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| Name: | Date written: |
| Listening to Children Policy | Oct '21 |
| Written by/Reviewed by: | Date of Review: |
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Policy Statement

This policy outlines how we listen to children throughout every day at Young Friends.

Aims and Purpose

We train our team in extremely high levels of meaningful interaction and value time spent with children over time spent writing down examples of conversations. Families of Young Friends children understand that this is happening throughout their children's time with us.

At Young Friends we believe that all children have the right to be listened to and valued.

Listening to children will help to:

- Aid their personal and social development
- Enable them to feel empowered
- Develop their sense of responsibility
- Improve their decision making and independence
- Increase their confidence and self – esteem
- Develop co – operation and sharing skills
- Better support safeguarding issues

There are also benefits for the whole nursery:

- ⊘ Children will influence the design of the learning environment
- ⊘ Children will introduce new innovative ideas
- ⊘ The involvement of children will help to ensure that resources are used more effectively and authentically
- ⊘ Further embed and deepen our nature curriculum and sustainable ethos

Listening to children enables all team members throughout each day to:

- ⊘ Keep children safe
- ⊘ Meaningfully seed the environment together according to interests and schemes
- ⊘ Scaffold children's interests and learning to challenge and engage throughout each day
- ⊘ Promote confidence and positive self-image by clearly respect and value all children's opinions, thoughts and feelings
- ⊘ Support them in active learning by facilitating a state of being 'in-flow'

- ◀ Enable our curriculum and our pedagogy to be relevant for the children who are benefitting from it.

Applicability

Staff
Parents
Children

Definition of Terms

Sustained Shared Thinking: 'Sustained shared thinking' occurs when two or more individuals 'work together' in an intellectual way to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate an activity, extend a narrative etc. Both parties must contribute to the thinking and it must develop and extend the understanding. It was more likely to occur when children were interacting 1:1 with an adult or with a single peer partner and during focussed group work.

The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project (2004)

Overview

Methods
Considerations

Procedures

Methods

Ask open questions: meaningful open questions that encourage children's confidence and critical thinking. We use sustained shared thinking as a reciprocal way of communicating which leads to opening up ideas and ways of thinking for all participants. Our conversations with children often start with What? Why? Or How?

Some common ones are:

- What would happen if...
- I wonder what...
- What do you need to do to begin the project?
- How does it work?
- How did that happen?
- What is your plan?
- What do you see?
- What do you think is happening?
- What might you change?
- What might you keep the same?
- Can you think of...?
- I wonder how...?
- What do you think might happen next?
- What should we put here?
- What made you think of that?
- How could you...?
- Can you think of other ways to...?
- Do you have any ideas...?
- Tell me why...

- Tell me when...
- Tell me what...
- Tell me how...
- How do you come up with that solution?
- Help me fix this...
- Are there any other ways we could...?
- What do you think...?

We model active listening when listening to children by:

- ⋄ Getting down to their level and giving them our full attention
 - ⋄ Making and sustaining eye contact
 - ⋄ Using facial expressions
 - ⋄ Using Makaton signing
 - ⋄ Not being distracted
 - ⋄ Modelling slow and clear speech
 - ⋄ Using correct grammar and simple high-quality language
 - ⋄ Giving them time and taking turns in the conversation
 - ⋄ Showing respect for what the child has to say and act if necessary
 - ⋄ Not finishing children's sentences before they are ready – we give them time
 - ⋄ Understanding that children need space and time to respond and take ideas on board
 - ⋄ Ensuring that children need to know that adults are giving them full attention and encouragement to their independent thinking
 - ⋄ Listening carefully and waiting for a child who gets excited or pauses when they are trying to communicate, so that they can complete what they wanted to say.
- Our team always give children time to think and express themselves**

Our team always observe and listen to children to find out about:

- ⋄ Their needs
- ⋄ What they are interested in
- ⋄ What they can do
- ⋄ Their preferences and their feelings
- ⋄ When they feel confident, excited, scared and frustrated.

Considerations

Sometimes children may not be able to talk for different reasons. Our team are sensitive to this and understand that:

- Babies and younger children and those with speech or other developmental delay or disability may not say anything verbally, though they may communicate a great deal in other ways.
- For a child with two or more languages, talking and listening with children should take place in English at the setting, through signing, clear speech and through body language and gesture.
- Children learn to communicate in many ways, not just by talking, but also in non – verbal ways such as gestures, facial expressions, and gaze directions, in drawing, writing, and singing, and through dance, music and drama.
- They must listen to what children tell you, and act on non – verbal signals from children, especially from children who are unable to voice their opinions, interests and/or anxieties.

- They must always take action to follow up any concerns, even if these prove to be groundless.

Make time to really listen to children's views and act on them even when they do not match adult's views.

External Links and Organisations

Brighton and Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership: [Home - BHSCP](#)

Relevant Policies and Documents

Communications Policy
Safeguarding Children Policy
Behaviour Management Policy
British Values Policy
Learning and Development Policy
Equalities and Diversity Policy

What Is Sustained Shared Thinking? [What Is Sustained Shared Thinking? With Kathy Brodie | Famly](#)

Ideas to Promote More Sustained Shared Thinking: [Ideas to Promote More Sustained Shared Thinking | Famly](#)

Authorisation

Signature:



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