

**Diploma in Child Care,  
Learning & Development**

**Unit 1**

**Unit 1**

**Principles and values underpinning work with children and the protection and promotion of children's rights.**

**1.1 Principles and Values in the Sector**

The values and principles adopted in the child care sector were designed to provide a basis for work with children in a range of settings and services. They meet the needs and rights of the child and reflect a rapidly developing sector that places the child at the centre.

The principles and values for underpinning work with children and the protection and promotion of children's rights are as follows.

**Principles**

1. The welfare of the child is paramount.
2. Practitioners contribute to children's care, learning and development and this is reflected in every aspect of practice and service provision.
3. Practitioners work with parents and families who are partners in the care, learning and development of their children and are the child's first  
and most enduring educators.
- 4.

## **Values**

1. The needs, rights and views of the child are at the centre of all practice and provision.
2. Individuality, difference and diversity are valued and celebrated.
3. Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice are actively promoted.
4. Children's health and well-being are actively promoted.
5. Children's personal and physical safety is safeguarded, whilst allowing for risk and challenge as appropriate to the capabilities of the child.
6. Self-esteem, resilience and a positive self-image are recognised as essential to every child's development.
7. Confidentiality and agreements about confidential information are respected as appropriate unless a child's protection and well-being are at stake.
8. Professional knowledge, skills and values are shared appropriately in order to enrich the experience of children more widely.
9. Best practice requires reflection and a continuous search for improvement.

Principles and values were extracted from "Introduction to the National Occupational Standards in Children's Care, Learning and Development Levels 2, 3 and 4"

## **Who are the values and principles for?**

These values and principles apply to anyone who works with children aged 0 to 16 years in settings whose main aim is children's care, learning and development.

That could include any of the following settings:

- schools
- pre-schools/ playgroups
- after school clubs
- day care
- crèches
- childminders' own homes
- nannies in a child's own home
- children's centres
- hospitals

That includes everyone, both paid and voluntary, and at all levels from the newly recruited through to managers.

## **Equality of opportunity**

Although very unfair, it is a fact that the options and opportunities for many children are limited from an early age because of the way they and their families are treated by other people.

To allow children an equal opportunity, each child should be recognised and valued as an individual and should be encouraged and helped to develop their own sense of identity within their cultural and racial groups.

## **The value of individuality, difference and diversity**

Britain today is very much a multi-cultural, multi-racial society. A large variety of cultural groups make a very positive contribution to our society. All children should have the chance to learn about other cultures that are different from their own so that no one culture is represented as being better than another. Information and background about their various traditions, customs and

festivals should be taught to all children, including those in areas where there are few members of minority ethnic groups. These traditions should be presented with a sense of pleasure and enjoyment. Introducing information about a variety of cultures can be done in a fun way through posters, food, dressing-up, clothes, stories and videos.

The child carer must ensure that in everything they do they help to teach children that all people are valuable, whatever their gender, class, racial origins, religion, culture, ability or linguistic background.

### **Promote equal opportunities and diversity**

In order to provide an inclusive child care setting that enjoys diversity and does not discriminate against children and their families, the setting should ensure the following practices are in place:

- prejudice about a particular group in society is not used to exclude children or their families from the activities of the setting
- parental activities are accessible to all parents
- all children's activities are accessible to all children
- that all activities reflect the diversity of background of all of the families represented in the community
- activities in the child care setting help children to realise that they are part of a world where people's backgrounds and experiences are diverse and that this diversity is a valuable asset
- that no child or it's family should suffer from any form of abusive treatment because they belong to particular group or because of a particular personal characteristic

The way in which adults treat children and the information they expose them to will have a huge influence on them. In order to promote equal opportunities and the value of diversity, the child care setting should ensure that they employ the following practices:

- 1 **Avoid stereotyping.** The way adults treat children can give strong messages about what is expected of them and what they can and can't achieve. For example, indicating that it is alright for a boy to do certain things but not for a girl and vice versa, restricts possibilities for children's future development by limiting their expectations about what role they can play in life. Avoiding these kinds of stereotyping traps is very important. Girls should be encouraged to be adventurous, ambitious etc, whilst boys should also be encouraged to be caring and sensitive, creative, and expected to do domestic roles.
  
- 2 **Provide positive images.** All children develop perceptions and misconceptions about various racial and cultural groups from the society we live in and the media. The environment that they are brought up in is therefore an important way of helping to overcome stereotyping expectations. Materials on display should show black people, women and disabled people taking responsible roles and men in caring, domestic or creative roles. These materials can take the form of pictures, books, puzzles, play materials, computer games, television programmes, videos or board games.
  
