

# Policy and practice for children and young people essay

[Business](#), [Management](#)



Discuss the ideology underpinning policy and practice for children and young people and demonstrate an awareness of constructs of childhood and adolescence from either an educational or care perspective. “ The idea of belonging and membership, being part of a community, is a basic human need. It’s one of the principles of our democratic society. We all have the same needs, we want to be loved, we want to have friends, we want to feel that we are making a contribution in our families, in our communities.... We learn about understanding what someone’s interests and point of view are by interacting with them. To include everyone is to open up those possibilities for learning and appreciating our humanity.

” Gookin, J (2012). Every Child Matters 2004, (ECM) is a Government initiative for England and Wales which was launched in 2002 following the death of Victoria Climbié. It has been the title of three Government papers, leading to the Children Act 2004.

In the past it has been argued that children and families have received poorer services because of the failure of professionals to understand each other’s roles or to work together effectively in a multi-disciplinary manner. ECM was brought in to influence changes to this, stressing that it is important that all professionals working with children are aware of the contribution that could be made by their own and each other’s service and to plan and deliver their work with children and young people accordingly. This paper will discuss ideas behind ECM and demonstrate awareness of constructs of childhood in an educational setting. A look into the history of childhood shows, however, that childhood is constructed differently in

different times and places. Class, religion, labor, gender, race, politics, and education shape the way in which children experience life.

Phillipe Aries (1960) is a French Historian who argued that in the Middle Ages, the idea of childhood did not exist. Aries believed children were weaned, however once they passed the stage of being physically dependent on their parents they were to be seen as adults. Children began to work at an early age and were often seen as 'mini adults'. This meant children had the same rights, duties and skills as adults. Aries insisted that the modern idea of childhood came about after the thirteenth century and that the law made no distinction between children and adults, with children facing severe punishments. This thesis was widely accepted and built upon as this fitted with the prevailing view of the distant past.

This was when society was viewed as a cruel and unpleasant place. Lloyd De Mause (1974) stated that the history of childhood is a 'nightmare from which we have only just begun to awaken'. De Mause also adds that the further back in history goes the lower the level of childcare and children are more likely to be beaten, terrorized, abandoned, sexually abused or even killed. To add to this Lawrence Stone (1977) was perhaps the most eminent historian of the family in this period and he stated his view by arguing that the very high mortality rates among children in the past until very recently meant, that parents could not 'invest emotional capital' in their children. As a result, Stone (1977) argued that parents did not show affection for their children and consequently avoided the worst emotional damage that such attachment would inevitably involve if or when the child died, Zwozdiak-

Myers, P (2007). However, it was not long before other historians began to challenge the view of attitudes towards children and their childhood as a state. Early in the 1980's Linda Pollock harshly criticized all arguments made by Aries, De Mause and Stone.

Pollock argued that childhood experiences were not as grim as it had earlier been suggested and strongly denies that there were any fundamental changes in the way parents viewed or reared their children in this period of time. The work of Pollock was highly supported by other historians such as Rosemary O'Day and Mary Abbot who both deny that childhood 'evolved' considerably in this period. Moreover, it can be argued that not much has changed since the medieval times.

Children are being forced to grow up more quickly than ever and in our rush to make them independent, the ability for them to learn and mature is being taken from them. However, how children are being raised has changed dramatically, children would leave home in the morning and play all day, as long as they were back when the streetlights came on. No one was able to reach them all day, but the children were always ok.

That "playing outside" also meant that they were getting plenty of sunlight and constantly topping up their Vitamin D levels. The exercise and their being outside also boosted their immune systems. Those children really had everything going for them. Children today are being raised without nature for a variety of reasons: the prevalence of television and video games, being two, but another significant reason is fear. Parents fear what is outside their

front doors, violence, kidnapping, accidents and so they don't allow their children to freely explore as was common one or two generations ago. As children get older, too much screen time can interfere with activities such as being physically active, reading, doing homework, playing with friends, and spending time with family.

It has been identified that every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfill their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important as it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

According to Maslow, every individual is born with a level of certain needs. Maslow refers these levels of needs to a hierarchy of Needs and this is often used to summarize the belief system of humanistic psychology. The basic premise behind this hierarchy is that we are born with certain needs. Without meeting these initial needs, we will not be able to continue our life and move upward on hierarchy. The needs we begin life include; psychological needs such as food, water and shelter, Huitt (2007). Without proper diet and adequate rest a child's attention may split between focusing on schoolwork and worrying about hunger. With this children will begin to lack in energy when required to participate in activities and their grades will suffer.

Lack of sleep is often symptomatic of an unstable home environment, for which the solution may involve serious intervention, investing in children. Safety needs, such as needs for security and safety, Huitt (2007). Children

often worry about their safety and security, whereas adults only tend to think of their safety in an emergency. This category includes needs for children's physical safety, a secure environment and emotional safety. For every child these needs are equally important at home, in school and in the neighbourhood. However, children who come from dysfunctional families, abusive environments or foster care homes may not have the feeling of security. Belonging and love needs such as acceptance, love and belonging.

To a child, this is the need to be loved and to belong, not just in the family, but to other groups as well. The efforts of parents and the community are equally vital here; the family can provide a child the unconditional love they need, while the community can offer ample opportunities to belong to a group, team, or organization, investing in children. This may include afterschool clubs where children are part of a group and work alongside others sharing ideas and supporting others whatever it may include. Esteem needs such as, education, need for achievement and respect, Huitt (2007).

