Case study: Supporting children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

Little Stars Nursery is owned and managed by two early years teachers, Emma Matthews, and Marie Ellis-Jones. The nursery has just celebrated its 20th birthday! The nursery is registered for 65 children per day and the pre-school department has 30 children attending daily. Little Stars Nursery have been recognised by Estyn for their excellence in education and training and work closely with both Estyn and their local education consortia (EAS) to support other setting leaders and practitioners. Due to their knowledge and experience in early education and childcare, Emma and Marie have also been an active part of the curriculum co-construction process with Welsh Government, participating in working groups writing the 'Curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings' and the supporting assessment guidance.

Hayley Edwards, NDNA Cymru's Early Years Education Officer interviewed Emma and Marie with a focus on supporting children with Additional Learning Needs in the non-maintained sector. Although the setting has a wealth of experience in supporting children and their families with additional needs over the years, they experienced a setting first for them, whereby a child started in the baby room at 9 months old with a diagnosis of Down Syndrome. This case study focuses in on this example and explores the journey the nursery took with the child and their family, from transitioning into the setting at 9 months old to leaving to attend school and the impact the support had on the child's learning and development.

What was the initial process that you followed prior to the child attending the nursery?

"We already had an established relationship with the family as the sibling was attending the setting. We were able to link with outside agencies prior to transition and offer a full support network on entry. Staff received visits from Portage prior to the child starting. Portage is a home-visiting educational service for pre-school children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and their families. Staff felt well supported by this service. This face to face training helped staff to gather ideas of how they could best meet the needs of the child on transition. This had a positive impact on the transition from home."

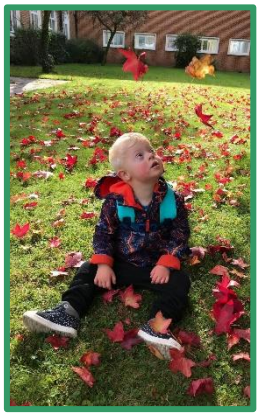
What did implementation of the ALN code look like?

“Monmouthshire Early Years Additional Needs Lead Officer (EY ALNLO) was a frequent visitor to the setting through the 3 ½ years the child attended. They were able to signpost us to additional services when emerging needs were identified. The person centred practice process (PCP) supported excellent communication between all professionals, we held PCP meetings termly. We all gained a shared understanding of what life was like for the child and how we could best support the family, child and setting in a holistic way. What was always evident at these meeting was how well everyone knew the child.”

Additional Learning Needs Code seeks to improve the planning and delivery of additional learning provision. It seeks to do this through a person-centred approach to identifying needs early, putting in place effective support and monitoring, and adapting interventions to ensure they deliver desired outcomes. Practitioners should ensure that all learners with ALN are supported to overcome barriers to learning and achieve their full potential.

Were there any staff training needs that were highlighted? How did you address these?

“Staff training needs evolved as the child developed and their needs emerged. The supervision and appraisal process supported management to highlight these training needs promptly and deliver a training plan to support their professional development. In terms of speech, language and communication, training was delivered to key staff and then we applied a whole setting approach. The keyworker became the ‘sign-a-long’ champion and supported all staff to use basic ‘sign-a-long’ as part of the nursery routine. ‘Sign-a-long’ is a key word sign supported communication, based on British Sign language. It uses speech, sign, body language, facial expression and voice tone to reference the link between sign and word. This proved to be extremely beneficial to all children, not just those with ALN”



How did partnership working with others further support the child?

"All outside agencies contributed to the PCP process and the termly reviews. Agreed, measurable targets were set and reviewed by everyone. The child's learning journal was used in meetings to reflect the child's voice. The observations from staff helped inform the PCP process and we were able to collaboratively analyse where the child was developmentally and what our next steps would look like. This ensured the holistic development of the child and progression.

