Young children are vulnerable. They develop resilience when their physical and psychological well-being is protected by adults.

**Being safe and protected**
- Babies and children are vulnerable as they have little sense of danger and only learn to assess risks with help from adults.
- Reading stories and poems about everyday events is a good way of helping children to focus on who they can trust and how to keep safe.
- However, being overprotected can prevent children from learning about possible dangers and about how to protect themselves from harm.
- Learning when to say "No" and anticipating when others will do so is part of learning to keep safe.

**Discovering boundaries**
- Explaining boundaries, rules and limits to children helps them to understand why rules exist.
- When children are clear about the limits on what they may and may not do they learn to distinguish right from wrong.
- Having consistent boundaries for behaviour at home and in the setting helps children feel confident because they know what is and is not acceptable in either place.
- When children receive warm, responsive care they are more likely to feel secure and valued and want to contribute to making the rules which make things ‘fair’ for everybody.

**Making choices**
- Giving children choices helps them to learn that while there are several different options they can only choose one at a time.
- Children who are supported to make choices learn that sometimes they can have, or do, something now, while at other times they may have to wait longer for a particular choice.
- Making choices about things such as what they will do or what they will wear helps children feel some sense of control over their day.
- Remember that choices sometimes include choosing not to do something, such as choosing not to join in when everybody else is moving to music!
A Unique Child: Keeping Safe – Principle into Practice

**Effective practice**

- Allow babies and children to do the things they can, help them with the things they cannot quite manage and do things for them they cannot do for themselves.
- Demonstrate clear and consistent boundaries and be reasonable with expectations.
- Talk with parents about taking a consistent approach to challenging behaviour such as biting or scratching.
- Listen to what children tell you, and act on non-verbal signals from them, especially from children who are unable to voice their anxieties. Always take action to follow up any concerns, even if these prove to be groundless.

**Challenges and dilemmas**

- Maintaining a respectful dialogue with parents or other professionals whose views about behaviour or child rearing differ radically from your own.
- Providing sufficient opportunities and experiences for babies and children to interest and involve them without compromising their safety at any time.
- Giving children time to think about what they want and to express their wishes, rather than stepping in to help by making decisions for them.
- Being flexible about applying important rules while remaining consistent so that children do not become confused.

**Reflecting on practice**

What activities or experiences in the setting help children to think about:

- the things that make them feel good about themselves?
- the people who help them?
- how to keep themselves safe?
- how to recognise and avoid possible danger?
- reasons for making particular choices?
- the reason they are allowed to do or to have some things and not other things?

**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.

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- Relationships with both children and adults.

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