

## Participation Policy

### Principle

The aim of this 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 relation to matters that affect them and to have those views taken into account.'*

### Policy

Staff 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.

### Procedure

There are many ways children and families and staff 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 panning of resources.
- Children have ideas therefore encourage child initiated pay, not adult led.
- Parental participation will include informal feedback through word of mouth, a comment book and suggestion box.
- Formal feedback will be obtained by questionnaires or attending short parent teacher meetings.

Participation provides many benefits by:

- Children and families having a voice and 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 needs 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 supervisions.
- Yearly appraisals.
- Good communication skills.
- Open door policy.
- Key worker system.
- Working in partnership with parents.

Feedback and review meetings significantly impact on the provision with children, families and staff having the 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.

This Policy was developed on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2015