
Level 3 Residential Childcare: Unit 15

Support the Rights, Diversity and Equality of Children and Young People in Residential Childcare



Introduction

Within this area of your professional development you will gain the knowledge and understanding relating to the rights of children and young people and the implications of equalities legislation for them.

This includes how their rights are safeguarded in law, how legislative and rights frameworks are intended to improve their life chances and effects of discrimination, stereotyping and labelling.

You will be able to address discriminatory practice, through reviewing own values and behaviours in order to improve practice and work in a culturally sensitive way, supporting children and young people to understand and value their own cultural practices and beliefs. By building the confidence of children or young people that concerns and complaints they raise will be addressed and knowing why they may find it difficult to raise concerns and complaints, you will be able to support the right of children and young people to raise concerns and make complaints.

To complete this professional development module, you will be required to meet the learning outcomes detailed below:

Knowledge and understanding:

1. Understand the rights of children and young people
2. Understand the implications of equalities legislation for children and young people in residential care

Performance abilities:

3. Be able to address discriminatory practice
4. Be able to work in a culturally sensitive way
5. Be able to support the rights of children and young people to raise concerns and make complaints

1. Understand the rights of children and young people

Outline the rights of children and young people and how these are safeguarded in law at national and international level

Legislation and codes of practice: The rights of children and young people, who for whatever reason, find themselves taken into care are protected by the agreed and adopted codes of practice linked to this sector. Children and young people's rights are also protected under the Governments own "National Care Standards", these are the minimum standards expected to be adhered to by every children's residential childcare setting.

As a residential childcare worker, a very important part of your work duties is the understand and implement the adopted policies and procedures of your own workplace setting. Children and young people also have their rights protected under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Their individual rights also form part of the Human Rights Act 1998, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, the Equality Act 2010 and the European Convention on Human Rights

Explain how legislative and rights frameworks are intended to improve the life chances and outcomes of children and young people

Improve life chances: As a residential childcare worker, part of your professional development is to support the children within your care, this means that is part of your care duty to try and improve their chances in life. This can be done through a wide range of methods including:

Encourage choice. We all have the right to choose, as a child or young person in care, they may feel that the right of choice has been taken away from them! – not the case. They have a voice and this voice must be heard, it is your duty to encourage them to look at all the choices still open to them and to discuss these openly, asking for support where necessary.

Empower individuals. When you work with children in care, many have led disadvantaged lives, many may have suffered and felt overpowered by circumstances and events that have led them to be in care. This is not a life sentence and as part of their self-development and to help them redeem the self-esteem, your role is to allow them opportunities that they feel they may not be able to do, take part in or say what it is they would like

Encourage independence. To re-discover a sense of independence helps children and young people thrive better, they begin to feel wanted and not isolated. Each individual child has something to say, they have something different to say and it is your role to encourage them to speak openly and independently without fear of reprisal. It is also your role to steer them down the right pathway as independence can lead on to feeling un-restricted and that laws and rules do not apply to them.

Remove barriers to access. By promoting equality at all times, your role is to ensure that all the children within your care are made aware that they have the right of access. This is access to their rights, the right to feel safe, the right to be educated etc. This can only happen through your diligence and ability to work with them in understanding their rights. Promote equality and rights.

Other areas for your professional development in this area will require you to develop a more in depth knowledge, understanding and ability to provide opportunity and access to services according to individual's needs. You will need to be able to recognise differences

between individuals and groups, e.g. culture; nationality; ability; ethnic origin; gender; age; religion; beliefs; sexual orientation; social class. Remember the importance of being able to promote opportunity and being in a position where you can direct them towards appropriate services in response to individual needs valuing diversity

Here is some additional information that will assist your professional development within the emotive area of residential childcare:

Advocates are specially trained workers who have a statutory responsibility to uphold the rights and entitlements of children and young people in care and to support them in decision making.

Discrimination may be at one or more of the following levels:

- individual
- institutional
- societal.

It may be direct or indirect and may be based on one or more attribute including:

- gender/transgender
- sexual orientation
- race/ethnicity
- religion
- age
- ability/disability
- health status
- physical attributes
- social circumstances.

Others may include:

- colleagues
- other agencies
- children and young people
- their families and friends.

