

AFTER SCHOOL +

A PRACTICE GUIDE FOR PROVIDERS

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After School + A Practice Guide for Providers

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CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Section 1: Children and Young Person's Development 8-14 Years.	7
Section 2: Roles and Relationships in the After School Project	16
Section 3: The After School Environment.	32
Section 4: Programme Development for After School Projects	41
Appendix A: Resources for Activities with Children and Young People.	56
Appendix B: Useful Resources.	58
References	62
Index	63

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS AN 'AFTER SCHOOL PROJECT'?

Growing numbers of Irish children are spending their after school time in the care of people other than their parents. There are many different ways children and young people are cared for after school finishes in Ireland, including childminders, crèches, school provision (activities such as dancing/music/drama), homework clubs, and community based after school projects. Community based after school projects provide an accessible and affordable service, meeting the needs of children, and the needs of the local community, within that community. This type of service may also be known as 'after school care', 'out-of-school care', 'after school clubs', or 'summer schemes'. The Report of the Working Group on School Age Childcare defines this type of childcare provision as "childcare for school going children provided outside of normal school hours where the same children attend the childcare facility on a regular basis and access to the service is clearly defined by agreement with parents and guardians" (2004, forthcoming). Another definition is provided by the European Commission Network on School Age Childcare which defines it as "services which take over the responsibility for children when school is over but parents are not available – whether because they are working or for other reasons" (1996).

After school projects can be organised in different ways and in different settings. The most common types of services available include:

1. A project where children and young people are cared for in a safe and secure play and recreational environment – many service providers see after school care as a way to provide children with the safe space that they need while allowing parents some time for work or other activities.
2. Mixed environments where children and young people can play, do homework and are supported in all activities. This approach regards after school care not just as a safe haven, but also as providing developmental support for children and their families. Social, sporting and cultural activities are seen as the most important features of these programmes.

In the Irish context, typical after school projects provide more than the first option highlighted above. Children are provided with a broad variety of activities including homework support, sporting and cultural activities and outings to local community activities.

For the **children and young people**, this might mean a chance to be with friends and take part in activities in a safe and supportive place they call 'theirs'.

For their **parents**, this might mean a safe, well-supervised place where their children want to be, which has regular and consistent opening hours and provides opportunities for the children and young people to do their homework.

A VISION OF AFTER SCHOOL WORK IN PRACTICE

It is important that all those working in the project are clear about the vision for the project – what the project hopes to achieve and how it will do this. This vision needs to be written down in the form of a 'mission statement', as the core message of the project's purpose and what it stands for. It will state the reason why the project exists



and what its guiding principles and underlying value system are. An example of a guiding principle for an after school project would be the empowerment of young people to make their own decisions, express their own needs and take responsibility for their own actions in an environment structured to meet the needs of a diverse age group of children while cognisant of their individual needs.

Clearly stated aims and objectives, where there is a shared understanding between all adults and children of what the service is trying to achieve, is one way to ensure a quality service. A quality after school programme is essential because quality care helps children to grow socially, emotionally and physically, supports their learning and helps them reach their full potential.

WHAT IS AN 'AFTER SCHOOL PRACTICE GUIDE'?

Creating the best possible after school experience for children and young people is a challenge for all service providers. This practice guide outlines a model of good practice for after school projects and is designed to help workers to work towards developing and always improving their practice. Achieving 'good practice' should not stop workers from always striving to be better. The role of the worker in the project is the main focus throughout the practice guide, with questions designed to help them reflect on their practice and identify their programme's strengths and weaknesses.

WHO IS IT FOR?

This practice guide is for anyone who works with children and young people in an after school project. It may be particularly helpful for those who are working in community based after school projects providing a service for children and young people aged 8-14 years.

HOW TO USE THIS PRACTICE GUIDE

It is important to remember that guidelines alone cannot establish good quality services. Adequate resources, effective management structures, clear objectives, with qualified and experienced staff who have access to in-service training and a broad based curriculum are some of the factors which contribute to quality.

There are six themes running throughout the practice guide, each of which are considered essential for good practice in after school work. A brief explanation of each is given below. They each have symbols and are colour coded for ease of identification.



PARTICIPATION

'Children's participation' is now a well-known phrase in the childcare field. But what exactly does it mean? For children and young people who attend after school projects, participation means having an opportunity to have a say in how their project is run. For example, children and young people can be involved in programme planning and evaluation. When they are involved in the decisions about what happens in a project, they are likely to have a greater sense of ownership and get more from attending that project (Kids Club in Action Newsletter no. 3). Participation is closely linked to freedom of expression, essentially meaning involvement or having a say in something that affects you.



PARTNERSHIP

While the specific focus of after school projects is largely the child or young person, parents, schools and the community are also involved. It is important that children and young people see parents, after school workers and teachers working together in partnership with their best interests as centre stage. Communication between all of these people needs to be clear and regular for this to occur. Working in partnership with parents means listening and responding to their childcare needs. Good practice in after school projects can depend as much on the skills of working well with other adults as on the direct work with the children themselves (Bonel & Lindon, 1997). Making links means working with parents, co-operating with other agencies, and networking to achieve better practice.



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

Children of different ages, with different life experiences, and from many different cultural and religious groups may come to the after school project. They learn from an early age about gender, culture, race, and disability, and as they grow their attitudes become more concrete. Inclusive practice is not about treating all children the same, but more about recognising differences in a positive and supportive way. In practice this might mean that children can feel free in the after school project to explore their ideas and interests without worrying that others will make fun of them. It is also important to show respect for and take time to understand the different cultures that are represented in the project, and how those cultures are represented by the children. Play offers the chance to include positive images of all members of society. Best practice requires that a strong commitment to inclusiveness is a fundamental element in the delivery of services.



POLICIES

All after school projects should have written policy statements and procedural guidelines for practice on a wide range of areas. In the spirit of participation and partnership, these should be drawn up in conjunction with workers, parents, children and young people. For the purpose of this practice guide, the following policies have been selected for consideration:

- Equal Opportunities
- Child Welfare and Protection
- Health and Safety
- Admissions
- Behaviour Management
- School Collection
- Staffing



EVALUATION AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

It is important to know how the programmes that are provided for children and young people are working. The views of children and young people can be sought, either informally through conversations, or formally through a project users' meeting or through written questionnaires. Feedback from parents can be obtained in the same way. Children, young people and parents are the experts when it comes to finding out the project's strengths and weaknesses, what's working well and what hasn't worked. Workers also will have valuable observations and opinions about how a particular session went. These should be recorded straight after the session and used to plan future sessions.



IDENTIFYING NEED

In order for the after school project to work effectively it needs to be able to both identify and respond to the child or young person's needs

in the context of their development. To do this, a thorough understanding of child and adolescent development is necessary. After school workers need to be able to assess the child or young person's needs before they make a decision as to whether their project has the skills, resources and expertise to provide a service for them. If the project cannot offer the child or young person a place, they should have detailed information to hand on other services that might be better placed to meet that child or young person's needs.

Workers should respond appropriately to the individual needs of the children and young people who attend. Examples of this might include knowing when each child has special interests or talents and recognising the range of the children's abilities. Staff should be able to relate to the child or young person's culture and respond to their feelings and temperaments.



Finally, throughout each section of this practice guide, the 'Worker Activity' symbol invites workers to spend time thinking about what happens in their own project. Workers are also encouraged and given ideas to carry out individual or team exercises in order to identify what is being done well and what could be improved on in their own project.

This practice guide is divided into four sections as follows:

SECTION 1

'Children and Young Person's Development 8-14 Years' examines the developmental tasks for this age group across four areas of development: Physical, Intellectual, Emotional and Social development.

SECTION 2

'Roles and Relationships in the After School Project' highlights and explores four significant sets of relationships: the relationship between workers; the relationship workers have with the children and young people; the relationship staff have with the parents and the relationship workers build and maintain with the local community.

SECTION 3

'The After School Environment' explores the significance of the place – both the indoor and outdoor environment where the project is held.

SECTION 4

'Programme Development for After School Projects' guides workers through the area of programme development, highlighting best practice.

The guide closes with a detailed section on useful resources and activities, and contact addresses.

SECTION 1: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSON'S DEVELOPMENT 8-14YEARS

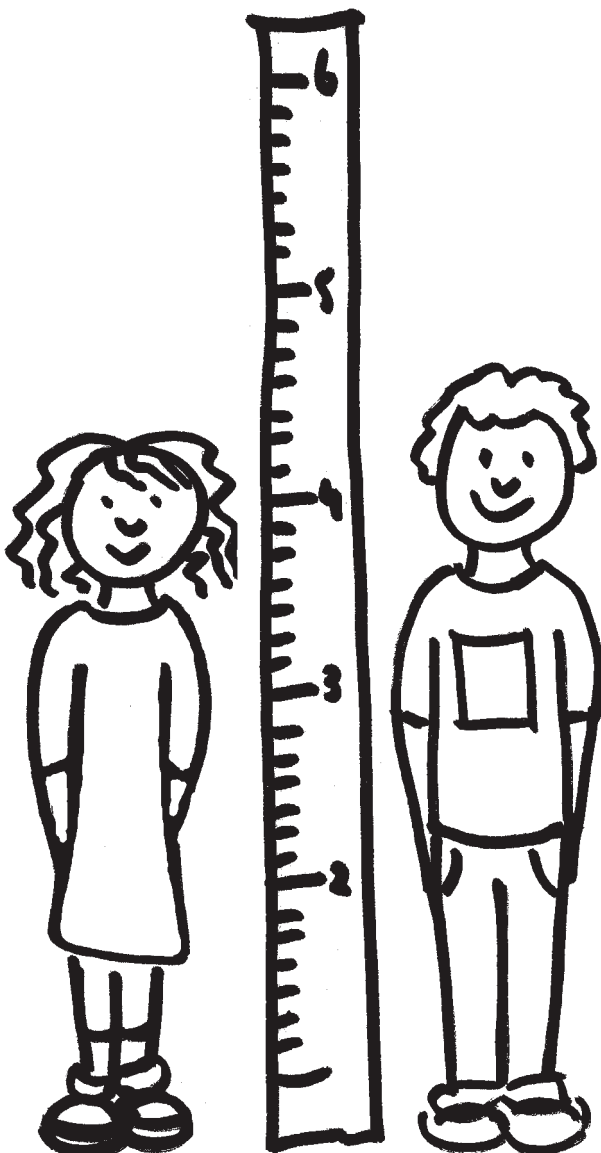
"Development is the term used to cover the changes that can be observed in children as they pass through the years from birth to young adulthood. Study of development has included not only what happens, but also how and why it happens" (Bonel & Lindon, 1996:27).

