

PART ONE

Catalytic leadership, what is it? Connor (2013) talks about a catalytic leader being able to identify issues and needs and then finding a new way of adapting the provision that inspires others to improve their practice. They should be able to communicate clearly and understand the main focus of their work and how people must work together to achieve that goal. Eckert (2021) discusses this in further detail by highlighting that it is not about the management within a setting or about that one person who is the catalyst. It is about the catalyst accelerating the work of others, this is done by working alongside the staff and looking at what is working well and how it can be improved further. Zachery (2011) supports this and identifies the five components they think that catalytic leaders need. However, one of those components is being heretical and by being heretical and changing the normal processes it can result in some challenges and upset amongst staff if they are not willing to take on board the change. Department for children, schools and families (2010) agree that to improve provision within a setting, practitioners must be challenged. It is important that during this process the person challenging must be open to working together to create solutions and ways forward, rather than just instructing others in what they need to do. Having this sustained shared thinking approach will help to combat others feeling pressured into these new ways as they will have been involved in the planning of the changes being made. Ankrum (2016) further supports this stating leadership that is distributed amongst a team helps decision making easier when they work together and having catalysts of excellent provision at all levels within the setting provides multiple leadership rather than a sole leader at the top. Lindon (2012) discusses how being able to manage relationships within the team involves inspiration, being able to motivate others with clear vision, however they need to be able to use tactics to deal with any conflicts that might arise during these changes and bring the team together to collaborate. This can be a challenging time for any of the individuals involved.

McDowall Clark (2012) states that their research they found that most practitioners within the setting had difficulty with the term leadership and displayed little confidence in discussing how they are a leader. Most felt that it was more a managerial term and came as directions from the top rather than leading from within. Toomer ET AL (2018) states that catalytic leadership is not about having that title of management or the

authority at the top of the hierarchy it is about being able to lead from wherever you are. Being in education/ early years settings there is a need for multiple leaders throughout. Davies and Ryder (2016) discuss that many practitioners idea of leadership is someone who oversees the whole setting and puts policies and structures in place, but it is more than that. They identify how practitioners can take leadership of their own role, looking at their practice and evaluating what works well and how things can be changed and then sharing this with others. Childhood leaders reflecting on their practice and researching new approaches, looking for positive changes to be made are helping build better learning environments. Cooper (2014) talks about the difficulties that teachers and early years educators have identifying with the term leadership. They state that practitioners can hold back from wanting to be a leader as they see it as too competitive with heavier workloads and more responsibility. Penn (2011) agrees stating that practitioners have multiple layers of leadership within their role daily, but these levels of responsibility are not reflected in their pay grade, yet another reason for practitioners to hold back on wanting to take on any extra responsibilities, such as leading others. However, (Siraj and Halet 2016) talks about empowering leadership in others using influence. Influencing other's behaviours and practice by doing themselves and taking into consideration the assessment of the provision being delivered alongside the care for the practitioner's wellbeing and job satisfaction. Being able to build a strong relationship with the team and identifying their interests and strengths can give them a morale boost and help empower them, providing them with the confidence to share their practice with others. Sims ET AL (2014) discusses this further stating that practitioners need opportunities to attend training opportunities to motivate and inspire them and infill them with the confidence that they are delivering high quality provision. Practitioners that have undergone the Early Years Professional Status in the UK have reported a remarkable improvement on their quality of provision and a greater developed ability to mentor and support the other members of staff. Furthermore Colmer (2017) supports this stating that practitioners that are listened to and are given professional development opportunities gained the confidence to speak in professional discussions and offer ideas that lead innovative practice. This type of catalytic leadership cannot be forced or delegated by others it should be collaborative and supported by all.

Connor (2013) discusses a catalytic leader being able to work together with not just the staff within their workplace but the surrounding community and outside agencies.

