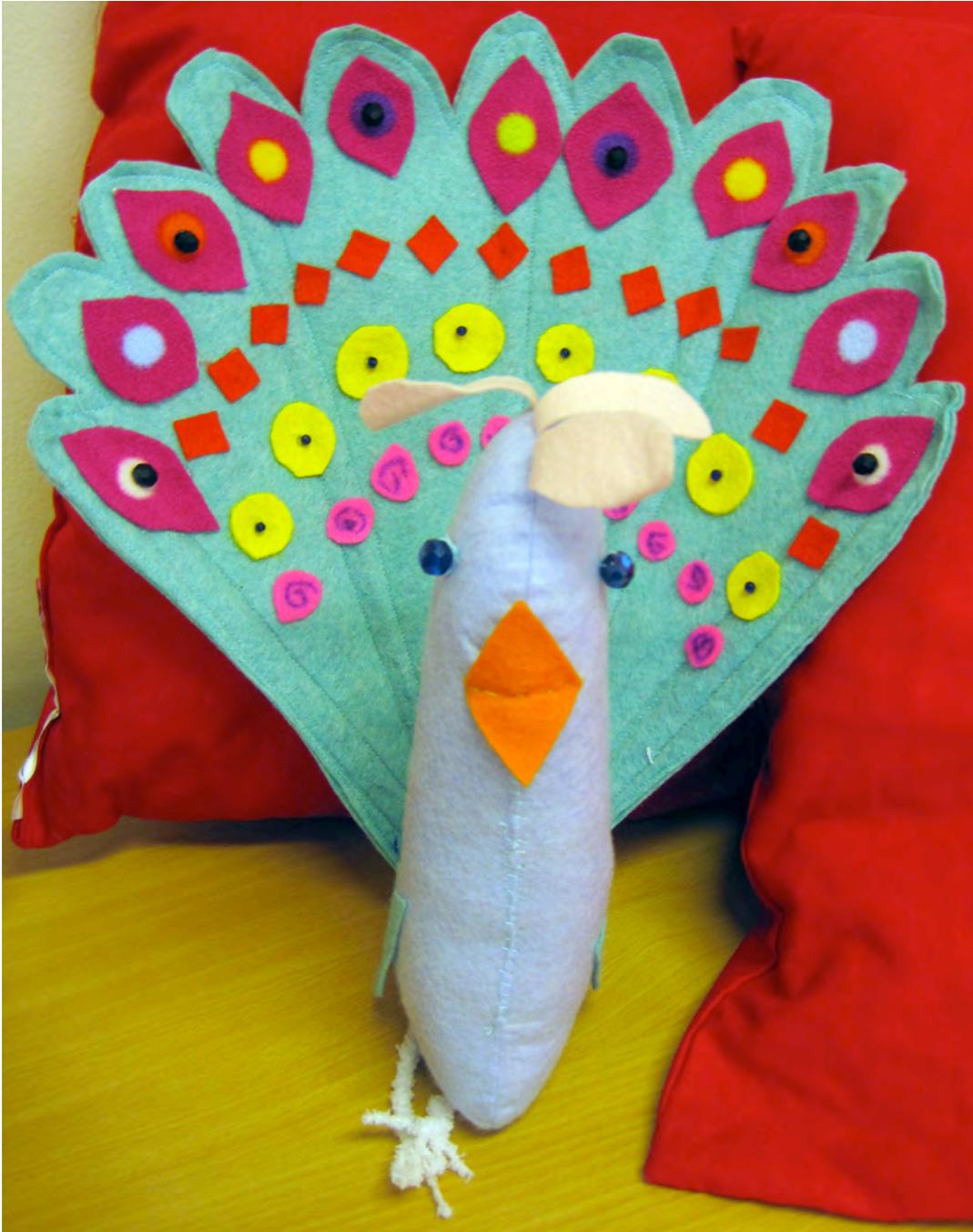


CREATING A CULTURE OF KINDNESS

A report of work with Fife Childcare and Early Years Services, Fife Council on consulting with children



Sue Gutteridge – 2011

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Acknowledgements and thanks

We would like to thank Fife Council's Children and Early Years Service for commissioning this work and for their excellent support throughout. Thanks too to the unfailingly helpful staff at the Auchterderran Centre.

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INTRODUCTION

Background

This report is the result of training commissioned by Fife Council Children and Early Years Service from the Children's Parliament and carried out in May and June 2011. The purpose of the work was both general and specific: to help staff consult effectively with the children they work with and to ensure that children's voices help shape the Respect Policy that the Children and Early Years Service is in the process of drafting. As just a small number of Fife's large out of school workforce participated in this work (which was seen in a sense as a pilot project) the Children and Early Years Service was also interested in looking at the implications for the whole service.

23 staff members were registered for the training and were split into two groups. Of the 23 registered, 20 completed all three days. The majority of the participants were from 16 of Fife Council's 52 out of school care clubs, including from two clubs specifically for children with additional support needs. These participants were a mix of Area Childcare Managers, Senior Childcare practitioners and Childcare Practitioners all of whom work directly with children. Other participants were the Voluntary Sector Development Worker who supports voluntary sector out of school clubs in Fife and staff from Levenmouth Child Care Centre and from Fife's Mobile Crèche Service.

The course co-ordinator was Sue Gutteridge, an associate of PLAYLINK, a play and leisure consultancy. The other two course facilitators were Cathy McCulloch, Co-Director of the Children's Parliament and Rosie Gibson, arts specialist.

Each group took part in three days training occurring over a four week period. All sessions took place at the Auchterderran Centre in Cardenden, Fife.

The course values

The interrelated values that underpinned our approach to this piece of work concerned human rights, the primacy of relationships and the importance of creativity (see appendix 4 for more background).

Respect for the views of children is recognised as one of the general principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The recognition that children have a right to be consulted about and have a say in decisions affecting them is articulated in Article 12 of the 54 articles that are set out in the convention. Article 12 states:

- Every child and young person has the right to express his or her views freely about everything that affects him or her.
- The child's or young person's views must be given 'due weight' depending on his or her age and maturity.

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- The child or young person has the right to be heard in all decision-making processes, including in court hearings. The child or young person can speak for him or herself, or someone else can speak for him or her.

The UNCRC establishes that children have rights as human beings and also need special care and protection. It is an international statement of the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of children which almost every member of the United Nations has signed and it is legally binding under international law.

A common challenge to the very concept of children's rights is on the grounds of children's (by definition) immaturity and therefore lack of experience and competence to make rational and informed choices. Such challenges rest on a concept of rights as the attributes of autonomous individuals. However an alternative approach, and one that we have adopted in this work, is to see children's rights as relational – that is to be negotiated and exercised in the context of their relationships with each other and with adults. This is not to infer that children's rights are in any way conditional but rather that instead of being perceived as 'demands' that mean 'children gain something therefore adults lose something', the relational approach allows for the natural fulfilment of children's rights through relationships which are based on knowledge, mutual understanding and respect. Such an approach has profound implications for the quality and nature of those relationships and the culture that they generate.

Our thinking both about relationships and creativity in the context of consulting with children draws inspiration from the pedagogical thought and practice of Loris Malaguzzi and his successors in the early childhood centres of the Emilia Romagna area of Northern Italy, known as the Reggio Emilia approach. This approach has influenced early years practice in Scotland for more than a decade, but we would see it as relevant to work with older children as well, particularly in the informal setting of the out of school care club.

The concepts of children and adults as co-researchers and of the childcare setting both as a community in itself and as part of a wider social and political environment are integral to a relational view of children's rights. They also suggest 'consultation' as a practical, relational and creative process for all the participants, adults as well as children. A part of this approach is the recognition and encouragement of the multitude of ways in which people can communicate with each other and express themselves, encapsulated in Loris Malaguzzi's concept of the '100 languages of children.'