Recognising that each child or young person is an individual, developing at a different rate, all children and young people do go through certain developmental stages in a similar order. Having an understanding of child and adolescent development is a basic essential for the provision of an after school programme of activities that matches the age and abilities of children and young people at their various developmental stages. This knowledge will not only enable workers to plan developmentally appropriate activities, it will also give workers insight into the various developmental tasks all children and young

people need to achieve in order to progress from one developmental stage to another.

There are many factors that will influence how a child or young person develops and determines who they are. These factors include genetic (inherited from their family) or environmental (the physical and social context within which they live) influences, and together they co-operate to produce the young person's intelligence, height, weight, temperament, etc.

Knowledge of child development will also assist workers in recognising when a child or young person is nowhere near the stage they should be for their age. This is important, as it will enable them to identify possible causes and set about helping the child to catch up. Some of these causes may be genetic, for example autism, and some may be environmental, for example developmental delay as a result of lack of stimulation. It is vitally important that the worker gains a clearer understanding of where the child's strengths and weaknesses lie, and if possibly physical or learning difficulties exist. This understanding comes from many different sources, such as a knowledge and understanding of the stages of development and how this relates to different ages. Workers can also gain this understanding by observing and talking to the child, young person, and their parents. The ability to observe is a critical skill for all after school workers and it is to this that we now turn our attention.



OBSERVATIONAL SKILLS

Observing children is a critical part of understanding and assisting in their development. Through observation, workers can get a clearer image of the level the children are at and the progress they are making, discover the games that the children like, find out where workers can be most helpful. There are some key principles to observation that should be adhered to in order to produce objective, factual reports.

1. Good practice requires that the children know that they are being observed. Their behaviour shouldn't change and they usually continue playing as normal.

2. The worker should only write facts relating to the interactions. No opinion, suggested meaning or interpretation should be given to the activities being observed.
3. Observations should be written, recorded and reviewed.
4. Decide on time of day and length of observation, and how you will record the observation.
5. Use only initials or first names, as confidentiality must be upheld.
6. Decide what you are going to observe and the reasons for it, then evaluate your results after observation. What have you learned? What are the future considerations?
7. Make sure you have consensus from the rest of the workers and adequate supervision is in place.

FACTORS AFFECTING DEVELOPMENT

As stated earlier, both genetic and environmental factors influence how a child or young person develops. Genetic factors may result in a range of disabilities that compromise children's development in a number of ways. They can be categorised under five headings, as follows:

1. Communication and interaction, including children with speech and language disorders, and some aspects of autism.
2. Cognition and learning, including all learning disabilities where the child's normal intellectual development has been compromised in some way.
3. Behavioural, emotional and social, as well as those who find it difficult to respond to boundaries.
4. Physical or sensory impairment such as deafness, blindness, wheelchair bound.
5. Disability, related to ill health or a medical condition such as cystic fibrosis or heart conditions.

Children with similar disabilities may have many differences in the severity of their condition. Those differences will influence how that condition impacts on their development and as a result on their physical, intellectual, social or emotional skills. In order for after school workers to work well with children with

disabilities, they need to have an understanding of how that child or young person's disability has affected their individual development.

Environmental factors will also influence, compromise or contribute to a child's development. These may be categorised as follows:

1. Family and cultural influences – just as every family has different social and economic circumstances, every culture will have different expectations of its children, provides different role models and different opportunities for development. Check out the ethnic and cultural diversity resources in Appendix A for examples of different cultural expectations of girls and boys.
2. Socio-economic influences such as poverty, deprivation, poor housing, poor access to play areas and to play may result in poor nutrition, retarded growth and delayed development.

Finally, a child or young person may have a disability that impacts on their ability to communicate, such as deafness, or they may find it difficult to communicate because of a lack of social stimulation. In either situation, workers may find it hard to communicate with the child or young person and may find it helpful to get some advice from their parents or other professionals, such as speech therapists.

There are four aspects of development we are going to explore in this section – physical, intellectual, emotional and social. As each aspect is discussed, the role of the after school programme in promoting healthy and favourable development will be highlighted.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Physical development is not limited to for example, how tall a child grows in a year, but also refers to how the child uses their body, and the various activities and games they can play that will help them grow physically and mentally. Let us explore what physical development is typically happening under the two age groups highlighted below.

1. 8-11 YEARS:

By this stage, children will have just completed a noticeable growth spurt in height and weight, the rapid head growth will be completed and they will have lost most of their first teeth, and will experience their permanent teeth coming through. In particular:

- They will continue to grow in size and strength.
- They will continue to improve and refine their gross motor skills. For example, they are able to use sharp tools without adult supervision. For the older children in this age bracket, their motor skills are becoming smoother, and the co-ordination necessary to be involved in activities or games such as sports or dance, continues to develop.
- They will be less dependent on help from adults, becoming more self-sufficient. For example, they are able to do practically everything, where lack of strength and potential risk in activity are the only prohibiting factors.
- Some children may be starting puberty. Girls usually start earlier than boys. The average age for the onset of puberty in girls in Ireland is 9 years of age, and for boys 11 years of age.

2. 12-14 YEARS:

During this period, most young people will be entering puberty. This is a period of significant internal and external rapid skeletal and sexual maturation that occurs mainly in early adolescence. During this period the body produces hormones, which lead to the following development:

- Of the ovaries, breasts, pubic and underarm hair and the onset of menstruation in girls.
- The growth in testes and penis, body hair, sperm production and the deepening of the voice in boys.

Children and young people at this age are often referred to as 'adolescents'. The term 'adolescence' refers to all of the changes that take place for the child and young person at this stage, including the social, emotional, and psychological changes. These physical changes are a sign of maturity that many young people experience with a sense of pleasure that they are growing up. However, it is important to remember that for all young people these changes are uncomfortable and may also cause worry and uncertainty as young people compare themselves to

others. They may be taller than their friends and feel conspicuous because of this. They will be developing at different rates and may feel inadequate or immature if they have not reached certain milestones, e.g. experienced their first period for girls or their voice breaking for boys. Young people at this age will also be developing sexual awareness and a sexual interest in other young people.

THE ROLE OF THE AFTER SCHOOL PROJECT

Physical play has a direct impact on fitness, strengthening bones, aiding emotional health and increasing the capacity of the cardiovascular system. Even non-physical activities such as board games and arts and crafts activities assist in both physical and mental brain development, stimulating the brain and helping develop fine motor skills.

Activities: Ping-pong football

This is a game where two teams of two children or more blow ping-pong balls using drinking straws on a defined floor space.



TO THINK ABOUT:

How many physical skills do you think a child is using while playing this game?

How will observing children playing this game let you know if you need to be concerned about their physical development?

While many children and young people engage readily and enthusiastically in physical activities, their family or peer group may also influence them regarding what are considered appropriate activities for their sex. The worker has a role in modelling how activities can be enjoyed regardless of sex, ability or skill.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN WITH DIFFERENT PHYSICAL ABILITIES

All children should be encouraged and have the opportunity to participate at their own level in physical play. Children learn new skills by observing peers who are more capable than they are – by imitating the skill

observed and perfecting this through repetitive practice. For example, observe a group playing football. The less capable child will often perform an auxiliary role such as goal-keeper, score keeper, ball retriever and so forth. However, the important physical skills learned here such as hand-eye co-ordination, grip, balance, and the opportunity to be involved in the social context of the play are the building blocks for their developing skills. Such children will often be observed practising, on their own, the skills they have observed but not yet mastered.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Rapid physical change occurs during this period, particularly with the onset of puberty.
- Children are becoming more physically skilled and self-sufficient, relying less on adults for help.
- Physical play is important for healthy physical development.
- All children should be encouraged and have the opportunity to participate at their own level in physical play.

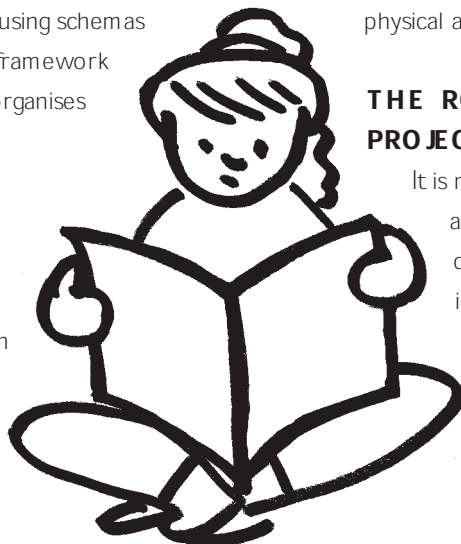
INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Intellectual development includes the entire span of thinking about something and thinking through a problem or difficulty. It includes how children and young people make sense of the world around them, how things work and why people behave in certain ways.

Piaget (1896-1980), a French psychologist formulated a Theory of Cognitive Development. According to this theory, children construct their world using schemas that can be defined as a concept or framework that exists in a person's mind, which organises and interprets information.

CONCRETE OPERATIONAL STAGE: 8-11 YEARS APPROX.

This is a time of huge cognitive development and learning. Children are developing the skills of reading, writing, calculating and understanding of common concepts.



Their ability to understand and to use metaphors and symbols is developing, although they are not yet able to think in complex abstract terms.

This stage is considered to be the period of most stability during childhood. An 8-year-old child will be well settled in school and will begin to fend for himself and make reasoned judgements. By this stage, children can reason logically about concrete events and sort objects into different classifications. For example, show a child two identical balls of clay, then roll one ball into a long, thin shape, and ask the child whether the pieces of clay contain the same amount. The child in this stage of development will know that both pieces are equal despite the difference in shape.

Interrupted development at this stage could mean poor concentration at school, telling lies to cover up lack of ability, and difficulties in developing greater reasoning skills.

FORMAL OPERATIONAL STAGE: 12 YEARS-ADULTHOOD

Children and young people will be reaching their peak intellectually during adolescence. They are typically full of questions about the world they live in, and are developing new skills, talents and leisure pursuits. By this stage, the person can reason in more abstract, idealistic and logical ways. For example, adolescents are able to imagine and wonder about many situations and possibilities, they think about what an ideal place to live would be like or what the best way of solving a problem is. Because of the continued development of their cognitive skills, they have the capacity for abstract reasoning and can understand physical and social relationships.

