

Inclusion in the early years

Everyone has the right to be treated equally without prejudice or discrimination. So how can this be supported at nursery?

Legislation has been introduced to address inequalities and discrimination and those that you need to be aware of are highlighted below. The principles of all anti-discrimination legislation are largely the same and aim to reduce inequalities and promote inclusion.

Inclusion is critical to the aims of delivering improved outcomes for all children and closing the achievement gap between disadvantaged children and others. It is 'non-negotiable' in the sense that it respects and responds to children's entitlements as defined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as the legislation.

Legislation:

- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Regulations 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice 2014 (updated 2020)
- The Children's Act 1989
- The Children's Act 2004
- The Childcare Act 2006, 2008
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).



Definition of inclusion

There are many definitions for inclusion, although they all have the same underlying principles. The word 'inclusion' was commonly used to describe the integration of disabled children into a setting. However, this is now used in a wider context to cover all children including those who may be discriminated against or shown prejudice.

The Early Childhood Forum's definition of inclusion is: *"a process of identifying, understanding and breaking down barriers to participation and belonging."*

Early years settings must promote an inclusive environment in which every individual is fully accepted, respected and valued. The colour of their skin, their gender, religion or belief, disability, social status or any other factor should not affect the way each person is valued. It is therefore important that practitioners work together effectively to positively promote inclusive values and principles in all aspects of caring for and educating children.



Good inclusive practice is not just about everyone being 'equal', but about ensuring there is 'equity'. Where equality means giving all children the same resources or opportunities, equity recognises children's individual circumstances and provides whatever resources or opportunities are needed in order to reach an equal outcome.

Inclusive play enables a flexible, responsive approach where activities are planned with the needs of the children in mind and assessments undertaken to ensure progress. Sharing expertise and partnership working are also key, including working with parents and outside agencies.

Find out more

Contact our training team for Inclusion support for your setting on 01484 407070 or email training@ndna.org.uk