We have also drawn on ongoing work in Scotland. Here the Children's Parliament works directly and creatively with children in the context of family, school and community to help them understand and exercise their human rights, sometimes linking with national children's rights policy initiatives. Children's rights are increasingly supported by Scottish Government policy such

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as the Curriculum for Excellence, Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and 'Do the Right Thing' which identified a number of areas where Scotland needs to make progress in implementing the UNCRC.

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COURSE STRUCTURE

See **Appendix 1** for course material, programme outlines and handouts.

Day One

The morning session started with a general welcome and introduction to the course including the two practical consultation tasks that participants would be undertaking. This was followed by an introduction to consultation and engagement with children in a human rights and human dignity context, and some exploration of how to make consultation meaningful. A short DVD 'Making Darnley Park' about children's involvement in the redesign of their local park was shown and discussed in terms of the level and quality of the children's engagement. The morning ended with the mapping and discussion of participants' individual childcare settings, including starting to think about possible consultation topics or issues.

In the afternoon a slide presentation 'Children as Explorers and Makers' formed the basis for a discussion of the ingredients of good consultation, offering a range of practical ideas and examples for people to work from. Participants then planned a piece of consultation to bring back to the second session. A range of materials and equipment was introduced which participants could use both at the planning stage and/or to take away with them and use during the actual consultation. Consultation ideas were shared and discussed. Everyone was given a copy of the draft Respect Policy to read before the next session.

Day Two

The morning began with a quick review of Day One and an outline of the aim for Day Two, which was to plan a consultation process through which the children could contribute substantially to the content of the Respect Policy.

Participants presented and discussed the consultation work they'd undertaken using the following questions as a framework:

- What did you consult about?
- How did you do it?
- What worked and how did you know it worked?
- What didn't work/what would you do differently?

In preparation for planning consultation on the Respect Policy, participants split into three groups facilitated by Sue, Cathy and Rosie for a personal 'thinking back' exercise on the topic of bullying and being bullied, drawing out comment, themes and insights.

The afternoon was spent on consultation planning. The introduction to the consultation planning session included: discussion of the Respect Policy; introduction of a common framework as a suggested approach; reviewing the

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ingredients of good consultation; discussion of documenting and recording. A range of materials was presented which participants could choose from to use in consultation. Detailed consultation followed which was carried out individually or in pairs (where there was more than one person from a particular childcare setting). The day concluded with a sharing of ideas and a review of what would be required for the final session.

Day Three

Participants gave detailed descriptive and analytical feedback of the consultation they'd undertaken using the following questions as a framework:

- What did you do and how did you do it?
- How many children were involved and over what timespan?
- What results did you get?
- How satisfied are you with the consultation?

Participants then split into two groups to review the consultation tasks in general by asking the questions:

- What worked/went well ?
- What would we do differently/in the future ?
- What didn't work/went less well?

In the afternoon, we discussed the question of 'respect' for the Fife Childcare and Early Years Service as a wider organisational and resource issue. The day concluded with an evaluation of the course as a whole (see **Appendix 2** for full analysis).

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PARTICIPANTS' EVALUATION

'Using creative methods to engage with the children was inspiring and I used these when I was carrying out my consultations. Made me think about consultation in a different way.'

'It has been interesting and has made me think more about how we consult children on a daily basis anyway and how we do so without thinking about it. It has also been good seeing and hearing about different approaches to how to consult with children and the challenges – depending on your setting.'

'Time was given to discuss ideas and exchange information.'

During Day Three, participants split into groups to review the consultation tasks. At the end of Day Three, participants filled in evaluation forms on the course as a whole. (See appendix 2 for full evaluation information).

The main findings of participants' review of the consultation process were as follows.

What worked/went well:

- Finding ways to engage children and to gain interest.
- Creativity of the process
- Sharing ideas with colleagues – collective process – involving everyone
- Building relationships – getting to know the children better – becoming aware of others' feelings
- Practical results – changes/improvements resulted from the process
- Consultation was age appropriate

What didn't work/went less well:

- Second exercise went less well – needed more time (two weeks to carry out consultation worked better than one).
- Second exercise particularly more difficult/less appropriate for younger age groups (nursery)

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What would we do in future consultation work:

- Plan with other staff so their ideas could feed in.
- Use as a method of meeting individual children's needs
- Consult to evaluate the service and improve it
- Look at scope for including parents
- Look at different ways of involving boys (audiotapes very successful).
- Would tend not to rely on questionnaires at all – too limiting.

The main points to emerge from the analysis of the evaluation forms were as follows:

- Increased understanding of why and how to consult with children, and increased confidence in doing so.
- Thought provoking – encouraged reflection and questioning
- Informative – covered unfamiliar ground in terms of consultation
- Opportunity to share ideas and discuss issues with people working in other settings
- Suggested new methods and forms of consultation
- Information on the Respect Policy
- Course methods appreciated, specifically gaining information through sharing experience with others; good group sizes; informal and interactive approach; mix of theory and practice.
- Would have liked two weeks between each of the sessions (instead of only one week between session two and three) to allow enough time for the second piece of consultation.
- More and better information before the course started, especially with regard to the Respect Policy, so that participants knew what it was about and what would be expected of them.
- More handouts/notes

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CONSULTATION TASKS

While the specific purpose of this course was to ensure that children's voices would help shape the Respect Policy, its starting point and general purpose was to help staff consult effectively with the children they work with. Central to the actual training days were the two pieces of practical consultation work undertaken by each participant in their own childcare setting over the four week period. The first was a piece of general consultation on a topic and using methods of each participant's choice. The second task had a common purpose - to contribute to the Respect Policy- and was carried out to a common framework with participants devising their own methods. In some cases, the second consultation task developed from or was explicitly linked to the first.

The first general consultation task generated a wide variety of interesting work, including the active investigation of issues or problems regarding the availability and/or use of space and imaginative approaches to consulting on and planning activities.

The idea of making and using characters or mascots was introduced on Day One in the form of Polly Respecta – a colourful and characterful parrot made by Rosie Gibson for this course. The idea of characters was taken up by participants in a number of different ways: as a collaborative designing and making project; as a vehicle through which children could express ideas and opinions; as the symbol or keeper of a Respect Policy. Most of the settings that created a character as part of their first consultation process continued to develop it and integrate it into their consultation on the Respect Policy.

The noisy quiet room

At one out of school club, the designated 'quiet' room that was always taken over by a group of noisy boys and was becoming a point of persistent conflict between staff and children was the subject of Kathleen's consultation. Observing how the boys used the space, Kathleen realised that the same cushions that to the staff suggested peace and relaxation, suggested jumping, leaping and shouting to them. She then cleared the club's main space of the furniture and activities that usually filled it, moved the cushions out of the 'quiet' room into the main space and stood back to see what would happen:

- The quiet room became quiet.
- The boys leapt about on the cushions on the main space.
- Clearing the main space of its usual furniture and activities meant that children noticed and played with formerly ignored materials and equipment.
- Children created their own quiet and intimate spaces with rugs and tents.

Kathleen commented that for lots of children, especially the boys, *'action works better than talking.'*

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Planning for the summer

At his out of school club, Greg felt that although children were frequently involved in planning activities, the process could feel superficial and did not really engage the children. And it's often the case that the over-reliance of adults on children for ideas, formulaic methods of involvement, such as template 'programme planners' and the over- use of voting to make decisions (meaning that some minority interests and ideas never get followed up) can all contribute to a sense of disengagement.