THE ROLE OF THE AFTER SCHOOL PROJECT

It is not unusual for workers, parents, children and young people to associate intellectual development with schooling. While intellectual development does occur to a large degree during school time, children and young people are developing their intellectual abilities, thinking and reasoning outside

of school time too. The after school project has an important role to play in the intellectual development of children and young people. How does this happen?

Play is important because it assists in the child or young person's intellectual development, as it is a learning process in itself. Play can also offer a holistic or 'all-round' approach to learning, as it incorporates social, emotional, creative and physical development. Children develop cognitively and intellectually through the use of books, or whilst reading and writing, playing games or using drama. This increases their knowledge and understanding, which in turn promotes their creative and learning capacities (*Best Play*, 2000:11).

While it is widely accepted that early play experiences play a crucial part in the cognitive development of all young children, play continues to have a role in cognitive development throughout childhood. Play also complements schooling by providing an opportunity for children to review and absorb and to give personal meaning to what they learn in formal educational settings.

Activities: Connect 4

This game challenges children and young people to match four colours in a row on a vertical board. Children of this age will have the ability to plan ahead strategically. They can identify the vertical, horizontal and diagonal solutions to this game and quickly learn to trick their opponent by laying false trails.



TO THINK ABOUT:

What cognitive processes are used for forward planning? Can children of this age adapt a plan to deal with change?

Between the ages of 8-14, children and young people are taking on board an enormous amount of facts. But they can only think through an issue or a problem on the basis of the knowledge they have and their understanding of how the world works. Sometimes ideas and conclusions that are obvious to adults may be far from obvious to children and young people. Good after school workers will look at issues or problems through the eyes of the child or young person

in an effort to understand their 'take' on a variety of issues or problems.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN WITH DIFFERENT INTELLECTUAL ABILITIES

It is important to remember that physical disability does not automatically mean a child or young person will have difficulties with learning or intellectual development. However, for those children who do have a difficulty, a well-planned programme with built-in options should accommodate all children. Additional supports in the form of higher staff ratios and specialised equipment, if required, would ensure an inclusive environment.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Intellectual development includes how children and young people make sense of the world around them, how things work and why people behave in certain ways.
- This is a time of huge cognitive development and learning, with young people reaching their peak intellectually during adolescence.
- Play assists in the child or young person's intellectual development, as it is a learning process in itself.

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Children's emotional development and ability to deal with and express their emotions is closely linked to their communication skills. Workers have a responsibility to provide children and young people with the vocabulary, the opportunity, and the security to express their emotions appropriately. Emotional security is vital for the development of sound mental health. Workers should look for every available opportunity to reinforce positive emotional well-being.

1. 8-11 YEARS:

Throughout this period, imaginative play continues to play an important part in their development as they try out new roles and explore the world they live in. They will seek personal and private play without adult involvement, in the secure knowledge that the adult is immediately available if they need them.

Children at the younger age can identify simple emotions and would have simple explanations, e.g. 'I was happy on my birthday because I got lots of cool presents'. Older children in this age bracket can express more complex emotions and are better able to communicate them: 'I am nervous about my football match on Saturday since it's the league final and it's a really important match. I hope I play well'.

In addition:

- Their self awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses in a variety of areas is increasing.
- They are becoming aware of the importance of how their peers perceive them and may be easily embarrassed at times.
- Through this stage they are gaining confidence and self-esteem by engaging in physical or non-physical activities.

2 12-14 YEARS:

This can be a difficult time emotionally for the developing adolescent as they adjust to the rapid physical and hormonal changes in their bodies. They are also starting to go through a process of psychological separation from their parents and are becoming aware that they are individuals, questioning their self identity, belonging, values and beliefs, e.g. "who am I?", "where do I belong?", "what can I do?", "what do I believe in?". They are questioning adult values, and their views on the world and on themselves are changing.

- Adolescents are able to recognise and articulate a wide range of emotions. At this stage in their development, due to puberty and the accompanying changes, there is an upsurge in their emotions. They may worry about their rate of development in comparison to their friends and may be conscious of their body.
- Adolescents need time to adjust and adapt to their bodily changes, and to try to make sense of strong emotional feelings, including sexuality. Finding a way to identify and channel their feelings and be able to express them would be both beneficial and constructive.

Interrupted development at this stage could result in feelings of insecurity, having a low opinion of themselves, and difficulties making and sustaining relationships. These difficulties may result in rudeness, unsuitable friends, smoking, dabbling in drugs and alcohol and introverted behaviour. For teenagers whose lives have been disordered in some way, emotional development is probably the hardest stage to achieve and, if there are difficulties, where most help will be needed.

THE ROLE OF THE AFTER SCHOOL PROJECT

Through play, the holistic development of the child is encouraged. This includes their emotional development. Without a good range of play opportunities, children may lose the chance to develop their emotional intelligence, independence, self-esteem and self-confidence, and to acquire self-management skills such as being able to see projects and tasks through to completion (*Best Play*, 2000:13).

Creative play provides children with opportunities to express themselves, develop creatively, experiment and learn how and why things work. By doing, risking, failing and succeeding in play, children learn how to deal with their environment and to understand their abilities and limitations.

The focus on play is about the child being the centre of the process. Helping children make, establish and maintain and dissolve relationships is fundamental to emotional development. Play also has a therapeutic role in helping children work through negative experiences, express themselves, build relationships and establish trust with peers and adults.

Activities: Discussion Group on Bullying - Mixed group of six children aged 10-12 years.



TO THINK ABOUT:

What is the role of the worker in this group?

How would the adult create an atmosphere where children are secure enough to discuss their experiences and express their emotions?

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Emotional development concerns the child and young person's growing ability to recognise and express their emotions appropriately.
- Creative play provides children with opportunities to express themselves, develop creatively, experiment and learn how and why things work.
- After school workers have a key role in reinforcing positive emotional well-being.
- Adolescents are going through a process of psychological separation from their parents and are becoming aware that they are an individual, questioning their self identity, belonging, values and belief, e.g. "who am I?", "where do I belong?", "what can I do?", "what do I believe in?".

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Social development is an important part of the development process. Through interactions with family, friends, teachers and peers they will learn how to communicate in various ways and gain confidence in their endeavours. Children and young people's personal identity continues to develop within a social framework as they compare themselves to others around them. Social development is also related to the child or young person's sense of personal identity, and their level of self-esteem (which is related to their image of themselves). Making new friends and being part of a group is an integral component of growing up which is fun, and where children can explore, discover and share things with their friends.

1. 8-10YEARS:

During this period, peer groups continue to be important with most children preferring to play with friends away from adult supervision. Most of these friendships are same gender and play tends to differentiate along gender lines, i.e. girls dancing to and imitating the dance routines of pop groups and boys engaged in physical activities or computer games. By the age of 8 years, they will have developed certain self-help and social skills and will build on these over the coming years. Entering this period, children should be capable of feeding themselves and

going to the toilet, for example. Peers still play an important role in their social development, though friendships become increasingly based on shared interests.

In relation to the development of their play, the following applies:

- Children can understand rules and often make up their own. As they get older, they understand more complicated rules; can identify right and wrong and the consequences of their actions.
- They can understand how their actions affect others and how others make them feel, and are better able to understand another person's point of view.
- They are beginning to develop moral reasoning, and can sort out the concepts of fairness, equality and right and wrong.
- They can manage and solve problems in the wider social setting outside the family unit, e.g. in school or with their friends.

Throughout this stage, children are becoming choosier about their playmates as they become friends with other children with whom they have shared values and things in common. Girls become increasingly dependent on 'best friends', while boys will have a wider pool of potential playmates.

Interrupted development might mean the young person finds it hard to make friends and may become withdrawn or bossy with other children, or may try to 'get in' with older children.

2. 12-14YEARS:

The influence and importance of the peer group continues to play a powerful role and can both positively and negatively influence adolescents' decisions on their attitude towards education, sports, extra-curricular activities, drinking alcohol, smoking, taking drugs or sexual activity. They are developing more mature relationships with friends of the same age and both sexes, with clearly defined masculine and feminine social roles emerging. During this stage the following is also happening:

- Adolescents are trying to gain more independence and, ultimately, trust from their parents, teachers or other carers.

- It is also a time where a desire for conformity, concerns about image, credibility and status are prevalent. To this end, the after school project needs to acknowledge and reflect the complexities of this developmental stage.
- Young people are also developing a values and ethical system, which will guide their behaviour and prepare them for adult relationships, family partnerships and economic independence.
- The gender divide in play begins to disappear as girls and boys re-develop interest in each other in the initial blossoming of early relationships.



Interrupted social development impacts on the young person's ability to make and sustain peer group relationships, which can result in unsuitable friends or no friends at all.

THE ROLE OF THE AFTER SCHOOL PROJECT

Delayed social development and lack of social competence can be shown in different ways. Some children may be withdrawn, not having the confidence or the skills to engage with others. They may have low self-esteem and poor communication skills. The after school project can promote social development through play. Social play is important as it enables children to learn to communicate, negotiate and develop listening skills, helping them to learn to interact in a positive and appropriate manner with others and develop self-esteem and confidence. Through play and interaction with other children, young people and adults, they can learn how to handle conflict, how to take care of themselves and others and face new situations with confidence.

Activities: Junior Disco 12-14-Year-Old Girls and Boys



TO THINK ABOUT:

How do you promote young people's self-confidence in this situation?
What ground rules would you set?

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Social development refers to the growing skills and abilities of the child/young person to listen, communicate, and negotiate, and interact in a positive and appropriate manner with others.
- Children and young people's personal identity continues to develop within a social framework as they compare themselves to others around them.
- The peer group plays an important role in social development.
- After school projects can promote social development through play, where the child/young person learns to handle conflict, to take care of themselves and others and to face new situations with confidence.

Now that the four areas of development (physical, intellectual, social and emotional) have been discussed in great detail, let us take a look at an activity that can be adapted to the different age groups attending the after school project, which helps the developing child in each of these areas.

MEETING A WIDE RANGE OF DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS

Where after school projects cater for young children and adolescents, consideration needs to be given to the provision of a wide range of play activities and projects. Some activities, however, will encourage positive development in more than one area and can be adapted across the age ranges and developmental stages. The following is an example of an activity taken from Davy (1998:34-35) that demonstrates how an activity can provide opportunities for all-round development.

