

## Participation Policy

The aim of the policy is to ensure the involvement of all children and families who use the provision and for staff to be committed to the meaningful engagement of children and their families. All children and families benefit from being involved in decision-making and also the organisation that involves children and families will benefit from their involvement.

Participation is a Right; the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that:

**‘...it is the right of children and young people to express their views in relations to matters that affect them and to have those views taken into account.’**

Staffs working directly with children have a vital role to play in listening and responding to the voice of the child. It is key to provide an environment where children feel confident and safe thus ensuring they have the time and space to express themselves in whatever form suits them.

Early years providers have a crucial role to play in developing a listening culture which nurtures day to day listening and provides opportunities for children to make decisions about matters that directly affect them.

Listening to children is an integral part of understanding what they are feeling and what it is they need from their early years experience.

There are many ways children and families can participate:

- engaging with children and asking them their opinion on things that affect them will empower them
- listen to their views
- make decisions with them rather than for them
- provide children with a choice
- discuss choices to help influence not change their decisions
- staff creating positive attitudes about participation in the setting
- support and encourage children to take responsibility
- provide appropriate resources and involve children in the planning of resources
- children have ideas therefore encourage child initiated play, not adult led
- parental participation will include informal feedback word and mouth, comment book, suggestion boxes, thank you cards etc
- formal feedback will be obtained by questionnaires or attending short focus group session

Participation provides many benefits by:

- children and families having a voice, having a choice
- if children are given choices it will increase their self-esteem
- children will feel valued and this will provide a sense of worth
- children will gain new skills and confidence and make a real difference in something that matters to them
- improving accessibility to children and families
- staff will be more aware of children's need therefore more able to meet their needs
- reflect and value difference
- the involvement of children and their families will enhance their experience of the services they receive

Participation is part of a process of involvement therefore communicating and consulting with staff will also be part of the participation process. All staff will be involved in and influence decision making in matters that affect them and for those views to be listened to and taken account of.

Staff involved in the setting will participate by:

- weekly staff meetings
- regular staff supervision
- yearly appraisals
- good communication skills
- open door policy
- key worker system
- working in Partnership e.g. Parents, Flying Start, Early Years Advisory, Health Visitor etc

Feedback and review meetings significantly impact on the provision, with children, families and staff having an opportunity to contribute to the outcomes of the planning meeting.

Consultation and participation are essential to review practice and will be developed as a means of auditing, evaluating and evidencing children, families and staff participation in the service provided. Collating this information will be relevant to the Quality of Care Report.

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) require registered settings to conduct ongoing review of the quality of care and complete a self-assessment report. All providers are required to demonstrate that they have consulted with children, families and staff.

This approach will reflect the views and ideas of those with whom you work and help to provide the best service possible.

Signed.....Date.....Review  
Date.....