and young people.

Using data gathered locally is crucial in identifying strengths upon which we may build and in identifying areas for further development.

## Implementation

The research tells us that complex problems require complex solutions. As such effective interventions need to be complex, multi-faceted, adapted to the local context and able to respond to unforeseen obstacles and unintended effects. In order that we implement changes that truly meet the assessed need in our local communities, be they on an individual, family or organisational level it is crucial that we adhere to a model of improvement such as that articulated through the Plan, Do, Study, Act cycle supported across the authority. This data gathering approach will help ensure that response best meets needs.



Evidence indicates that the following features are associated with improvement and positive outcomes:

### *Effective leadership and management*

- Effective leadership is active, distributed, supportive, clear and consistent in demonstrating a commitment to an inclusive approach, based on strong ethos, relationships of mutual respect, and high expectations of achievement, attainment and behaviour
- Positive and assertive management is communicated from senior management through all practitioners to all children and young people in explicit and implicit ways
- Senior Managers use data in a systematic way to inform and drive improvements in policy and practice to:
  - target learners who need support and challenge
  - identify successful practice and practice that needs support and challenge to improve
- Effective practice actively promotes inclusion and minimises the need for social exclusion
- Senior Managers recognise that exclusion or moves outwith the child or young person's own community are damaging to the attainment, achievement and life chances of that child or young person and their inclusion within the school and wider community.

### *Staff attitudes, skills and knowledge*

- Practitioners consistently demonstrate respect and positive regard, have high expectations, set clear boundaries and are child-centred in their approach

- Practitioners have a solid understanding of child development and how best to meet the needs of our most vulnerable children and young people
- Effective support is provided as an entitlement for all staff in relation to their roles and responsibilities
- Staff development incorporates basic behaviour management, covering key areas of learner engagement, building, maintaining, repairing and restoring positive relationships, and preventing and managing difficult situations.

## Evaluation

How will we know the Relationships Framework is active within practice and leading to improved outcomes?

- Mapping of key components to relevant current plans across Children and Young People's Services
- Workforce development opportunities – needs analysis of staff development requirements and plan to meet need on planned and evaluated basis
- Children and Young People's Service Plan – reflect and report on how staff across services have developed a relationships focus to their work, through individual practice, service-specific priorities and shared multi-agency priorities.
- Identify measures currently being gathered that would identify impact on children and young people, for example but not exclusively:
  - Attendance data
  - Exclusions data
  - Attainment and achievement measures for all, including LAC and those at risk of LAC
  - Wellbeing survey measures
  - Sustained family and care placements
  - Number and nature of CAMHS referrals
  - Outwith placements to specialist provision: education, care, health

### ***In sum***

Each of the services working with and for children, young people and their families - Education, Health and Social Care Partnership, Vibrant Communities and Housing - agree that they will embed the Relationships Framework in their practice in order that the children and young people in East Ayrshire experience:

*A positive culture towards children. One where children are welcomed and nurtured. One where we all are alert to their needs and look out for them. Where they are listened to – whatever their age – and where their views are heard and their rights protected. They should be respected as people in their own right... with rights to a present day life that allows them to fulfil their potential.*

(Scottish Government 2014)