On this occasion, Greg and the rest of the staff invested thought, time and effort into creating a special and inviting physical area within the club for thinking together about the coming summer holidays. The area was full of ideas and suggestions to get everyone thinking and resulted in children and adults together building a foundation of ideas for the summer that together they could develop and realise throughout the course of the summer. A parent who came early to collect her child ended up joining in. Greg commented *'it created a real buzz.....children respond to adults' investment in them.'*

Inside out and outside in

The children at an out of school club with no outdoor space of its own wanted to be able to play outside after a day cooped up in school. Sara worked with the children to come up with ideas, starting the process with a mind map focusing on 'nature', 'friends' and 'fresh air' with the focus on opportunities for non-prescriptive, self - directed play. This formed the basis for imaginative and creative use of the immediate environment. Journeys to nearby parks became interesting events in themselves rather than just a means to an end. Wind and rain became things to experience rather than shut out. Excursions out of the club resulted in lots of materials being brought back – bringing the outside in.

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CONTRIBUTING TO THE RESPECT POLICY

The purpose of the second consultation task was to ensure that children's own priorities and concerns could contribute to the framing of the Respect Policy. There was insufficient time for the groups to devise the task. We as facilitators did that, bearing in mind the need to devise an approach that was relevant to the task in hand, was true to the values and perspectives of the course, that would yield sufficient consistency of interpretation between the different childcare settings and would be manageable within the time and resources available.

This task itself was of necessity imposed, rather than arising naturally within the childcare settings, and related to the abstract and theoretical concept of policy. It was important therefore to make the Respect Policy issues relevant to and concrete for children. The approach that we took was to introduce a common framework for the consultation while relying on participants' diverse methods and processes to achieve children's engagement.

Three pairs of statements formed this framework:

- *I feel included at my club/nursery when...*
- *I feel left out at my club/nursery when...*

- *I feel safe at my club/nursery when...*
- *I feel scared at my club/nursery when...*

- *I feel happy at my club/ nursery when...*
- *I feel sad at my club/ nursery when...*

Participants were thoughtful, imaginative and well organised in undertaking this piece of work, employing a range of different methods and approaches, and presenting their findings well to the rest of the group. Through their consultation with the children they work with, participants have generated a lot of material that we hope is relevant to the draft Respect Policy.

We have to add certain provisos – though these could also be treated as suggestions for possible further training:

- Firstly, as participants themselves have emphasised, the timescale for the second consultation task in particular was very short.
- Secondly, we have been dependent on participants' reports of their work and don't know to what extent such methodological problems as communicating expectations of 'right' answers, asking closed questions, failing to probe beyond an initial superficial response etc. may have been problems. Some participants themselves noticed children's tendency to copy each others' responses and took steps against this happening.

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- Thirdly, while participants working in out of school care projects and in part of the mobile crèche service were able to consult in such a way as to contribute directly to the Respect Policy, this was not possible in the time available in the nursery and in one of the out of school care clubs for children with additional support needs. However, in both settings participants carried out work that was valuable and worthwhile in its own right.

In analysing children's responses to the statements, some clear themes emerged. While there was some overlap between the statements, this really served to emphasise strong themes and priorities. For example, the statements about feeling scared, sad and left out all elicited some responses to do with being the last at club in the evening.

The main themes to emerge concerned:

- The overriding importance of relationships between children
- The role of both the staff and the physical environment in making children feel safe
- Children's sensitivity to environment
- The effects of over zealous/inappropriate health and safety and child protection procedures
- The importance of activities, resources and materials
- The end of the day
- Children with additional support needs – some particular issues

The overriding importance of relationships between children

'I feel included when people don't pick me last at dodgy ball'

'If I never had friends I'd always be sad'

Children told us about the overriding importance of their relationships with other children in determining their feels of inclusion and exclusion. This related to particular friendships and friendship groups, to a general atmosphere of friendliness and to the pleasure and value of collective activities.

There were many versions of *'I feel included when my friend(s) come/when I'm playing with my friends.'* How children felt often depended directly on whether their particular friends were there and if so, whether or not they'd fallen out with them:

I feel left out on Mondays because O and P aren't there.

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(I enjoy coming) on Wednesdays and Fridays because I know D and J are coming. I don't really ever feel included. Except for F and D (sometimes) and J. I feel left out when my friends aren't coming or I've fallen out with someone. I feel left out when my friends don't play with me.

Children commented on the effects of a general atmosphere of friendliness and invitation:

*I feel included when everyone is friendly.
I feel included when people are kind to me.
I feel included when people invite me to play with them.*

And conversely:

*I feel left out when people don't let me join in.
I feel left out when everyone is playing together except me.
I feel left out when I'm sitting on my own.*

Collective activities and special events were important in making children feel included:

*I feel included when we all play a game together.
I feel included when we do gardening.
I felt included when we did the talent show.
I feel included when we do things together.
I feel included when we have parties for occasions.*

The audio taped consultation, uniquely, gave us access to full dialogues, including what adults said. It was interesting to note in this case that while the interviewing adult defined 'inclusion' in terms of democratic processes, such as choosing, voting, opportunities to 'have a say' etc. and was fairly insistent on introducing this theme into the discussion on inclusion, the children themselves neither interpreted inclusion in this way nor seemed particularly interested in discussing it.

Adult: Do you feel included in how we choose games?

Child: Sometimes you don't know how to play them.

Adult: If we choose games, how do we do it?

Child: Vote

Adult: Is that including you?

Child: No answer

It was apparent during discussion that other course participants tended to define 'inclusion' and 'involvement' in this way too, possibly as a result of the

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way in which the Care Commission (now Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland) interpreted the National Care Standards. A number of points emerge from this:

- Adults in out of school care clubs need to take children's relationships with each other seriously and be aware and observant of them. While the vast majority of 'relationship situations' between children do not need a heavy handed and bureaucratic response from staff, they do require awareness, sensitivity, thought and discussion on the part of staff.
- Particular situations that cause pain to some children – such as being chosen last for team games – can and should be easily avoided.
- Children said *'I feel included when people invite me to play with them'* and *'I feel included when someone comes and asks me to play a game with them.'* A culture can be actively created in which it is expected that children invite others to join in, and where children can be encouraged to ask to be included without fear of rejection.
- Some collective activities and events help to create a group culture and give children a sense of belonging. For some children they can reduce the pressure of or be an alternative to maintaining individual relationships.
- Creating environments, providing resources and thinking about activities in such ways as to include the option of being alone will mean that being alone is not a matter of shame.

Children with additional support needs – some particular issues

Two of the out of school clubs represented on the course were specifically for children with additional support needs. The three course participants who worked in them were imaginative and constructive in the way in which they used the course material but all of us felt there's a need for more work on how best to consult with and involve children with additional support needs. This is particularly important in that we know that such children are at even more risk than children in general of being denied their fundamental rights – including that of being heard.

What emerged strongly from consultation in one of these out of school clubs (the consultation carried out in the other of the clubs did not yield specific findings) was that for the children with additional support needs it was relationships with staff rather than relationships with other children that determined children's feelings of being 'included' or 'left out'. Almost all the children's responses related to relationships with staff and to the effectiveness of communication.

I feel included when I help to plan snack
I feel included when I help to plan activities
I feel included when we do songs, music and dancing

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I feel included when people working with me listen and understand what I'm saying

I feel left out when the people with me don't talk to me

I feel left out when people don't understand what I'm trying to say

I feel left out when people don't tell me what's happening next

I feel left out when people don't listen to me

These are interesting and important findings which deserve further consideration, including the wider questions that they raise about children with additional support needs and friendship. For example:

- What does friendship mean – is it different things for different people?
- Is friendship a fundamental need for all children?
- Should friendship be actively facilitated, and if so how ?
- Do segregated clubs for children with additional support needs militate against friendship possibilities between children?

The role of both the staff and the physical environment in making children feel safe. Children's sensitivity to environment

'I feel scared when it's windy and the wind howls outside.'

Staff are a key element in making children feel safe. This was expressed in physical terms and in general terms.

The adults are here and I know their names.

If someone gets hurt an adult helps or a child goes and gets an adult. The adult comes and does first aid.

I feel safe when the helpers are here.