A local charity '21 Plus' also provided the setting and family with a wealth of support and training. Throughout the journey they offered their expertise and supported us to celebrate the child's strengths and achievements and offer practical support to overcome challenges we faced. Their frequent visits to the setting were a valuable time for reflection and celebration."

What approaches did you implement to support the child's learning and development?

"The curriculum for the non-maintained is very inclusive. It supported the holistic developmental of the child and celebrated what was unique about the child. The enabling adult was able to 'tune in' to the child's natural curiosities and fascinations, follow their interests and make adaptations to meet their needs. For a child who loved the outdoors we were able to offer endless opportunities for hands on experiences. Time was given to revisit and consolidate learning. A communication rich environment supported the development of their emerging communications skills, and our effective environment supported the development of independence. Staff's knowledge of child centred pedagogy created a curriculum where the child thrived, and their needs were fully met."

What approaches did you implement to support the family?

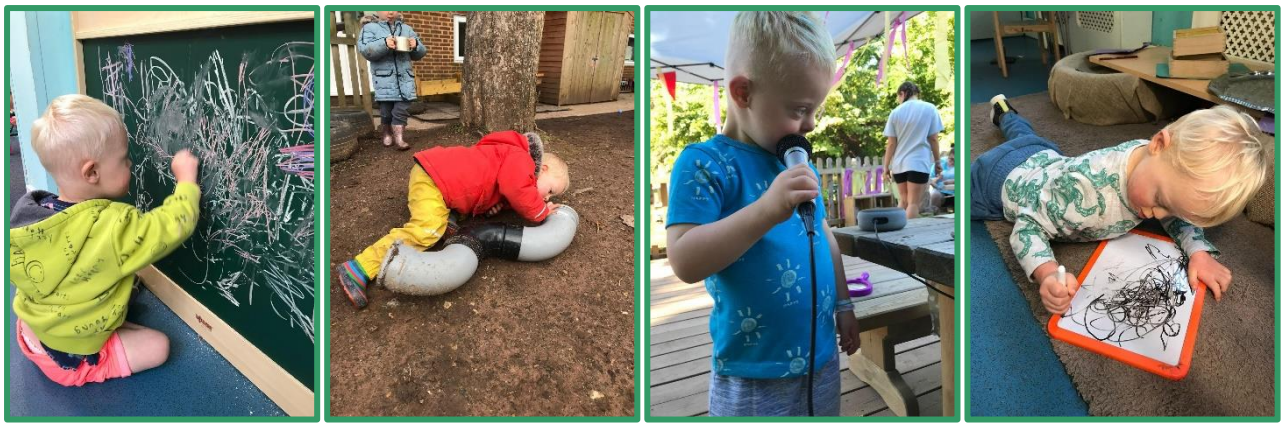
"Knowing your families is crucial. As a setting, we continually build on this trusting relationship. We celebrate what is unique about the child and value the wealth of knowledge the family has about the skills and knowledge their child has. Day to day conversations underpin this process. In addition, photographs and daily diaries are sent through our parent app. Our learning journals capture and really celebrate the child's unique journey. They support the observation process (notice, analyse and respond) and evidence how inclusive the new curriculum for the non-maintained is. This gave continuous reassurance as well as moments to celebrate to the family."

What impact did the practice and provision you offered have on the child and their learning and development?

"The child was able to access all areas of the setting; additional bespoke resources supported autonomy. Barriers were removed and adaptations made to allow for full participation. Examples of adaptations that were successfully used included;

- adapted chairs with sides to support the child eating at the table with their friends
- adapted cutlery and a 'Doidy Cup' to support the child to be independent at mealtimes
- a frame around the toilet to enable the child to ground both feet on the floor and support their core strength

Our self-evaluation process supported us to identify areas for improvement. For example, including representation of children with Down's Syndrome within resources and images. Ultimately the child was able to have a fully inclusive, rich early years' experience."



What impact has this experience had on the setting and the practice/provision that you deliver?

