

Section 1 – Reflection on Inclusion Leadership.

Within this section there will be a reflective discussion on a scenario based upon inclusive leadership. There will be an in-depth detail of a scenario on each participant mentioned, and a reflection on how Early Years practitioners' inclusive leaders can support the scenario and the next steps for the future. It will also detail the importance of a civil working partnership with families or carers to provide the best support and care for the child's learning. The co-construction of building knowledge of the family's child, professionals and the community needs to be understood, as everyone has different personalities and behaviours. However, everyone has the power and right to be included and the right to have their own voice. This section will finally describe the importance of understanding the co-production of early settings, working with internal and external services support for the inclusion of child and families/carers.

Early Years practitioners have a duty of care to treat everyone who they are in partnership with respect, equality and inclusion following the role of an inclusive leader as Newstead and Isles-buck (2019) define, the inclusive leader is based upon the understanding and acceptance of all different types of people including race, religion, gender, and age. In contrast, this article has similar points to inclusive leaders as Paige-Smith (2013) explains, to ensure all partnerships in the setting are included and respected within the setting as well as families in their child's learning.

It is important for practitioners to understand and present themselves as inclusive leaders, as Ferdman (2020) explains, inclusive leaders will understand families/ carers diverse thinking and may be challenged with resistances to change, differences and communication with others about changes and issues. In contrast, Bobongie and Jackson (2018) have a different opinion stating, there will be certain families/carers that may still not agree with changes and have a fixed mindset. As an inclusive leader, one must respect their decision and reflect on that not everyone may agree with changes within the setting.

An inclusive leader does not only collaborate with families/carers, but also includes the involvement of the children within the setting as Wall (2020) explains, inclusive leadership with every child involves listening to the child's voice as they may express their opinions on issues. Alternatively, an inclusive leader can be influenced differently according to Roberts and Callaghan (2021), practitioners must be respectful on the

child's beliefs encouraging the importance of respecting the differences and uniqueness in all children thus, encouraging children to never judge each other on their differences and hopefully take the idea of inclusivity and equality into their future learning.

Inclusive leaders will be involved in challenging or concerning scenarios in an Early Years setting. This may include a disagreement as Hallet (2016) explains, with parents not agreeing with each other, discrimination and excluding of others based on how they perceive their past behaviour. In comparison, this person agrees but they offer an alternative view as McDowall Clark and Murray (2012) states, Inclusive leaders need to analyse and reflect on their own practice, how to resolve solutions with the help and support from teams or agencies if needed.

Moving towards the scenario, which discusses a single parent overcoming their drug addictions having been assessed by the rehabilitation worker, substances abuse councillor and social worker, caring for their child on their own. The practitioner notices the father stands alone in the playground and at home time other parents look at him but do not invite him to join in their talks. He is nervous around teachers and only stays for a short while to talk if needed and seems very distrusting of others around him. The son is not doing well at the setting, as he suffers from abandonment issues due to removal from the home two years ago, due to addiction and going into care. He is displaying challenging behaviour and struggles to make friends within the setting.

Inclusive leadership may be beneficial for supporting the individuals in this scenario, along with reflective learning of practitioners in Early Years setting as Melhuish (2016) explains, practitioners could either learn individually or co – constructively as a team to build knowledge about the personalities, behaviours, and challenges of everyone they interact with. To concur, Willams and Gavana's (2016) article agrees with points made and explain, to collaborate with internal and external agencies for support and to socially include everyone at the setting, to support either the individual or group who are at a disadvantage.

There is also the working partnership with parents or carers as Cottle and Alexander (2014) explain, the parents or carers practitioner may work co-productively to support their child's needs to include the parent in their educational learning and to discuss any issues or struggles their child may be experiencing, resulting in a developmental

learning plan. In addition, Van Houte (2015) agrees explaining, that partnership will also build the trust and respect between parents and practitioners, whereby the practitioner will include the parent in conversations on how their child is progressing, making parents/carers feel welcome and safe within the Early Years setting.

Practitioners will also be reflecting on their own experiences of discrimination, exclusion and offensive comments as Chun *et al.* (2011) discusses, practitioners must understand and learn that families, carers, and children all come from different backgrounds such as race and religion. Practitioners need to be accepting of people for who they are, and to reflect on some comments may perceive them as normal, however may be an offensive comment to others' beliefs or race. In contrast, Dowling (2014) sees challenging discrimination differently, expressing practitioners must also be open minded and ready for resistances as there may be certain groups of people who may not be accepting of other groups of people therefore, an inclusive leader must keep an open mind towards judgments and comments, on how they will be able to settle disagreements or offensive comments.

