

Inclusive Practice

Equality and Diversity



Early years settings are required to provide opportunities for children to develop an understanding of diversity beyond their own family experiences.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the legal requirements to protect the rights of individuals and promote equality of opportunity for all. Policies and procedures need to be reviewed often to ensure you don't discriminate against anybody with a 'protected characteristic'. These include:-

- Race/ethnicity
- Gender
- Gender reassignment / gender identity
- Disability
- Religion and belief
- Pregnancy/maternity
- Sexual orientation

All children have equal rights to develop and learn. Research has shown that children belonging to certain groups are more likely to be discriminated against. Children are more at risk of discrimination if they are disabled, belong to a minority ethnic group, live in poverty or are a boy. Inclusion is the responsibility of everyone who works with children.

Task 1

With your team, work through the reflective questions below and consider any areas for development:

- Do you have inclusion, equality and diversity policies and procedures which ensure you are not discriminating against anybody with a protected characteristic?
- Are they available and understood by all staff, volunteers, and children?
- How do you ensure that information you provide to parents is inclusive and accessible?
- How would you ensure that a new family to your setting knows that **all** children are welcomed and valued?
- Do you promote diversity through the images and language you use in displays?
- Do you have a wide variety of books and resources which represent positive images of different ethnic backgrounds, cultures, disabilities, family circumstances?
- Do you have resources in the child's home language and learn some words from their language, such as 'hello', 'thank you' etc.
- Do you invite families, members of the local community into the setting to share experiences, demonstrate skills, etc?
- How would you challenge a parent that you had overheard making a discriminatory remark?
- Do you record incidents which relate to equality, along with how you responded to the incident and any further actions?
- Do you ensure that everyone attends continuing professional development that enables them to gain an understanding of equality issues?

Useful Links:

Government information on the Equality Act

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/equalities/equality-act

Government guidance documents on the Equality Act

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/equalities/equality-act-publications/equality-act-guidance-equality-act-early-years_online.pdf (councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk)

See related Q cards in the Inclusive Practice Section:

- Positive Images
- Cultural Capital
- EAL 1 – New child
- EAL 2 – Practitioner
- Immigration 1, 2 and 3
- LGBTQ+ 1 and 2
- The media