"We feel privileged to have been a small part of this child's learning journey. During their time with us, we gained an in depth understanding of what inclusive practice truly was. The policy became practice. We gained a shared understanding of what progression looked like and worked in partnership with outside agencies, the family and school at transition. A positive attitude by the whole setting was fundamental to the success.

Our reflective practice helped us to consider the next steps within the developmental pathways. Using our observations to inform our practice and planning supported us to see how the 3 Enablers were interdependent and interlinked."

How have you shared your good practice with others?

"We have used our NDNA network meetings, local cluster meetings and Estyn stakeholders forum to share our good practice with the sector. Whilst participating in local authority ALN training we shared many examples of our experiences to support the importance of transition, inclusion, partnerships with parents and a child centred approach."

"Inclusive practice recognises, values and promotes the diversity of children and families, and ensures they receive equitable treatment, representation, opportunities and respect. Inclusive practice respects and responds to the unique experiences of children and their families, ensuring that all children receive appropriate support to participate fully in learning….

…We know that children are influenced by their environment and the adults around them and that they learn from everything they see, hear and do. We have a responsibility to influence children's development positively through creating an accessible and inclusive environment in our setting, one that values and celebrates everyone.

Our environment should:

- *be well organised to ensure accessibility for all*
- *include diverse and authentic representation within resources, images and text (in terms of gender, ability, sexual orientation, religion, etc.)*
- *make appropriate adaptations to remove barriers to participation*
- *offer open-ended resources that reflect diversity and are not gender-specific."*

Curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings, Welsh Government 2022

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Further support

- **Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Act and Code** – CWLWM blog post
- **MyNDNA resources** – Free NDNA factsheets on areas of ALN
- **Autism Awareness** – NDNA LVC course
- **Communication and interaction: Strategies for children with SEND/ASN/ALN** – NDNA LVC course.

Astudiaeth Achos: Cefnogi plant gydag Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol (ADY)

Emma Matthews a Marie Ellis-Jones yw perchnogion Meithrinfa Little Stars ac mae'r ddwy yn athrawon blynyddoedd cynnar. Mae'r feithrinfa newydd ddathlu ei phenblwydd yn ugain oed! Mae'r feithrinfa wedi ei chofrestru ar gyfer 65 o blant ac mae 30 yn mynychu'r adran cyn-ysgol pob dydd. Mae Meithrinfa Little Stars wedi cael cydnabyddiaeth gan Estyn am safon arbennig eu darpariaeth mewn addysg a'u cyfleoedd hyfforddi ac maent yn gweithio'n agos gyda Estyn a'u consortiwm addysg lleol (EAS) i gefnogi arweinwyr ac ymarferwyr mewn lleoliadau eraill. Oherwydd eu gwybodaeth a'u profiad mewn addysg blynyddoedd cynnar a gofal plant, mae Emma a Marie wedi bod yn cymryd rhan yn y broses cyd-lunio'r cwricwlwm gyda Llywodraeth Cymru, gan gymryd rhan mewn gweithdai ac ysgrifennu y 'Cwricwlwm am leoliadau meithrin a ariennir nas cynhelir' a'r canllaw asesu sy'n ei gefnogi.

Fe wnaeth Hayley Edwards, Swyddog Addysg Blynyddoedd Cynnnar NDNA Cymru gyfweld Emma a Marie gan ganolbwyntio ar gefnogi plant gyda Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol yn y sector nas cynhelir. Er bod gan y lleoliad brofiad helaeth o gefnogi plant ag anghenion dysgu ychwanegol a'u teuluoedd, roedd yn brofiad newydd iddynt pan gychwynodd plentyn â diagnosis Down Syndrome yn yr ystafell babanod yn 9 mis oed. Mae'r astudiaeth achos yma yn canolbwyntio ar yr achos hwn ac yn edrych ar siwrnai y feithrinfa ynghyd â'r plentyn a'r teulu, o gychwyn yn y lleoliad yn 9 mis oed i adael i fynd i'r ysgol, a'r effaith gafodd y gefnogaeth ar ddysgu a datblygiad y plentyn.