The next section will discuss the involvement of the child. All Early Years professionals have a voice within the setting such as, Additional learner needs practitioners and teaching assistants, as these professionals have the most interaction with a child in the setting (Majoko, 2016). Moreover, Bain, James and Harrison (2015) also have insight to this and explain, it is important for an inclusive leader to be collaborative with other professionals, as they may pick up on things that other practitioners may have missed. The teaching assistant will interact and observe every child within the setting as Webster and De Boer (2019) explain, teaching assistants will be able to pick up on any impairment or issues of children in the setting, so there must be collaborative leadership for both teacher and teacher assistant to discuss the child who may need extra support. Thus, supporting Vygotsky as Wass and Golding (2014) explain, Vygotsky theory believes if a child's learning is scaffolded by a more experienced peer, they will be able to learn from them and hopefully with support, become a more independent learner.

As an inclusive leader, the child's voice could be valued and respected in the setting. Thus, supporting Article 12 in United Nation Convention of the Rights of the Child as Unicef (no date) explains, the article is based upon the importance of the child's rights

on freedom of speech and expression, on how they feel about certain experiences on environments, race, gender, religion and behaviours, and for their views to have the weight of being valued and respected within every Early Years settings.

Inclusive leaders should implement an action plan for mental health in settings as World Health Organization (2021) explains, it spreads an awareness of the importance and support of mental wellbeing and for children who may have mental health issues to feel valued and included in the setting, as they are made to feel safe and secure and are not judged and treated differently to other children. In contradiction, certain parents may refuse to believe their child has any mental health issues and consider it offensive as Judge and Deutsch (2017) explain, parents find it hard to believe their own child may have mental health and wellbeing issues, as they may not understand what mental health is and fear of judgement from other parents.

Understanding a child's holistic development gives practitioners and other professionals a co-construction about the whole child and how to adapt changes in their learning, support and activities, as Carter (2016) explains, looking at the child as a whole, understanding how the child's learning technique and interests are adapted within their learning. Furthermore, Johnson (2016) states, by changing rooms around and adding new resources and activities that are based on the child's interests supports their learning and health and wellbeing. Thus, supporting Maslow as Lee and Hanna (2015) state, Maslow believes by meeting a child's deficiency needs with a practitioner's support and safe and secure environment, the child will become self – actualized which is reaching their full potential. However, practitioners tend to have a large ratio of children and less ratio of staff in their settings therefore, Gorry and Thomas (2017) explain, it could be very time consuming to teach each individual child and sometimes the unique child, as child's needs tend to be missed due to child-staff ratio

It is important for all children have a right to express themselves and feel welcome and included in all activities as Cefai *et al.* (2014) state, practitioners can understand how a child is feeling by allowing them to express themselves through circle time, as every child will be included. In addition, Ab Rahman, Sazali and Veloo (2020) explain, it gives them the power and time to speak as they all sit together and listen to each other during that time, By the practitioner giving equal praise to each child, this supports the

brain mentality, which in turn improves the child's resilience, confidence, and self-esteem.

Inclusive leaders will be meeting different ethnic groups, past behaviour and religious backgrounds of families and carers, as Underwood (2013) explains, practitioners must have a clear understanding of all people, as they are not all the same and they may come from different beliefs and backgrounds and to ensure inclusivity for all parents and carers by having a welcoming and warm setting. Furthermore, Derman-Sparks, LeeKeenan and Nimmo (2015) agree explaining, there must be a standard of non-judgemental comments about families and carers backgrounds, showing an equal level of respect to all parents and carers to work collaboratively with other agencies to build a co construction with external agencies, as there may be some parents who are recovering from addiction or mental health. However, Waters (2014) states, there may be some parents who have a different mindset than the practitioners' and still preserve parents of recovery differently and exclude them and their child due to the parent's past.

For inclusive leaders to understand both parents and child, there needs to be a working partnership as Parsons, Kovshoff and Ivil (2020) explain, practitioners will gain a better perspective of the child's learning and physical needs by discussing with the parents, as both parties can have an insight and work together on an action plan on how to support the child's needs. Thus, supporting Bronfrenbrenner as Rosa and Tudge (2013) explain, Bronfrenbrenner believes children develop and learn from the environments they interact with and to understand the influences, practitioners must understand and learn from these environments that influence the child's development and behaviour.

In all Early Year settings, professional practitioners need to co construct either individually or as a professional team to work on the role of inclusive leadership and how they can implement those skills in the setting (Mistry and Sood, 2012). Practitioners could learn from their own inclusive experiences by reflecting on their inclusive practices as Robson (2019) explains, reflecting gives practitioners an idea on past experiences they have had and gives them ideas on what they need to work on themselves such as, behaviour, terminology language, personality and beliefs towards children and families. In contrast, Garvis *et al.*, (2016) suggest that as every

family and child comes from a different background, the practitioner must understand and respect their ethnics and beliefs, reflecting on what they may need to improve on for the future.

