

Actively promoting British values in the EYFS

Planning activities that foster core British values in your setting

by Marianne Sargent

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to do this in an age appropriate way, through ensuring children learn right from wrong, mix and share with other children and value others' views, know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and challenge negative attitudes and stereotypes.'

(Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales, HM Government, 2015).

The values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs are implicit within the themes and principles of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The underlying principle of 'A unique child' is that individual children should be respected and have access to early years provision that fosters their unique aptitudes and abilities, enabling them to thrive and develop. Through positive relationships children develop personal confidence and learn to become more independent. They develop a sense of right and wrong and learn how to regulate their own behaviour. Practitioners plan to provide enabling environments where children feel secure and able to take risks with their learning, encouraging them to become creative and critical thinkers.

The EYFS is a democratic curriculum that acknowledges the difference in the learning and development of individual children. Observation is central to early years practice and is used to inform planning so that provision meets the needs and interests of individual children. The EYFS gives children the freedom to play, explore and learn in their own way and encourages them to find out for themselves. It aims to motivate children to have a go, persist in their efforts and celebrate their achievements, as well as to manage their feelings and behaviour when things do not turn out as planned. What's more, it encourages children to have their own ideas, make their own choices and express their own opinions.

How to use this book

This is a practical resource that takes each of the British values in turn and demonstrates how they can be actively promoted in the early years setting. To begin with, page 4 takes a closer look at each of the four values and outlines the skills, aptitudes, abilities and attitudes that underpin them, highlighting what children need to learn, develop and understand in order to uphold them.

Pages 6 to 21 contain a range of activity ideas that aim to help children develop each of these underpinning skills, aptitudes and abilities. There are four activities for each British value. Each is described in detail with discussion ideas, as well as a list of resources, suggested key questions and curriculum links. On page 5 there is a planning matrix which provides an overview of these activities, the values they promote and how they link to the EYFS curriculum.

The end of the book looks at meeting the requirements of the Common Inspection Framework with ideas for how to collect

evidence that the setting is actively promoting British values. There is a brief checklist to help practitioners consider how settings can embed British values into everyday practice. Furthermore, there is an example observation document that can be used alongside the activities in the book with helpful prompts to aid assessment and reflection. Finally, there are suggestions for resources and further reading.

Actively promoting British values

Democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs should be embedded in a setting's culture through everyday practice. Children look to adults for example and so these values should be promoted through the ethos of the setting and reflected in its policies and procedures.

The values cannot be taught. As a colleague put it: 'British values are exemplified rather than described. They are organic and moving and children are better served learning about why we have particular laws and what they are intended to protect'. The aim is not to tell children how to behave and what to think, it is to give them the knowledge and skills they need to regulate their own behaviour and make carefully considered, informed decisions. This equates with the characteristics of effective learning identified in the EYFS. Children must be engaged, motivated and encouraged to think for themselves.

While the companion to this book, *Promoting Fundamental British Values in the Early Years*, takes an in-depth look at each of the values in relation to the principles that underpin them, *Actively promoting British values in the EYFS* provides





ideas for activities that reflect the characteristics of effective learning and aim to help children develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, aptitudes, abilities and attitudes that they need to uphold each of the values.

Democracy

The success of a democracy is reliant upon active participation. We should, therefore, encourage young children to get actively involved by asking them to share their ideas and opinions and inviting them to participate in decision-making processes. One of the ideals that underpins democracy is fair and equal treatment. In the early years this means learning to share, take turns and play cooperatively. Furthermore, a democratic society takes shared responsibility. As future participants in this democracy children need to learn to respect each other and work together.

Rule of law

In order to ensure children grow up with respect for the rule of law they need to be able to distinguish right from wrong and develop an understanding of the consequences of their actions. This means helping children to become emotionally literate so they are able to recognise different feelings and understand how emotions affect behaviour. It also means teaching them how to manage such feelings, regulate their behaviour and take responsibility. However, this does not mean raising children to blindly follow rules and regulations. They should be allowed to question authority and invited to engage in debate. To follow the rule of law children need to be able to pay attention, listen and process instructions and rules.

Individual liberty

In order to enjoy individual liberty children need to have a sense of self and positive self-esteem so they have the self-confidence to portray a personal identity, express personal views and exercise freedom of choice. They also need to have the communication and language skills to convey their ideas and opinions, as well as listen to the views of others. It is important that we enable children to exercise their rights to personal freedoms from the earliest age, and encourage them to respect the freedom of others.