Beth oedd y broses gychwynnol wnaethoch chi ei dilyn cyn i'r plentyn gychwyn yn y feithrinfa?

"Roeddem gennym eisoes berthynas gyda'r teulu oherwydd bod brawd/chwaer yn mynychu'r lleoliad. Mi wnaethon ni gysylltu gyda asiantaethau allanol cyn i'r plentyn gyrraedd er mwyn cynnig cefnogaeth llawn o'r cychwyn. Cafodd staff ymweliadau gan Portage cyn i'r plentyn gychwyn. Gwasanaeth addysgol yn y cartref yw Portage ar gyfer plant o oedran cyn ysgol sydd ag anghenion dysgu ychwanegol (ADY) a'u teuluoedd. Roedd staff yn teimlo eu bod yn cael cefnogaeth dda gan y gwasanaeth yma. Roedd yr hyfforddiant wyneb yn wyneb yma wedi helpu staff gasglu syniadau sut y gallent gyfarfod ag anghenion plentyn orau. Cafodd hyn effaith cadarnhaol yn ystod y cyfnod pontio o'r cartref."

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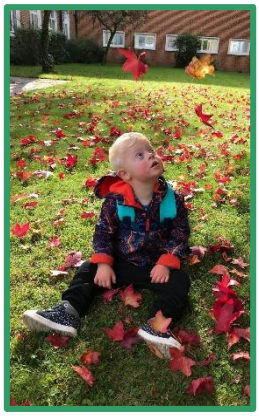
Sut oedd gweithredu y côd ADY yn edrych?

“Roedd Swyddog Arweiniol Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol y Blynyddoedd Cynnar Sir Fynwy (EY ALNLO) yn ymwelydd cyson â’r lleoliad yn ystod y 3 ½ mlynedd bu’r plentyn yn mynychu. Roeddynt yn gallu ein cyfeirio at wasanaethau ychwanegol pan oedd anghenion ychwanegol yn dod i’r amlwg. Roedd y broses o ymarfer mewn modd person ganolog (PCP) yn cefnogi cyfathrebu gwych rhwng yr holl bersonau proffesiynol, roeddem yn cynnal cyfarfodydd PCP pob tymor. Mi wnaethom ni gyd ddatblygu dealltwriaeth o sut oedd bywyd i’r plentyn a sut oedd y ffordd orau i gefnogi’r teulu, y plentyn a’r lleoliad mewn modd cyfannol. Beth oedd yn amlwg yn y cyfarfodydd yma oedd pa mor dda oedd pawb yn adnabod y plentyn”

Mae'r Cod Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol yn ceisio gwella cynllunio a chyflwyno darpariaeth dysgu ychwanegol. Mae'n ceisio gwneud hyn drwy ddull sy'n canolbwyntio ar yr unigolyn i nodi anghenion yn gynnar, rhoi cymorth a monitro effeithiol ar waith, ac addasu ymyriadau i sicrhau eu bod yn cyflawni'r canlyniadau dymunol. Dylai ymarferwyr sicrhau bod pob dysgwr ag ADY yn cael ei gefnogi i oresgyn rhwystrau i ddysgu a chyflawni ei botensial llawn.