Early Years settings also need to have a sense of inclusivity and equality towards all children in their care as Cologon (2014) states, there are many different characters of children that come into a setting, making the setting inclusive to all, gives a child a sense of belonging, feeling safe and welcomed. Marwick (2017) follows on further on this point stating, to have this sense of belonging and inclusivity in the setting, the practitioners could implement the child's interests in activities and play using appropriate body language, speaking at their level, adapting activity and play for children who may have an impairment or disability. Furthermore, Helavaara Robertson *et al.*, (2015) are in agreement stating, giving power to the child's voice is important as they may have some ideas of what they would like in the setting, on play and the activities they would like to do, which may suggest building a positive relationship with the child, supporting the child and their families to have a positive attitude and be less anxiety towards the setting. However, there may be some disagreements or issues towards certain activities and play as some families may disagree on activities the child does, as it may go against their religious beliefs, or they may not want them to do it if it involves the child getting dirt on their clothes (Fleer, 2021).

An inclusive leader will need to be involved with communities, as there could be some families and children who may be living in a disadvantaged area and may need support (Ryan, 2014). To have communities interacting and working together as a team, an inclusive leader can set up workshops for all families to participate in as Melton (2017) states, families can come from different communities, consequently by setting up supportive and bonding groups for them to bond ensures social inclusion for all communities, as there may be families, carers or single parents and children who are at a disadvantage. Alternatively, Killen and Rutland's (2013) there may be certain families who do not get along or may not like families from different backgrounds because of past behaviours, religious beliefs, or ethnics. As a result, families must be reminded that all are welcome to bonding groups and they have a choice if they do not want to take part (Daniel, 2015).

Referring to the whole scenario there are some things that still need to be improved on and the continuation of support with each party mentioned in this section. Practitioners still need to work on their partnerships with single parents and to build a positive relationship with the child, always reflecting on their inclusive leadership and what they may need to work on. From this, the professional practitioners have learnt the importance of inclusivity and equality for everyone within the setting, to face challenging and resistance behaviour from certain families and how to handle the situation in an appropriate way and to ensure all children in their care are being treated equal and fairly, by allowing the setting to have a sense of belonging and accessibility for all children in their care.

Section 2 – Policies and professional guidance inclusion.

Within this section, there will be an in-depth look at a policy, whereby the understanding, implementation within settings, its relationship to inclusion and the professional practitioner are discussed within Early Years settings and communities. In addition, an explanation on how the policy supports Early Years provision in helping child develop will be explored. The positives and opportunities of how well the policy has worked within settings, professional and communities and the negatives and barriers of what does not work in this policy such as funding, language terminology, training, or shared values will be looked at.

In all Early Years settings, professional practitioners have many different sets of guidelines they must follow to maintain high quality care and safety of all children and staff in the setting (Harding, 2014). Early Year's practitioners learn through their professional development about policies, as they will need to understand how to use and implement policies in settings as Bonoli (2013) states, a policy is a detailed document about a topic in relation to childcare services that needs to meet the legislative requirements on Early Years. In addition, Clausen (2015) agrees explaining, policies are required by law to be implemented within the Early Years setting as they are there to protect the setting, staff, children and families from high-risk situations. In addition, Lohmann and Zagel (2016) have an alternative viewpoint and discuss, parents or carers read the policies on how tasks and situations should be handled, with safety and care. All childcare practitioners must know the responsibilities of the policies and what is required to ensure that all policies are being followed and implemented correctly. In a more inclusive approach, situations that affect different ethnic groups and religious beliefs should be looked at and how to include these groups into the policy ensuring there is fairness and equality for everyone in the setting and community (Ferdman, 2020).

All policies in Early Years settings have different impacts and support for everyone that is involved in the setting and benefits them for better inclusion, development, and collaborative partnership (Adema, 2012). Policies start at the macro level which is the government, who create the policies and legislations for all companies as they are interconnected. These policies slowly trickle down to micro level for practitioners to implement them in the setting (Ferdman, 2020). However, Maynard *et al.* (2013) has

a different opinion explaining, policies may have changed overtime when they come down from the macro level, as practitioners may perceive the policy in a different way due to not having a lot of information about the new policies or the language terminology may not be understandable and may affect the inclusive approach towards the child, parents and communities.