Being able to do this across all areas will help put the community's cultures, environmental factors and any sociological issues at the heart of what they do. Joiner (NO YEAR) supports this stating that catalytic leaders that identify key stakeholders and gather input from them and the information of the surrounding community will help the leader make better, more personalised and tailor-made initiatives. Having the input of others will have strong influences in any new approaches or ideas. Baier and Lang (2019) identifies the Scarr-Rowe hypothesis where they state that children's genetic potential is more fully expressed in areas with higher socio-economic status than lower socio-economic areas. They also discuss that children in disadvantaged families have more influence from the environment that they live in. Therefore, the setting needs a deep understanding of environmental and genetic influences the children are living in. UNESCO (2015) states the importance of children having their basic human rights met to support their development and foundations for learning. With the right start in life and having those foundations they have better opportunities for the future which will have an impact on society. Meaney (2014) reinforces the importance of how practitioners need to adapt their provision to consider these socio-economic factors. The children do not just need education, they need an extra element of care and provision that needs to be delivered in a more affectionate nurturing environment, especially for children in their earlier years or children who have experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACES). Hardcastle ET AL (2018) agrees that ACES increase the chance of a child developing emotional distress and inability to develop healthy relationships due to the neurological changes that have been occurred in their brain due to trauma. This can be evident in children when they display unwanted behaviours. Heikka and Hujala (2013) states that all these societal factors must be considered and merge with the leadership and adapt the approach of the setting. Training and development agency for schools (NO YEAR) talks about Maslow's theory The Hierarchy of Needs and once children have their basic needs met and they feel safe, loved and that they have a sense of belonging then and only then they are ready to be develop their knowledge further.

The Scottish Executive Education Department (2006) discuss the importance of working with parents as partners relating to their child's learning. This partnership also provides an insight into the family's dynamics and socio-economic status. Working closely with parents has benefits for the parents, the educational setting and the education authority. It helps parents have a better insight into their child's learning,

educators can discuss ideas with the parents and involve them in developing the setting and the education authority get information on how provision is working from different viewpoints. In an interview with Patel (2020) Stewart Friedman points out that parents are leaders, without them even thinking about it they constantly try to motivate their children to do a variety of tasks every single day, right from an early age. It is not just about instructing the children to do these tasks but to inspire them, make them realise their goals and values and challenge themselves to become the best person they can be. Powell (2022) agrees that having parents involved in their child's education is crucial and that by using regular parent forums it helps the setting adjust their approach to suit the ever-changing ways of the local society. Waterford.org (2020) discusses that without empowering parents and gaining their views and perspectives the setting is unaware of their understanding and outlook, making it more difficult to have that partnership needed to make changes, design new approaches and understand the child's background. However, Tett and Macleod (2020) identify that there are challenges that need to be factored in when working with parents. Some settings may see working with parents their way of managing them and telling them what they want them to do rather than responding to what the parents think or have to say. For these partnerships to work and be fair the practitioners need to have mutual respect and recognise both the settings and parents' views. Goodwin University (2017) discusses how the Reggio Emilia approach looks at all the partners involved in the child's learning journey, listing the children, parents, educators and the environment. By looking at these factors as a whole picture it is clear that it takes co-operation from all areas to give the child the best education possible. Zeldin ET AL (2018) extends this stating that the surrounding community influences children and their life skills and it should be taken into consideration when the type of schooling is approached. Whereyoustand.org (NO YEAR) supports the importance of early intervention teams working with families, specifically those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Families First believes that for children to have the best support, interventions such as Flying Start, Communities First and Integrated Family Support Services need to work closely with not just the child but the whole family. The level of support given depends on the circumstances and needs of the child and their family. By these teams being a catalyst for change in the child/family's life it can help reduce the likelihood of further complications developing and improve any current issues. This is supported by Welsh Government (2017) who reinforce those early interventions and aim to tackle any issues as soon as possible by working with the families and

helping the build on their parenting skills to ensure children have the best environments to thrive in and reach their full potential. Snap Cymru (2022) state how they can work with educators to help train them and build their knowledge on a range of issues and how to develop and their provision to meet children's additional needs or children living with difficult home lives. Educators need to be aware of this support to help improve their own practice and motivate others to make those changes to best suit the child.

PART 2

NSPCC (2021) share a timeline of how children's rights were developed since the 1880's and that these acts were created over time due to significant high-profile cases which resulted in death. Batty (2004) in the Guardian talks about the first act of parliament that protected children was the Children's Charter in 1889. This was iconic as it was the first time that the law was able to prosecute anyone who was found to be subjecting a child to abuse or neglect. This law also gave guidance on children in the workplace. Moorhouse (NO YEAR) details it further identifying another two key points of the legislation which was the introduction of childminders requiring registration and being answerable to their local authority by inspection and the act also made it law that all children are entitled to an education. Moving onto the introduction of The Children's Act 1989 in England and Wales, Elvin ET AL (2019) states it was a significant moment in child protection history as it delegated duties to the local authority and the law system as well as enforcing councils to deliver services to support the children in need. Evans (2013) documents in Nursery World that although it came into action in England and Wales in 1991 and in Northern Ireland in 1996, with some slight adjustments, the act's core belief was that children are best cared for in their own homes, that parents have key involvement, and they work in partnership with the Local Authority. However, Speight and Wynne (2000) argue that returning abused and neglected children to the parents who abused and neglected them is most certainly not having the child's best interests at heart. It then highlights that in the act there is no description of what the best interests of the child are, leaving it to people's own judgements. Children's Bureau (2018) states that children who suffer from neglect and or abuse have a higher chance of long-term health conditions, poor mental health, depression and it can even affect their brain development. These are just some of the