- 3 **Make each child feel individual.** Each of us is an individual, different from any other person. We all have different strengths, weaknesses, wishes and needs and characteristics. By appreciating children for who they are and admiring the characteristics that make them special, the carer can indicate to them that they are valuable, special and unique individuals.
  
- 4 **Treat all children equally but not all the same.** In order to treat children equally the carer may sometimes have to treat them differently from one another, adapting the way they work with them to meet their individual needs and characteristics. It is important to treat all children with equal concern, making sure that they have the opportunities which will help them to get the most out of life.

### **An equal opportunities policy**

A written equal opportunities policy can help to ensure that all aspects of the child care setting give equality of opportunity to all children and their families,

regardless of gender, racial origin, ethnic, cultural, religious, linguistic or family background.

But however useful it may look on paper, an equal opportunities policy cannot bring about real equality of opportunity unless it is supported by the adults in the child care setting who have to put it into practice. The process of discussing, preparing, agreeing, acting on and monitoring the policy is much more important than the piece of paper itself.

The policy should be developed in the following stages:

1. Discuss why the setting needs a policy, what should go into it, and who will operate it.
2. Draw up a draft policy and circulate it to everyone who has a role within the setting.
3. Invite everyone's comments.
4. Make any necessary changes based on these comments.
5. Implementation of the policy should be agreed at a formal meeting in the child care setting.
6. Develop a timed action plan for putting the policy into practice.

## Activity 1

Draw up a draft equal opportunities policy for your child care setting.

## **Implementing anti-discriminatory practices**

Good anti-discriminatory practice involves treating everyone with equal care, consideration and respect.

Research has shown that children start to learn about the differences between people at a very early age. By the age of two to three a child is aware of the difference between male and female, and black and white people. By the time they are four years old they are developing their own views about the different values attached to different people.

Children learn through imitation. They need to have good role models. If an individual acts in an anti-discriminatory way in their presence they are more likely to do so too. It is therefore important that in all that the child carer does they must help the child learn that all people are valuable, whatever their gender, race, ability or background.

Most child care settings do have good, clear written policies about anti-discrimination which make it plain that prejudice and discrimination will not be tolerated.

The policy should state that no member, user, employee or applicant receives more or less favourable treatment because of:

- nationality
- gender
- racial or ethnic origin
- colour
- sexual orientation
- disability
- cultural background
- language
- religious belief
- marital or parental status
- age
- HIV/Aids status

The child care setting will need to examine whether its practice is inclusive and anti-discriminatory from the perspective of each of the many groups that make

up our society and also whether the principles of inclusion are applied to all areas of the child care setting's practice. These principles will affect the way the setting carries out the following activities:

- advertises its services
- operates its admissions systems
- plans, presents and manages play activities for the children
- creates and maintains relationships with the children's parents
- recruits and manages its staff

The policy should be reviewed regularly.

### **Monitoring and evaluating anti-discriminatory practice**

Once the code of practice has been put into effect, the child care setting should regularly monitor and evaluate how it is being used, to ensure that the policy is not merely a piece of paper in a file but a code of practice that is actively followed. It will also be necessary to make sure that it is being implemented and to decide whether any further action is needed to ensure that it is being effective.

Exclusion to certain individuals or groups can happen even though there was no deliberate intention on anyone's part, but because some structures and systems that are set up with best of intentions can accidentally create situations that:

- prevent some people from finding out about the group and their entitlement to join it
- do not encourage all children to develop to their potential
- exclude some individuals from active decision-making within a group

It is therefore important that each of the specified areas of practice is reviewed as part of the monitoring and evaluation of its anti-discriminatory policy. To **monitor** the policy the setting will need to develop ways to measure their practice against the requirements and targets of the anti-discriminatory policy. In order to **evaluate** its practice the setting will need to assess whether the practice meets the requirements and targets of its policy or whether its practice

falls short of these targets and requirements. If there is a shortfall the setting will need to decide what needs to be done to bring its practice up to the desired level described in their policy.

### **Reacting to instances of prejudice or discrimination**

**Prejudice** can be described as an attitude, opinion or feeling, usually negative, that is formed without knowledge, thought or reason.

**Discrimination** can be described as actions based on prejudice against a person or group of people.

How anyone reacts to instances of prejudice or discriminatory behaviour will depend on the circumstances and the setting, but simple guidelines are:

- acknowledge the behaviour or remark
- state clearly that it is unacceptable
- correct any misinformation
- make it clear to the person discriminated against that you support them
- the incident should be reported to the relevant leader/manager

Sometimes in doing this all the attention is focused on the person who has made the remark, but it is important to remember to give time and attention to the child who has been the object of the prejudice. They will need comfort and reassurance and perhaps some help in knowing how to respond to any future comments with dignity.

