# Inclusive Leadership

According to Nutbrown (2022) inclusion means giving every child the chance to participate in activities regardless of whatever differences they may have, and the environment is judgment-free. Additionally, according to Ferdman, Prime and Riggio (2020), for inclusion to occur, practitioners must recognise that they may have unconscious biases toward different morals, cultures, or beliefs; however, it is their duty to make sure that children have the chance to feel valued and represented, which will motivate them to participate. Additionally, Early Years Alliance (2019) agrees with Ferdman, Prime and Riggio (2020) practitioners must emphasise a child's individuality, value identities, and value quality, furthermore, according to Early Years Alliance (2019) doing so will give children equitable opportunities in life and will advance equity in early years settings.

The scenario being discussed in the assignment involves a child who has recently arrived in the early years setting after moving to Wales from China. The child's development appears to be delayed, but this could be because of a language barrier as their first language is Mandarin Chinese, making it difficult to fully assess the child due to the current assessment criteria is English language focused (Welsh Government, 2021). However, as the child does not understand English, other children have avoided her, and practitioners appear uninspired to push the child to join in with activities because they are unsure of how to explain the activities to the child, which may cause the child to feel excluded, unrepresented, or unwelcome in the setting as they perceive themselves as being excluded from everything (Independent, 2021). Furthermore, a translation app has been used by practitioners to try and communicate with parents, but it is not accurate in translating both languages, leading to misunderstandings and negatively impacting their relationship. As a result, it is difficult for parents and practitioners to discuss and express their concerns to one another (Bell, 2019).

Article 2 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that children have the right to experience non-discrimination in any activity that involves contact with them. This includes discrimination based on race, ethnicity, language, ability, or family background, as this can isolate a child and have long-term effects on their development, health, and well-being (UNICEF, No date).

Additionally, Hackett, *et al*. (2020) believes that people with racial and ethnic characteristics are members of a small minority group as evidence reveals that they face prejudice and are given fewer opportunity to fully engage in society. Twenty-point four percent of the participants in the study conducted by Hackett, *et al*. (2020) reported experiencing racial discrimination at some point in their lives. This has a negative impact on the participants mental and physical health because they do not feel represented or accepted in their community because of their ethnicity therefore affecting their abilities to develop. The scenario encourages inclusivity by having professionals make sure that children have the chance and opportunities to engage in activities despite differences in race and ethnicity (Entrust 2020). However, according to Entrust (2020) a welcoming attitude toward racial and ethnic inclusion makes children feel comfortable in their setting, influencing them to become more confident and can encourage them to likely approach teachers and other adults, and encourages participation and involvement, providing effective practise in promoting inclusion.

According to Donaldson (2015), practitioners serve as role models for children, and when they engage in inclusive behaviour, children will imitate it. This helps kids learn empathy, compassion, and how to be confident and healthy individuals who can decentre themselves to understand how their actions affect others. In agreement with Donaldson (2015), NAEYC (2022) states that children and parents have a variety of needs and that it's crucial to ensure that they receive not only equality but also equity, as the latter entails providing them with opportunities by removing systemic barriers that prevent children and parents from feeling like they're being represented in settings and encouraging participation regardless of diversity. According to Ferdman, Prime and Riggio (2020), when systemic obstacles are removed, children and parents feel accepted and are more inclined to approach practitioners with issues so that practitioners can put support methods into place. However, during the scenario, the teacher did not feel motivated themselves to motivate the child to participate, which can make the child feel excluded and alone because other children are receiving positive reinforcement while they are not. This is discriminatory behaviour, and it does not serve as a good example for all the children within the setting and can affect the child’s Mental health and their self-confidence (Mentally Healthy Schools, No date).