many issues that can be a result of abuse and neglect. The severity of the issues depends on the age of the child at the time of the abuse and the length of time they were subjected to it. Having such maltreatment at any age can have devastating effects, First things first (2018) support this stating that the first five years of a child's life are crucial to their development as this is the time that their brain develops the quickest. Therefore, it is important that children are provided with high quality learning experiences, helping their brain make the connections needed that will have a lasting impact on their development and the person they will become. Ferguson (2019) discusses how social workers and stakeholders have difficulties in making decisions in what is best for the child. They can often be seen as removing a child too soon without trying to support the family to overcome issues or the opposite of leaving the child with the family for too long. The rights of the child need to be the focus and fought for by others as children cannot always speak for themselves.

Lievens (2021) discusses the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child, otherwise known as the UNCRC, that was adopted in 1989. Stating that it relates to all children under the age of 18 years old and is made of four key principles. It is non-discriminative, it has the best interests of the child at the core of it, the child's right to life which they can grow and develop and finally the right to have their thoughts and views heard. Unicef (2022) lists the fifty-four articles that the convention is made from detailing an explanation of each article that came into force in the United Kingdom in 1992. They explain that every right is linked, and they are of the same importance. Having these rights made children more than possessions of their parents, they became individuals with their own rights, which helped transform children's lives forever. Humanium (NO YEAR) discusses how the UNCRC was built upon the Geneva Declaration of the rights of the child, 1924. This declaration consisted of five rights for the child, however these were not legally binding, unlike the UNCRC. Children in Wales (2021) states that Wales was the first nation in the UK to make the adopt the UNCRC as part of their laws. The 'Rights of Children and Young Persons Measure Wales 2011' became law in 2012 ensuring that the Welsh Government always have the rights of children at the forefront when making decisions. However, Welsh Parliament (2020) states that in examination of it's introduction there are gaps in the public's understanding of children's rights and that there is no formal approach of teaching the children about their rights. Welsh Government (2022) states that ministers have a responsibility to make sure that everyone in Wales knows and

understands children's rights and to support ministers they have a Children's Rights Impact Assessment for many proposals and areas that they deal with. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2022) explains the child rights impact assessment further stating that it is vital that when creating any new proposals for laws, policies and budgets, children's rights and the impact it would have on children are embedded into the development of them. This is supported by Article 3 of the UNCRC where 'In all actions concerning children...administrative bodies or legislative bodies have the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration' (Unicef Canada, 2022). These children's rights impact assessments are constantly being created and adapted to identify any changes in society, such as the recent pandemic of Covid-19. Welsh Government (2021) Childcare, play and early years division responses to Covid-19: children's rights impact assessment details the impacts Covid restrictions has had on children both directly and indirectly. Putting provision in place for vulnerable children and children of critical workers, ensuring this provision was funded. Free school meals were provided throughout half term holidays to help relieve the financial pressure of parents feeding their families in difficult times due to lack of work or loss of job, linking in with Article 24 of the UNCRC.

UK Parliament (2001) discusses the appointment of the first children's commissioner for Wales which happened in 2001. The appointment for this role followed after the Waterhouse tribunal. The key role of the commissioner was to ensure children and their rights are respected and to become an advocate for the children, handling individual cases and publishing reports when necessary. The Times (2007) states that children's organisations in Wales had been campaigning for more than ten years for such a role to be developed and that it was the first time for an independent to represent and champion children's rights. Clarke (2002) states in the annual report and accounts 2001-2002 that the first year of their role as Children's Commissioner had been challenging regarding setting up a team of staff and getting the correct systems in place as it had never been done before. Twenty-one years later and on the cusp of the new commissioner in the coming months this is not an issue for a well-established team. Children's Commissioner for Wales (2017) states that they work with 'A Children's Rights Approach' that is guided by the UNCRC and work in partnership with multiple agencies within Wales to help improve services. However, Welsh Parliament (2016) states that during scrutiny of Wales and the UK by an expert

