

A UNIQUE CHILD SERIES

Inclusive Practice

Equality and diversity ■ Children's entitlements ■ Early support

by Anne Rodgers

Introduction	2
Section One: Equality and diversity	4
How inclusive is your setting?	4
The role of the adult	7
Learning environments	8
Festivals and celebrations	11
Record keeping, planning and assessment	12
Section Two: Children's entitlements	15
What is inclusive practice?	15
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)	15
Children and Families Act 2014	16
Ofsted requirements	19
Every Child Matters	21
Section Three: Early support	24
Defining special educational needs	24
Two year olds progress check	25
SEND code of practice	29
Identifying needs	36
Working in partnership	38
Bringing it all together	44
References	46

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Introduction: Inclusive practice



This book has been written for early years practitioners who wish to focus on particular issues surrounding inclusion within their practice. It is important for practitioners to ensure that inclusive practice within their settings meets the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is vital to meet the individual and diverse needs of all children and to help them reach their full potential.

The EYFS 2014 seeks to provide:

- quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;
- a secure foundation through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly;
- partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers;
- equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years settings. These are:

- every child is **a unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers; and
- **children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

3. Everyone is welcomed on arrival and wished well on departure in a way that suits them.
4. Pictures, equipment and resources reflect disabled people's lives as part of a wide representation of children's differing backgrounds and experience.
5. The person in charge is committed to the active participation of children, parents/carers, team members and others to ensure good quality provision and to ensure each individual's needs are met.
6. The person in charge has made time to build links with families/schools/services for disabled children by becoming directly involved with them as part of a commitment to give all local children and families a genuine choice to be part of the service.
7. All practitioners have had attitudinal training around disability and other equality issues and continue to take part in training about inclusion.
8. All practitioners are aware that attitudes, environments, structures and policies need attention in order that no child is disadvantaged.
9. All practitioners have, or are, developing necessary skills to communicate effectively with each child, and encourage all children to develop ways of communicating with each other.
10. Each child has opportunities for formal and informal consultation so that they can express their views and opinions on sessions they take part in and on the setting as a whole, using whatever communication methods they choose.
11. Each parent/carer feels welcome and valued as an expert on their child, with a continuing key role in helping practitioners enable their child to take a full part in the setting.
12. The setting has a vision of what it wants to do; policies and procedures for how it does it and a process of

monitoring and evaluation to see how well it is doing it. This includes all who are involved in the setting in a process of continuing reflection on the development of inclusive policy and practice.

This shows that there is a lot to achieve before considering that you have an inclusive setting. Think about the following:

Is everybody welcome? Do you have a diverse client base? Do you encourage the whole community to use your setting? Who monitors the client base? Is it dependent on the families living in that particular part of the country? If so, it is important to introduce children to other cultures and diversity through activities and experiences within the setting to reflect the diversity of the country as a whole. Celebrating festivals throughout the year will ensure that children develop a knowledge base of others around them and take part in celebrating the differences and similarities that we all have.

Look at the entrance to the setting and see how welcoming it is. Make everyone feel welcome by ensuring that there are signs and pictures in place to reflect the diverse nature of the world we live in. Put up 'welcome' signs in different languages for example, these should also be at the child's height or use pictures showing images of diversity so they can identify with them.

Putting leaflets and fliers in shop windows and doctors surgeries as a marketing strategy may help others who do not know of your setting to make enquiries.

Consider the link you have within the community and how they may be developed, for example one setting telephoned their local police station and asked if they could send a police car and some officers to come and talk to the children, which they did. The children enjoyed having a sit in the police car and turning on the siren and lights and the police officers let them put on their police hats and sat and played with the children. This helped the children to see that police are not scary and they are some of the people who help us within the community.

The environment – what resources do you have? Do they reflect all sectors of the community?