JUNK MODELLING

Instructions: using a variety of 'junk' materials (paper, card, egg boxes, fabric, corks, etc.) glue and scissors, make a model of your choice or use a theme; e.g. transport, animals or buildings.

Social development: children are working in a group and can share ideas, materials and work together.

Physical development: children are cutting, gluing and sticking and developing their manipulative skills and hand-to-eye co-ordination.

Intellectual development: children are planning, designing, estimating, anticipating plus counting, matching, etc.

Creative development: children are inventing, designing, and problem solving.

Emotional development: children experience a sense of accomplishment and achievement, independence, pride in their finished work, and learn to express their feelings and deal with frustration.

This section has discussed in detail what the after school worker can expect from the child or young person at this stage in their development, across the four developmental areas highlighted above. The role of the after school project in helping children and young people to develop socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically, by providing them with opportunities for learning and social interaction, is clearly stated. Let us now move on to take a closer look at the role of the worker, in particular their relationship with the other key players in the after school project.

SECTION 2: ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS IN THE AFTER SCHOOL PROJECT

This section examines the nature and importance of relationships in an after school project. In particular, four significant sets of relationships are highlighted: the relationship between workers; the relationship workers have with the children and young people; the relationship workers have with the parents; and the relationship workers build and maintain with the local community. Before examining each of these in turn, it is important to first examine the role of the worker, highlighting the particular skills, resources, training and personal qualities they need to work effectively in the project.

THE ROLE OF THE WORKER

The worker's main function is to enrich the child's experience, through their skill in designing the play environment and through the attitude and culture of play fostered in the project. A skilled worker will understand children and young people's needs, and be consistent, caring and warm. Workers will be aware of the importance of their role and will ensure that each child and young person is treated as an individual and feels valued. Skilled workers may also take on other roles. They may become confidants when children are troubled or unhappy, and may become significant adults in the child's life. These relationships are particularly important for children experiencing poverty and deprivation in their home lives (*Best Play*, 2000:16).

Workers need to be able to recognise the special developmental needs of children who are using their after school project. To do this requires special skills on the part of the worker. Some examples of these are listed below:

1. The skill to build relationships with children, their parents and carers.
2. The skill to understand and promote the different developmental needs of children and young people.
3. The skill to support children's involvement and participation in the project.
4. The skill to ensure a safe and stimulating environment.
5. The skill to recognise and provide for the emerging independence of the child.



6. The skill to promote individuality, balancing the needs of the child and of the group.
7. The skill to encourage fair and caring behaviour.
8. The skill to develop the cultural awareness of the child.
9. The skill to encourage choice and self-confidence.

However, it takes more than the above abilities and attributes to ensure an effective service. A high quality after school project also needs a committed and well-trained team of workers who have the ability to care for children and young people of all ages. How this team of workers works together is central to providing a high quality service, and it is to this relationship that we now turn our attention.

THE 'WORKER-TO-WORKER' RELATIONSHIP

After school workers need to work well together as a team in order to meet the needs of the children and young people who are attending the project. The main purpose of this team is in fact to provide the best after school service possible. To do this, each worker in the project needs to have a clear understanding of what the aims and objectives of the project are.

An effective team has workers who are communicating and co-operating with each other, and being respectful of each other, as role models of positive adult relationships for the children, young people and their parents. Communicating might mean keeping each other up to date with what is happening in different parts of the project or with different age groups, passing on messages or information either face-to-face or through a message book system. Communicating also involves finding and setting aside the time to discuss and plan what you will do in a play session and also to review how it went afterwards. It also involves expressing doubts or criticism in a constructive way and encouraging fellow workers in the work that they are doing.



EVALUATION AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Effective teams of workers need to meet together to plan and to review. Time needs to be set aside for these meetings, un-interrupted by telephones. The outcomes or actions requiring follow up should be recorded. Each project needs to find the methods of evaluation that best suit them. The children and young people who come to the project and their parents can be asked what they think of the service being provided for them. While this is a useful source of information, it is not enough on its own. Evaluating or making an assessment of your project is also informed by observation, and this needs to be recorded. Information from other professionals outside the project, particularly teachers, is very important when a project is trying to measure what impact it is having. Finally, monitoring should occur continually in order to ensure that the policies, procedures and service plans are being carried out. The programme may need to be continually and regularly changed as a result of evaluation to ensure that it meets the needs of the children and families within the service goals.

Building an effective project takes time, effort and money. It also involves paying attention to a number of key staffing issues, some of which are highlighted below.



POLICIES

As stated in the introductory section, all after school projects should have written policy statements and procedural guidelines on the areas suggested. In the spirit of participation and partnership, these should be drawn up in conjunction with workers, parents, children and young people. Two of the seven policies identified in the introductory section are discussed in more detail here.

STAFFING

All workers should meet the training/qualification/experience requirements to work with children and young people. This qualification will give them an understanding of the process of play. They also need to be physically and emotionally able to care for young people. Qualified workers should be represented in all areas of the programme, with enough there to meet all levels of responsibility.

To do this, workers must have their training needs assessed, prioritised and agreed with them individually, relevant to the responsibilities of their job. Training of workers begins with the induction programme that introduces them to the after school project, to the other workers, the children, young people and parents and to the policies and procedures that govern the project. Ongoing training is also needed to build on the worker's skills and experience, to develop new skills, and to ensure that the worker is fully informed of the latest policy, practice, and legal developments in after school work. Examples of this training might include some of the following:

- **How to relate to children and young people in ways that promote their development.**
- **How to set up programme space and design activities to support programme goals.**
- **How to support the safety, health and nutrition of children.**

- How to manage behaviour positively.
- How to include families in the after school care of their child.

The Report of the Working Group on School Age Childcare highlights a number of areas where specific training and procedural guidance is essential. These include:

- First-aid training.
- Training in health and safety issues.
- Training to recognise evidence of child abuse and knowledge of the procedures to follow in this regard. (Local procedures and guidance for dealing with child protection should be developed and all staff need to be informed of and be aware of these procedures).



TO THINK ABOUT:

Is there an induction process in the after school project I work in? Does induction introduce new workers to others, children and young people, parents, activities? Do I have a job description? Can new workers shadow or be mentored by more experienced workers? Is there a training manual? Is there a commitment to training reflected in time off to attend, to reflect and to develop new skills?

It is vital that workers receive the appropriate support and supervision in order to do their work effectively. This support may come in the form of adequate pay and good working conditions, but more importantly this support needs to come in the form of team support and individual supervision on a regular (monthly) basis where workers are given the time and the opportunity to discuss and review their work and agree goals for the coming month. It is also good practice for a supervisor to be easily accessible should issues arise that need immediate attention. It is important that the team of workers are able to help each other and work together within the work place.



TO THINK ABOUT:

Can I go to my work colleagues for support on tough issues? Do I feel that my supervisor, the children and young people and the parents value my work? What support systems are in place for me as a worker? Is time allowed on a weekly basis to plan, review activities and discuss the working of the project?



POLICIES

CHILD WELFARE AND PROTECTION

Child protection is about promoting the welfare of the children and young people who use the after school facility. Child welfare and protection policies and procedures should be drawn up by the team of workers in line with *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, and with reference to *Our Duty to Care*. Developing this policy will raise awareness about the possibility of child abuse occurring and the procedures will guide the workers in responding to accidents and complaints.

If a project has concerns about a child or young person, or a child or young person shares concerns with a worker, it is important for both the worker's and the child's care and protection that the necessary procedures are followed. For example, it is important that the worker does not take on the responsibility for investigating, physically examining or asking leading questions. The project should have clear guidelines on their reporting obligations – the how, when and where to pass on the concerns – and the worker should clearly know what steps will happen next, who will investigate the concerns and what follow up will be needed. After school teams should also have considered how to share concerns with parents. Developing a policy of openness with parents is important, consulting them about everything that concerns their children. This

includes letting them know what the project's legal responsibilities are from the time their child attends and giving them a written statement to this effect.

The provision of child protection training for workers is essential for any organisation working with young people. This should form part of the worker's induction into the programme and should also be reflected in the ongoing training that is provided for the workers. Training would include an introduction to the definitions of child abuse, recognising child abuse and best practice in responding to child abuse. It would also clearly show the procedures to be followed if child abuse is alleged or suspected.

Responding to child protection and welfare concerns can be an emotionally draining experience for even the most experienced workers. The provision of adequate support and supervision for workers is essential if child protection and welfare issues are to be dealt with sensitively and professionally. Additional support and supervision should be offered in the event of child protection issues arising in the project.



TO THINK ABOUT:

Do I know what to do if a child or young person tells me something that makes me concerned about their safety or welfare?



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

An inclusive project will have workers with the training and skills necessary to work with disabled children. All workers would benefit from attending awareness workshops, on disability for example, and be given opportunities to attend further training. Consideration should be given to the project's recruitment strategy. Perhaps by actively encouraging applications from people with disabilities, the project can help to provide positive role models for children and young people. Actively recruiting male workers will counteract the over-dominance of female employees in this field and provide positive male role models for the children and young people attending.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- After school projects need skilled, qualified and experienced workers in order to provide the best service possible.
- These workers in turn need support, supervision and ongoing training.
- After school workers need to work well together in order to meet the needs of the children and young people who are attending the project.
- Clear policy statements with accompanying procedural guidelines should be drawn up by the team of workers, in conjunction with children, young people and their parents.

WORKER - CHILDREN / YOUNG PEOPLE RELATIONSHIP

Developing and maintaining good relationships with the children and young people who attend the after school project is central to good practice, and requires a basic understanding of child and adolescent development. Children and young people within this age bracket are beginning to establish themselves as independent individuals from their family. However, it is also a time when the peer group is powerfully influential and where a desire for conformity, concerns about image, credibility and status are prevalent.

SECTION 2: ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS IN THE AFTER SCHOOL PROJECT

Developing and maintaining good relationships with the children and young people will only be possible if there are adequate numbers of workers in relation to the numbers of children and young people attending. Best practice suggests a ratio of one worker to every eight children. However, the ideal ratio is two adults to every twelve children, so that children have a choice of adults. This ratio is also important to allow for one worker to take on the role of 'floater' during after school time. The role of the 'floater' includes the following:

1. Extending and supporting spontaneous play opportunities.
2. Talking and listening to children and young people.
3. Observing patterns of play and interaction.
4. Responding quickly to individual needs.
5. Supporting those children on the fringes of activities to successfully participate.