Although Ferdman, Prime and Riggio (2020) contends that professionals can be unconscious biases, it is their duty to guarantee that these biases which that may include those related to race, religion, morals, and values are not manifested in their work because it is their duty to ensure children's self-advocacy and individualism are priority. In addition, Entrust (2020) suggests that when practitioners engage in inclusive practise consistently, all practitioners will develop unconscious inclusion rather than unconscious bias since ongoing inclusion and knowledge of minority groups will become second nature to them. Additionally, Bourke and Titus (2020) believe having an open mind helps practitioners accept knowledge that contradicts their own ideas and offers details about other people's perceptions. This is one of the key mindsets for ensuring unconscious inclusiveness. Furthermore, McLeod (2022) states having an open mind is a growth mindset that should be practised in line with Piaget's cognitive theory and the two schemas of assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation refers to the information we already know, while accommodation refers to changing our thought patterns in response to new information. This allows practitioners to advance their understanding of how to encourage inclusion. According to Ferdman, Prime and Riggio (2020), encouraging and supporting practitioners to be open-minded fosters diversity in children and encourages children to develop their own sense of belonging because practitioners can appreciate the value of learning more about a variety of subjects that have an impact on children's holistic development, including children's own thoughts, opinions, and morals; to foster individualism and feel represented within the setting.

Nursery World (2010-2022) believes not all practitioners can overcome unconscious bias such as factors like religion will surely manifest in their work because they are oblivious of how their culture affects it. Although this behaviour is inadvertent and not intended to hurt children, when it occurs, professionals may unintentionally cause children to feel excluded, which isolates the children. Additionally, according to Nursery World (2010-2022) it is the duty of a practitioner to try to eradicate discrimination and excluding behaviours because they have a delegation to advocate for children.

Additionally, according to Early Education (No date) Siraj-Blatchford *et al*, believes practitioners can extend learning opportunities by including elements like sustained-shared thinking, but this typically does not occur, if a child does not understand the

native language. As a result, non-native speakers are not given the same learning opportunities as other children. This does not encourage inclusion because children are unable to improve their language development or language processing efficiency due to a lack of learning opportunities caused by communication hurdles (Marchman, V.A. *et al*., 2015).

According to Communication Theory (No date) communication problems caused by language limitations might make it difficult for professionals to grasp a child's requirements and so reduce the quality of care they can offer. According to Maslow as stated by McLeod (2007 - 2022) children have a hierarchy of needs, and to reach self-actualization and be prepared to learn to their full potential, they must have their fundamental requirements and psychological needs addressed. Furthermore, NSPCC (2021) children who do not receive the basic and psychological needs are less likely to reach developmental milestones because they are unable to engage fully when aspects like food, sleep, health, relationships, and self-esteem can deteriorate.

McLeod (2007 - 2022) believes every child's holistic needs are met through inclusive practises, which also promote equity and give each child the chance to reach their full learning potential. This allows children to become more self-aware and develop their individuality. Within Maslow’s pyramid theory according to Jenner (2017) Children who feel safe, secure, and respected in the environment are more likely to be fully engaged by practitioners who promote self-actualization through meeting their needs. Good Therapy (2007 – 2022) believes practitioners can encourage self-actualization through collaborating with children because a child is aware of their needs and feelings. enabling practitioners to adopt an inclusive strategy centred on the child by giving them a deeper awareness of the child's individual needs and abilities in addition to their brief, overall understanding of what children require.

Children have the freedom to think and express themselves, to have their own opinions and feelings, if they cause no harm to others, according to UNCRC article 13. (UNICEF, No date). According to the Children’s Commissioner for Wales (2022) children have the right to do this as when they get to be themselves, they can explore and discover who they are and what type of person they want to be. Clark (2022) states a practitioner should support diverse individualism as it is children's

capacity to comprehend their own sense of belonging in the world, their interests, and their own views, whether they be religious or their own morals and values. Children are more likely to express themselves in a healthy way and form their own morals that respect others, their beliefs, and culture when these behaviours are supported and encouraged in their environments.

Additionally, Carter, *et al.* (2012) support this as practitioners who support through inclusive practise, can enable children to develop individuality and allows children to gain inspiration for jobs within their future, and can encourage children to participate in extracurricular activities that benefit the community as children learn how to care for others and the environment. Understanding how their actions affect the world helps children establish sustainable habits. This makes them aware of how to improve the ecosystem, which giving clean water and air, and maintain the soil, and regulates the climate. According to UNICEF, (No date) when children learn how climate change affects their surroundings, it motivates them to reduce pollution and other environmental footprints, which in turn motivates kids to act against deforestation. Furthermore, according to Donaldson (2015) knowing how to protect the environment encourages children to become valued members of society because it enables them to grow their empathy, show others kindness and compassion, and form lasting, healthy relationships.

