

Children's Participation

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's Participation

"Every child has rights, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status.

- **Article 3** (best interests of the child) - The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.
- **Article 12** (respect for the views of the child) - Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.
- **Article 13** (freedom of expression) - Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions and to access all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law."

(United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)

We are an inclusive community. As such it requires the support and efforts of everyone within it. In Getting it Right for Every Child, ensuring children are included means examining each child as an individual and ensuring they can take part, feel included and accepted. We value and respect the central role the family play in a child's education and strive to place our families at the centre of our work.

Young children require to be nurtured and supported to realise the part they play in their community. They will begin to take responsibility for themselves and develop an understanding of the impact they can have on others. The development of independence and interdependence is crucial to the development of teamwork which nurtures the child's self-esteem and resilience in the community.

For this to be embedded in practice, there requires to be a respectful, supportive learning environment in which children know that their views, decisions and actions are significant, are valued and are respected. It is an environment where adults know how to establish this trust, support children, and most importantly, know when to step in to enhance and support the learning or step back and let the children get on with it.

Realising the Ambition – Being Me promotes the need for ELC settings to provide our young learners with:

"experiences which encourage children to contribute their own ideas and be involved in decision making about their day."

It suggests that the adults:

"involve children in making sensible choices about their own learning by helping them to plan and evaluate their own experiences."

(Realising the Ambition – Being Me)

There are no wrong decisions, only learning situations.



Aims

- To give children the skills and confidence to participate actively in the nursery and local community.
- To help children to empathise with others and to develop a sense of social and moral responsibility.
- To encourage children to develop self-esteem, a strong sense of their own identity and respect for others.
- To develop co-operation, negotiation and problem solving.

How the aims will be achieved

Staff will involve children in:

- Consultation
- Making choices
- Having a voice
- Participate in decision making

This can be done in a one-to-one conversation with a child, small group or larger group settings, Circle Time activities, on all aspects of nursery life e.g. the learning environment, development of guidance, transitions from nursery to school.

Through stories, pictures, videos and conversations in spontaneous response, to observed play and circumstances and to opportunities provided to discuss and explore moral, social and cultural issues.

Staff will look for opportunities and develop links with home, the feeder primary schools and local agencies, so that children are aware of their environment and their place within it. Through discussion and action, children will be shown that their contributions are listened to, valued and acted upon.

Staff will help children to manage their own behaviour and become aware of the impact of their behaviour on those around them.

Evaluation

Evidence that children are involved in decision making with staff and this will be evaluated regularly to ensure this involvement is continued.

Agreed procedures are in place to encourage children to be actively involved in the life of the nursery.

Evidence that parents/carers and other stake holders are included in this process and that the children are fully aware of this.