A amlygwyd unrhyw anghenion hyfforddi staff? Sut wnaethoch chi fynd i'r afael â'r rhain”

“Datblygodd anghenion hyfforddi staff wrth i’r plentyn ddatblygu ac wrth i’w anghenion ddod i’r amlwg. Roedd y broses oruchwylio ac arfarnu yn cefnogi rheolwyr i amlygu'r anghenion hyfforddi hyn yn brydlon a chyflwyno cynllun hyfforddi i gefnogi eu datblygiad proffesiynol. O ran lleferydd, iaith a chyfathrebu, darparwyd hyfforddiant i staff allweddol ac yna defnyddiwyd dull lleoliad cyfan. Daeth y gweithiwr allweddol yn hyrwyddwr ‘arwyddo’ a chefnogodd yr holl staff i ddefnyddio ‘arwyddo’ fel rhan o drefn y feithrinfa. Mae ‘Sign-a-long’ yn ddull cyfathrebu allweddol a gefnogir gan arwyddion, yn seiliedig ar Iaith Arwyddion Prydain. Mae'n defnyddio lleferydd, arwyddion, iaith y corff, mynegiant wyneb a thôn llais i gyfeirio at y cysylltiad rhwng arwydd a gair. Roedd hyn yn hynod fuddiol i bob plentyn”



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Sut wnaeth gweithio mewn partneriaeth gydag eraill gefnogi'r plentyn?

"Cyfrannodd pob asiantaeth allanol at y broses PCP a'r adolygiadau tymhorol. Cytunwyd ar dargedau mesuradwy a cawsant eu hadolygu gan bawb. Defnyddiwyd dyddiadur dysgu'r plentyn mewn cyfarfodydd i adlewyrchu llais y plentyn. Roedd yr arsylwadau gan y staff wedi helpu i lywio'r broses PCP ac roeddem yn gallu dadansoddi ar y cyd ble roedd y plentyn yn ddatblygiadol a beth fyddai ein camau nesaf. Sicrhaodd hyn ddatblygiad cyfannol y plentyn a dilyniant.

Darparodd elusen leol '21 Plus' hefyd gyfoeth o gymorth a hyfforddiant i'r lleoliad a'r teulu. Trwy gydol y daith fe wnaethon nhw gynnig eu harbenigedd a'n cefnogi ni i ddathlu cryfderau a chyflawniadau'r plentyn a chynnig cefnogaeth ymarferol i oresgyn yr heriau oedd yn ein hwynebu. Roedd eu hymweliadau cyson â'r lleoliad yn amser gwerthfawr ar gyfer myfyrio a dathlu."

Pa ddulliau a ddefnyddiwyd gennych i gefnogi dysgu a datblygiad y plentyn?

"Mae'r cwricwlwm ar gyfer y rhai nas cynhelir yn gynhwysol iawn. Roedd yn cefnogi datblygiad cyfannol y plentyn ac yn dathlu'r hyn oedd yn unigryw am y plentyn. Roedd yr oedolyn galluogi yn gallu 'tiwnio mewn' i chwilfrydedd a diddordebau naturiol y plentyn, dilyn ei ddiddordebau a gwneud addasiadau i ddiwallu ei anghenion. I blentyn a oedd wrth ei fodd yn yr awyr agored roeddem yn gallu cynnig cyfleoedd diddiwedd ar gyfer profiadau ymarferol. Rhoddwyd amser i ailymweld a chyfnerthu dysgu. Roedd amgylchedd cyfathrebu cyfoethog yn cefnogi datblygiad eu sgiliau cyfathrebu newydd, ac roedd ein hamgylchedd effeithiol yn cefnogi datblygiad annibyniaeth. Roedd gwybodaeth y staff am addysgeg sy'n canolbwyntio ar y plentyn yn creu cwricwlwm lle'r oedd y plentyn yn ffynnu, ac roedd ei anghenion yn cael eu diwallu'n llawn."

Pa ddulliau ddefnyddiwyd gennych i gefnogi'r teulu?