Furthermore, in accordance with Welsh Government (2020) drug use and violent crime are related to unemployment as people who are unemployed are more prone to experience stress, which they can self-medicate with by using illegal drugs. When using drugs, a person may get more agitated, lose their ability to think clearly, and exhibit violent outbursts or engage in minor crimes like theft. Hart (2013) states that community-based practitioners can create connections with children and parents which can have a positive association with the community to address issues. According to Hart (2013), statistics on illegal drug use, violence, and unemployment among youth and adults are reduced when children are part of a community because, when this kind of negative behaviour is identified, the community can come together to help the individuals in question overcome their challenges by letting them know about available resources or by encouraging them to seek the advice of experts.

Language barriers encountered in this situation can be overcome by practitioners making sure the child has access to flash cards with images of objects or phrases in Mandarin Chinese and English, as this teaches the child the fundamentals of the English language and encourages bilingualism in children (British Council, No date). According to Twinkl (No date) flash cards for children who don't speak the language at home help them visualise objects and sayings that are common in the environment. This helps them start understanding the language and gives them an equal chance to interact with and communicate with teachers about what they need or want.

Dunlop (2022) asserts that non-native speakers score poorly on tests because they are given instructions in a language, they are not familiar with. Although linking words and vowels may not always appear in the same ways in all languages, children are tested on how well they use the language by adding adjectives to their sentences. For instance, some languages have consonant mutations (Academic Kids, No date). As a result, children being evaluated in a language they do not fully understand will therefore indicate that their development is delayed, even though this may not be the case and the practitioner may simply not understand what the child is saying (Dunlop, 2022).

According to Welsh Government (2017), assessments give experts a way to pinpoint areas where children need more help as well as any potential additional learning needs (ALN). Additionally, evaluations should be used to identify children's interests, according to the Welsh Government (2019), so that practitioners can adopt play activities they are convinced children would enjoy and so increase their involvement. Assessments should be used for more than only determining whether early intervention is necessary and understanding children’s development. Lack of communication makes it difficult to fully comprehend the child's growth or interests. Additionally, Early Years Matters (2022) believes practitioners should be provided with the tools to focus on interventions and activities for children's development in certain areas. Working with several agencies is one method to help children because experts have a plethora of information in their field. This is because it can be challenging to perform examinations for children due to language barriers (Rawlings, *et al*, 2014). This makes it difficult for the practitioner to know whether the child can perform things like speak in organised phrases, which makes it difficult for

practitioners to plan activities for the child in an appropriate way (Early Years Matters, 2022). However, Kurt (2020) states Vygotsky believed that within the Zone of Proximal Development, practitioners needed to comprehend children's holistic development to scaffold them and give them equal learning chances.

Nursery Resources (2019) believes that communication with parents enables practitioners to build positive relationships with parents, enabling collaboration aimed at supporting their child and understanding strategies and interventions which can support the child effectively. During this scenario, the practitioners promoted inclusivity as they attempted to communicate their concerns with the parents. According to MacBlain (2017) Brunner and Bronfenbrenner believed cooperation with parents is crucial since they are children's first teachers, their biggest influences, and their biggest role models because they spend most of their early years with them. Additionally, Kurt (2017) believes that parents and practitioners who have positive relationships with one another give children access to positive role models who help them realise the value of long-lasting partnerships and teamwork.

Furthermore, although practitioner’s trying to connect with parents during the scenario, it was ineffective due to the language barrier and the translation app, which led to misunderstandings (Shamsi, *et al*., 2020). Consequently, having a bad effect on their relationship can make it difficult to recognise the best ways to support the child (Shamsi, *et al*. 2020). According to Vygotsky's Zone of proximal development theory, practitioners are unable to provide children with equitable improving learning opportunities throughout their early education because they lack understanding of effective techniques to support children, which encourages inequality and exclusion (McLeod, 2019).