Volunteers should not be included in this ratio unless they hold the necessary qualifications and regularly take part in the programme.



TO THINK ABOUT:

What are the staff ratios in our project?
Who decided these? Am I happy with them?

Do I have time to interact with individual children and young people?
Is there a back-up plan when someone is sick?

Building a relationship with the children and young people begins at the first contact with them. They will need support and encouragement in adjusting to the new setting and in settling in. There are many ways in which workers can help a new child/young person feel more comfortable. Here are some suggestions:

- Children and young people's names should be known and used in the way that they ask – for example, Christopher may prefer being called Chris, but Nicola may not like being called Nicky.

- Some children's names will be more familiar to workers than others. With children from cultures or countries different to theirs, workers may well come across names that are both new to them and difficult to pronounce. This is a good opportunity to ask the child to repeat their name and for workers to make sure they are pronouncing it correctly.
- Children and young people may need plenty of time to relax and ask questions. Workers should try to arrange a time for them to visit when they are free to spend time with them.

The other children and young people can also be involved in helping new children settle in.



TO THINK ABOUT:

Is there an induction plan for new children?

Can established children take on the role of mentors or buddies to new children to help them settle?

It takes time to build trusting relationships with children and young people. It is also a two-way process that involves them getting to know the workers as well as the workers getting to know them. This means workers sharing something of themselves, their interests, or personal likes and dislikes. Children and young people may ask workers questions they consider intrusive. Good practice involves the worker sharing memories that are personal to them, like for example, games they played when they were children, without sharing intimate facts about themselves, their families or anyone else.

Workers need to see themselves as facilitators for the child or young person, helping, advising and supporting them when needed. This involves:

- Acting as positive role models.
- Striking a balance between being involved without being intrusive.
- Being available and supportive to the children and young people at all times, without being too hands on and intervening.

- Assisting without taking control.
- Encouraging and being enthusiastic about the activities without appearing too eager and pushy.
- Providing structure but also allowing children and young people the chance to make informed and responsible choices.

Good practice involves workers relating to children and young people in positive ways. This can mean treating them with respect and listening to what they say, and being kind and fair and accepting of them. It is also about making them feel welcome and comfortable, engaging with them, playing with them, showing an interest in what they have to say and what they are doing by, for example, sitting and chatting with them.



TO THINK ABOUT:

What kind of choices can children and young people in my project make? How often do we let them choose what they are going to do and with whom? Do we include them when we are making plans?



TO THINK ABOUT:

How do you greet the children and young people when they arrive at your project?
Do you feel you spend enough time with them?



PARTICIPATION

In order to feel empowered, children need to be allowed to have an active involvement in the decision-making process of the after school project. Freedom of expression helps them feel valued and welcome. These are all important principles to consider when working with children. Again, children's age, gender and background will affect the way they process experiences. Knowing the children and young people and having knowledge of their lives is essential here.



Children and young people need to be encouraged to make choices and become more responsible. For the worker, this might involve helping them plan their own activities, giving them clear direction but also giving them opportunities to choose what they will do, how they will do it, and with whom. For example, they can be encouraged to set up their own activities or help to prepare and serve the food.

How relationships end is also important to think about. When children are leaving the project, perhaps because they are past the upper age limit, the workers should acknowledge this event in some way. This might involve a leaving party, or a gift, or simply an acknowledgment on the last day that the child or young person will not be back. Workers should always let children and young people know in advance if they are leaving the project.



PARTICIPATION

While working with children and young people at this developmental stage presents a real challenge, the best way to ensure the project works is to make sure the workers ask the children and young people what they want, involving them in drawing up activity programmes, in creating their own environment, in contributing to the drawing up of project rules and involving them in the everyday running of the project. If the children and young people have a sense of ownership and feel able and welcome to contribute, they will want to be there. This also helps to develop their skills such as negotiation, co-operation, decision-making, and conflict-resolution.



POLICIES

A policy on children's participation should be drawn up with the children, young people and the workers. The policy should state the project's commitment to encouraging the children and young people's involvement in the after school project with creative ideas and suggestions as to how they can be involved.

rules apply to behaviour, homework, meal times and activities. The project reported that behavioural problems were rare, with children settling their own disputes by negotiation.

When children and young people are listened to, they are far more likely to learn how to listen to others through experiencing adults who listen to them. Here are some useful tips for listening to children and young people:

- Never be too busy to listen. Children and young people often have the most important things to say at the most inconvenient times of the day.
- Look at the child or young person when they are speaking.
- Pay attention to what is being said and to how it is being said.
- Avoid interrupting them, or anticipating what they are going to say next.
- Show them that not only were you listening but you value what they said enough to recall it at a later stage - "what you were telling me earlier, Sam..."
- Take seriously any worries that children bring to you.

Remember, listening is as much an art as speaking - both require practice and attention (Weal & Emson, 2002).

Watch out over the next week and notice how often adults, even well meaning ones, show through their behaviour that they do not value what the child or young person is saying.



TO THINK ABOUT:

Are children involved in planning and preparing snacks?

How do we respond to their requests for different ones?

Is food provided for children when they arrive and do they have enough time to eat without rushing?

A clear example of this was highlighted by Pugh's 1999 research where in one after school project, the children have their own children's council and were responsible for making the rules by which the after school operates (1999: 60). These



TO THINK ABOUT:

Do the children and young people hold regular meetings with the workers to discuss and negotiate relevant issues?

Is there a children's or young person's committee?

Is there a children's rights officer?

POLICIES

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Most people prefer to know where they stand and children are no different. They like to have boundaries that are clear and practical rules that are fair. Positive techniques to guide the behaviour of children and young people might include:

- Giving attention when children co-operate.
- The setting of appropriate limits for the children and young people.
- Encouraging children and young people to resolve their own conflicts.

Ground rules for the after school project work much better if the children and young people are involved in making them firstly and then in reviewing them from time to time. These rules need to be simple and phrased as a 'do' rather than a 'don't'. There shouldn't be too many – ten is probably enough, and should apply to everyone in the project, children and young people, workers, parents and visitors. They should be written down, preferably by the children, and put where they can be seen clearly by everyone.

Here is an example of some typical project rules:

1. Respect!
2. We help each other!
3. We listen
4. We share
5. We have a good time
6. We look out for each other inside and outside the project

Responding positively to children's behaviour involves rewarding the behaviour you want to encourage rather than focusing on and punishing the behaviour you don't want. Ways of encouraging might include thanking children for what they have done or the effort they have made. Workers can simply acknowledge or encourage a child because of what they have done – "well done, you did that really well". There is also a place for rewards or giving children

incentives for good behaviour. This does not mean paying the child to behave well.



TO THINK ABOUT:

Identify the possible causes of behavioural problems in children and young people.

It is essential for any project that the team of workers discuss and agree what the project policy is on their response to unwanted behaviour. Here are some ideas:

- Often the worker will have to respond immediately to a certain kind of behaviour. They can often use the rules to remind the child or young person that what they did is not allowed.
- Sometimes it is a good idea to ignore the behaviour.
- Workers can re-direct the child or young person to another activity or another part of the room.
- Workers can use consequences – "if you continue to do that, we will have to stop this activity, and I know you love painting".
- Wait until a later time to discuss the incident with the child or young person.
- In extreme cases, it may be necessary to consider banning the child or young person from attending.

Children need to be helped by adults to make and understand their own rules and their views need to be taken into account. These should be reviewed from time to time to suit the changing needs of the children.



TO THINK ABOUT:

How does your project deal with unwanted behaviour? Do you have a policy that is agreed and understood by all workers?



TO THINK ABOUT:

In your project, think for a moment about a child or young person whose behaviour is troublesome. Think for a moment about their positive behaviour. When was the last time you complimented them on their positive behaviour?



TO THINK ABOUT:

What does your project consider to be clearly unacceptable behaviour – alcohol and drugs, bullying, discriminatory behaviour, sexual behaviour? How does your project help children resolve conflicts?



POLICIES

CHILD PROTECTION AND WELFARE

A child, young person or parent may tell the after school worker about something that has happened or is happening to them. Also, workers may witness something that suggests to them that a child or young person is being injured. The child or young person may be very unhappy, they may have had an experience of abuse or may be experiencing abuse at the time, or in the case of a parent, may suspect their child is being abused. This is a very serious situation and it is really important that workers respond in the right way. Above all else, it is important that the child or young person's safety and well-being is put first, above all other considerations.

While it is important for after school projects to be tuned in to the signs of child abuse, it is also important that this awareness does not cause undue anxiety and suspicion. A clear and supportive management structure will give workers the confidence to respond appropriately and effectively – for example, it may be the role of after school workers to be supportive, as the child, young person or parent may need support and comforting but it would not be appropriate for them to investigate, as that is the job of the Social Workers or the Gardaí. Here are some points to remember for workers who find themselves in this situation:

1. Listen carefully to what you are being told.
2. Explain that you cannot keep this a secret, because you need to get them help and support.
3. Try to find a quiet space for them.
4. Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you.
5. Find out if they have told anyone else.
6. Write down anything you have been told.
7. Stay calm, as they may be upset.
8. Report what you have been told immediately to your supervisor.

If workers are concerned about a child or young person's behaviour, for example, bullying, hitting, or sexual behaviour, there should be a clear policy to guide them, with clear procedures to follow.



TO THINK ABOUT:

Remember, you are not responsible for investigating any abuse that you may have been told about. However, you are responsible for making sure that the right people are told so that the child or young person is protected.



POLICIES

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Children can be discriminated against because of their skin colour, religion, their race or culture, because they are male or female, or perhaps because they have a physical or learning disability. An equal opportunities policy is important because it helps to stop this discrimination. It is important for after school workers to think about how accessible their project is for children with either physical or learning disabilities.

Positive relationships cannot be developed between workers and children and young people with disabilities if the children and young people are seen only in terms of their disabilities and if the workers concerned are uncomfortable with the impairment.

Workers might find it helpful to reflect on the following practical suggestions for working with children or young people who have a disability. This is obviously not an exhaustive list.

