

The Importance of respecting a child's voice

For all early years practitioners



Introduction.

This briefing paper highlights the importance of early years practitioners who are working with young children understanding different aspects on why children have their rights also looks at why a child's voice and understanding how crucial it is to encourage all children and adults to have their own views and using their voice to express how they truly feel.

A child's voice, views and opinion matters. All children and adults all have rights. These rights are in place to ensure the children are able to survive, develop to their best ability, ensure they are protected and able to participate in decisions that may affect their lives. This is why we have UNCRC which is made up from 42 articles this are in place to protect all children.

Allowing children to have a voice it supports and develops their self esteem but also their self worth as we are allowing children the opportunity to speak for themselves by making choices, giving opinions, how they are truly feeling, the emotions they are having within. All these factors support children being able to develop and learn and know that they are important and that they feel valued by others. That feeling of being valued plays a big part in a child's learning and development. As children need to experience feeling confidence this allows them to take risks through exploring the unknown, being able to actively learn and use problem solving skills through play and this comes from being able to use their voice confidentially.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a worldwide agreement that is in place so that it is able to set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that every child is given no matter their race, religion, disability or abilities. Looking at articles within the UNCRC they have all been created in the best interest of the child.

- *Article 12 - Respect of the views of the child.*

Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.

This article highlights very important points and explains children have the right to be listened to and taken seriously. It explains that everyone should ensure children are being respected for using their voice and expressing themselves.

- *Article 23 - children with a disability.*

A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to support disabled children and their families.

This article highlights that children with disability are not discriminated and are still able to have equal opportunities and are still given the opportunity to use their voice and express their views, opinions and feeling in matters that involve them. Professionals in the early years settings should ensure children have support they need in place to do so.

- *Article 31 (leisure, play and culture)*

Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

This article highlights that all children have the right to play through freedom to express themselves and the culture they support.

- *Article 16 (right to privacy)*

Every child has the right to privacy. The law should protect the child's private, family and home life, including protecting children from unlawful attacks that harm their reputation.

This article highlights that children have the right to feel protected and they have their privacy and confidentiality is used in situations regarding the child.

Early years practitioners should ensure that these articles regarding rights of the children. Implementing them to a child's day to day life.

Briefing paper references.

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EAAA4008/C
The Professional Practitioner
Student Number: 1807809

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