Physical features of the building or the environment were also important to children's sense of safety. Most of the out of school clubs meet in schools – often using vast and featureless spaces such as gym halls and school playgrounds and a number of children specifically mentioned the creation of small intimate spaces as giving them a sense of safety.

I feel safe when we're playing under the parachute.

I feel safe in the snoezelen room.

I feel safe when I'm under the tent.

I feel safe in the house I make in the gym.

Children's sensitivity to their physical environment was evident in their vivid memories of the recent storms. Also, we need to remember that the novelty of life for children can bring fear and confusion as well as excitement and pleasure.

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I feel scared when there are loud noises and bangs.

(I feel scared) maybe sometimes when there's a power cut and then it just magically comes on. I hate it when the power cuts come on and then off. That freaks me out.

But conversely, this could also lead to a sense of security.

I feel safe when the doors are locked and the wind is blowing.

The following points emerge from this:

- Adults play an important emotional and practical role in making children feel safe and in being able through their presence to convert a scary situation to a safe one.
- Often the physical settings for out of school care in particular are less than satisfactory and we may underestimate how much this affects children. However, with imagination, effort and the right resources adults can to some extent mitigate this.

The effects of over zealous/inappropriate health and safety and child protection procedures

'I feel safe because you've got to ask to go to the toilet in case there's a fire as they need to know where you are.'

A number of the children's responses suggest that some health and safety and child protection procedures may actually be making children feel frightened and insecure.

We checked that none of the settings in question had experienced an actual fire. However, the evident prominence of fire drills seem to have engendered in some children a general and disproportionate fear of fire as well as leading them to define safety in relation to being well prepared for the possibility of fire.

I feel scared when I go to the toilet in case they shout fire.

I feel scared when the fire drill goes off.

I feel scared when there's a fire drill because you can never tell if it's a drill or a real fire.

I feel safe when we practise for a fire.

Similarly, the fear of strangers that child protection/security procedures seem to be provoking in some children seemed disproportionate, unhealthy and likely to sap children's confidence.

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*(I feel safe because) you lock the door every time someone comes in.
I feel scared when I see strangers.
I feel safe when the doors are locked.*

We assume that these effects are unintended, but they certainly suggest that the kind of procedures that are being followed should be reviewed. These responses also raise the wider question of children's need (and natural inclination) to experience, relish and manage risk, the adverse effects on their development if this is denied them and the important role that child care settings can play in taking an active and practical 'risk benefit' approach. Lighting fires is likely to be more use (and certainly more fun) in learning about fire than doing endless fire drills.

The importance of activities, resources and materials

'I feel happy when I'm playing on the wii and it's ice cream for snack'

It was interesting to note that while children did define 'feeling happy' in terms of their relationships with other children, activities, resources and food also figured strongly.

*I feel happy when I do hammer beads
I feel happy when it's breakfast and it's TOAST
I feel happy when me and friends play swingball
I'm happy when I'm playing with Lego*

Good quality and varied resources and activities, and good planning contribute to children's sense of wellbeing - a topic we return to on the following page.

At the end of the day

'Wednesday's best because I don't have to go home really really late'

As we mentioned earlier, the prospect of being the last one at the club made children feel 'scared', 'sad' and 'left out', suggesting that this is a key issue.

*I feel left out when I'm the last to go
I feel left out when all my friends are away home
I feel scared when my mummy doesn't pick me up at 5.00
I feel scared when I'm the last in the club
I feel sad when I'm the last one
I feel sad when my mum and dad are the late picking me up*

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*I feel sad when I'm going to respite rather than going home
I feel happy when mum comes*

It's important that staff understand the strength of children's feelings about being last at club and take on board that at the moment they may be failing to meet children's emotional needs at a key point in the day. It's also an important reminder that although a number of participants said that they saw it as a mark of success of their club when 'the children don't want to go home', children are highly aware of when they're 'supposed' to be going home. By this time of day too, these young children will have been away from home for between eight and nine hours, and for some of them this is their daily experience. Quite simply, many of them will be missing their homes and their families.

There are many practical steps staff can take in responding to children's fears of being last and meeting their emotional needs at the end of a long day:

- Communicating to parents the importance - from their children's point of view – of being on time.
- Organising the end of the day with care including not starting to clear up until after the last child has left.
- Being aware of which children are usually or likely to be last and ensuring that they get the kind of attention they need.

Voice power

Diane opted to use a digital recorder when consulting on the Respect Policy at her out of school club. She created a special tent in an area where children are not usually allowed to go in where the recorded conversations took place. Both the confidential and intriguing setting, and the novelty of the digital recorder attracted a high level of interest and engaged participation. The initial idea was for children to interview each other, however this was not successful and Diane took over but also encouraged the children to interview her. Children chose the order in which they responded to the statements and listened to and approved the playback. This method of consulting elicited very rich material in terms of the quality, subtlety and emotional content of the responses and allowed children to develop and expand on what they were saying.

Rolling the dice

Pauline at Glebe Park out of school club consulted on the Respect Policy by creating a game. She made a giant cube which had a statement written on each side. Children and Pauline herself took turns to roll the cube and respond to the statements which Pauline wrote down. Children were keen to join in what felt like a game rather than a task, but it proved also to be a chance for people to share and discuss feelings.

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Characters and mascots

It's difficult for children to get their heads round the abstract concept of 'policy'. The idea of making and using characters or mascots as a possible way of representing a policy and making it concrete was introduced through Polly Respecta, the parrot made specially for this course.

Polly inspired a host of new characters including Georgia, an extraordinary mythical beast part giraffe, part lion, part horse. Inspiration took many forms with children actively involved in the conception and creation of these characters. In some cases children did the detailed design which was then faithfully transformed into a three dimensional sewn creature (see Lisa the Peacock and Billy the Bear). When the making became a collective project it was enjoyed by both children and adults who noticed the sense of intimacy and quality of conversation that such group projects invoked.

Children could speak through their characters – an unthreatening way in which to try out thoughts and ideas and get opinions both in terms of the Respect Policy and other topics. At the mobile crèche service, Yvonne and the children made a robot together and the children then investigated through the robot where he'd like to play and what he'd like to do, photographing and documenting his progress and opinions.

In Sharon's out of school club, Billy the anti-bullying Bear was devised and made collectively during the first consultation session. During the second, he occupied a tepee that had been made for him where children were invited to 'Blether with Billy' using posters containing each of the six 'statements'. Sharon reported much fuller responses than usual in the safe and inviting atmosphere of the tepee and the comforting and familiar presence of Billy. At Sara's out of school club, the children's frog mascot sat on ingenious lily pad cushions with pockets into which children could post their notes. Characters could extend and develop children's conversation and play. At Lou's out of school club, Lisa the Peacock acquired over time numerous accessories including a house and a village.

The following factors seemed to contribute to the success of a character and the potential that a character could bring to a child care setting.

- The character's personal and unique nature.
- Children's active involvement in the concept and its development, so that children felt the character was truly their's.
- The opportunity to engage in a collective and inclusive practical making project .
- The intimate conversational opportunities afforded through quiet group projects

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- The combination of the humour and 'light touch' of such characters with the potential to touch on serious topics.
- Children and adults working together on and with the character.
- The time and materials to continue to develop the character and its surroundings.
- Opportunities to speak through the character.

While this course was too short to tell us this, we felt that the development of characters over time and their continuing presence could have the potential for them to be identified with or seen as 'keeping' or 'carrying' certain values and that we had seen the beginning of such a process in some cases.



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ORGANISATIONAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES

'We don't even know what we're a part of'

'Many head teachers never wanted us in their schools – it's been forced on them.'

The stated purpose of this course was to help staff consult effectively with the children they work with and to ensure that children's voices help shape the draft Respect Policy. However, as the course progressed it became apparent that there were important organisational and social issues that were both relevant to the concept of 'respect' and were compromising the fundamental quality of the out of school care service. The views and comments are offered not as criticisms but as direct reflections from practitioners and included in the hope that they will provide helpful in terms of the 'big picture'.