Practitioners should employ interpreters while speaking with parents and when assessing children to better understand how to support them (Raising Children Network, 2022). This is one approach that inclusive leaders could use to talk to parents even if they don't speak the same language. They can ensure a positive relationship with the parents while helping families and parents who are having a hard time in their day-to-day lives (Raising Children Network, 2022).

## Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

This section will provide a critical examination of how the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ensures inclusiveness in order to provide children a sense of worth, respect, representation, and belonging in their environment. According to UNICEF (No date), children have the right to be free from discrimination under Article 2 of the UNCRC, which specifies that they cannot be subjected to exclusion based on race, religion, culture, gender, or skills. Children's self-esteem, self-awareness, confidence, and overall development might suffer when inclusion is not encouraged since they are less likely to engage or participate in activities when they do not feel like they belong (Freud, No date). The Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015 aims to understand the long-term effects that decisions have on children and how they can positively support their wellbeing by preventing things like health inequities, poverty, and ACEs (NHS Wales, 2015) of which are all things that can have a lasting impact on children. All early childhood educators must work with families and the community to achieve this goal, according to the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, in order to ensure that everyone has access to the pleasures of life as well as the basic necessities (Hobbs and Mutebi 2021).

In order to ensure that children are given effective learning opportunities, early identification of additional learning needs (ALN), and practitioners can support parents if they are having difficulties, Bronfenbrenner believed that collaboration within settings enables positive relationship building and working in partnership with the best interests of the child (Landon, 2014). Collaboration with children enables professionals to form a good rapport with the child, which, according to Donaldson (2015), gives them the chance to comprehend the child's interests and incorporate them into the environment to encourage the child to participate in equitable enhancing learning opportunities without being aware of their learning. Williams-Siegfredsen (1998-2022) reports that at Danish Forest schools, educators feel that unintentional learning opportunities for children give them hands-on learning opportunities that are more likely to engage and inspire kids to learn while they're playing.

In addition, Williams- Siegfredsen (1998-2022) asserts that play activities that incorporate unconscious learning enhance children's self-esteem and overall development because they give them the freedom, choice, and opportunity to participate in independent and self-initiated play, allowing them to express

themselves in a healthy manner. Additionally, Montessori (2022) agrees with this, as they think that children's unconscious play stimulates their innate curiosity and gives them the chance to engage in risk-taking and challenging activities. Therefore, encouraging sustained-shared learning situations where professionals can cooperate with children to find answers to their inquisitive and distinctive thoughts (Learning Journals, 2022). Children's needs and abilities should be taken into account when planning activities by working together with the children (Welsh Government, 2022) Furthermore, by working together to understand children's needs and capacities, practitioners may design activities that provide every child the chance to participate, guaranteeing that every child is included regardless of diversity (Early Years Wales, 2020). Brooker, *et al.* (No date) believes that because of the ratios in place and the constantly changing curriculum that will be implemented, practitioners will increasingly become unable to collaborate with children.

However, in Wales, the ratios are insufficient to guarantee that every child feels represented and included. Positive ratio sizes enable practitioners to offer children with efficient care (Miranda, 2017). Working together with parents enables practitioners to comprehend the child's family background, ensuring they accurately represent the child's culture and personal interests within the setting, and enabling the child to feel appreciated and gain a sense of belonging within the setting, according to Welsh Government (2015). Additionally, during collaboration, practitioners can build strong relationships with families, enabling families to approach them with their individual difficulties and receive assistance from practitioners (WJEC CBAC LTD, 2019) A good working connection with parents also gives parents and professionals the confidence to approach one another about issues that might require multi-agency working partnerships (WJEC CBAC LTD, 2019).