1. Obtain as much knowledge about the person's disability as soon as possible.
2. Have high, yet realistic, expectations.
3. If your project has children or young people who are wheelchair users, try to situate yourself at eye level with them. It will be difficult for them to participate in conversations that are going over their heads.
4. If you have a child or young person attending who has a speech impairment, don't pretend to understand if you don't. Ask them to say it again, and repeat it back to make sure you have got it right.
5. If one of the children or young people is deaf, try not to stand against a window or bright light as this will hinder lip reading.
6. If you are working with children or young people with visual impairments, describe what is on the plate at mealtimes, relating the food to the position of the clock. For example, the meat is at 6 o'clock, etc.



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

All children should be treated fairly. Good practice means that workers recognise and respect the values and beliefs that result from the child's cultural, ethnic and religious background. It is important that the project is accessible for all children and young people and that all members play an equal part in decision-making.

Differences such as skin colour, language and culture can be frightening for children to deal with. However, an after school project is an ideal setting to explore, discover and celebrate differences, and in doing so, help children to accept and value the differences in each other. There are many opportunities through play or the provision of food, where new and exciting ideas can be experienced. For example, children can dress up to try out different roles and images and to learn about each other's cultures. When a project has children and young people attending who come from a number of cultural backgrounds, diversity can be celebrated using a calendar of festivals where special events for all cultures can be marked and celebrated. Similarly, children and young people can learn about other cultures by experiencing the food associated with these cultures.



TO THINK ABOUT:

For your next planning session, try to introduce ideas and materials from another culture into one of the activities for the children and young people in your project. For example, if they enjoy cookery, introduce a 'foods of the world' theme.



IDENTIFYING NEED

The best way to know what the children and young people need is to talk to them, listen to them, and observe them. Examples of this might include knowing when each child has special interests or talents, and bringing in material related to a child's special interests. For example, if a child is particularly talented at baking, workers can develop this talent by encouraging the child to bake a cake for other children's birthday parties at the project.



TO THINK ABOUT:

Are you aware of the different interests and abilities of all the children and young people who use your project?

Identifying need can also mean that workers recognise the range of the children and young people's abilities, varying their responses and expectations to match the child's age and ability. Workers can relate to the child or young person's culture by helping them use books or music in a different language.

Identifying and responding to individual needs also applies to the food provided for those attending the project. This needs to take account of any special dietary requirements whether for medical or cultural/religious reasons. Parents can give this information when their child is starting in the after school project. It then needs to be written down so that all workers are aware of each child's individual needs.

Not all children and young people may communicate in the same way, either because they have a disability or because they do not speak the same language as the workers. It is up

to the workers to find ways to communicate with the child. Linking with parents or the child's teacher may give some ideas about how to communicate with that child.



TO THINK ABOUT:

Think about all the ways you can communicate with the children and young people, particularly those who have special needs or speak another language.



EVALUATION AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Through supervision, workers can continually reflect on how they develop and maintain their relationships with the young people they work with. Children and young people can be involved in evaluating different aspects of the after school project, through questionnaires, informal and formal meetings with workers, or through more sophisticated means. For example, in a leading UK specialist playwork training agency called Playtrain, young people have been trained as evaluators of after school provision.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Developing and maintaining good relationships with the children and young people who attend the after school project is central to good practice, requiring a basic understanding of child and adolescent development, and high worker to children ratios.
- Relationship building takes time, starting with the child or young person's first contact with the project.
- Empowerment, an important principle to consider when working with children, involves an active involvement in the decision making process of the after school project for the children and young people who attend.

- Positive behaviour management involves rewarding the behaviour you want to encourage rather than focusing on and punishing the behaviour you don't want
- An inclusive project is one that recognises and respects the values and beliefs that result from the child's cultural, ethnic and religious background.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORKERS AND PARENTS

The best way of making sure that children's needs are met is by working as much as possible with those who look after them at home. Parents are important because they have the long-term responsibility for the child or young person and are experts on their own children. Workers should aim to make parents welcome, bearing in mind the same considerations for remembering names as outlined above for children. They can strive to share the language and culture of the families they serve and the communities within which they live. At a basic minimum, parents will need information on the after school project that is accurate, up to date and clear, so that they feel informed as to what happens in the project. They may need time to read this and come back with questions if necessary. There are particular areas where regular and clear communication between families and workers is important, such as arrival and departure arrangements.



PARTICIPATION

What does the participation of parents in an after school project actually mean? Parents may be involved in a number of ways:

- 1. On the Board of Management**
- 2. As volunteers**
- 3. Through newsletters**
- 4. Through evaluations**

They can be involved in decision-making - informing, running, or planning particular

activities, or involvement in the running of the project as a whole. In order for parents to participate, they need to feel valued and welcomed. There are many ways to ensure this happens. Welcome signs, in as many different languages as possible can be on the wall at the entrance to the project. Indeed, parents with particular creative or artistic skills can be invited to help put this sign together. Having somewhere for the parents to sit, either as they wait for their child or to chat with other parents will help them to feel that they are wanted there. Similarly, having a parent's noticeboard or a parent's room will facilitate their increased participation in the project.

Here are some tips for developing a more participative approach to working with parents:

- 1. Be clear with parents right from the start what your role is ... and what it is not. Don't wait to be asked for information - offer it freely in the form of leaflets, etc. Make sure that you have considered parents who have specific communication needs (for example, use interpreters and advocates).**
- 2. Be open with parents about the after school's policy regarding recording and offer to show them what you are recording about them.**
- 3. Continue to learn more about the impact of culture, gender, sexuality, disability and poverty in the lives of families.**
- 4. Speak in a straightforward, jargon-free way, making sure you are being understood.**
- 5. Finally, work from and with the strengths of parents. Treat all parents as you would want to be treated - with courtesy and respect, yet with honesty - if you have concerns about their child's development and welfare.**

(Adapted from Shemmings, Y and Shemmings, D, 2001: 125-126)



TO THINK ABOUT:

Is there a written policy on parental involvement?

Is there a parents' committee?

What contribution do parents make to the decision making process in the project?

Are there parent representatives on the management committee?

Do families from all backgrounds seem to be involved?



PARTNERSHIP

While it is important to keep the children and young people's needs to the forefront of planning, it is also important to involve parents and keep them informed.

Developing a partnership with parents begins when they are settling their child into the project by giving the workers information such as medical or social history. If parents are to develop close links with the after school project, they will need to feel valued and welcomed.

Working in partnership with parents means taking account of and responding to their childcare needs. It also has to include a shared understanding of what the project is offering and what in turn is expected of them as parents.

Continued involvement of parents in the life of the project can be achieved through encouraging parents to attend social events organised by the project, encouraging their involvement in the running of the project and in leading specific activities, and encouraging their attendance at special events such as a play performed by the young people or a musical or sporting event involving the project users.



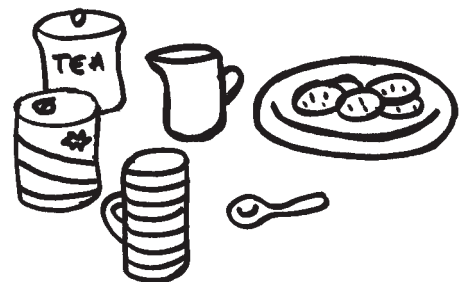
POLICIES

A policy of partnership with parents should be developed jointly with the parents and the workers. The policy should state the project's commitment to working in partnership with parents and should give suggestions as to how parents can be involved.



EVALUATION AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

It is important to include parents' views and opinions when evaluating your after school project, and there are many ways of doing this. While a formal meeting is one way to find out what they think, this is not always practical, especially where parents work full-time. Workers could introduce a 'suggestions box' or book for parents to let you know what they think about the project you are providing. Sending out a questionnaire or holding parents meetings are other ways to capture their ideas and opinions.



DIVERSITY INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

Just as it is important to respect the values of the children and young people who attend the after school project, it is equally important that parents' values are also respected. All parents, regardless of their cultural or ethnic backgrounds should have the same opportunities to communicate with workers and become involved in their child's after school care. This might involve having written information such as policies and procedures translated into different languages.

POLICIES

SCHOOL COLLECTION

Many after school projects provide a school collection service to transport children from their school to their after school project. All projects should have a policy in place regarding the collection of children and it is vital that workers and parents work together to ensure that the collection service is effective. Parents are responsible for ensuring the after school project knows the collection times and places and that the school is fully informed as to who is responsible for collecting the child. It is a good idea for after school projects to agree what their policy is on school collection, in consultation with parents and the local schools.

CHILD PROTECTION AND WELFARE

Developing a policy of openness with parents has to include introducing them to the child protection and welfare policy of the after school project when their child starts attending. This will explain to them your project's commitment to valuing and safeguarding the welfare and protection of the children and young people who attend. It will introduce parents to a policy that raises awareness about the possibility of abuse occurring, explaining the steps to be taken if it is suspected. This policy, while recognising that the welfare of children and young people must always come first, will also state a commitment to consulting with parents about everything that concerns their child, and will encourage them to be involved in the project in a variety of ways – on management committees, as volunteers, etc. Parents should be given time to read this and other project policies, and encouraged to discuss openly any concerns they may have about this or any other policy.

WORKING WITH FATHERS

There is now growing evidence that promoting fathers' greater involvement in childcare can enhance developmental outcomes for children (McKeown, 2001) and a general consensus that involving fathers in family support services is desirable. It is important that after school workers do not see the word 'parent' as interchangeable with that of 'mother', and that efforts are made to involve both parents equally. It may be routine practice to communicate with a child or young person's mother, but it should also be equally standard practice to involve fathers as both have parental responsibility. If the after school project aspires to partnership with parents, it should commit itself to working with both parents. However, if the project is seen to be heavily female dominated, this may act as a major barrier to the involvement of fathers. The after school project can find innovative and creative ways to do this, by involving fathers in sporting or technical activities (computer skills) for example. Thought should also be given to what image the project portrays of men. For example, are images of men displayed? Are there leaflets, posters and other materials relevant to men available? Do the images and texts say that men are welcome here?



TO THINK ABOUT:

Are men valued as parents?
 Are letters addressed to both parents?
 Are men actively and continually encouraged to participate? Do you feel more comfortable approaching women than men? Do you assume men positively want to be involved? Do you expect men will be interested in their children's welfare? If a mother and father are present at a meeting, do you listen and talk to both of them?


KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- The best way of making sure that children’s needs are met is by working as much as possible with both their parents who are important because they have the long-term responsibility for the child or young person and are experts on their own children.
- A policy of partnership with parents should be developed jointly with the parents and workers, reflecting the project’s commitment to working in partnership with parents, giving practical suggestions as to how parents can be involved.
- All parents, regardless of their cultural or ethnic backgrounds should have the same opportunities to communicate with workers and become involved in their child’s after school care.

WORKER’S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WIDER COMMUNITY

While the specific focus of an after school project is largely the child, young person and their parents, there is also a place for schools and the community to be involved. Partnerships that develop between projects and schools can add to the effectiveness of the after school project. To this end, good practice can depend as much on the skills of working well with other adults as on the direct work with the children themselves.

The worker’s relationships with other projects and adults in the community may not only provide ideas but also be a rich source of shared resources. The project should have names and addresses of important contacts in an easily accessible form that is available to all workers. Workers may also find it useful to have a list of places and people in the community to draw on for fresh ideas, such as libraries or museums.



TO THINK ABOUT:
 In my project, do we provide information about community resources to meet the needs of children, young people and their families? Do we have these displayed on a noticeboard? Are we able to refer families on to local agencies if needed? Are children encouraged to take part in community projects?



PARTNERSHIP

It is important that children see parents, workers and anyone else connected to their project, working in partnership towards a common goal with their best interests as centre stage. Communication between all parties needs to be clear and regular for this to happen. Referrers to the project need to have a clear understanding of the project’s ethos and function, their responsibility as referrers, and the expectations that the project and the family will have of them in this role.



TO THINK ABOUT:
 How are links created and maintained between schools, other organisations and your project?
 If concerns arise regarding any aspect of the child’s development – speech for example – how is this concern responded to?
 How are links between organisations involved with the same family maintained?
 Do other organisations/projects have information about your programme?
 Is there a project newsletter?

The children and young people who attend the after school project should be encouraged to be actively involved in their local community.

Working in partnership with local schools is particularly important when attempting to ensure availability during school holidays and days off school if the after school project serves a number of schools in the local community. Knowledge of the schedules for all the relevant schools is vital information in programme planning for after school projects.

The team of workers in the after school project can create, develop and maintain positive partnerships with many voluntary or statutory organisations in the community by having a representative on various committees. Having an open day, where local agencies and personnel are invited, can be an ideal way to make connections.



IDENTIFYING NEED

How does the after school project know what need there is locally for an after school project? Before a new one is developed within a local community, a needs analysis should be completed. This will look at the demographic trends indicating where the greatest needs lie. It will also show the current childcare needs, the projected ones and needs of special children.

In order to meet the needs of the children and young people who attend the after school project, knowledge of the amenities/resources in the local community such as swimming pool facilities, parks, libraries, etc. is essential. Community personnel can also be brought in to provide services that the after school project cannot provide, for whatever reason, such as speech and drama, computers, etc.



TO THINK ABOUT:

Consider starting a file on all the resources available to you in your after school project's local community. Include a contact person for each resource, addresses and any leaflets or additional information you have. Make contact with some of these resources and find out what they do.



EVALUATION AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

While the completion of a needs analysis prior to the setting up of an after school project will determine the type of service that is needed, how can the after school project know that it is meeting and continues to meet the needs of the local community? Regular contact with other service providers and professionals in the area provides opportunities to check out both formally and informally how your project is doing, identifying what's working well and what needs to be changed. Regular communication with the local schools, for example, will give invaluable insight into how the after school project is impacting on the children and young people who attend.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Partnerships that develop between projects and schools can add to the effectiveness of the after school project, because the community may not only provide ideas but also be a rich source of shared resources.
- The after school project should be set up to meet a clearly identified need in the community. Ongoing evaluation of community need will influence the nature of the service provided.
- Feedback from local community services should be sought to inform ongoing evaluation of the after school project.

This section has highlighted and discussed the relationships that are at the core of after school service provision. The after school worker is the key player in all of these relationships and the particular skills, resources, training and personal qualities they need to work effectively in the project have been highlighted. The reader has been invited to reflect on the ideas presented, with activities suggested for future practice.

The next section explores the after school environment, where ideas and principles for good practice are highlighted, and the reader is again invited to reflect on their own after school project.

SECTION 3: THE AFTER SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

What exactly do we mean when we talk about the after school environment? The environment of the after school project refers to both the indoor and outdoor space. This includes the physical space, such as the rooms, the play areas, the heating and lighting. However, when we talk about environment we are also talking about less tangible things such as the mood and the atmosphere that is created, and how appealing the project is for the children and young people who attend. The after school environment is important because it will affect the way the children and young people act and feel and should play an important role in the planning for the after school project.

After school childcare needs to be informed by an understanding and involvement of the young people at its core. Children at this age are beginning to establish themselves as independent individuals from their family. However, it is also a time when their friends are a powerful influence and when they have many concerns about their image and their status. Recognising and reflecting the complexities of this developmental stage, the after school environment needs to be seen as warm and welcoming but not too cosy and secure. Paying careful attention to the creation of the right environment will help children develop as independent young people.

There may be many different types of premises where the after school project takes place. The building may have been built specially for the project, it may be held in a community centre or a school. It may be the project's

permanent space or it may be shared with many other services. The type of building you have will affect the type of service you can provide – for example, if your project wants to provide meals for the children and young people, a kitchen and somewhere to eat is needed. Regardless of the type of building there are certain standards that need to be met. In this section we are going to look at these requirements or standards for the place where the after school project takes place. We are going to look at these standards under three headings, as follows: Legal Requirements; Basic Requirements; Best Practice in the Design and Organisation of the After School Space.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

After school provision for children over 6 years of age is not covered by the Child Care (Pre-school) Regulations, 1996. However, strict adherence to the relevant health & safety legislation is expected as a basic minimum. These include the Fire Services Act, 1981; Building Controls Act, 1990; the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989. If planning permission is required, the law governing the planning system is set out in the Local Government (Planning and Development) Acts, 1963-2000 and the Local Government (Planning and Development) Regulations, 1997-2001. Appropriate insurance cover should also be secured before an after school project is launched.



BASIC REQUIREMENTS

At a basic level the after school space should comply with the following recommendations:

1. Heating requirements – it is recommended that the after school space be heated to 65°F/18°C. For health and safety reasons, radiators should be protected with a guard and portable heaters, open fires, or other systems that give off fumes or gases are not suitable.
2. Ventilation – the premises should have adequate ventilation.
3. Lighting – every room should, as far as possible, have natural light with artificial light used as a back up. Strong harsh lighting and fluorescent lighting should be avoided.
4. Toilet facilities – it is recommended that there is a separate toilet for adults; there is adequate ventilation in the toilets; there is liquid soap and hand dryers; a wheelchair accessible toilet; that the toilet area is easily accessed and supervised; there is hot (max 43°C) and cold running water; and that the ratio of 1 toilet for every 10 children and 1 toilet for every 8 adults is adhered to.
5. Insulation – it should be well insulated to maintain heat and quiet.
6. Kitchen area – this should have adequate facilities for cooking, preparing, storing and serving food; adequate eating and serving utensils; a dishwasher; adequate workspace; consideration of adequate equipment for the preparation of cultural/religious diets, e.g. Kosher; there should be a system for the hygienic disposal of waste; and the area should comply with the guidelines on kitchen space; it should facilitate the preparation of food and hot drinks for children after the school day.
7. Hygiene – the premises should be clean and well maintained.
8. Administration area – a separate area for administration work is recommended with locked filing cabinets for storing workers' and children's confidential information.
9. Staff room – workers should have a comfortable room with tea/coffee making facilities.
10. All fittings, furnishings and equipment must be suitable for the purpose for which they are used. They must be regularly checked and maintained and kept hygienically cleaned.
11. Fire safety – it should comply with fire safety standards and legislation and have a designated fire assembly point for children and young people.
12. Number of places – the National Children's Bureau (1994 in French, 2003:67) make a number of recommendations in this regard:
Where the after school is provided alongside full day care, a maximum number of fifty children attending the combined care facilities at any one time is suggested.
For sessional or after school projects an upper limit of twenty four children is recommended.
13. Accessibility – premises should have both wheelchair and buggy ramps with wide double doors for easier access and the project should be situated on the ground floor. After school facilities for the older age group can be located on the first floor.
14. Space requirements – there are no space requirements for after school projects. Best practice, however, recommends a minimum of 2.32 metres for children aged 4-8. This is clear floor space and does not include furniture. Additional rooms such as toilets, kitchen, etc. are also not included in this figure.
15. Location – the location should be chosen very carefully, either near or in the school that the children and young people attend.



TO THINK ABOUT:

Do we make sure children wash their hands with soap and water?

What happens when a child is ill – what is our procedure?

Do we follow up regular attendees who do not arrive?

Is there a system in place for monitoring the arrival and departure of children? Do you know where each child is at all times?



POLICIES

HEALTH & SAFETY

In addition to the areas outlined above are some other areas.

1. **At a basic minimum there should be no observable safety hazard in the after school space and the equipment that is used should be safe.**
2. **Hygiene, heating and ventilation standards (as outlined earlier in this section) should be maintained.**
3. **How does the project provide an environment that protects and enhances the health of the children? Children should not have unsupervised access to medicine, poison or cleaning agents such as bleach.**
4. **Given the relatively older age group (8-14 years), the provision of separate toilet facilities for girls and boys is a necessity and the girls' toilets should have sanitary dispensers located in them.**
5. **Fire safety procedures should be agreed as a matter of priority, with a clear evacuation plan, regular fire drills, and fire safety equipment clearly observable and accessible in the building.**
6. **As stated in the previous chapter, workers should have first-aid training and a first-aid kit should be regularly checked, updated and accessible.**

In addition to the basic requirements outlined above, French (2003:67) suggests that after school projects should also:

1. Feel home-like, reflecting the lives and activities of the children/families in the project.
2. Allow children to actively explore, make decisions and follow through with plans, by offering accessible equipment and free choice.
3. Be arranged in order to meet children's needs with regard to their age, size and stage of development.

4. Be "owned" by the children.
5. Offer resources which should counteract stereotypical and discriminatory attitudes.
6. Offer opportunities to move, dance, increase control over their bodies.
7. Be regularly evaluated.

In order for these requirements to be realised, careful consideration needs to be given to the design and organisation of the after school space for best practice. It is to that area that we will now turn our attention.