These issues included:

- A perceived lack of respect for out of school care as a service and for out of school staff in general.
- A perceived lack of respect from many of the schools in which out of school care clubs are based.
- Confusing and over prescriptive health and safety procedures.

Other issues that arose concerned the quality and type of play resources available to out of school care clubs and the amount and type of training available to out of school care staff.

The issues discussed here are drawn from discussion that occurred throughout the course. The allegations made are not corroborated, and the views of others such as parents, Council members and staff, schools staff etc. haven't been sought. However, we took time on the last day of the course to identify the issues that it was claimed were affecting a number of clubs and staff and to discuss them dispassionately and systematically. We suggest that this is an urgent area for further investigation and action, whether via the Respect Policy or through other means.

A perceived lack of general respect for out of school care as a service and for out of school staff

Both nursery and out of school care staff, but particularly the latter, felt that there was a perception of them by the general public as 'glorified babysitters', that they were not generally regarded as 'professionals' and that Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs – the most usual childcare qualifications) are not always well regarded by others.

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They felt that the predominant reason for the existence of out of school care clubs and Levenmouth Childcare Centre – to allow parents to work – was an important determinant of such attitudes, which they felt often extended to parents as well. We noted that staff reported that at the one out of school club that had the active involvement of parents through a parent committee, parents did not hold such views.

Fairly recent reorganisation appears to have left out of school care staff feeling that the Early Years and Childcare Service does not promote out of school care sufficiently in terms of the service it offers and the value of play. Many staff did not know how or where out of school care fitted in the bigger organisational structure.

Lack of respect from many of the schools in which out of school care clubs are based

The most difficult relationships however were on the ground – between school and out of school care staff. Because out of school clubs in Fife almost never have their own premises, and because they most commonly share premises with schools, this can critically affect the quality of out of school care provision in a number of ways.

While a few individual clubs and schools had forged good relationships with each other, this was not the case for most clubs. Interestingly, where out of school clubs were sharing premises with organisations other than schools (for example community centres and churches) the same difficulties did not exist. This suggests that while the personal relationships between the head of the school and the manager of the out of school care club will always be relevant, there are underlying structural problems in the relationship between schools and out of school clubs that must be addressed on organisational and policy levels as well.

Basing out of school care clubs in schools seems like an attractive option. It is free; the premises by definition should be suitable for children; many of the new schools have excellent facilities and resources; no transport arrangements have to be made or costs met for the children who already attend the school; it should fit with current thinking about the community role of schools. However, sharing premises with schools can militate against a prime requirement that out of school care feels, and is, different from school.

While in theory it is possible to create provision within a school that feels physically and socially distinctive, in practice there appear to be immense barriers to doing so. Many of these barriers are to do with the way in which space is allocated and managed. Out of school clubs typically have very little dedicated space within schools other than minimal office and storage space. Typically, the space in which out of school care actually takes space will be the

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shared spaces within a school, such as the dinner hall and/or the sports hall and general purpose rooms. These areas are used extensively by the schools every day and may be in use until the end of the school day with little opportunity for access to them until children are actually arriving at the out of school care club.

The types of spaces made available to out of school care clubs are by their nature impersonal and often large spaces. They lack the comfort and intimacy that we have learned that children crave and that makes them feel secure. Transforming them on a daily basis is impossible because they are often not accessible before the out of school care sessions begin and because the out of school care clubs have relatively little storage space for the kinds of materials that would be needed.

The fact that the spaces are used every day by the schools combined with the relative lack of storage space means both that nothing can be left out from one day to the next and that it's difficult to even keep things from one day to the next, destroying the possibilities of continuity, of 'works in progress', or of the inclination to undertake ongoing projects.

All of this creates physical environments for children that stunt children's play, are sterile and do not give them a sense of welcome, of being cared for and of belonging. Added to which is the apparent reluctance of schools to share equipment and resources, such as the store of tempting adapted bikes at the school at which one of the out of school clubs for children with additional support needs met. As one member of staff commented, *'the children know there are fab toys in the cupboard – or sometimes within their sight, but they're not allowed to use them.'*

As a local authority service based in local authority schools, out of school care clubs do not pay rent. While this has obvious advantages, because the schools see themselves (rather than the local authority) as the 'proprietors' of the premises and everything in them, this arrangement seems to confirm the low status of 'out of school care' as opposed to 'schools' and to deny the out of school care clubs the normal rights that they might have as paying tenants, and that out of school clubs that use (and pay for) premises such as community centres and churches do have.

This central question of the unequal status of schools and out of school care clubs manifested itself in many ways. We were given examples of teaching staff assuming control over out of school care clubs; of head teachers and other staff walking unannounced and uninvited into out of school care clubs and engaging with children; schools giving work people access to spaces being used by out of school care clubs without seeking agreement from the club; of the imposition of school rules about noise and movement to out of school care clubs.

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A number of out of school care staff felt that they were invisible to school teaching staff '*other staff* (i.e. teachers) *recognise other staff* (i.e. teachers)' The fact that out of school care staff wear uniforms seemed for many to define their low status in the school setting - '*teachers don't wear uniform*'- in the recognition that lack of respect within this setting can extend to all 'non-teaching' staff.

Out of school clubs based in schools could be subject to contradictions between different regulatory and quality assurance bodies, in particular the lack of knowledge and understanding of out of school care of some HMIE inspectors.

Children and Early Years Service managers do acknowledge the problems, but take what we felt was a somewhat fatalistic attitude to them, citing their long term nature, the power held by individual school heads, and the difficulties of effecting change in schools. But in many cases, the problems that are being encountered are severe and are seriously affecting the quality of out of school care in Fife and should be being tackled in parallel at policy and management level and on the ground.

Confusing and over prescriptive health and safety procedures

This issue was discussed above in the context of children's perceptions of 'feeling safe.' Other organisational health and safety issues emerged in the course of discussion.

There was a perceived inconsistency between Early Years and Child Care Service managers on where and when to carry out risk assessments and also in the use of accident report forms and excursion forms. Participants felt that some management requirements, including the need to inform the office if leaving the premises and the need to submit detailed excursion forms 48 hours before any outing from the premises were over bureaucratic and detrimental to the quality of provision. The requirement to submit excursion forms ahead of time for even local outings such as going down to the beach on a nice day, was seen as robbing clubs of spontaneity and enjoyment- especially given the unsatisfactory nature of many clubs' indoor and outdoor premises. It also meant that in the case of more formal trips and outings, the 48 hour rule meant that there was no possibility of filling up free spaces at the last minute.

There was also a perceived over emphasis on the negative aspects of child protection, particularly in terms of 'rules' about cuddling and touching children.

While there is a clear need for consistency, it seemed to us that there is also a need for a reflective service wide debate on the topic of 'health and safety' and 'risk' in which children could be included, looking at how approaches that start from the perspective of the benefit (indeed necessity) of risk can be established.

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Quality and type of play resources available to out of school care clubs

As we've described, the quality of resources and materials available to out of school care clubs is compromised by their lack of dedicated premises, lack of adequate dedicated storage space and the constrictions placed on many clubs on the way in which they use the space available to them.

The Fife Resource Base is a good facility that's appreciated by the clubs and nurseries that use it and a base such as this which stores and delivers materials and from which equipment can be collected is invaluable, particularly where clubs have little storage space of their own. However, we felt that there could be room to expand it to include more non-prescriptive, scrap and recycled resources and good quality non-prescriptive arts materials. In conjunction with this, a number of participants expressed a desire for more play based training opportunities.

CONCLUDING NOTES

'A day like today, it's a beautiful day and they don't want to be sitting going over things, so it's "Can we no just go outside and play?"

In preliminary discussions with some of the course participants there were reports of consultation fatigue among the children. We would agree with the children that there's probably already too much consultation going on. And while formulaic, repetitive and unengaging methods of consultation (questionnaires, smiley face stickers etc) don't help, engaging methods alone are not the answer.