panel of the UN Committee they gave more than one hundred and fifty recommendations and highlighted a range of issues that are not being addressed appropriately. From high child poverty rates, especially Wales being the highest in the UK, to children's views not being heard during policy making. Acting upon this later in 2016 the Welsh Government members of the Senedd created a Welsh Youth Parliament. Welsh Youth Parliament (2022) state that the Senedd worked with thousands of young people in Wales and the first Welsh Youth Parliament was established late 2018. Giving the children of Wales a voice and empowering them to decide on the main aims they would like to tackle was a big step for them and helped rectify those issues brought up in the prior UN scrutiny. Children in Wales (2021b) discusses the importance of Article 12 of the UNCRC- 'every child has the right to express their views and have them listened to and taken seriously.' This 'umbrella body for organisations' that work with children in Wales is looking to further support the child's voice by engaging with young children in early years settings as they have strong trusting relationships with their educators in a safe nurturing environment. Supporting Service Children in Education Wales (2022) state in their pupil voice guidance that having a school council, which is required by all maintained schools in Wales, helps pupils feel represented and informs the educator and other stakeholders the children's suggestions for improvements and what their views are on school life. The Children's Commissioner for Wales (2021) supports this stating that the school council is an important part of their time at school, not just for the council member themselves, but the other children involved in the setting. However, the school council must be fully inclusive of a range of identities and cultures to help prevent a lack of diversity and improve the school experience for children.

When The Children's Commissioner for Wales, Sally Holland was appointed in 2015 she made one of her key priorities to make the government ban smacking children. Talking to the Wales Online (2015), she discussed her disappointment of the ban not being lifted that year and stated it was an 'injustice against children'. UNICEF (NO YEAR) supports this with Article 19 stating that children should be protected from any violence and abuse and the governments have a duty to support this. Welsh Government (2022b) announced that in March 2022 the change, prioritised by the Children's commissioner, was made and it became illegal to physically punish a child in Wales. Therefore, children are given the same protection as adults in regards of

assault. This relates to all children in Wales and any visitors also, anyone found guilty of physically punishing a child will be breaking the law and risk becoming arrested or charged. Morgan (2022) the Deputy Minister for Social Services agrees that this change in the law will give a clear message of how Wales is working with the UNCRC at the forefront, preventing children coming to any harm. This will also help professionals providing parents with different approaches of discipline with positive parenting styles. Dathan (2022) reports in The Times that with Wales putting the smacking ban into force, England is now the only nation in Britain to not have a ban on smacking. Weale and Quinn (2020) state that the Children's Commissioner in England would not give a view on whether there should be a ban on physical punishment for children. It is currently illegal in England, however parents can claim they are using 'reasonable punishment' something that has been removed in other nations. The NSPCC (2021) state that this is not the first time there has been such a difference in nations in the UK. With the appointments of Children's Commissioners there are a range of starting dates, such as Wales appointing the first Commissioner in 2001, Ireland appointing in 2003, Scotland in 2004 and finally England's first Commissioner being established in 2005 after the influence of the Lord Laming's report. Guy (2022) states that Professor Aoife Nolan, a human rights law expert, thinks that the Welsh Assembly are leading the way with children's rights and are going beyond what the UK as a whole agreed to do. He stated that Wales has 'greater protection' for the rights of a child, in the CRC compared to England. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (2016) discusses these differences in the nation's approaches further stating that the CRC is not incorporated in UK wide law as it is in Wales and Scotland and that there is a lack of adequate consideration of the CRC when new legislation is being created. They identify that there is an urgent need for change for the CRC to be part of all domestic law. Cole-Alback (2019) states that children's rights have made leaps of progress since the creation of the UNCRC. Before the UNCRC children were seen as unimportant and they only had a need for little rights as their focus was getting to an age when they can work and provide for others. However, Harvard University (2022) argues that children who are deprived of a healthy start, are unaware of their rights and are being treated badly will have lifelong damage relating to their physical, emotional or social development. As Unicef (2019) state children need to know their rights, without them they are unable to know what they are entitled to and be able to make a change in their lives and the lives of others.