This often works in tandem with the belonging needs a child has already satisfied. At this level, not only does a child want to be part of something, but also to take pride in their accomplishments, and to be recognized by others, investing in children. Finally, the need for self-realisation which is having the need to realise one's fullest potential later in life, Huitt, W (2007). Maslow indicated that children can only achieve self-reliance, autonomy, self-esteem and other higher needs once their basic physical and emotional needs have been adequately addressed. The child's other needs have been met they can begin seeking self fulfilment. The fulfillment of these needs by

themselves or with help of family and community, leads to healthy development and a strong foundation for adulthood. Any deficiency in these needs can handicap a child, hindering his/ her performance at home, in school and in their adult life, investing in children.

However, Wahba and Bridwell reported that there was little evidence for Maslow's ranking of these needs and even less evidence that these needs are in a hierarchical order. Other criticisms of Maslow's theory note that his definition of self-actualization is difficult to test scientifically. His research on self actualisation was based on a very limited sample of individuals which included biographies of famous individuals and people who he knew and thought were self actualised and have reached their full potential in life. People included in his research were named as Albert Einstein and Eleanor Roosevelt. It can also be argued that Maslow's work focused on the development of healthy individuals dismissing abnormal behaviour and development of human beings.

Researches set out to put hierarchy to the test and it was to be identified that, while fulfillment of the needs was strongly correlated with happiness, people from cultures all over reported that self actualisation and social needs were important even when the most basic needs were unfilled, Cherry, K (2012). However, for children and families who are ' at risk' Maslow's Hierarchy of needs provides an excellent framework to help them to satisfy their needs, investing in children. Every Child Matters (ECM) is also an excellent framework launched by the UK Government, which is designed to reform the entire system of children's services in England, placing them

within ethos based on children's rights and entitlements and on positive outcomes for children. . ECM is designed to support children and young adults. It was introduced following the death of Victoria Climbié, who was eight years old.

Victoria was tortured and murdered by her great aunt Marie-Therese Kouao and her boyfriend Karl Manning. In the lead to Victoria's death, a number of local authorities were involved with Victoria's health and well being. These include the Police, Social Services, the National Health Scheme (NHS) and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). After failing to communicate with each other, the case not been investigated properly, Victoria was murdered. Her death was described as 'blinding confidence'. Kouao and Manning were sentenced to life imprisonment for the death of Victoria. The framework was brought in to make changes to the system and to educate practitioners on their delivery of service to children and young adults. ECM is in partnership with different schools, children's centre's and health services, among others.

The main aim is to ensure every child gets the support to achieve the ECM's five strands. The five strands are; to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve and make economic well being. Families and children's service providers which include police, schools, hospitals and other children's services must all play their role and participate in safeguarding and improving children's outcomes. However, Winchester, R (2009) states that Every Child Matters consists of a number of interrelated policies, so it is hard for frontline staff to judge what component is responsible for what improvement. From this the



Early Years Foundation Stage was introduced to all educational settings, which insisted that all children must achieve all of the five strands and a new educational approach to the curriculum. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is an educational guideline, which was introduced in England in 2008. It was designed to support children's learning and development from birth to five years and replaced 'birth to three matters' and 'the national standards for under eights day care and child minding'. The main aim is to help children achieve the ECM five outcomes.

The Early years Foundation Stage works alongside other children's services to ensure good practice across the age range. All educational settings have a task of ensuring that the aims and objectives of ECM are met in every aspect of school management, leadership and planning. Schools as institutions are at the heart of ECM and have a role to play in all aspects of the agenda.

The government implies that ECM and raising standards mutually reinforce strategies to ensure children are safe and healthy so that they can be better learners, Nightingale, J. Hoare, S (2011). This includes new healthy menus to promote healthy eating, more lessons on physical activities and the introduction of personal, social and health education (PSHE).

All primary schools have now developed extensive anti-bullying policy documents linked closely to varying home-school contracts with parents and carer's. Schools have also focused on all aspects of health and safety to ensure that pupils and staff have a safe working environment. This is

promoted by practitioners teaching lessons on how to stay safe and organising road safety specialist's to attend lessons.

Making sure the classroom is a supportive environment to ensure children that they are safe in the classroom and if any problems occur such as bullying teachers can deal with this effectively. To ensure children within a setting enjoy lessons and their time in school teachers try to make lessons fun and creative as possible and use children's personal interests to help motivate them within the class. Carefully planning lessons and using assessment for learning to know what level the children have started at and where to go from there is important as some children's levels of interest are weak.

Inspiring children to be motivated within the class and the community is making a positive contribution. This includes encouraging children to take responsibility within the class through given tasks or jobs to complete such as; milk monitor or line leader. Getting children involved in various clubs such as planting clubs or an eco club and discussing what can be done to help our area and our planet. With the love and encouragement of family and extended community of caring adults, childhood is the time for children to be in school and at play to grow strong and confident. Children should live free from fear, safe from violence and protected from abuse and exploitation. Childhood refers to the state and condition of a child's life, to the quality of those years and means much more than just the space between birth and the attainment of adulthood.

Looking back over the year's childhood has improved drastically, however it has been identified that Class, religion, labor, gender, race, politics, and education shape the way in which children experience life. ECM has made a huge impact on children's safety and welfare as it sets out proposals for addressing the immediate concerns for children and identifies a range of circumstances that occurred in families that impacted on the lives of children and young people in England.