"Mae adnabod ein teuluoedd yn hanfodol. Fel lleoliad, rydym yn adeiladu ar y berthynas hon drwy'r amser. Rydym yn dathlu beth sy'n unigryw am y plentyn ac yn gwerthfawrogi cyfoeth yr wybodaeth sydd gan y teulu am y sgiliau a gwybodaeth eu plentyn. Mae sgyrsiau o dydd i ddydd yn adgyfnerthu'r broses hon. Yn ychwanegol i hyn, mae lluniau a dyddiadur dyddiol yn cael ei anfon drwy ein app rhieni. Mae ein cofnodion dysgu yn rhoi darlun clir ac yn dathlu taith unigryw pob plentyn. Maent yn cenfogi'r broses arsylwi (sylwi, dadansoddi, ymateb) ac yn dangos tystiolaeth o pa mor gynhwysol yw'r cwricwlwm newydd ar gyfer y sector nas cynhelir. Mae hyn yn rhoi cysur parhaus i deulu yn ogystal ag achlyusuron i ddathlu."

Pa effaith gafodd yr ymarfer a'r ddarpariaeth ar y plentyn eu dysgu a'u datblygiad?

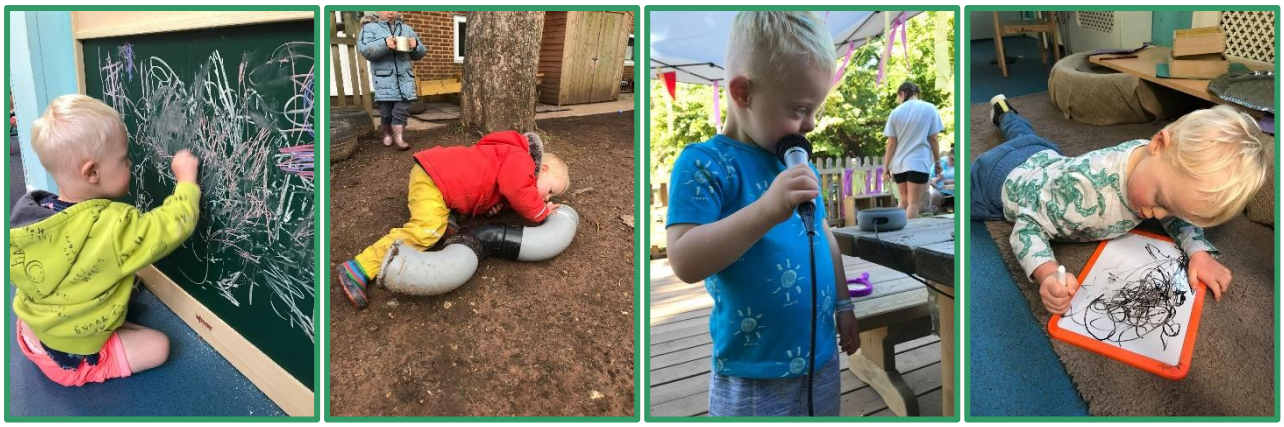
"Roedd y plentyn yn gallu cael mynediad i bob rhan o'r lleoliad; roedd adnoddau pwrpasol ychwanegol yn cefnogi'r ymreolaeth. Cafodd rhwystrau eu dileu a gwnaed addasiadau i ganiatáu cyfranogiad llawn. Roedd enghreifftiau o addasiadau a ddefnyddiwyd yn llwyddiannus yn cynnwys;

• addasu cadeiriau gydag ochrau i gefnogi'r plentyn i fwyta wrth y bwrdd gyda'i ffrindiau

• cyllyll a ffyrc wedi'u haddasu a 'Chwpan Doidy' i gefnogi'r plentyn i fod yn annibynnol amser bwyd

• ffrâm o amgylch y toiled i alluogi'r plentyn i roi ei ddwy droed ar y llawr a chynnal ei gryfder craidd

Fe wnaeth ein proses hunanarfarnu ein cefnogi i nodi meysydd i'w gwella. Er enghraifft, gan gynnwys cynrychioli plant â Syndrom Down o fewn adnoddau a delweddau. Yn y pen draw, roedd y plentyn yn gallu cael profiad blynyddoedd cynnar cwbl gynhwysol a chyfoethog."



