

Teaching and Learning

Voice of the child



Listening, understanding and being responsive to a child's voice, promotes participation and decision-making and is a key element of rich early years practice. By tuning in to the child's voice (both verbal and non-verbal), we get a sense of a child's personality, interests, preferences, and feelings.

“Young children are experts in their own lives and it is important that they are regarded as important sources of information about their own lives – their feelings, thoughts, views, needs, interests and preferences are sought and inform the decisions that affect their daily lives. Young children as skilful communicators Children may have different ways of communicating depending on a range of factors including their age, special needs, culture, interests, and personality. This principle starts with the understanding that all children are viewed as able to communicate their experiences. Adults need to find ways of enabling all children to communicate in ways that is appropriate for individual's children's needs and preferences.”

TASK 1

Watch the 5-minute video about how a pre-school promotes the voice of the child in their setting:
[Children's Voice in a Pre-School - YouTube](#)

What did you learn from watching the video? Think about how the children were able to take lead of their own learning.

With this in mind, working with a partner reflect on your own practice and answer the questions below:

- How often do you enable them to contribute their own ideas in their learning?
- How do you enable children to choose their own resources?
- Are children involved in the layout of the provision? If so, how does your environment reflect this?

TASK 2

With a partner discuss ways in how to ensure the voice of the child is heard. If you are working with nonverbal or younger children and babies, how can you ensure that they feel listened to?

- Are children enabled to express themselves?
- How do you as practitioners, tune into their needs and wants? Consider the child's non-verbal behaviour.
- How do you gather this information?
- How do these observations inform practice to enable you to support the child?