

Tma02 task 1



Even young children can be involved in decision making in the family and in schools. How can adults involve children and how can involvement be difficult? Children are like adults as they require independence to some degree. Children want to feel valued and respected. They want to feel that they can express their opinions and or suggestions without the risk of being mocked and belittled, they also need to know that their opinions are valued and do matter to the adults involved. Group discussions at school and in the home is most likely one of the best ways for children to get involved in the decision making process.

School group discussions sometimes referred to as ??? carpet time??™ or ??? circle time??™ is one of the best ways to deal with problems such as bullying. There are many positive reasons as to why circle time is a good method of involving children in decision making. It can help to improve communication, respect, confidence and self-esteem to name but a few. Rai and Flynn (2004, Pg. 106) states ??? Circle time can be used to counter a bullying subculture in a school. It might also be used to: help children gain insight into communicating with other people; help children gain and maintain mutual respect among peers; raise self-esteem through affirmation, understanding and support; develop positive discipline; give training in social skills, problem solving and conflict resolution.??? At home group discussions can be used to try to combat unwanted behavior by involving the child in the decision making of the type of reprimand to be given out, from removal of television rights to being grounded or going to bed at an earlier time than normal. It could also help to resolve the conundrum behind the unwanted behavior and investigate ways to prevent it occurring again in the future.

Encouraging a child to make decisions can be very important for the child. Being able to make his or her own decisions with regards to whom is their friend teaches them independence and individuality. Allowing a child to make an undemanding decision for example what colour to paint their bedroom can be extremely important as it may help the child to feel more special, and part of something important. It may also help the child feel more appreciated as part of the family unit and within the community, this in turn may help to boost the child's self-confidence and may also boost the child's self-esteem.

Rai and Flynn (2004) suggests that encouraging a child to value their peers and their peers cultures is encouraging the child's decision to treat their peers and their peers cultural backgrounds and beliefs with the respect that everyone deserves. Unfortunately involving a child in decision making may not always be possible. This could be because the child's opinions and or suggestions may not be satisfactory to adults. Rai and Flynn (2004, pg. 117) state 'we thought that greater publicity of children's rights might be a factor, along with the possible research showing that adults who had in the past spoken on behalf of children did not really represent children's views.

It could also be that the adults involved do not know how best to involve the child or children in the decision making process. Rai and Flynn (2004) suggest that adults who want to involve children in the decision making process, however do not have the confidence to do so can seek help if they wish to as there are places that can help the adults involve children more frequently. Another reason as to why involving children in the decision

making process can be extremely difficult is because a small problem to an adult could be viewed as a substantial problem to the child, for example a child being afraid to use the school toilets or not being able to open their drinks flask and or lunch container, which could lead to further problems for example them soiling themselves or not being able to eat or drink thus leaving them hungry and thirsty. Rai and Flynn (2004, pg. 101) state ??? I hate lunchtime. I can never open my lunchbox and we are supposed to do it on our own so the helper looks cross with me??; Mum keeps grumping because I don??™t eat all my food and am hungry when I get home. I don??™t know if she is mad with me or not.??? If the child had been involved with the decision making would the child have picked an appropriate lunch container and drinks flask that he could have opened on his own or would the child have picked something similar to what his parents picked for him As adults they should have made sure beforehand that the child could have opened both the drinks flask and lunch container unaided to avoid such problems at school.

In conclusion it may sometimes be extremely difficult to involve children in the decision making process due to unacceptable ideas, suggestions or opinions, lack of interest from the child and many other various reasons and factors for example the child being unsure of what is being asked of them due to a learning difficulty. However we as adults owe it to the children to at the very least try to involve them as much as possible in the decision making process even if we don??™t use their ideas, suggestions or opinions as the children of today are the adults of tomorrow. Word count 903ReferencesRai,

L and Flynn, R. (2004) understanding children, Milton Keynes, The Open University.