### **Summary**

To give children the best start in life child carers must ensure all children:

- are given an equal opportunity to develop their own individual potential
- learn not to discriminate against others
- learn to value and enjoy the ways that people are different from one another

## Activity 2

How would you react to this father's comment?

'Well, you don't expect a boy to be artistic, do you? Maths and science are more suited to boys'

### **The Legislation**

There are particular laws that aim to promote equal opportunities. Some aim to prevent discriminatory practice and the expression of prejudice and others to establish the rights of individuals.

These laws can provide frameworks to make certain practices punishable, but cannot change people's attitudes. This can only come through education and exploration of ideas and helping people to develop attitudes about the equal value of each individual. That is why the work of the child carer is so influential in promoting greater harmony in our society.

### **Data Protection Act 1998**

Under this legislation, individuals have a right to information recorded about themselves in hard or electronic copies. This information should be relevant, accurate and up to date.

**Children Act 1989** actively encourages good anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice.

**Race Relations Act 1976** outlaws discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin.

**The Sex Discrimination Act 1975** outlaws discrimination on the grounds of gender.

**The Disability Discrimination Act 1995** outlaws discrimination against disabled people in employment, and in the provision of goods and services.

## **1.2 Children's rights and legislation**

In this unit we will look at the rights of the child. We look at how to ensure confidentiality and privacy for children, except where their well-being is at stake, and the child care setting's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of those individuals in their care.

### **Confidentiality**

In this position the child carer will have access to information about the children they work with and their families. Some of it will come to them directly from parents or other professionals and some of it they may pick up indirectly, perhaps from children. Some of this information may be sensitive and must be treated in a confidential way.

### **The principles of confidentiality**

Maintaining confidentiality is a fundamental part of working in a professional way for all child carers. Upholding confidentiality means not passing on personal information about the families that carers work with. It doesn't mean

that an individual can never say anything about a child of family to someone else.

Confidentiality is about understanding:

- what sort of information is sensitive and must be kept confidential
- what sort of information is suitable to share with other people
- when to seek parents' permission to pass on information about their child
- when to pass on information without seeking permission first if it is in the child's interests to do so

But a carer should:

- never discuss one set of parents with another
- take care when they are having casual conversations with friends, family and at meetings with other carers
- be cautious, even in training course sessions, and in preparing course work assignments. make references to children and families in a general way and don't refer to them by name
- be prepared for others to be curious and ask questions about the child in their care or its family
- keep any written information they have about children and families in their care in a secure lockable file, cabinet, or box, which is accessible only to the relevant members of the child care setting

### **When it is appropriate to share confidential information**

There are only two situations when it is acceptable for a carer to share or pass on confidential information. These are:

1. If parents have first given permission for them to do so. For example they may take a child to see a health visitor, but first they must discuss with the parents what they are going to say and be sure the parents are happy about them talking about the child.
2. If it is necessary to do so in the interest of the child. A child's welfare must always take top priority especially if there is any suspicion of abuse. A carer may have to pass on information without any previous discussion with the parents, in the interest of protecting their child from harm.

### **Activity 3**

What information might the child care setting hold that is confidential?

## **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children**

According to the Children Act 1989, anyone who comes into contact with children and their families in their daily work, even if they don't have a specific role in relation to child protection, has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

### **Well-being**

Well-being is defined by the five positive outcomes set out in Section 10 of the Children Act 2004. They are:

- physical and mental health and emotional well-being
- protection from harm and neglect
- education, training and recreation
- the contribution made by them to society
- social and economic well-being

### **Why it is important to safeguard the welfare of children**

All children and young people have a basic right to build a positive future and this includes emotional, physical and mental health. Good emotional well-being and mental health will enable the child to build positive relationships and cope with the ups and downs of life. It will help them to realise their own potential and have the opportunity to develop emotionally, intellectually and spiritually.

The three main influences on a child's welfare are:

1. The child's developmental needs
  - health
  - education
  - emotional & behavioural development
  - identity
  - family and social relationships
  - social presentation
  - self-care skills
2. The capacity of the child's parents or carers to parent

- basic care
- ensuring safety
- emotional warmth
- stimulation
- guidance and boundaries
- stability

3. Family and environmental factors

- family history and functioning
- wider family
- housing
- employment
- income
- family's social integration
- community resources

**(From framework for the assessment of children in need and their families, Department of Health, Department of Education, Home Office 2000).**

**How can a carer promote well-being?**

As a professional in a child care setting the carer can use their knowledge, skills, and values to enhance the experience of children over a wide range of areas. Those skills can be used to:

- recognise when a child or young person may not be achieving their developmental potential
- recognise when a child's health is impaired
- identify appropriate sources of help for children and their families

What skills and knowledge will help the child carer to fulfil their duty to safe guard and promote the welfare of children?