PART 3

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (NO YEAR) describe Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) as a traumatic, or a potentially traumatic experience that can occur in childhood which is the first 17 years of life. NHS (2022) list a wide range of experiences which fall under the ACEs umbrella. These include, physical or sexual abuse, neglect, violence, loss of a close family member or being witness to substance abuse or mental health issues. Experiencing one or more of these in early childhood can impact negatively on education and future job opportunities as well as links to health problems, mental health issues and substance misuse. Bellis and Zisk (2014) estimate that approximately 47% of people in the UK have experienced at least one ACE. This indicates that nearly half of the British public are living with increased risk of health problems such as heart disease or cancer as a result of their early childhood experiences. As well as physical health issues, ACEs plays a huge role in the development of mental health issues in adults. NHS (2022) suggest that 1 in 3 mental health problems are caused by a direct result of ACEs. These include stress, anxiety and depression. Public Health Scotland (2021) outline the fact that people who have experience 4 or more ACEs compared to those who have experiences none are up to 4 times more likely to have negative experiences in adulthood in terms of their education, behaviour and overall health. Hayes-Grudo and Morris (2020) agree that ACEs can have lifelong effects and many individuals who experience a plethora of ACEs will also go on to have children who are exposed to adverse childhood experiences. Therefore, ACEs and early childhood trauma is passed on to the next generation.

Child Trends (2019) looked at the percentage of children with three or more ACEs and compared them by the level of poverty they lived in. The results compared were from 2011/12- 2016. They showed that children who were living in poverty were more than twice as likely to experience three or more ACEs rather than children who lived in more affluent households. The Robertson Trust (2020) agrees stating that although the links between poverty and ACEs can be complex they are evident and that children living in disadvantaged households were at a higher risk of experiencing ACEs and a continuation of poverty in their adult life also. Healthwatch (2019) lists the possible warning signs that a child is subjected to ACEs as being depressed acting out, signs of being under stress, eating disorders and inappropriate behaviours. They state that catching these signs early can prevent the damage caused by ACEs but more people

need to be educated about it to do this. Morgan (2022b) discusses the Welsh Government's plan for preventing ACEs and how they set out in 2021 to develop a plan to do this. The framework will be published later this year and include a 'new trauma-informed practice framework' to support services in understanding ACEs further. It discusses large amounts of funding that has been put into this plan for the use of training, women's aid the creations of related community projects. However, UCL (2020) states that the focus should be more concentrated on helping parents with medical issues and mental health, as early as in the pregnancy stages to reduce the chances of the child being subjected to ACEs.

Boullier and Blair (2018) discusses some of the ACEs prevention programmes that are available in the UK. The Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) which was created in the USA helps first time mothers who are under 20 years old. The aim of this programme is to have an impact on the mother's behaviours and promote positive parenting skills. However, this is not available in all areas of the UK and restricting the reach as it is only for women under 20 years. NHS (2022) states that Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is one service that aims to support adults and young people who are struggling to process and manage their ACEs. CAMHS can offer a wide range of therapies and support programmes such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, family therapy sessions and Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing Therapy. These types of therapies will help young people and adults manage their anxiety, depression and past trauma. However, it is recognised that many people will need support and guidance to build trusting relationships with professionals before they are ready to engage in some kind of coping strategies. Public Health Wales (2020) state that children who have poor mental health and behavioural difficulties often struggles to manage and maintain positive relationships with others. The lack of trust these children experience will often leave them feeling alone and isolated. Therefore, a great deal of work must be done in order to develop a safe, trusting relationships before embarking on any therapeutical work.

Future Generations Commissioner for Wales (2020) talk about the vision for a Wales without ACEs part of this pledge include schools being more informed, through the support of the new curriculum, to recognise and mitigate ACEs. Services such as GroBrain (2022) is helping reduce the impact of ACEs for children who live in poverty. It supports flying start support workers and health visitors and educated parents on

the importance of the first 1000 days of life and how attachment and the development of the brain affects children. However, Launder (2021) states that there increasing worries with health visitors feeling they are unable to do enough to help safeguard the children who are part of the increasing numbers living in poverty. Early Help (2020) states that it provides advice and interventions related to ACEs prevention in six different themed areas. Safeguarding, attachment and family relationships, child development, finance, benefits and housing, mental health, and wellbeing and finally education and childcare. With these in place there is a strong intention of tackling ACEs and helping children and their families with the support needed. Estyn (2020) supports this stating that The ACE support hub focuses on making changes to ensure that the society is fully aware of ACEs, and it aims for Wales to lead this through the use of prevention and mitigation. ACE Aware Wales (NO YEAR) further supports this stating that the ACE support hub is making Wales a leader in combatting ACEs. They identify that there are still issues with inequalities within Wales, however the First 1000 Days Programme is crucial in providing the supporting information and evidence of the importance of the programme. This programme is vital in bringing agencies, services and sectors together in working cohesively to tackle ACEs.

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