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 talks about how crucial it is to promote a child’s achievement throughout their lives because doing so helps them realise their goals and discover their passions (Welsh Government, 2015). The Welsh Government (2015) adds that this is done to promote individualism, enable them to be creative and productive, and help them get highly skilled jobs. However, Ferdman, Prime and Riggio (2020), contends that in order to ensure children's prosperity, policymakers must consider both macro and micro factors that have an

impact on direct individuals while formulating policies and encouraging inclusive practises. Raffo, *et al.* (No date) states the micro is the affects how a specific individual operates on their own, and the macro, means to have an impact on how each individual child operates with the uniqueness and within in society. Furthermore, Raffo, *et al.* (No date) believes even though the two categories are different, understanding them both is necessary to fully appreciate an individual child, in order to understand how numerous things, effect a child, therefore ensuring a practitioner is aware on how each child is unique and have their own abilities which should be met.

Supporting Children, Families and the Wider Community Within the LGBTQIA+

Every child is unique, this is because they have their own Individual abilities, beliefs, and identities (Early Years Matters 2022). The Children's Society (2022) suggests children learn about their identities as they mature and start to form a sense of who they are. This could entail investigating their gender, such as their gender identity, the many ways they express their gender, and the people they find attractive for example their sexual orientation. Freud (2020) believes some children may experiment with alternative ways of being as they mature, that may not fit the stereotypes of gender identity or sexual orientation. During their early years, some children may declare that they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual or non-binary (LGBTQIA+).

Furthermore, Freud (2020) states LGBTQIA+ children have reported experiencing stigma, discrimination, and social isolation. All these can have detrimental effect on their self-esteem, mental health, and well-being. Welsh Government (2021) believes although belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community is not always associated with having poor mental health, research suggests that LGBTQIA+ children may be more vulnerable to mental health issues, for example, children being bullied for who they are. Therefore, combining Articles two, twelve and twenty-seven of the UNCRC UNICEF (No date) every child has the right to be non-discriminated against, their views should be respected by everyone that surrounds them to protect them from having mental health issues within their future.

Umbrella Cymru (No date) believes an inclusive leader can support children by discussing within their settings what the LGBTQIA+ stands for and teach others to understand. However, as Bradbury and Coffey (2021) state some inclusive leaders are afraid to discuss LGBTQIA+ awareness as they worry that parents may be unhappy about children learning about it. Therefore, suggesting inclusive leaders try other approaches for both children and parents to understand. Bradbury and Coffey (2021) believe having LGBTQIA+ awareness week within settings can help understanding, creating activities such as dressing up, colouring different objects in the pride colours. Inviting parents into settings and presenting their children's creations and their own ideas of the LQBTQIA+ and discussing with parents what the awareness is about (Children's Commissioner for Wales, 2021).

Gibbs (2015) suggests due to conflicting religious or cultural ideals, some children who identify as LGBTQIA+ are rejected by their family, support system and the wider community. However, as stated by Umbrella Cymru (2015) there is support for inclusive leaders to help parents understand their children within LGBTQIA+. Inclusive leaders can support families by recommending they can do their own research and find support online to help them understand, as religion and culture should not be a barrier to how children feel about themselves. LGBTQIA+ prejudice should always be taken seriously. For instance, by encouraging children to report incidents of bullying or hate crimes, or by implementing strict anti-discrimination measures at the early years setting (Welsh Government 2011).

Furthermore, NHS Wales (No dates) states every child has the right to: -

- Equality: - Equal opportunities and protected from discrimination.
- Diversity: - Receive respect, to be recognised and to be valued differently.
- Inclusion: - Feel valued and Included

Many families and communities consider religion and culture a barrier to the LGBTQIA+. However, the Welsh Government (2021) has set out an action plan to support LGBTQIA+ and the wider community, The Welsh Government (2021) is dedicated to preserving human rights for everyone. Stating they want to make it possible for all LGBTQIA+ individuals living in Wales to have as complete lives as they can, to be healthy, happy, and safe. Within the previous three decades, the Welsh Government (2021) have made great strides toward equality and diversity.

Advancing the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning people to equality. Inclusive leaders can encourage children, families, and communities to connect with others who might have had comparable experiences, this can be beneficial. This may apply to other young persons in the community who are LGBTQIA+ or who have mental health issues. They might be introduced to a nearby LGBTQIA+ support group or online network as a result (Freud, 2015).

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