- children and young people will more readily relate to the carer if a trusting and respectful relationship can be built up with them

- a carer should understand what is meant by safeguarding and know in what different ways children and young people can be harmed
- a carer should understand the parents' role in safeguarding and promoting children and young people's welfare and involve them accordingly
- a carer should give careful thought regarding how to act to safeguard and promote a child or young person's welfare
- a carer should know the signs of abuse and understand that the signs may be subtle and could be expressed in a variety of ways, including play, artwork, and in their relationships with other individuals
- carers should ensure children or young people are given the opportunity to participate in decisions affecting them, as appropriate to their age and ability
- carers should undertake assessments and be vigilant to unexplained changes in behaviour and signs of neglect or abuse
- carers should observe, record, and report making a distinction between observation, facts, information gained from others and opinion, using the appropriate IT and language skills effectively
- carers should be able to recognise when a child or young person is in danger or at risk of harm, and know what action to take to protect them
- carers should develop appropriate professional relationships with children and young people
- a carer should be able to evaluate objectively
- a carer should have the confidence to challenge their own and others' practice
- a carer should be confident in their ability to represent the child or young person and his or her rights

### **The legislation related to children and their care**

There is no single piece of legislation that covers children's rights, but rather a multitude of laws and guidance that are being continually amended, updated and revoked.

Child welfare policies and initiatives target the care, health, and well-being of children, with the goal of improving child health within the public health sector. These policies and initiatives aim to protect children from the harmful effects of poverty, family and parenting problems, child abuse and neglect, and inadequate resources.

### **The Children Act 1989**

This reform upholds a number of principles, one being that a child's welfare is paramount when making decisions about a child's upbringing. It introduced the concept of parental responsibility which sets out the rights, duties, power and responsibilities of the parent or carer of a child. It also sets out to detail what local authorities and the courts should do to protect the welfare of children.

### **The Children Act 2004**

This did not replace or even amend the Children Act 1989, instead it sets out the process for providing services to children so that every child can achieve the five outcomes laid down in the 'Every Child Matters' green paper:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic well-being

It requires local authorities to take the lead through multi-agency children's trusts, to develop a children and young people's plan, and to set up a shared database of children, containing information relevant to their welfare. This means that the organisations involved with providing services to children - from hospitals and schools, to police and voluntary groups - will be teaming up, sharing information and working together, to protect children and young people from harm and help them achieve what they want in life.

Children and young people will have far more say about issues that affect them as individuals and collectively.

## **Children's Commissioner for England**

In March 2005, the first Children's Commissioner for England was appointed, to give children and young people a voice in government and in public life. The Commissioner will pay particular attention to gathering and putting forward the views of the most vulnerable children and young people in society, and will promote their involvement in the work of organisations whose actions and decisions affect them.

## **Childcare Act 2006**

The new Childcare Act is the first ever Act to be solely concerned with early years and childcare. The Act will help transform childcare and early years services in England for generations to come. Measures in the Act set out important strategic roles for local authorities to play through a set of new duties. These duties will require authorities to:

- improve the five every child matters outcomes for all pre-school children and reduce inequalities in these outcomes
- secure sufficient childcare for working parents
- provide a better parental information service

The Act also reforms and simplifies early years regulation and inspection arrangements. The Act's main provisions will come into effect in 2008.

## **Every Child Matters**

Every Child Matters: Change for Children is a new approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19.

The Government's aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic well-being

The Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme aims to put in place a national framework to support the joining up of services so that every child

can achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes. This will involve, amongst others:

- the every child matters: change for children programme aims to ensure that support for parents becomes routine, particularly at key points in a child or young person's life, because parents, carers and families are the most important influence on outcomes for children and young people
- social services will play a central role in trying to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable. they will be achieving change through closing the gap between their outcomes and those of the majority of children and young people
- the government, in partnership with local areas, is working to make sure parents and families have access to the support that they need, when they need it, so that all children can benefit from confident, positive and resilient parenting, from birth right through to the teenage years

### **United Nations Convention in the Rights of the Child 1989**

This Act includes the right to protection from abuse, the right to express their views and have them listened to and the right to care and services for disabled children and children living away from home.

### **The Human Rights Act 1998**

The Act makes it unlawful for public authorities to act in a manner which is incompatible with the rights and freedoms contained in the Act. It also requires the Government and the courts to ensure that court rulings and new Bills are compatible with the Act wherever possible. These include the right to respect for private and family life.