It might be useful to go through your inventory of toys and equipment to see what resources truly reflect all cultures and abilities. Some fundraising may be required to help finance this. Look at the images and content of the books and stories that you read the children and songs that you sing – are they inclusive? Small world play figures are a good way to show children that there are different characters in life, puzzles depicting roles that people have for their jobs or children and adults with disabilities. Posters and displays should be inclusive and varied to reflect those families in the community.

Something to think about

- Do your resources reflect the wider community?
- Are your staff aware of their role in promoting equality?
- Do the staff attend training on equality and diversity as well as additional needs?

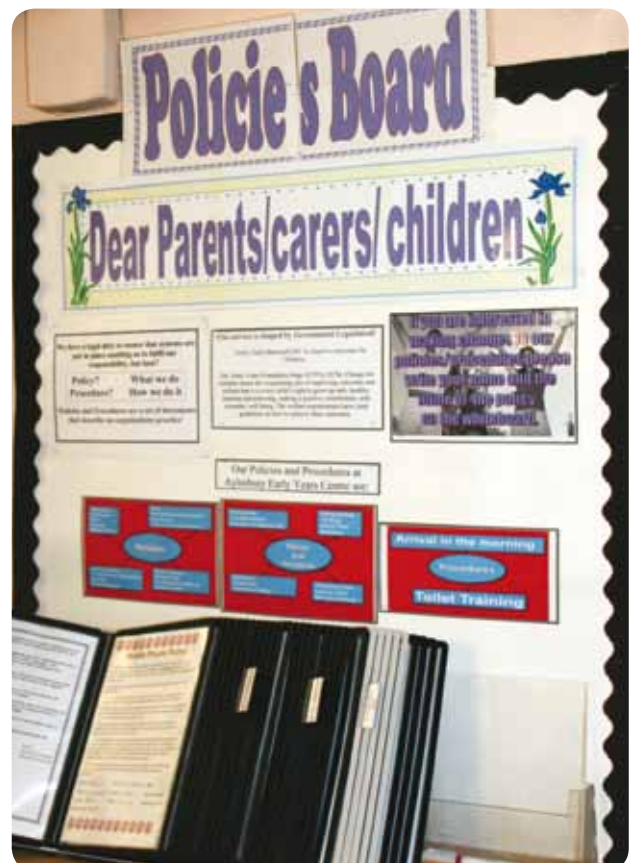
SECTION 2: CHILDREN'S ENTITLEMENTS

disclosure. If a person has been disqualified from caring for children for any reason this must be declared, and staff who are taking medication only look after children when it is deemed safe to do so. Qualifications and training records must be kept, each child must be designated a Key Person and ratios dependent on the age range of the children adhered to. Procedures for administering medicines to children must be in place and a healthy lifestyle promoted through nutritional and balanced meals and snacks. Accidents and injuries must be recorded and a behaviour policy in place. Premises and equipment must be safe and suitable for purpose and providers must have a no smoking policy. The premises must be suitable, meet required square footage and keep risk assessments in place. When taking children on outings, they must be kept safe and procedures showing how this is done should be shown. There must be an equal opportunities policy that includes all children and families who attend and information and records kept about the children and families as appropriate. Complaints must be followed through and Ofsted notified where appropriate.

Policies and procedures

Generally, the following list of policies and procedures is in place but can be adapted to make them personal to each setting:

- Admissions policy and procedures
- Allergies and allergic reactions policy
- Arrivals and departures policy and procedures
- Babies and toddler policy
- Confidentiality policy
- Data protection policy
- Health and safety policy and procedures
- ICT policy
- Inclusion and equality policy
- Induction procedure
- Intimate care policy
- Late or non-collection policy
- Lost child policy
- Medication policy
- Mobile phone and social networking policy
- Outdoor play policy
- Recruitment policy
- Safeguarding policy and procedures
- Settling in policy
- Sickness policy
- Staff working with their own children policy
- Student's policy
- Supervision of staff policy
- Travelling safe policy
- Visitors and supervision policy
- Visits and outings policy
- Waste management policy
- Whistle blowing policy.