Mutual respect and tolerance

In order to promote mutual respect and tolerance we need to create an inclusive learning environment where all children and their families feel welcome and comfortable and negative and discriminatory attitudes are challenged. Children should learn about a variety of cultures and traditions in order that they can develop an understanding of different faiths and beliefs. They should explore similarities and differences between themselves and others so they grow up understanding, valuing and appreciating difference.

Democracy

Activity 3

Taking ownership

Resources

Role play resources

What you do

Every few weeks bring the children together and ask them what themes they would like for the role play area. List their suggestions on a large whiteboard and explain you will take a vote to see which are the most popular suggestions. Tell the children they can vote as many times as they like. Count the votes and mark them as tally marks against each option. The three options with the highest number of votes will be the role play themes for the next three weeks.

Then, at the end of the week bring the children together again. Remind them what the role play theme for the following week will be and ask them what they will need to create it. Compile a list of ideas for scenery, props, costumes and other resources. Ask the children to bring in anything they might want to use from home and gather everything you need over the weekend.

Set up the role play area each Monday morning and invite the children to help. Ask them to suggest how you should organise the space and where different props should be placed. Encourage them to use their imaginations and help create a backdrop and scenery.

As the children play in the area ask them if there is anything else it could benefit from. Is there anything missing? How might it be improved. Then at the end of each day encourage the children to take responsibility for tidying the area.

How does this promote democracy?

Involving children in planning and setting up the role play area is democratic practice because it ensures their active participation in creating their own play space. The role play area is a significant part of the early years setting and it makes sense to ensure the changing themes reflect the interests of the children. Demonstrate democracy in action by holding a vote to decide on the most popular themes and encouraging children to work together to make their ideas a reality.

Key questions

- What is your favourite role play theme?



- Which is the most popular?
- How many votes did this theme get?
- What do you think we will need to set this up?
- Where do you think I can get that from?
- Do you think this works?
- Have we forgotten anything?
- Is there anything else you need/want?
- How can we make it better?

Curriculum links

PSED: Takes account of one another's ideas about how to organise their activity; confident to speak to others about own needs, wants, interests and opinions.

CL: Uses talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking and ideas.

EAD: Plays cooperatively as part of a group to develop and act out a narrative; represents their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through role play and stories.

Activity 2

Scribbling feelings

Resources

Multicoloured playground chalks
Mixing pallets and water
Powder paints
Paintbrushes
Laminated pictures of faces depicting a range of feelings
Access to a range of natural objects and materials

What you do

Explain you would like the children to use playground chalks to create pictures that portray different feelings. Begin by talking about different emotions and how they make us feel. Initially, it is best to concentrate on the basics, feelings that all children will easily understand and relate to, for example, anger, happiness, sadness and fear. Talk about each feeling in turn, asking the children to describe them as best they can. Are they able to tell you about a time when they were particularly angry, happy, sad or scared?

Go outside to an open space and ask them to think about how different feelings might make them want to move. Demonstrate stamping your feet in anger, jumping up and down for joy, lying down in despair and cowering with fear. Can the children think of any other movements?

Take a look at the different coloured chalks and ask the children which colours they think match each of the feelings best. Divide the children into groups and explain you would like each group to create a picture of a feeling. Allow the children to choose which emotion they would like to draw then stand back and give them space to get creative. Provide powder paints and encourage the children to incorporate natural objects into their pictures as well. Reassure them that their pictures do not have to be anything in particular, they can just be forms, shapes and colours.

When the pictures are complete, bring the children together to look at what they have created. Encourage children from each group to talk about their drawings and how/why they represent a particular feeling.

How does this promote the rule of law?

The aim of this activity is to help children explore the feelings engendered by different emotions in order to help them gain an understanding of the correlation between feelings and behaviour. Children who have a greater understanding of their emotions will be better able to regulate their behaviour and



exercise self-control. They will also find it easier to empathise with and comprehend the actions of others.

Key questions

- What does anger/happiness/sadness/fear make you feel like?
- What do you want to do when you are feeling angry/happy/sad/scared?
- Where do you want to go when you are feeling angry/happy/sad/scared?
- What colour/shape do you think anger/happiness/sadness/fear is?
- Is there anything else you could add?
- Why does that remind you of anger/happiness/sadness/fear?

Curriculum links

PSED: Talks about how they and others show feelings.

CL: Uses talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas and feelings.

PD: Holds chalk/brush near point between first two fingers and thumb and uses it with good control.

EAD: Represents their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through art.