

## **CHAPTER 5 STANDARDS IN DAY CARE FOR UNDER EIGHTS AND EDUCATION FOR UNDER FIVES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

- 1 This chapter gives advice and guidance on the standards which apply to all day care services provided for children under the age of eight on the Island.
- 2 The Department has published the Day Care Standards for Under Eights. The Day Care Standards documents represent a baseline of quality below which no provider may fall and are intended to underpin a continuous improvement in quality of care in all types of child care provision.
- 3 There are separate Day Care Standards documents for:
  - Childminding,
  - Full day care,
  - Crèches,
  - Sessional care,
  - School age.

See Annex 1

### **COMMON PRINCIPLES AND ISSUES**

- 4 There are separate standards for each type of provision but some common principles and issues pervade them all. They are divided here into:
  - a. common principles;
  - b. issues concerning people;
  - c. issues concerning organisation;
  - d. research evidence.

#### **Common principles**

- 5 The following general principles embodied in the Act should inform good practice in all services for children and their families.
  - a. The child's welfare and development are paramount,
  - b. Children should be treated and respected as individuals whose needs should be catered for,
  - c. Parents' responsibility for their children must be recognised and respected,
  - d. Values deriving from different backgrounds – ethnic origin, cultural, religious and linguistic - should be recognised and

respected,

- e. Parents are generally the first educators of their children; this should be reflected in the way other carers and providers relate to them,
- f. Parents should have ready access to information about services and advice to inform their choices.

### **Issues concerning people**

6 This section covers:

- Rights and responsibilities,
- Parental Involvement,
- Children's behaviour,
- Equal opportunities and racial minorities,
- Special Education Needs,
- Learning Opportunities and Education.

### *Rights and responsibilities*

7 **Children** have a right to an environment:

- which facilitates their development and opportunities for learning and socializing,
- where they are cared for as part of a community,
- where their religious, racial, cultural and linguistic identity is valued and respected,
- where their health is nurtured and promoted,
- where they are respected as individuals.

And they share a responsibility with the adults who care for them to respect those rights in others.

8 **Parents** have the same right and responsibilities as their children, though of course the balance between the two is different. When they have a child in a day care setting they have special rights and responsibilities in relation to it:

- to acquire information and express their opinion,
- to change it or move their child,
- to contribute to its development,
- to choose alternatives.

9 **Staff and volunteers** have the right to be valued as employees and colleagues and by the parents and children. It is important for the children to learn this respect by example. Staff who feel valued are in a much better position to promote quality of care themselves: the care environment depends largely on the workers.

### *Parental Involvement*

- 10 The core principle should be that parents generally have the greatest knowledge of their own child. So, in spite of the practical difficulties, the Department will look for ways to involve parents in developing its policy on day care and exhorts other service providers to do likewise.
- 11 At the very least parents should be kept fully informed about their child's activities while in the setting. Providers should create opportunities for parents and the people who work with their child to discuss progress and plans for future activities.
- 12 The relationship between parents and childminders is likely to be close in the nature of things and provide daily opportunities to discuss activities and progress. But it may be necessary from time to time to create some space to discuss progress at a time when nobody is having to respond to the demands of young children!
- 13 Other day care and educational facilities will need to devise a more structured policy on parental involvement which takes account of staffing and management arrangements. The policy should create time to discuss the child's activities with the parents and seek their views on how the facility is managed and any changes which are contemplated.
- 14 A lot will depend on the kind of facility and how it is managed in general.
  - a. In many playgroups and community day nurseries some of parents are actively involved in managing the service and others work as volunteers with the children,
  - b. In other facilities there is a user/parents committee or a similar process to act as a forum for discussion and consultation.
- 15 The close involvement of some parents sometimes disguises the fact that others remain on the fringe; unable, for whatever reason, to give much time to the work of the facility and feeling marginalised because of it. The policy needs to recognise that special measures may be needed to draw in people in this position. Their children need them to be involved as much as the others.

### *Children's behaviour*

- 16 In general children learn to develop a sense of right and wrong if they are encouraged to co-operate in the social organisation they happen to be in at the time. However, some children may join the facility having already developed unacceptable standards of behaviour.
- 17 Each centre needs to develop a policy and procedures for describing and identifying unacceptable behaviour and responding to it appropriately to modify or contain it. Skilled staff will have many