Moving on to the main topic chosen. The Welsh government decided to introduce a new policy for all Welsh communities, settings and culture, The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. As the Welsh Government (2015) defines, the act is about the improvement of issues in Wales, looking into the social, economic, environmental and community cultural wellbeing. In addition, Wallace (2019) agrees with a different viewpoint explaining, the public bodies work for the community in order to have more of an awareness of people's issues living in Wales and to have a better partnership and inclusion, avoiding any future problems. Furthermore, Farrell and Law (2017) agree, supporting this act will help public bodies to understand the inclusion of Welsh language and communities to build a better Welsh culture and language to support the future of Wales. This act has an importance for the improvement of inclusion of the Welsh Language and culture and to implement the plan within the communities and settings as Nesom and MacKillop (2021) explain, to tackle the issues Wales face such as, poverty, health and wellbeing and growth, the government and communities need to work together to improve the quality of life for all people of Wales.

Looking in-depth at the positives and negatives of the policy, the benefits are the inclusive communities and settings across Wales as Jones, Goodwin-Hawkins and Woods (2020) explain, the act provides a better quality of finances for all communities and settings in Wales by the government providing funds towards resources, to have a better quality for educational learning for children. In contrast, Jones (2019) disagrees as, the funds will only have an implicit attention in certain areas of Wales, not the inclusion of the whole of Wales's communities and settings. Resulting in, some areas being left straggling for funds while other areas will be provided due to focused areas.

Another benefit of the act is the immersion and inclusion of the thriving Welsh language and culture within settings, as Weatherup, Dyakova and Bellis (2016) explains, the inclusion of the Welsh language and culture will help children and families to

understand what their traditions are in Wales, helping children to feel more inclusive as their language and culture are being implemented and insured within their learning. Davies (2017) concurs as, the act mentions everyone is to be treated equally in all of Wales. It does not matter who they are or what background, every person has a right to be able to reach their full potential in learning and careers. Conversely, Martin, Woods and Williams (2019) state, the act is only including people who are Welsh speakers and excluding people who are non-Welsh speakers, therefore practitioners who do not speak Welsh need to be trained in the Welsh language. In contrast, Nicholl, Johnes and Holtom, (2016) agree explaining, the differences of language within the policy focuses on the Welsh language and culture instead of the involvement of different cultures and languages of children and families.

Overall, policies play an important part of the inclusive leader role as policies are based on the experiences of people who come from different backgrounds and ethnics. Public bodies implement those experiences into policies and legalisation which provides inclusion for all. In hope, The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act will work well within Wales's culture and help Welsh communities to overcome the

Section 3 – Flying Start, Universal vs Postcode.

Poverty is an issue that the country of Wales faces. The introduction of Flying Start to support families and children who are in disadvantaged areas has been a great opportunity for families in poverty to have support for their child and to learn basic needs they need for school. However, there is the issue of flying start being the postcode only system not Universal. This blog will be discussing the inclusion of Flying Start and the exclusion of Postcode vs Universal.

Families in poverty have been an issue for a long time and some families cannot afford nursery in Wales, therefore the Welsh government introduced a new childcare setting, Scourfield *et al.* (2020) defines Flying Start as a new Early Years programme that includes families and children under the age of 4 who live in deprived areas of Wales. In addition, Gridley, Hutchings and Baker-Henningham (2013) agree a different viewpoint explaining, Flying Start settings promote the health and wellbeing of all children under their care and the inclusivity of all families and poverty community in the Wales area.

Flying Start is an important part of children's learning development when they live in disadvantaged areas as Bywater *et al.* (2011) discusses, the aims for Flying Start are to help children who may have an impairment due to poverty, to build and develop their learning developments allowing them equal opportunities of education at their level, to get them ready to move forward into school. Thus, support article 12 in the UNCRC as Unicef (no date) states, every child has a right to educational learning within any setting and to have their individual needs supported in order to help them develop further in their education. Equally, Hutchings *et al.* (2017) agrees, as this program can also identify early signs of impairments the child may have thus, understanding the whole child and the support they need helping them progress their learning, This also supports the promotion of inclusion as the child's needs are being met.

However, there is an issue of intersectionality of the Flying start being postcode only in certain areas of Wales as Rutter and Stocke (2015) explain, Flying Starts are based upon postcodes in certain areas of Wales, therefore if there are families on the poverty line, who are just outside the postcode they may not be entitled to the Flying Start scheme. Similarly, Deave *et al.* (2011) agree, as families who are in desperate need

for this support are being excluded, due to not living in the certain postcode area. In addition, McCluskey, Riddell and Weedon (2015) agree with a different viewpoint, the overview of this whole scheme needs to change providing a more flexible approach including all postcodes in Wales, so that every family in poverty can be included in the scheme and have help and support.

Overall, Flying Start is great scheme that includes families and children with help and support who are on the poverty line, giving the child a chance to develop, learn and have their individual needs met. However, the scheme should include all families in poverty not just a postcode lottery system ensuring Article 12 in the UNCRC is met, giving every child the opportunity to learn, develop and thrive.

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