Cultural: the ideas, customs and social behaviours of a particular society or community.

Cultural practices may include:

- female genital mutilation (FGM)
- use of corporal punishment
- practices arising from attitudes to disability
- practices arising from attitudes to gender differences
- practices arising from attitudes to family life
- practices arising from attitudes to children and childhood.

Explain why the voice of the child or young person has a central place in relation to rights and the role of advocates in supporting this

Why the voice of the child or young person has central place. As stated earlier, every child has a voice and it is their right to have their voice heard, to do this it is essential that you, as a residential childcare worker understand the child-centred model. Being child-centred is about elevating the status of children's interests, rights, and views in the work of your organisation. It involves considering the impact of decisions and processes on children

and seeking their input when appropriate to inform your work. Being child-centred is a way of elevating the interests, wellbeing and views of children. This is important because children are affected directly, and indirectly, by practically all policy decisions, and yet children can't influence them through traditional channels.

Children can't vote, and they rarely respond to consultation processes such as discussion. The overarching reason to be child-centred is to make sure your organisations decisions do not harm children and, in fact, support them to thrive. To achieve this, you need to embed processes that support child-centred thinking in your organisation. A core part of being child-centred is ensuring children have a say in decisions that affect them.

Your culture should take into consideration the real needs of child, their individual likes and dislikes, and individual targets and goals. By creating an environment of inclusion, seeking out their opinions ensures all targets and goals are appropriate, and fair. Children and young people are more interested in forming their own pathways through life and your role is to discuss this and to support this in appropriate ways, mainly by listening to them.

Explain how policies and procedures in own work setting reflect the rights of children and young people

It is an essential part of being a residential childcare setting that policies and procedures are developed to meet and suit the needs of the workplace setting. Settings and childcare practitioners should always advocate inclusive practices and procedures. Remember it is a child's right to be heard.

We have looked at the effective ways of empowering children and young people. Look at effective ways of removing barriers, develop effective lines of communication with children and young people, involve other team members to ensure continuity of procedures. Look carefully at strategies and ways of improving participation. Ensure the development of effective ways of promoting dignity and respect within individual children and young people and ensure that as individuals, they are at the centre of planning and delivery of services.

2. Understand the implications of equalities legislation for children and young people in residential childcare.

How current equalities legislation affects work with children and young people in residential childcare. As a registered residential childcare setting, it is essential that all staff have a clear understanding of current and relevant legislation and policies appropriate to England Including:

- The Common Core of Skills and Knowledge
- Health and Social Care Act 2008
- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- The Children and Young Person Act 1933
- Every Child Matters

As a residential childcare worker, you are also duty bound to understand any and all other forms of legislation, codes of practice and policies which inform and guide practice. You must understand and adhere to Public Sector Equality Duty understanding confidentiality and protected characteristics including:

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Be aware of how your own settings policies and procedures and duty of care affects the provision of care and services. You also need to look at areas surrounding accommodation and education, all of which are covered under current legislation and guidelines.

Effects of discrimination, stereotyping and labelling: Some of the effects brought about by these can be risks to health resulting in children and young people suffering from stress, anxiety, fear and depression. It can also lead on to children self-harming or developing a reluctance to go to school and play. This in turn is detrimental to their ability to learn.

Discrimination, stereotyping and labelling can lead to children and young people suffering social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. They develop anxieties and feelings of mistrust, rejection, anger and despair.

As a residential childcare worker, you must be able to recognise all the physical indicators that begin to show, including: change in appearance; personal hygiene and changes in weight. These are very strong indicators and require immediate support from you to help overcome and eradicate these.

Analyse how and why children and young people in residential childcare can be subject of multiple discrimination: A very important part of your role as a residential childcare worker is to be able to identify challenging discriminatory behaviour wherever this may originate from. You need to develop the ability and skills to recognise stereotypes in attitudes to and from the children within your care. You must develop skill sets that allow you to understand beliefs and attitudes of the wider community who only see through blinkered eyes and who do not know any of the circumstances leading to children being in care.

You must develop the appropriate skills that demonstrate a complete understanding of the mechanisms of oppression; oppressive language used; stereotyping and labelling that takes place.

Finally you must understand the range and methods of abuse towards children and young people in care, all of which are detrimental to a child's health and well-being.