	<p>techniques for diverting and containing anti-social behaviour and for channelling it in positive directions. But from time to time the centre may need to exercise sanctions.</p> <p>18 The parents and children should understand the policy on modifying unacceptable behaviour and should have the opportunity to comment on it. The sanctions should be explicit in the policy and procedures. They must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child,</li> <li>• immediate,</li> <li>• relevant to the behaviour, and</li> <li>• fair.</li> </ul> <p>The child should always be told why his or her behaviour is not acceptable and why the particular sanction is being used.</p> <p>19 Corporal punishment, which includes smacking, slapping or shaking, must not be used in any facilities within the scope of this guidance. It may be necessary to employ physical restraint on a child in an emergency to prevent personal injury to the child, to other people or to prevent serious damage to property.</p> <p><b><i>Equal opportunities and ethnic minorities</i></b></p> <p>20 Each child is to be valued as an individual and treated as such without ethnic or gender stereotyping.</p> <p>21 The Department expects the day care of young children to follow best practice in the provision of services generally. So it must take account of the child's religious persuasion, ethnic origin and cultural and linguistic background in the way services are provided.</p> <p>22 In an island community where minorities are small in number it is vitally important that young children should learn by example to respect their own and other people's ethnic origins, religion, culture and language.</p> <p>23 It is also important that children learn to avoid gender clichés and stereotypes. These stereotypes can frustrate the pursuit of interests which might enable children to develop their full potential. Children need to learn to see other children (and adults) as individuals rather than as members of a gender or a racial group.</p> <p>24 Day care services should have equal opportunities policies which:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. ensure that staff are appointed solely on their suitability for the job,</li> <li>b. ensure that children and families are offered a service against clear and understandable criteria,</li> <li>c. provide the service in a non-discriminatory way,</li> </ol>
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- d. review their arrangements and consult their service users.

### *Special Education Needs*

- 25 One volume in this series is devoted specifically to services for children with disabilities. We deal here with day care issues only. Generally the development of young children with disabilities and special educational needs is likely to be enhanced by attending a day care or educational service which is open to all young children.
- 26 The Department would like to encourage a dialogue among its own policy and registration staff, service providers, social work practitioners, health and education professionals and voluntary organisations about how best to achieve this on the Island.
- 27 In making arrangements for integrating children with disabilities particular attention should to be paid to the needs of each individual child.
- a. Does the physical environment, staff ratio and balance of staff skills meet the needs of this child?
  - b. What can be done to build in the support necessary to do so?
  - c. Can the Department, the health service or a specialist voluntary organisation help to mobilise the particular skill or resource?
  - d. Are there other children who could benefit from a resource in a way which would produce some economy of scale without prejudicing the best interests of any of the children?
  - e. If the resource or service is just too specialised to run alongside the services for other children day to day can it be attached to a mainstream service for children in a way which allows other joint activities?

### *Learning opportunities and education*

- 28 Young children are continuously learning about the environment and people around them. People working with young children should be skilled in structuring and supporting learning:
- through planned learning activities,
  - by exploiting the learning from the day to day events.
- 29 Children need variety in their experience and their activities need to be adapted to their developmental level to provide good learning opportunities. Three to five year olds in day care settings can benefit from an input from staff trained in early years education.
- 30 The facility should aim to provide 3 and 4 year olds in day care settings experiences comparable in quality with those offered to children attending school. Their learning experience at this age builds the confidence and competence to embark on compulsory schooling.

	<p>Policy makers, providers and practitioners must decide how this aim is to be met.</p> <p>31 Children who are generally happy and content develop more quickly. The evidence is that they learn new concepts and new communication and social skills more rapidly from a secure base. Unhappy children tend not to explore and will often cut themselves off from the others.</p> <p><b>Issues concerning organisation</b></p> <p>32 This section covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning activities,</li> <li>• Staffing,</li> <li>• Training,</li> <li>• Health issues,</li> <li>• Public Liability Insurance.</li> </ul> <p><i>Planning activities</i></p> <p>33 The programme for the facility should be planned in advance. Flexibility is important but so is a clear fabric and structure for the day. General points to bear in mind in programme planning are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the activities should fit the age and developmental stage of the children,</li> <li>b. there should be variety to give the children opportunities to develop physical, cognitive and social skills,</li> <li>c. staff should involve the children in planning activities,</li> <li>d. the programme should be flexible and allow for quiet and noisy activities,</li> <li>e. young children in all day care need sufficient time to rest,</li> <li>f. children should work at their own pace as much as possible.</li> </ol> <p><i>Staffing</i></p> <p>34 Staffing standards vary between the different kinds of facility and are set out in the individual documents. But there are some of the general factors to be taken into account in deciding optimum staff ratios. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• opening hours,</li> <li>• the proportion of staff time in direct contact with the children,</li> <li>• the number of very young children needing one-to-one attention,</li> <li>• levels of skill, qualification, training and experience,</li> <li>• the size of the facility,</li> </ul>
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- the children's stage of development,
- the number of children with disabilities or special needs.

### *Training*

35 The competence of everyone who works with children in this way should be subject to systematic assessment. Acceptable qualifications following the consultation by the English Department for Education and Skills is attached and will be used as a guide by the Department here in assessing competence.

Older qualifications and other courses not on the list above may be acceptable - see Annex 1.

36 There will be a need to review the validity of these qualifications on an individual basis. There will be some people working in settings with qualifications gained pre 1991 which have been accepted e.g. P.P.A. Foundation Course. If these people fulfil the following conditions, their qualifications should be accepted:

- They have been in employment with no large career breaks since they achieved their qualification and.
- They have kept up with relevant new requirements through regular in service training on issues within subsequent legislation including:
  - anti discriminatory practice,
  - equality of opportunity,
  - child protection,
  - health and safety,
  - curriculum planning and early learning goals.

