

Children's Voices at Victoria Quay Nursery

At Victoria Quay Nursery staff strongly believe that children have a vital contribution to make to the planning, delivery and evaluation of their services. Providing a wide range of opportunities for children to express their views, influence decision-making and achieve change is therefore an essential principle that is central to their work.

Children are encouraged to express their views and make choices on a daily basis as part of everyday life in the nursery, for example through play, choosing resources and activities, circle time and having a say in routines.



In addition to this, staff provide opportunities for children to take part in consultations and projects focusing on specific topics and issues. They have recently started to involve the older children in staff recruitment and have found this to be beneficial to children's learning and development.

By involving children in staff recruitment they aim to:

- Promote children's rights in line with Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Identify what qualities and skills children think are important for early learning and childcare workers to possess.
- Identify questions that children would like to ask the interview candidates.
- Take account of children's views when appointing new staff.
- Increase children's capacities as confident individuals and effective contributors.

Children are involved in the recruitment process before posts are advertised.



Staff do this by using creative activities that enable them to gather children's views on the skills and qualities they think early education and childcare practitioners should possess. For example, children who recently participated wanted to draw an early education and childcare practitioner and chose to draw around one child as a template.

Whilst creating an image of an early education and childcare practitioner, the children were supported to express their views on the qualities and skills they felt the practitioner should possess.

Children worked collaboratively and took turns at drawing, talking and listening. They identified a wide range of attributes, which were scribed and written around their drawing. Their comments included 'being a nice and kind person', 'having both girl and boy workers in the nursery', 'a person that likes outside things', 'a helpful person who is good at playing' and 'somebody who has worked in a different nursery before'. They used these ideas to help them think about what kind of questions they would like to ask someone who wanted to work in their nursery.

They composed several questions such as:

- 'In my nursery I like doing lots of different activities. What activities could you do with me?'
- 'I would like to be a nursery nurse when I am older. What would I need to learn about?'
- 'We have good nursery teachers in our nursery. What makes you a good nursery teacher?'

Children were then supported to video one another asking the questions they had decided to ask. They enjoyed playing the videos back for others, including their parents, to see, and were proud of what they had achieved.



The qualities and skills that children identified, and the actual videos of them asking their questions, were used during interviews for a new early learning and childcare practitioner. The ways in which the children's input and contributions had been used as part of the interview process were fully explained to the interviewees, so that they understood the impact of the children's participation.

Involving children in the recruitment process demonstrated that children's opinions are valued by adults and that their participation can influence real-life decision making. This process of involvement promoted children's development as active learners.

The activities required children to work collaboratively. This increased their ability to take turns and developed a greater awareness of when to talk and when to listen. Encouraging all of the children to express their views and share their ideas supported them to grow in confidence and attain higher levels of positive self-esteem.

Through staff really listening to the children's voices and taking their views more fully into account, the recruitment process was greatly improved.

Staff will continue to promote children's participation in the recruitment process by:

- Embedding the good practice that currently exists within the recruitment procedures
- Creating a booklet on participation to share with parents
- Working with children to explore different methods and tools to further promote their participation in staff recruitment
- Developing opportunities for children to play an active role in the induction of new staff within the nursery
- Devising a staff training pack to document children's participation.