We don't believe that children should be constantly 'consulted'. What is important is establishing a culture and atmosphere in which children feel free as a matter of course to express their views and have at their disposal a variety of means to do so. Looking at how this can be achieved is one of the things that we've tried to do on this course.

While it will at times be necessary to engage in specific pieces of consultation, this has to be on matters of genuine concern and not just to satisfy the demands of external bodies such as HMIE and SCSWIS for 'evidence' of consultation – a process that children will detect as inauthentic and can lead to tick box methods of consultation.

The adults working with children also need opportunities to debate, question and develop their own ideas and practice. The participants on this course relished the opportunities they had to meet with colleagues and discuss their work and would like more such opportunities. There were the beginnings of good debates on a number of issues, including the fundamental ones such as what constitutes children's human rights. We hope that space and time will be made for such debates to continue.

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KEY OBSERVATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Our key observations and the suggestions that stem from them are framed in terms of the course purpose and values explained in the introduction to this report. As all except two of the childcare settings represented by the course participants were out of school care clubs, the key observations and suggestions inevitably relate to them – though they may be found to be applicable to early years settings as well.

Within individual out of school care clubs, key observations concern: the significance of children's relationships with each other; the role of adults working with children in child care settings; the significance to children of the physical environment; appropriate resources for children's play.

Within the wider environment of the Children's and Early Years Service and Fife council as a whole, key observations concern: the general profile of out of school care; the relationships between schools and out of school clubs when the latter are based in schools; 'health and safety' and child protection issues.

We would reiterate that we don't believe that children should be being constantly 'consulted'. What is important is establishing a culture and atmosphere in which children will express their views and make their feelings known because this is what's expected, because they have the means to do so and because they know they'll get a response.

While it will at times be necessary to engage in specific pieces of consultation, this has to be on matters of genuine concern and not just to satisfy the demands of external bodies such as HMIE and SCSWIS for 'evidence' of consultation – a process that is likely to be tokenistic, that children will detect as inauthentic and that can make children cynical in general (just as many adults already are) of formal consultation.

The significance of children's relationships with each other:

- Adults in out of school care clubs need to take children's relationships with each other seriously and be aware and observant of them. While the vast majority of 'relationship situations' between children do not need a heavy handed and bureaucratic response from staff, they do require awareness, sensitivity, thought and discussion on the part of staff.
- Particular situations that cause pain to some children – such as being chosen last for team games – can and should be easily avoided.
- A culture can be actively created in which it is expected that children invite others to join in, and where children can be encouraged to ask to be included without fear of rejection.

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- Some collective activities and events help to create a group culture and give children a sense of belonging. For some children they can reduce the pressure of or be an alternative to maintaining individual relationships.
- Creating environments, providing resources and thinking about activities in such ways as to include the option of being alone will mean that being alone is not a matter of shame.

During this piece of work, the responses of children with additional support needs have prompted some further questions about children in general, as well as those with additional support needs. These include:

- What does friendship mean – is it different things for different people?
- Is friendship a fundamental need for all children?
- Should friendship be actively facilitated, and if so how ?
- Do segregated clubs for children with additional support needs militate against friendship possibilities between children? What are the pros and cons of integrated versus segregated provision, particularly with regard to children's relationships with each other.

We would add too the need for more specific work on communicating with and consulting with children with additional support needs.

The role of adults working with children in child care settings

Intrinsic to a relational concept of children's human rights is equal relationships between adults and children. This has enormous implications for the way that adults work with children, as co-researchers and as equal participants in collective enterprises. This does not preclude adults' greater levels of responsibility.

- As noted above, through their awareness of the nuances of children's relationships with each other adults can actively create a 'culture of kindness'
- Adults play an important emotional and practical role in making children feel safe and in being able through their presence to convert a scary situation to a safe one.
- The end of the day at the out of school care club can be a particular source of stress. There are many practical steps staff can take in responding to children's fears of being last at the club, and meeting their emotional needs at the end of a long day. This can include communicating to parents the importance - from their children's point of view – of being on time; organising the end of the day with care including not starting to clear up until after the last child has left; being aware of which children are usually or likely to be last and ensuring that they get the kind of attention they need.

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- Adults working with children need opportunities to develop their own ideas and practice through debate with each other.

The significance to children of the physical environment

We have learned that children are very sensitive to their physical environment. Often the physical settings for out of school care in particular are less than satisfactory and we may underestimate how much this affects children. However with imagination, effort and the right resources adults can to some extent mitigate this. This will include creating environments that encourage conversation and reflect children's need for intimate as well as large spaces.

Appropriate resources for children's play

The quality of relationships between children and between children and adults determine the quality of an out of school care club. But they don't exist in a vacuum. As we hope this course has demonstrated, children need good resources and a good environment as a context and a means of communication and expression and they need these things for the daily business of non-prescriptive play.

The limitations imposed on the quality of resources and environment by inadequate shared premises are laid out below, as well as suggestions for tackling them. The Fife Resource Base is a good and much appreciated facility but we suggest that there is room to expand it to include more non-prescriptive, scrap and recycled resources and good quality non-prescriptive arts materials.

This would go alongside with more play based training, as requested by some participants.

The general profile of out of school care in Fife Council and in the Children and Early Years Service

There was a widespread view that out of school care was not sufficiently recognised, valued or promoted both within the council as a whole and within the Children's and Early Years Service.

The relationships between schools and out of school clubs when the latter are based in schools

Many out of school care clubs are based in schools. Although there are individual exceptions, lack of dedicated space, unsuitable space, insufficient storage areas and inadequate access can seriously threaten the quality of out of school provision. Most serious is the failure of schools to recognise, welcome and value out of school care clubs as entities separate from and different to the school.

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Both of the above issues could be investigated further and tackled in a number of different ways at once including:

- Seminars/presentations to senior Fife Council officers, members and school staff.
- Work on the ground with a few selected out of school care clubs and the schools in which they're based aimed at improving attitudes, relationships and practical arrangements.

'Health and safety' and child protection procedures

It seems that in some out of school clubs over rigorous health and safety and child protection procedures may be causing rather than quelling anxiety. While the specific review of the issues raised during this training course would be worthwhile, the wider question of children's need to experience and manage risk should also be raised. A starting point for this could be a seminar and discussion related to practical examples for a range of staff on 'risk benefit' approaches to the management of risk in child care settings.

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APPENDIX 1

Children's Parliament Consulting with Children, Fife Childcare & Early Years Services

9 and 13 May 2011, 9.30 – 3.30

Auchterderran Centre, Gardenden, Fife
Conference room

Rosie Gibson, Sue Gutteridge, Cathy McCulloch

9.30
coffee/tea

9.45 – 10.15
Welcome and introductions. Aims for the three days and approach for day one
SUE
Getting to know each other CATHY

10.15 - 10.45
:Consulting and engaging with children: a context of children's human rights and human dignity
CATHY

10.45 – 11.30
Consulting and engaging with children: making it meaningful SUE

11.45 - 12. 15
Mapping your project ROSIE

12.15 - 12. 45 LUNCH

12.45 - 1.15
Children as explorers and makers ROSIE

1.15 - 1.30
The ingredients of good consultation CATHY

1.30 - 2. 15
Planning your own consultation
- *introduction and handout* SUE
- *quick outline planning for possible consultation topics*
- *Introducing the materials.* ROSIE
2.15 - 2. 40 *share consultation ideas*

2.40 - 3.00
Review today and think about the next session SUE
Recap on the day and talk about the next session.