SECTION 3: EARLY SUPPORT

Identifying needs

There are four broad areas set out in the code that will help you to identify the range of needs you may have to plan for and the support required by children.

- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning
- social, emotional and mental health
- sensory and/or physical needs.

However, individual children may have needs that cover more than one area, or needs that change over time and you should plan to meet the needs of the child based on your understanding of their strengths and any areas of difficulty.

You should not wait until any formal check, such as the progress check at age two, or the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (where relevant) to start the process of identifying needs (EYFS 2.3 – 2.10). In addition to formal check points, you should monitor and review the progress and development of all children throughout their early years in line with the expectations in the EYFS (EYFS 1.6, 1.10 and 2.1).



In doing so, you may find it helpful to refer to the non-statutory guidance Early Years Outcomes to establish whether a child has a delay or difficulty in their learning and development in relation to other children of the same age.

A delay in learning and development or worrying behaviour in early years may not necessarily indicate that a child has SEN. However, where there are concerns, you should assess whether there are any underlying difficulties. Where a child appears to be behind expected levels, or where a child's progress gives cause for concern, you should consider all the information about the child's learning and development, especially in the three prime areas of learning: communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development. The child's key person, together with the setting Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), will usually be the person who identifies any emerging difficulties and needs. All information, including any external specialist information and the views of the child and parents, should be considered when coming to decisions about the type of help, support and interventions that are needed to support the child. These should be shared with the child's parents who should be involved in any decisions about the next course of action.

Broad areas of need (Code of Practice 5.32 and 6.28-6.35)

Communication and interaction

Children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) have difficulty in communicating with others. This may be because they have difficulty saying what they want, understanding what is being said to them or they do not understand or use social rules of communication. Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, including Asperger's Syndrome, are likely to have particular difficulties with social interaction. They may also experience difficulties with language, communication and imagination, which can impact on how they relate to others.

Cognition and learning

Support for learning difficulties may be required when children learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation. Learning difficulties cover a wide range of needs including moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties (where children are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum) and associated difficulties from mobility and communication, through to profound and multiple learning difficulties, (where children are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment). Specific learning difficulties encompass a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.

Social, emotional and mental health difficulties

Children may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties or disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder.

Sensory and/or physical needs

Some children require special educational provision because they have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the general educational facilities provided. These difficulties can be age related and may fluctuate over time. Some children with a physical disability require additional ongoing support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.

Some children may come to you with their needs already identified by:

- identification of more complex developmental and sensory needs at birth
- health assessments, such as the hearing screening test, which is used to check the hearing of all new-born babies
- checks on children's physical development milestones between ages two and three by health visitors as part of the universal Healthy Child Programme
- your local children's centre or another childcare provider who may have already identified concerns and agreed interventions and support
- parents who may express concerns about their child's development as part of the information they give when a child starts with you.

Where a child's needs are already identified when starting with you, you should make sure that you have all relevant information about them. Where health services have

Something to think about

- Who are the external agencies that you work with?
- Do all staff know them?
- How can you ensure they are familiar with your setting and how you work?



already been involved in early identification, they should be already working with the family to help them understand their child's needs and access early support. They should have also alerted the local authority and should work with you to help to identify appropriate support.

You should make sure that you take account of all information made available to you about the child and consider this with the child's parents when deciding on the next course of action, including whether you are able to admit the child in line with your admissions policy.

A graduated approach to supporting needs (Code of Practice 5.39-5.46)

The code sets out a new graduated approach to providing SEN support for children with four stages of action: assess, plan, do and review. This approach should be underpinned by assessment evidence, targeted plans and evidence-based support. The approach replaces the previous Early Years Action and Early Years Action Plus and the need for individual education plans.

Your SENCO and the child's key person must work in partnership with the child's parents when analysing the child's needs and establishing the support needed,