

The Children's Lodge 'Inclusion Policy'

Mission statement

Our mission is to value the ability, individuality and cultural background of all children by providing each child with the opportunities they need to reach their full potential as active learners within an inclusive ethos/culture.

At The Lodge, we achieve care and inclusion in education by continually reviewing an anti-bias approach that is implemented by the early childhood service, and by working in partnership with families, children and the early childhood team, both individually through reflective practice, and in consultation with children and their families, so as to ensure that the education and care provided is fully inclusive of all children, families and agencies that attend and use our service.

Ethos of the service

At The Lodge we will ensure an inclusive culture, recognising that every child is an individual and has their own learning style. We believe that all children are unique, but share many similarities, thus promoting equality and diversity throughout the early childhood service. We will promote and nurture the identity of each child attending the service and ensure that their emotional and physical well-being is of paramount importance at all times.

Policy Statement

This policy represents the agreed principles and commitments for inclusion, in line with the Early Childhood Care and Education National Inclusion Charter. The Children's Lodge Early Childhood service will implement this policy to support and develop an inclusive environment for children and adults within our early childhood service.

'Inclusion' refers to:

A process involving a programme, curriculum or education environment where each child is welcomed and included on equal terms, can feel they belong, and can progress to his/her full potential in all areas of development (National Childcare Strategy 2006–2010).

Role of Inclusion Coordinator

The Inclusion Coordinator within our service is Sinead Brady.

Core principles

At the Lodge we will actively seeks to support learning and participation that does not hinder or exclude individual children or groups of children. This means that equality of opportunity must be a reality for all children attending the service. This is achieved by

using a child-centred equality and diversity approach to create an inclusive learning environment.

Core principles of this strategy are:

- Work in partnership with parents.
- Support children's ability, identity, cultural background and sense of belonging.
- Support children to become respectful of difference.
- Foster each child's critical thinking in order to confront bias and discrimination.
- Implement a curriculum that meets the individual needs and emerging interests of the child under *Síolta: The National Quality Framework (2006)* and *Aistear: The National Curriculum Framework (2009)*.
- Respond to children's diverse and individual learning needs and styles through an emerging curriculum.
- Support continual development for all early childhood practitioners, so as to ensure that they are trained in an equality and diversity approach to providing care and education to all.

At the Lodge Early childhood practitioners work to ensure the following:

- Children feel secure and know that their contributions are valued.
- Children know they belong and are valued as unique individuals.
- All children's cultural backgrounds are respected and valued.
- Children feel strong and confident about their identity.
- Children are taught in groupings that allow them all to experience success.
- Children use materials that reflect a range of social and cultural backgrounds.
- Children have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles.

- Children are encouraged to participate fully, having particular regard for and being cognisant of children with a variety of abilities.
- If a child uses an aid or assistive technology to communicate, that the device is used solely for this purpose.

Our Responsibilities at the Lodge

- All families and children are encouraged to participate, accessing learning experiences through the curriculum on offer.
- We will promote children's individual learning according to their stage of development in line with the Child Care Act, 1991; Child Care (Pre-school Services) (No. 2) Regulations 2016; Disability Act 2005; Equal Status Acts 2000–2012; the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, with particular attention to Articles 29 and 30; and Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2011.

Admissions Policy

Please see the Admissions Policy, included in your handbook for parents which contains all policies and procedures for the admissions to/enrolment in the service.

Working in partnership with parents

As children and families are the most knowledgeable about their background, culture, language, and physical and developmental needs, at the Lodge we will ensure that families are consulted when developing and implementing policy. Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education An effective diversity and equality approach will ensure that ability and diversity are recognised and celebrated, and that discrimination, inequality and exclusion are addressed.

Dealing with discriminatory incidents

- The first step in handling incidents involving discrimination is to recognise and acknowledge what is happening.
- All children need to know that name-calling or physically hurting someone is unacceptable.
- Discuss with the children in a democratic and sensitive manner that name-calling or physically hurting someone is unacceptable.
- When an incident occurs (hurtful remarks made by one child to another), both children learn from the incident. Refer back to the rules of the service where appropriate.
- Always determine the real reason for incidents involving exclusion or conflict. It may not be a discriminatory incident, so be careful not to make assumptions.

- Some issues may be brought into the early childhood service by the child, arising from comments made by adults outside the setting. Recognise when it is an adult issue, and identify appropriate actions for addressing the issue with the child's parents or guardians.
- An incident should be considered from the perspective of all individuals involved as well as those who witnessed it. Appropriate actions need to be taken, at circle time or in group discussion, in order to address incidents witnessed by children who were not involved. This does not mean singling out children in the group.
- By showing empathy and expressing our feelings, we help children to express their feelings.
- It is important to be aware of how our own attitudes can shape how we respond to a given situation. Be mindful that early childhood practitioners are role models for the children and the early childhood service. Children will do as we do (see the Éist manual – Murray and O'Doherty (2010)).

Actions to be followed if the policy is not implemented

If you, as a staff member or a parent, feel that this policy is not being implemented, you can follow The Children's Lodge Complaints Policy and Procedure to make a complaint.

Monitoring and reviewing the policy

The above policy will be re-evaluated at regular intervals throughout the year. We at The Children's Lodge value your input. If you have any queries in relation to the policy, please contact the Inclusion Coordinator:

Sinead Brady either at school or on 023-8844245/086-2471820

*Reviewed by
Sinead Brady
2/9/2019*