37 Formal qualifications though important are not sufficient. Every service for young children should develop a learning culture among staff and parents which will include a willingness to pursue short courses relevant to priority issues, for example:

- play,
- reading skills,
- child protection,
- children with special educational needs,
- violence in young children,
- equal opportunities,
- health and safety.

38 The facility should include a budget the for staff time and purchase fees to allow a short course programme. Staff, and where appropriate parents, should receive positive encouragement and

group support to participate fully in such opportunities.

### *Health issues*

- 39 **Liaison with health professionals.** Day care services need to establish effective working relationships with the health service. Health professionals can give advice on child health and development. An existing relationship is of great benefit in the event of an emergency. The Department commends the practice of having a named doctor and health visitor linked to the day nursery or other service.
- 40 Infants and young children are provided with a health surveillance programme and it is important that they should not miss out on the health checks because they are with a day nursery or a childminder. Carers need to make sure that parents keep them informed about health check appointments.
- 41 Parents have the primary responsibility for their child's health and day carers should not be tempted to try and "take over". A skilled worker may sometimes spot a possible need which the parents might have missed. Examples might include:
- poor articulation which may benefit from speech therapy or surgery,
  - a physical condition which may benefit from physiotherapy,
  - seriously aberrant behaviour which may benefit from investigation by a child psychiatrist or a clinical psychologist.

Under no circumstances, apart from child protection, should the carer take unilateral action. It should be discussed with the parents and support provided, if needed, to enable them to obtain advice or treatment for the child.

- 42 If an injury or behaviour appears to be the result of abuse or serious neglect the carer should immediately alert the person in charge (unless he or she is the person in charge). The person in charge of each unit must be familiar with the Island's child protection procedure and acts on it when necessary.
- 43 **First aid.** At least one member of staff should have first aid training. He or she should keep the first aid box fully supplied and check its contents from time to time. Managers should ensure that all staff have a working knowledge of first aid.
- 44 The Department requires that childminders undergo first aid training. If they have not done so yet they should have at least a working knowledge of first aid. They must have a first aid box whose contents are checked regularly.

The Red Cross and St. John's Ambulance Brigade are useful sources of

advice about first aid and courses.

- 45 **Food hygiene.** It is important to have suitable arrangements for the safe storage and preparation of snacks and meals. There are booklets on Food Safety and the Department is happy to advise on suitable sources of information.

### *Public Liability Insurance*

- 46 Parents need to be reassured that the service or person who has undertaken to care for their child is paying due attention to the business side of the arrangement. Evidence of up-to-date and adequate public liability insurance cover is a good way to demonstrate this. The Department therefore expects day care providers and childminders to carry public liability insurance in their own interest.

### **Research evidence**

- 47 Studies into factors affecting children's development and well-being have included adult-child interaction, stability and peer interaction.

### *Adult – Child Interaction*

- 48 Several studies in home and day care settings reveal positive developmental benefits associated with affection and sensitive responsiveness from adult to child. Children enrolled in day care with more responsive caregivers are likely to have better cognitive and language development and to become more socially competent. Home-based research has also found that responsive interaction fosters secure attachment. It seems likely that similar processes will operate in day care settings. .

### *Stability*

- 49 Secure attachment relationships are associated with a wide range of developmental advantages for the child. Where a warm secure relationship exists between adult and child, the child is better able to use the adult to explore the environment. This is true in the home, and in day care where children are securely attached to a caregiver. Toddlers show different patterns of social interaction with stable caregivers.
- 50 Such differences may well account for the developmental effects sometimes associated with instability of care. Young children learning to communicate will often use idiosyncratic speech or gestures. A caregiver who is familiar with a child is most likely to understand and be able to respond quickly and appropriately.
- 51 Research repeatedly demonstrates the importance of stability of carers. Poorer language and social development is associated with higher staff turnover. There are two major aspects involved in stability of care:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the continuity of the care placement,</li> <li>• the continuity of the caregivers.</li> </ul> <p>52 In both, the greater the instability the more detrimental it will be for the child's experience. Stability is most important for the younger child during the rapid early learning of interpersonal and communication skills. In peer relationships social and sophisticated role-playing proceeds better between good friends, so that stable peer groups are more likely to foster competent social skills. Stability of care is likely to be strongly influential on the child's capacity to form effective relationships in later life.</p> <p><i>Peer Interaction</i></p> <p>53 There is ample evidence that the social skills of three to five year old children are facilitated by group experience in a variety of sessional and full day care settings. Same-age and mixed-age groups including children with learning difficulties supply useful and complementary forms of experience.</p> <p>54 One of the great benefits of the expansion of group day care services since the early 1960's - for example the growth in the number of playgroups - has been the increased opportunities for under fives to develop their skills in peer interaction. This has become more important with the general reduction in family size, increased mobility of families and other factors which have led to greater isolation of families with young children and a consequent reduction in other opportunities for peer play for under fives.</p>
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