Pa effaith mae'r profiad yma wedi ei gael ar y lleoliad, yr ymarfer a'r ddarpariaeth?

"Rydym yn teimlo'n freintiedig i fod wedi chwarae rhan fach o siwrnai ddysgu'r plentyn yma. Yn ystod eu hamser gyda ni, rydym wedi dabtlygu dealltwriaeth dwfn o beth yn union yw ymarfer cynhwysol go iawn. Daeth y polisi yn ymarfer. Fe ddatblygon ni ddealltwriaeth ar y cyd o sut mae dilyniant yn edrych ac fe wnaethon ni weithio mewn partneriaeth gyda asiantaethau allanol, y teulu a'r ysgol roedd yn trosglwyddo iddi. Roedd agwedd gadarnhaol gan y lleoliad cyfan yn sylfaenol i'r llwyddiant.

Roedd yn help i ni fyfyrio ar ein ymarfer er mwyn ystyried y camau nesaf o fewn y llwybrau datblygiadol. Fe wnaeth defnyddio ein arsylwadau helpu i lywio ein ymarfer a'n cynllunio er mewn gweld sut roedd y 3 Galluogydd yn ddibynnol ac gysylltiedig â'i gilydd."

Sut ydych chi wedi rhannu eich ymarfer da gydag eraill?

“Rydym wedi defnyddio cyfarfodydd rhwydwaith NDNA, cyfarfodydd clwstwr lleol a fforwm rhanddeiliaid Estyn i rannu ein ymarfer da gyda’r sector. Wrth gymryd rhan mewn hyfforddiant ADY gyda’r awdurdod lleol fe wnaethom rannu nifer o enghreifftiau o’n ymarfer i gefnogi y cyfnod trosglwyddo, bod yn gynhwysol, parnteriaeth gyda rhieni a dull plentyn ganolog.”

“Mae arfer cynhwysol yn cydnabod, yn gwerthfawrogi ac yn hyrwyddo amrywiaeth plant a theuluoedd, ac yn sicrhau eu bod yn cael eu trin yn deg, eu cynrychioli, rhoi cyfleoedd a dangos parch. Mae arfer cynhwysol yn parchu ac yn ymateb i brofiadau unigryw plant a’u teuluoedd, gan sicrhau bod pob plentyn yn cael cymorth priodol i gymryd rhan lawn mewn dysgu….

…Rydym yn gwybod bod plant yn cael eu dylanwadu gan eu hamgylchedd a’r oedolion o’u cwmpas a’u bod yn dysgu o bopeth y maent yn ei weld, ei glywed a’i wneud. Mae gennym gyfrifoldeb i ddylanwadu ar ddatblygiad plant yn gadarnhaol trwy greu amgylchedd hygyrch a chynhwysol yn ein lleoliad, un sy’n gwerthfawrogi ac yn dathlu pawb.

Dylai ein hamgylchedd:

- *bod yn drefnus i sicrhau hygyrchedd i bawb*
- *cynnwys cynrychiolaeth amrywiol a dilys o fewn adnoddau, delweddau a thestun (o ran rhyw, gallu, cyfeiriadedd rhywiol, crefydd, ac ati)*
- *gwneud addasiadau priodol i ddileu rhwystrau i gyfranogiad*
- *cynnig adnoddau penagored sy’n adlewyrchu amrywiaeth ac nad ydynt yn rhyw-benodol.”*

Cwricwlwm ar gyfer lleoliadau meithrin a arienni nas cynhelir, Llywodraeth Cymru

Cefnogaeth bellach

- **Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Act and Code** – blog CWLWM
- **MyNDNA resources** – Taflenni ffeithiol NDNA ar bob agwedd o ADY
- **Autism Awareness** – cwrs LVC NDNA LVC
- **Communication and interaction: Strategies for children with SEND/ASN/ALN** – cwrs LVC NDNA

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