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Children's Parliament Consulting with Children, Fife Childcare & Early Years Services

26 May 2011, 9.30 – 3.00

Auchterderran Centre, Cardenden, Fife

Seminar 1

Rosie Gibson, Sue Gutteridge, Cathy McCulloch

9.30
coffee/tea

9.50 - 10.00 *Introductory session* SUE

Review of Day One and outline aims for today

10.00 - 11.00 *Feedback from completed consultations* CATHY

11.00 - 11.10 coffee break

11.10 - 12.00 *Thinking back* ROSIE

12.00 - 12.45 LUNCH BREAK

12.45 - 1.00 *Introduction to consultation planning session* SUE

1.00 - 2.30 *Supported practical consultation planning session*

2.30 - 3.00 *Share plans and talk about final session* SUE

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Consulting with Children Day Three Programme

Tuesday 31 May 2011
Seminar Room 2

Thursday 2 June 2011
Seminar Room 1

9.30 coffee/tea

9.45 - 11.20 Feedback from consultation exercises

Detailed feedback from each participant

Coffee/tea break 11.20 - 11.30

11.30 - 12.00

Group exercise and feedback on consultation that's been undertaken

12.00 - 12.45 lunch break

12.45 - 2.00 The question of 'respect' for the Fife Childcare and Early Years Service as a wider organisational and resource issue

We will look at the following:

- Is your service understood and valued ?
- Where services are sharing premises, the relationship between your service and other users of the premises.
- The material resources with which you work and the environment you work in
- The quality of support and staff development opportunities available to Childcare and Early Years Service staff.
- The impact of 'health and safety' concerns.

2.00 - 2.30

What happens next

2.30

Evaluation

Thinking about consultation

Thinking about the two consultation exercises you've undertaken, can you consider the following questions:

- What went well and why?
- What didn't go so well and why? If you were doing it again, what would you do differently?
- Do you have any thoughts about how , when and why you'll consult in the future?

Thinking about consultation

Thinking about the two consultation exercises you've undertaken, can you consider the following questions:

- What went well and why?
- What didn't go so well and why? If you were doing it again, what would you do differently?
- Do you have any thoughts about how , when and why you'll consult in the future?

Thinking about consultation

Thinking about the two consultation exercises you've undertaken, can you consider the following questions:

- What went well and why?
- What didn't go so well and why? If you were doing it again, what would you do differently?
- Do you have any thoughts about how , when and why you'll consult in the future?

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Consulting with children, Day Two

THINKING BACK

Can you remember a time when, as a child, you were bullied, by another child or by an adult?

Or can you remember someone else who was bullied?

Or can you remember a time when you bullied someone else?

- What happened ?
- What were the circumstances ?
- If you're talking about yourself, how did you feel?
- Did any (other) adults know ?
- If any adults knew, what did they do about it?
- Generally speaking, looking back on it now, what do you think would have helped?

What are the shared insights and shared themes come out of this discussion?

APPENDIX 2

Analysis of evaluation

Number of completed forms: 19

Did you find the course useful? (please say why/why not)

MAIN POINTS MADE

Increased understanding of why and how to consult with children, and confidence in doing so.

Thought provoking - encouraged reflection and questioning

Informative - covered unfamiliar ground.

Opportunity to share ideas and discuss issues with people working in other settings

Yes, I felt it was very interesting and gave me ideas in which I could consult with children in the future listening to everyone's ideas.

Yes, very informative and invited the asking of questions on areas that were brought up and go into more details where you were unsure. This was an area where I did not have a great knowledge and so found it very helpful.

Yes, made me think more about what we offer the children and provide for them. Also how to gain information from the children. Made me put on my thinking cap on to develop ways of gaining the information from them through play..

Useful, made me think about how I do consult with the children and ways to do this. Interesting hearing exchange of information.

Useful to get ideas around consultation activities that other clubs use and to question how we do it.

It has been interesting and has made me think more about how we consult children on a daily basis anyway and how we do so without thinking about it. It has also been good seeing and hearing about different approaches to how to consult with children and the challenges - depending on your setting.

I found the content informative and relevant to our services. I found the discussions surrounding the content of most value.

Useful to see the different methods used for consultation across age groups and for children with additional support needs. Good discussion and good methods used.

Gained further knowledge on how to consult with children.

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Good opportunity to share ideas/practice with colleagues and a good mix of ideas for consulting with younger children and children with additional support needs.

Refreshed knowledge of children's rights, particularly with regard to the Respect policy.

Yes, by sharing information got a lot of new ideas for consulting with the children.

Very useful. First session was inspirational with examples of consultation. More confident on consulting with children in future. Great evidence to take back into club.

Gained lots of new ideas about different methods of consultation. Support and encouragement from the tutors and the whole group.

It refreshes the topics in your mind which is always handy as you can get caught up with everyday work.

Many practical ideas for use in the services. The quality of the consultations/contributions from the children were enhanced and were more meaningful.

I found the course very useful. Meeting with other people and hearing about their experiences gave me ideas to take back to my club.

I was glad I attended. It was very informative.

Yes. Made me look for information on the internet for consulting with children, which was very useful and informative

I feel much more confident now about consultation and the range of methods we can use.

Did you find the course gave you new information? If so, please say why.

MAIN POINTS

New methods and forms of consultation

Information on the Respect policy

Appreciated course methods, specifically gaining information through sharing experience with others.

Yes, I felt that listening to what Sue, Rosie and Cathy were explaining was very interesting and gave me a new outlook on consulting with children

Yes, with the help of other people I found other ways to approach this area with children.

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Enjoyed information sharing with other services and being made more aware of obstacles they had to face and how they dealt with them.

New ideas

New ideas. Different ways/forms of consultation.

It has given me a better knowledge of the Respect policy and its purpose as well as a better understanding. However personally I would have benefited from having a handout to refer back to when in the club doing the tasks and trying to remember back to what we said.

Good refresher and got me thinking about how to raise the issue of consultation more freely with staff and services.

Information about things to think about when planning consultation.

New ideas and sharing different methods of communicating with children.

Ways of consulting with children, e.g. using puppets, games, pictures

Yes, different ideas on how to consult with children. Nice to know it's still okay to comfort and cuddle children.

Yes, about the respect policy. New ideas.

Gained lots of new ideas and consulting methods as we feedback individually.

Great ideas on how to involve boys more.

Yes, an insight into out of school clubs and others' ideas on how they would consult with children

using creative methods to engage with the children was inspiring and I used these when I was carrying out my consultations. Made me think about consultation in a different way.

Definitely. The mixture of the tutors and others' inputs was very useful. I think it reaffirmed the fact that children's input is very important.

Enjoyed the different participants' ideas and feedbacks.

Would you change the course in any way?

MAIN POINTS

Would have liked two weeks between each of the sessions (instead of only one week between session two and three) to allow enough time for the second piece of consultation

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More and better information before the course started, especially with regard to the Respect policy, so that participants knew what it was about and what would be expected of them.

No, just to explain the course and what is expected from us throughout the course

The (second piece of) homework we were given needed more time in between class to be completed.

I think because the course was presented in relation to the 'respect policy' it took the group time to settle in to the right mind set. Maybe a bit more guidance on what expecting people to do before first consultation - know don't want to dictate how or what , but not quite sure what were hoping to achieve.

Later start. More information about the course before it starts.

More time between sessions two and three to get as much feedback from children as possible.

Would have been nice to know that the course was to review the policy.

Make sure information is distributed before the course starts so that people know what the course is all about and what it involves.

I would spread the course so that there were two weeks between each session to allow time to consult.

Would have liked two weeks between second and third session. One week not enough time to carry out the consultation. Information sheets beforehand. AS I was unaware of the purpose of the course and what it entailed and what was expected I would have had a better idea how to carry out the exercises and would have done things differently.

It would be more helpful to have the days further apart so that there was more time to complete tasks in our settings.

Perhaps a longer time period in between 2nd and 3rd session to complete consultation. However, based on everyone's feedback it all seemed to have gone really well.

Could our delivery of the course be improved in any way?

MAIN POINTS

More handouts/notes

Appreciation of group sizes; informal and interactive approach; mix of theory and practice.

