

1.2 Inclusive Practice

The **diversity** of individuals and communities is **valued and respected**. No child or family is discriminated against.



Equality and diversity

- All children have a need to develop, which is helped by exploring and discovering the people and things around them.
- Some children's development may be at risk, for example:
 - children who are disabled and those with special educational needs;
 - those from socially excluded families, such as the homeless or those who live with a parent who is disabled or has a mental illness;
 - children from traveller communities, refugees or asylum seekers and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.
- All children are entitled to enjoy a full life in conditions which will help them take part in society and develop as an individual, with their own cultural and spiritual beliefs.
- Practitioners ensure that their own knowledge about different cultural groups is up-to-date and consider their own attitudes to people who are different from themselves.

Children's entitlements

- All children are citizens and have rights and entitlements.
- Children should be treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. This applies no matter what they think or say; what type of family they come from; what language(s) they speak; what their parents do; whether they are girls or boys; whether they have a disability or whether they are rich or poor.
- All children have an equal right to be listened to and valued in the setting.

Early support

- It is important to identify the need for additional support as early as possible. Without it children will not get the help they need at the right time, in the way that is right for them.
- Early support for children includes listening to families and taking part in a sensitive two-way exchange of information.
- For children with the most severe and complex additional support needs you need to plan jointly with everyone who is in contact with the child. This will coordinate support and promote learning as effectively as possible.
- Knowing when and how to call in specialist help is one important element of inclusive practice.

Effective practice

- Encourage children to recognise their own unique qualities and the characteristics they share with other children.
- Make sure that you actively promote equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that all children and families feel included, safe and valued.
- Ask parents whether there is a need for any special services and equipment for children who may require additional support.
- Support children to make friends and help them to think about what makes a good friend.



Challenges and dilemmas

- Ensuring the needs of every child are fully met, even when temporarily you need to spend more time with a child who is new to the setting or whose behaviour is giving rise to concern.
- Keeping a focus on the child's needs when a parent also has significant needs.
- Maintaining records suitable for sharing with colleagues in an inter-agency team while acting as a point of contact for a child and their family.



Reflecting on practice

- How would a family arriving at your setting know that all children are welcomed and valued? By observing:
- information in pictures, words and signs indicating how to get attention?
 - a warm smile and greeting from the receptionist?
 - photographs showing the names of staff?
 - a welcome board showing children and families from a variety of cultures, saying “Welcome” in different languages?
 - signs, symbols, photographs or objects relating to the lives of families who use the setting, for example, a charity event in a nearby park attended by children and families from the setting?
 - displays showing documentation of children's play, development and learning?
 - somewhere comfortable to sit?



What do I do next?

- **Welfare requirements** are explained in full in the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* booklet.
- **Areas of Learning and Development** including effective practice, planning and resourcing at different stages are detailed in the *Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage* booklet and on the CD-ROM.
- **Early Support** information is available on the CD-ROM under areas of Learning and Development.
- **Research and resources** are available on the CD-ROM.