Appendix I

Common Core of skills, knowledge and understanding and values

**Essential Characteristics of those who work with children, young people and families in Scotland**

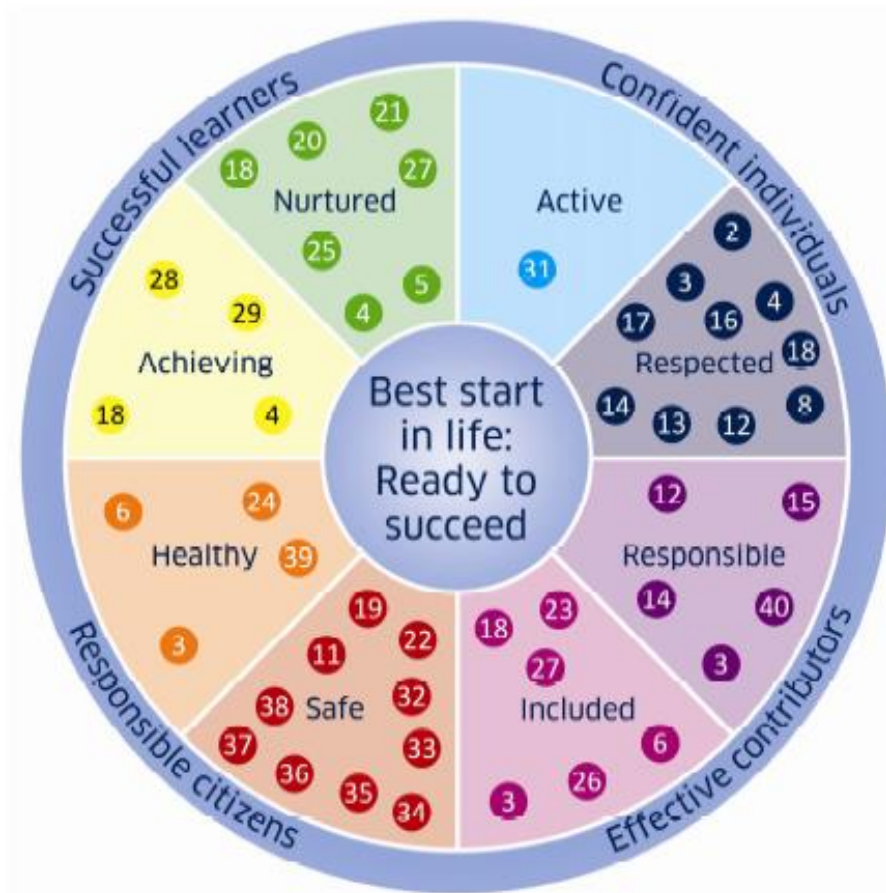
|  | UNCRC guiding principles   |   |  |   |
|--|--|---|--|---|
|  | Non-discrimination   | Best interests of the child   | Right to life, survival & development  | Respect the views of the child  |
|  | <i>As an employee or a volunteer you will:</i>   |   |  |   |
| <b>Context A:<br/>Relationships<br/>with children,<br/>young people<br/>and families</b> | <p>A1. Recognise that the needs and strengths of children, young people and families are unique and will be influenced by their environment, backgrounds and circumstances</p> <p>A2. Understand your impact on children, young people and families and how they might perceive you. Adapt your tone, language and behaviour to suit the circumstances</p> | <p>A3. Help identify and work with the needs and strengths in parents, carers and their networks in the interests of children and young people for whom they care</p> <p>A4. Ensure children, young people and families understand what information will be kept in confidence; and why some information from or about them may be shared</p> | <p>A5. Be aware of how children and young people develop, seek to understand vulnerability and promote resilience</p> <p>A6. Understand appropriate child protection procedures and act accordingly</p> <p>A7. Consider the needs and potential risks for each child &amp; young person in the context of where they live, their relationships and their wider world</p> | <p>A8. Include children, young people and families as active participants, listening to them, offering choices</p> <p>A9. Explain decisions and ensure children, young people and families fully understand them and their implications, especially if the final decision isn't what they hoped for</p> <p>A10. Keep children, young people &amp; families informed of progress</p> |
| <b>Context B:<br/>Relationships<br/>between<br/>workers</b>                              | <p>B1. Be aware of who can help when provision for the needs or promotion of the strengths of children, young people or families is affected by their environment, backgrounds and circumstances</p> <p>B2. Be aware of who can help when you cannot communicate effectively with children, young people or families for any reason</p>                    | <p>B3. Understand the extent of your own role and be aware of the roles of other workers</p> <p>B4. Respect and value the contribution of other workers</p> <p>B5. Know what information to share, when to share it and with whom</p> <p>B6. Be aware of who can help parents or carers identify their own needs or strengths</p>             | <p>B7. Know who to contact if you have a concern or wish to make a positive recommendation about a child, young person or family</p> <p>B8. Contribute to assessing, planning for and managing risks in partnership with others</p>  | <p>B9. Seek to support children, young people and families in partnership with them, their networks and other workers</p> <p>B10. Recognise that timely, appropriate and proportionate action is appreciated by children, young people and families as well as other workers</p>  |

## Common Values of those who work with children, young people and families in Scotland

Common values and principles are at the heart of the Common Core and the *Getting It Right For Every Child* approach. These values and principles build from the *Children's Charter* and reflect legislation, standards, procedures and professional expertise. They bring meaning and relevance at a practice level to single agency, multi agency and inter agency working across the whole of children's services. Together with the Common Core essential characteristics, the values provide a common platform for working with children and young people which all workers can draw from.

1. **Promoting the well-being** of individual children and young people: this is based on understanding how children and young people develop in their families and communities and addressing their needs at the earliest possible time
2. **Keeping children and young people safe:** emotional and physical safety is fundamental and is wider than child protection
3. **Putting the child at the centre:** children and young people should have their views listened to and they should be involved in decisions
4. **Taking a whole child approach:** recognising that what is going on in one part of a child or young person's life can affect many other areas of his or her life
5. **Building on strengths and promoting resilience:** using a child or young person's existing networks and support where possible
6. **Promoting opportunities and valuing diversity:** children and young people should feel valued in all circumstances and practitioners should create opportunities to celebrate diversity
7. **Providing additional help should be appropriate, proportionate and timely:** providing help as early as possible and considering short and long-term needs
8. **Supporting informed choice:** supporting children, young people and families in understanding what help is possible and what their choices may be
9. **Working in partnership with families:** supporting wherever possible those who know the child or young person well, know what they need, what works well for them in their family and what may not be helpful
10. **Respecting confidentiality and sharing information:** seeking agreement to share information that is relevant and proportionate while safeguarding children and young people's right to confidentiality
11. **Promoting the same values across all working relationships:** recognising respect, patience, honesty, reliability, resilience and integrity are qualities valued by children, young people, families and colleagues
12. **Making the most of bringing together each worker's expertise:** respecting the contribution of others and co-operating with them, recognising that sharing responsibility does not mean acting beyond a worker's competence or responsibilities
13. **Co-ordinating help:** recognising that children, young people and families need practitioners to work together, when appropriate, to provide the best possible help
14. **Building a competent workforce to promote children and young people's well-being:** committed to continuing individual learning and development and improvement of inter-professional practice.

## Appendix II



The *Well-being indicators* are aligned with the range of rights specified by UNCRC to enable all children and young people to grow and develop, and to reach their full potential. Each *Well-being indicator* is connected to policy and practice developments.

The Scottish Government's paper *Mapping policy, strategic and practice developments to the Getting it right for every child Well-being indicators* forms an important reference point for this paper: [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright/publications/well-being-policy](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright/publications/well-being-policy)

The *Well-being indicators* are inter-connected. For, example, it is difficult to talk about a child **achieving** without relating this to **health**, **nurture** or how active they are.

Similarly, being **safe** will connect with children whose **nurture** is inadequate or who are affected negatively by their wider world.

Using the *Well-being indicators* in the National practice model is a practical way of respecting children's rights alongside achieving the best possible outcomes for them.

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