

Children as Learners

Category: Early Years

Risk Management and Legal Implications

Failure to manage risk may impact on the delivery of Service objectives and the outcomes achieved by Service users. Education and Children’s Services aim to mitigate the implications by ongoing management and review of risk in all elements of work activity.

The production of this document is one way in which we aim to reduce our exposure to risk. By providing staff with information on good practice, making reference to other guidance that is available across the Council and providing clarity on how we should do things, we can ensure that the management of risk is intrinsic to what we do.

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Children as Learners

“Young children come to early years settings as active, experienced learners with a natural curiosity. They are unique individuals eager to make sense of the world, to develop relationships, and to extend their skills.”

(Curriculum for Excellence)

“The experiences and spaces for play we facilitate for the children should reflect the children’s ideas, aspirations curiosities and next steps in their learning. It is through play that children learn about themselves and make sense of the world around them.”

(Realising the Ambition – Being Me)

“It is widely acknowledged that the provision of universally accessible and high quality ELC enriches children with skills and confidence to carry into, and multiply, throughout their schooling, and is a cornerstone for closing attainment and inequality gaps.

Expanded ELC has huge potential to improve outcomes for all children. It is a gateway to children getting the right start and will help to ensure that our children develop as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors.

High quality ELC can contribute to our wider actions to close the attainment gap, delivering opportunities to our young people no matter their family background.”

(A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning Childcare in Scotland)

Aims

Through play we aim to enable children to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors so they can:

- use literacy, communication and literacy skills
- use technology for learning
- think creatively and independently
- learn independently and as part of a group
- make reasoned evaluations
- link and apply different kinds of learning in new situations
- relate to others and manage themselves
- pursue a healthy and active lifestyle
- be self-aware
- develop and communicate their own beliefs and views of the world
- live as independently as they can
- assess risk and make informed decisions
- achieve success in different areas of activity
- consolidate previous learning
- develop knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland’s place in it
- understand different beliefs and cultures
- make informed choices and decisions
- evaluate environmental, scientific and technological issues



- develop informed ethical views of complex issues
- communicate in different ways and different settings
- work in partnership and in teams
- take the initiative and lead
- apply critical thinking in new contexts
- create and develop
- solve problems

“By identifying more closely what we want children to learn and how best children learn we can enhance the range of learning opportunities and try to ensure that, whatever setting children attend, they have equal access to broad and balanced learning experiences.

Children learn and develop at different rates personal to themselves. They are continually trying to make sense of the world around them. Children learn best when they are active, busy learners. It could be said that they are learning all of the time from all of their experiences.”

(Realising the Ambition – Being Me)

“Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve Excellence & Equity in Education – A Governance Review highlights that, when parents are fully involved in their child’s learning, and in the life and work of their school, we see better outcomes for children, parents and school.”

(A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning & Childcare in Scotland)

How these aims are to be achieved

Adults should provide an environment where they can support and extend children's learning through play, giving opportunities for choice thus encouraging the children to:

- be highly motivated for most of the time
- be very interested in what they are doing and show curiosity
- talk with knowledge and enthusiasm about previous experiences
- initiate and lead activities
- approach adults seeking information or assistance
- respond well to opportunities for choice for example deciding who to play with/follow interests/become absorbed in the activity of their choice
- choose from activities of various ability levels
- have responsibility for their own activities
- make regular independent use of resources
- be aware of what is expected of them and to do their best in any situation
- exhibit a sense of purpose when they are engaged in tasks
- demonstrate responsibility and self-discipline in an activity approach to learning
- follow group/individual activities
- take responsibility for their play, their order of choices of resources and for working without direct supervision as appropriate
- explore independently with staff extending learning with sensitivity when necessary
- use computers and other digital resources.



Resources

- How Good Is Our Early Learning & Childcare?
- Curriculum for Excellence
- Building the Curriculum 1,2,3,4,5
- Realising the Ambition – Being Me
- My World Outdoors
- Inventory of equipment upgraded/checked/reassessed annually
- Our Creative Journey

Evaluation

The learning environment will be constantly evaluated to ensure that appropriate opportunities for learning through play in the key aspects of children's development and learning are in place - considering interests, motivation, previous experience, stage of development and the balance between free play and activities directed by adults.