

# The childcare act 2006 in early years education



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### Unit 3: Building Positive Relationships

Every child deserves a good start in life and support to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. High quality early and pre-school learning, together, provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

Childminders and childcare providers registered on the Early Years Register must meet the legal requirements set out in the Childcare Act 2006 and associated regulations in order to remain registered.

The Childcare Act 2006 provides for the Early Years Foundation Stage Learning and development requirements to comprise 3 elements:

- The early learning goals.
- The educational programmes - the matters, skills and processes which are required to be taught to young children.
- The assessment arrangements for assessing young children to ascertain their achievements.

The requirements laid down must be delivered by the child care provider with no exceptions.

Document published by the Department for Education on 27 March 2012 states that “ there are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings”.

- Personal, social and emotional development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive

relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

- Physical development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive, and to develop their coordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- Communication and language development involves giving children opportunities to speak and listen in a range of situations and to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves.
- Literacy development involves encouraging children to read and write, both through listening to others reading, and being encouraged to begin to read and write themselves. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials – books, poems, and other written materials, to ignite their interest.
- Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to practise and improve their skills in counting numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems, and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.
- Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

- Expressive arts and design involves supporting children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

Parents and carers play an important role in assisting children to build self-respect, and then - through the child's personal understanding of that experience - develop the values and skills needed to express respect to others. This interactional process becomes a continuous cycle, as children with strong self-respect engage in constructive positive behaviours towards themselves and others, attracting praise and reinforcement, thus building further self-respect and further facilitating the capacity to demonstrate respect for others. Of course the counter to that occurs when a child experiences continuous disrespect, fails to build healthy self-respect, and then responds to those destructive and negative feelings by treating others in similarly disrespectful ways.

It is important that children learn about other people's feelings and that we show them how we behave in society and to expect all walks of life. We could help them to do this by having resources that show the different types of people. For example wheelchair users, people who are hard of hearing and other disabilities etc. You could also celebrate festivals from different cultures or religion. It is good to read the children stories about friendships and display posters that show diversity. Showing a child praise when they behave in a socially acceptable manner will give them more confidence and make them feel respected themselves.

Introducing a child to their own culture, traditions, and heritage helps the child valuing themselves and then others. Researchers (for example, Brown, 2008; Hughes et al., 2006) consistently find that young people from minority groups have better life outcomes when they develop a sense of pride in their own heritage and culture. As parents, we can cultivate this strength by helping our children participate in meaningful activities and rituals, spend time with others who share their culture or tradition, or use their native or first language. It also comes from having positive messages and role models in the media and culture that reinforce the value of one's heritage, culture, and identity.

If I was caring for a group of children from diverse cultural or ethnic backgrounds I would encourage them to explore their heritage and make it an educational project for the whole group. By making the approach inclusive rather than exclusive it would foster a greater understanding of cultural differences and backgrounds amongst all the children. For example: each week could be devoted to an individual child's particular background with that child encouraged to explore and learn about their culture (traditions, religion, celebrations, food, history) - the depth of research being determined by the child's age. The child could make a presentation to the group and be encouraged to find photos and other items to help present their culture. The child could possibly be encouraged to bring a family member with them to help with their presentation (if possible). The other children in the group would engage with the activity by making their own posters, drawings and decorations with the theme of the culture being presented. This activity would carry on for several weeks depending on the

size of the group. As an alternative, if the group was not primarily multi-cultural the above plan could still be used with a cultural theme being decided on in advance and the children being encouraged to learn about the culture and share their findings with the group.

Consistency in parenthood and for children is having the rules, routines and expectations the same over the course of time. This helps the child better understand rules and discipline, and it helps the child's world stay predictable and allows it to be a less confusing situation. Consistency helps children learn to be accountable for their actions.

Consistency is extremely important because children need set limits. When a child is allowed to do things and then reprimanded it is confusing to them. These children will push limits of adults while thinking it is okay to do so. Consistency will help the child to understand what is tolerable and what is not. What is acceptable and what is unacceptable. Being fair is only right. Children should be taught that for every action there is a consequence. It is also important for these children to help set the guidelines for what is a consequence. This should be done before the consequence is needed, not the moment of.

Positive reinforcement allows for the children to continue to have appropriate actions and become intrinsically motivated to do these actions. Positive reinforcement should be reduced over time otherwise the children will always seek the reinforcement instead of just doing the good deed in itself.

With negative behaviour it is important that you always give a reason for when you say no. The child will then know that it is not safe to cross the street because they might get hurt, or it is not safe to stand on the table because they might fall. If a child is given a reason for negative behaviour it is usually understood better and therefore will likely not happen again. And if you must give a child a limit follow through, or it will not work again the next time. The child will then push your limits and try to again get off of the hook.

In my opinion quiet time is a perfect time for children to just sit quietly and calm down and it helps you to simply get on with your work with minimum disruption. A child can be taken to quiet time without the whole class knowing and it is most effective when you simply, quietly and calmly walk up to a child and ask them to come to quiet time.

Quiet time is not to be confused with the naughty spot or naughty chair. There is a different negative feeling to being on the naughty spot, than there is to having quiet time. The naughty chair implies that the child is naughty, which is of course negative and unhelpful. Quiet time is not about making a child feel bad but an opportunity for a child to be taken out of a disruptive situation and as a consequence for unwanted behaviour. This way you are far more likely to end unwanted behaviour rather than temporarily distracted a child from it. Another good strategy is to acknowledge and praise good behaviour and mature interactions with others, rather than only acknowledging bad behaviour and aggression. Often, a child will engage in bad behaviour, including fighting with others, in order to gain the attention of nearby adults. Only paying attention to negative behaviour reinforces the idea that negative behaviour gets results.

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Conflict between children and adults or between children can be very distressing. In child care settings conflict is very common for children having trouble with an adult authority.

Over the years many behavioural theorists debated whether conflict has a positive or negative impact on child development. Some of them felt that conflict is a natural part of life. Others viewed conflict as a negative occurrence instead of being accepted as part of being human.

Research carried out by Dennis, Colwell and Lindsey from the Texas Tech University found that there are gender differences between children identifying areas of conflict. The girls tended to have more conflict with their peers over the things that had been said displaying a child to child conflict, whereas the boys manifested themselves in the form of disobeying the teacher.

Research supports work of Vygotsky who find that "... conflict provides for a learning experience for children when they have correct modelling or "scaffolding" from adults" (Travick-Smith, 2003, p54). The research showed that there were certainly gender differences, with girls' conflicts arising from reaction to " words" and boys' conflicts with " actions".

Among the many tasks of early childhood, two stand out: to communicate needs in a respectful way to other children and to listen with respect to the ideas of others. These areas of learning are important to all young children, but especially to those who participate in group settings away from home - preschool and child care programmes, playgroups, or summer camps. With



the support of knowledgeable adults, children are able to learn the skills necessary for effective communication within peer groups.

As children learn to be together in a group, they will inevitably experience conflict with another child. Many adults find conflict among children frustrating and feel uncertain about how to be helpful. However, when adults are thoughtful and skilled in their approach to classroom conflict, children benefit. Conflict resolution is an important foundation for future growth and learning.

## **References**

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