More handouts

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I would have liked handouts just because I need notes/handouts to refer to to help me retain the information.

Felt the ideas given out about equipment and resources were a bit like teaching us to suck eggs!

More activities as a group.

I really enjoyed the second and third day more than the first but I believe that was due to feeling a bit lost about the subject matter. Maybe a few information notes given on the first day re Children's Parliament and Sue and Rosie's work.

Slightly clearer instructions for some tasks. The context of the 'respect policy' caused confusion.

Break up feedback sessions with coffee break?

Yes. Found it rather slow to begin with. Lots of stopping and starting.

Shorter. Three days was a long time, more condensed.

The first day was less structured than the rest but by the end it had all connected well together and was purposeful.

Well delivered. Time was given to discuss ideas and exchange information.

I think the course has been delivered well with a good mix of theory and practical tasks.

Good number on the course as it enabled group work, but not too large.

No - enjoyed the way it went. Group size large enough

No - found it informal and relaxed, very open to discussion.

Very interactive and relaxed environment. Enjoyed the variety of methods used.

Can you identify any further training needs as a result of your participation on this course

Arts and crafts courses

Sign language and signalling

Communicating with children with additional support needs (although so individual to each child, may not be possible).

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Children's rights and child protection, making sure the right message is out across.

Ideas on how to present/work with children's rights with children to raise awareness without turning it into a 'lesson'.

I would like to learn more about consulting with children

Sewing classes to do the mascot! Only joking!

Perhaps evaluating collected information

All staff should get this training

APPENDIX 3 Resources List

Art Mediums

Unit 1 Block E,
50 Glenwood Place,
Glasgow,
Lanarkshire
G45 9UH

0141 630 9339

Warehouse in Castlemilk with comprehensive range of art materials for children. Catalogue. Good prices and delivery service.

Edinburgh College of Art Shop

Lauriston Place
Edinburgh
EH3 9DF

0131 221 6000

<http://www.eca.ac.uk/index.php?id=328>

Art shop open to public. Wide range of papers, pens and quality art material. Very reasonably priced.

Borders Scrapstore

Fisherrow Community Centre
South Street
Musselburgh
EH21 6AT

Tel: 01750 725961

<http://onlineborders.org.uk/node/5166>

john@bordersscrapstore.org.uk

Scrapstores recycle materials from textiles and other industrial/commercial processes. Eclectic selection of fascinating materials. Membership based. Email or phone for details and opening hours.

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Glasgow Playscheme Association

Langside Lane,
off 539 Victoria Rd,
Glasgow
G42 8BH

gpsa@btconnect.com

http://www.childrensscrapstore.co.uk/UK%20Directory%20of%20Scrapstores%20September%2010.htm#_Scotland

HobbyCraft

<http://www.hobbycraft.co.uk/>

Unit 23
Fort Kinnaird Shopping Park
Newcraighall
Edinburgh
EH15 3RD

0845 0516561

[Email HobbyCraft Edinburgh](mailto:Edinburgh@hobbycraft.co.uk)

Address

160 Provan Walk
Glasgow Fort Shopping Park
Junction 10 M8
Glasgow
G34 9DL

Tel: 0845 051 6555

[Email HobbyCraft Glasgow East](mailto:GlasgowEast@hobbycraft.co.uk)

Arts and Crafts Superstore. Also good online service.

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Fred Aldous Ltd
37 Lever Street,
Manchester,
M1 1LW

0161 236 4224

<http://www.fredaldous.co.uk/>

support@fredaldous.zendesk.com

Art, Craft and Design Supplies. Very friendly and helpful and competitively priced.

TTS Educational Supplies

0800318686

<http://www.tts-group.co.uk/shops/tts/Default.aspx>

Educational and nursery supplies. Interesting coloured masking tape, reasonably priced.

Japanese Washi Tape

http://www.amazon.co.uk/s/?ie=UTF8&keywords=washi+tape&tag=mh0a9-21&index=aps&hvadid=451088140&ref=pd_sl_7x7qc93y84_p

Other Sources:

Corrugated Card board : Find and cultivate a Fife supplier!

Youtube - good for 'how to do things' often posted by children and young people.

Local charity shops for dressing up games, props like old suitcases and fabrics for dens, bunting and mascot making.

Tesco and Asda often have bargains.

Ikea, Dobbies and outdoor supplies are worth a browse for inspiration.

And of course B&Q !!

APPENDIX 4

Appendix 4 Human Rights background: UNCRC ; Reggio- Emilia Approach

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international statement of the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of children. The UN General Assembly adopted the Convention in 1989, the 30th anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. It is a recognition both of children's human rights and their need for special care and protection. It has been signed by every country in the world except the U.S. and Somalia and was signed by the UK in 1995.

The Convention sets out these rights in 54 articles. It spells out the basic human rights that children everywhere have: the right to survival; to develop to the fullest; to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life. The four core principles of the Convention are non-discrimination; devotion to the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and respect for the views of the child. The Convention also protects children's rights by setting standards in health care; education; and legal, civil and social services.

Signatories to the Convention are obliged to **act in the best interests of the child** and are bound by international law.

That said, the concept of children as holders of rights is not a given (although children's need for special care and protection is). There is continuing valid philosophical and practical debate as to whether children are 'competent' to exercise rights, a part of this debate being the validity of linking 'rights' and 'responsibilities.'

The Reggio Emilia Approach

The Reggio Emilia Approach is the term given to the internationally important body of pedagogical thought and practice that has grown from the early childhood centres of the Emilia Romagna area of Northern Italy after the Second World War, and specifically as a response to and rejection of the violence, authoritarianism and oppression of fascism.

The pedagogical thinker whose name is most closely associated with Reggio is Loris Malaguzzi, the first head of the municipal early childhood centres. The starting point in his thinking was the image of the child as rich and resourceful, with 'extraordinary potential and this has become a central Reggio value. It is this image of the child that shapes a concept of play and learning in which the child, in relationship with others makes his or her own knowledge through the constant construction and testing of theories. It is this image that casts adults who work with children as co-researchers in this quest. Flowing from this is the

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concept and value of ‘participation’ by which is meant the active engagement of children, adults working with children and families in the child care setting as a collective enterprise consciously perceived as part of the wider community.

The Hundred Languages of Children exhibition based on the work of the Emilia Romagna early childhood centres came to Scotland for the first time in 1988, making a huge impact and its influence continues.

APPENDIX 5 The Children's Parliament

The Children's Parliament was established in 1992 and is a registered charity based in Edinburgh and working nationally with children in the context of family, school and community. In its creative projects, consultations and community programme children learn about their human rights whilst acquiring knowledge, skills, behaviours and values for citizenship. Its work connects children with each other, with adults, with their communities, with policy and services

The Children's Parliament themes are:

- Who we are
- Where we live
- Freedom
- Health and happiness
- Feeling safe and being cared for
- Having our say

Its approach is based on the development of open and honest relationships with children, on valuing their worth and their views and on a commitment to creating a space within which they feel safe, challenged and trusted. This means valuing the process of participation as a means of learning and gaining skills, as well as valuing the products of that process.

Its work is based on the following principles:

- Including all children
- Making enough time to allow ideas to unfold and deepen
- Understanding the needs of individual children and groups
- Using a range of creative arts as a way of exploring and expressing ideas and feelings
- Creating structure and boundaries and then allowing freedom within these

The Children's Parliament has established itself as a resource for public and private bodies that see the necessity and value in engaging in innovative ways with children. Just a few examples of its work are: *the children's eco-city project* - a vehicle to engage children in the redesign and regeneration of their community; work with children on *climate change*; work with children on *violence reduction*; consultations on the *reform of the Children's Panel system*; ongoing *MCP (Members of the Children's Parliament) groups in Fife and in the Western Isles*.

For more information go to: www.childrensparliament.org.uk