BEST PRACTICE IN THE DESIGN AND ORGANISATION OF THE AFTER SCHOOL SPACE

THE ENTRANCE AREA

When children and young people come into the project, they should feel as if they belong and experience a sense of 'excited anticipation' (Bone & Lindon, 1996:123). First impressions count, so the outside and entrance to the project need careful consideration. A separate entrance for the older age group will clearly differentiate this group from the younger after school children. In the spirit of participation, children and young people can be involved in both choosing the colours for the entrance and decorating it. Ideally, there should be plenty of space to move about.

- Storage – creative use of storage space for school bags, bicycles, etc. will help to keep it clutter free.
- Use of colour – attention to detail and creative use of colour and light will help the entrance feel warm and welcoming. If, for example, there is plenty of natural light, the use of strong bold colours will be quite striking. Specifically with the older 8-14 age group in mind, consideration might be given to the need for modern colour designs, posters of idols from the music or film industry.
- Furniture – the entrance area may also serve as a waiting room, so it is a good idea to have comfortable chairs and lots of interesting things for the person waiting to read and look at.

- Additional extras – some examples might include a project noticeboard with menus, photos of recent activities, photos of workers (taken at the same age as the children and young people who attend) and workers' names, and project and local news. If the children and young people are to leave their coats and bags here, consideration needs to be given to cubbyholes, lockers and coat hooks at appropriate heights. Ways to convey a sense of ownership also include having the children's art displayed on the walls, their crafts on the shelves and tables and their photographs, drawings and paintings on display. The installation of vending machines in this area will appeal to the older age group.



POLICIES

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Commitment to equal opportunities can firstly be reflected in how accessible the after school building is. For example, are there access ramps for wheelchair users?

Meeting the needs of disabled children and young people should be included in the planning for the after school project, if disabled children and young people are to have access to the project. Consideration needs to be given to ramps and special toilet facilities for those in wheelchairs.

HEALTH & SAFETY

The after school building should be secure so that no unauthorised person can enter the building and children cannot leave without the knowledge and permission of the workers. Consideration would need to be given to older children's access. There also needs to be an agreed system for the supervision and monitoring of the children's whereabouts. For example, children and young people should be signed in when they arrive and out when they leave. The installation of CCTV in this area will enhance the project's security.

THE INDOOR SPACE

The programme's indoor space must be big enough for workers to plan the various programme activities and the building needs to be organised with the children and young people's interests in mind. It should have a range of rooms or areas so that more than one activity by a child or group of children can happen at any one time. There should also be enough open indoor space to allow more physical activities including sports and drama, where appropriate.



TO THINK ABOUT:

Have a look around your project.

What was your first impression of the project?

Is it welcoming? Do the project users seem excited when they come?

What changes could you make?

Have you asked the children and young people for their views?

- **Storage** – the indoor space should be organised with plenty of storage space in order to keep the area as clutter free as possible. Storage space can be planned so that the materials can be stored where they will be used, and accessible to the children and young people when they need them. Creative use of 'nook and cranny' space, for example under the stairs, or a previously unused space such as a fireplace, can turn a dead space into an adventurous hide-out for younger children or a private storage space for older children.
- **Use of colour** – the colours will need to be chosen with care as the different activity areas will need different colour schemes, to match that particular activity. This is explored in greater detail below.
- **Floor surfaces** – the younger children will spend a lot of their activity time on the floor, so careful consideration needs to be given to the surfaces chosen. They will need to be easily cleaned and maintained. Waterproof or anti-slip material should be used in the active/messy areas whereas rugs or carpets are more suited to the quiet areas.

- **Furniture** – needs to take account of the growing physical development of the young people, and a combination of comfortable and more formal/adult furnishings could be provided in adult and child sizes. Tables and desks should be chosen that are the right height for their size and allow them to sit comfortably without feeling cramped.
- **Additional extras** – there should be sink units in each room, telephone access for workers and computer cabling and wiring for computer use.



POLICIES

HEALTH AND SAFETY

All areas should be designed for easy and unobtrusive supervision.

In order to meet the different developmental needs of this diverse age group, separate areas should be set aside to create a variety of opportunities for the children and young people, suitable to their age, ability, and stage of development, providing different areas for different levels of activities. They will want to take part in activities and group sessions, but they will also want to be able to chat, read, do their homework, watch TV or listen to music. Here are some suggestions:

- **A Quiet Area** for homework and quieter activities. This should include comfortable chairs, beanbags, warm rugs, cushions, and activity table with books and pencils, magazines and comics and access to computers/technological play. Use of adjustable lighting and calm colours such as blues and greens will help create a relaxed and quiet atmosphere.
- **A Creative Area** is for creative and messy activities, musical activities, in addition to more active pursuits and games. Creative areas should provide opportunities for exploring with a range of natural materials, paint, drawing, and craft activities and might include equipment such as easels, sand or water trays. Consideration might be given to the use of natural or paler shades, allowing the children's artwork to decorate this area.
- **An Active Area** that will provide opportunities for table-top or floor activities. Taking account of the natural light in this area, warm colours such as red or orange, pink or yellow will breathe life and activity into the room.

Given the upper age limit of 14, it is important to consider what young people of this age need and want from an after school project. If they see the project as too geared towards younger children, they simply won't come. Research undertaken in the UK (Nestle, 2002) highlighted some interesting findings about the type of club that 11-16 year old young people want after school is out. Similar to what has been outlined above, it developed the concept of three separate yet essential zones for young people to use depending on their need, mood, etc. These are as follows:

- **The Chill Out Space** is an informal and comfortable space where young people can relax, meet and chat with friends, listen to music, have access to food and drinks and chill out! This space can be decorated in bright colours and modern designs, have soft furnishings and beanbags, with wall posters of their choice, and noticeboards with local information on it. Modern and age appropriate magazines and vending machines complete this area.

- **The Activity Space** would offer facilities and equipment for young people to access a range of sports, art, drama and dance and music. The aim is to have an informal atmosphere that can facilitate spontaneous as well as structured activities.
- **The Quiet Space** provides time out to read, study, do homework or use computers



TO THINK ABOUT:

How accessible are the activities for the children and is the design appropriate to the age of the children and young people who are coming to the project?

Does the indoor space reflect the artwork and other interests of the children and does the décor portray people from different ethnic backgrounds?

Best practice also requires that children and young people be consulted with directly as they will have definite views on what they need in the after school project, so this will ensure that after school workers are providing the most appropriate play and recreation facilities.



TO THINK ABOUT:

Colours for buildings, furniture and walls should be chosen with children and parents in mind. Are they chosen by children and parents?

While it is good practice that children and young people are consulted about the use of available space, it is also important to bear in mind that you won't be able to please everyone!



PARTICIPATION

In order for children to feel that they belong and have rights in their after school project, it is necessary for them to be involved in the decisions about what happens there. Here are some ideas for promoting participation in your after school project:

1. **After school projects can hold children or young people's meetings to get feedback on any changes that need to be made to the environment of the project.**
2. **Children and young people can be involved in choosing a name for the project - why not make it a competition?**
3. **Children can participate in the decision making regarding how to decorate their project. Older children and young people will have very definite ideas about what they want. If permanent changes cannot be made, the young people can be encouraged to make moveable murals that can be quickly hung up and easily removed and stored when the project is over.**

THE OUTDOOR SPACE

It is arguably as important to provide outdoor play space as indoor play space, with indoor space directly accessible to outdoor space. Why is this? Outdoor space is needed for the children and young people to run, shout, and exercise in fresh air and freedom, and is a key support to healthy child development. It is of special value in providing freedom, physical activity and a range of challenges to children in order to meet their needs.

The young child interacts with and learns from the environment through all of their senses: sight, smell, taste, hearing and touch. Workers can create with children and young people the environment which is full of light, colour, interesting smells, attractive sounds and many surfaces and objects to touch.

 **POLICIES**

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Meeting the needs of sensory impaired children (blind/deaf/dumb) requires particular attention to detail in the play environment if the child is to make sense of their surroundings. For example, textured surfaces (smooth/rough), interesting sounds (chimes) and smells will be far more interesting to a child who is blind than zany patterns of colour or cable television.

An inviting sense of place allows children to express themselves and be the makers of their environment. For example, a garden created by them will have a special meaning, and will provide children and young people with a sense of belonging, identity and ownership of the after school project. Similarly, if children can paint the entrance to the project, perhaps making and hanging a sign with the name of the project, this will provide a sense of ownership.

The design and layout of the outdoor space should recognise the different developmental needs of the older age group and make allowances for this. For example: the outdoor space will have to facilitate the use of skateboards, bicycles and scooters; big old trees can



become a climber's paradise; and nooks and crannies in an old garden can be transformed into dens and hideouts.



TO THINK ABOUT:

As a team, workers could reflect on their own childhood.

What were the most playful physical environments of your childhood, e.g. a beach/the woods?

What do you use in practice? Is there a discrepancy?

Areas where children can grow plants should be provided, where the children and young people can see plants growing, observing weeds and insects in their natural habitat. Not only will plants provide shade, but they can also help children identify the seasons. Again care is needed in the choice of plants to ensure they are not toxic. Given the nature of children's play, hardy plants should be the first choice. A children's outdoor area would not be complete without a bird table – make sure it can be seen by the children when they are indoors.



TO THINK ABOUT:

Can your project start an indoor garden so children can grow things?

What here is the nearest park – could a trip to the park be included in your plan of activities?

There should be enough outdoor space for all the outdoor activities. If there is no outdoor facility, the after school project will need to be creative.

Similar to the previous sections, the design of the outdoor space should also consider the following:

- Storage – an after school project will need a lot of outdoor storage for bicycles and outdoor play equipment
- Use of colour – children and young people can be involved in painting murals on the walls, making dens and camps thereby putting their own stamp on the outdoor space.

- Floor surfaces – the outdoor space should meet with local health and safety codes. For example, surfaces should not have any sharp edges.
- Furniture/equipment – there should be picnic and seating areas for social gatherings; outdoor playhouses or tree house; a large sandpit; BBQs; fire-pit for sing-songs and camp-outs on winter evenings.
- Additional extras – a shaded area for sunny days; access to flowing water.



DIVERSITY INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

If you have different cultures represented in your service, children can learn about theirs and other children’s culture by introducing positive images of these various cultures into the play environment. If your project works primarily with travelling children, an example of this might be to make sure that toy caravans as well as dolls houses are represented in the variety of playthings available to children.

Diversity can be embraced through the project having jigsaws, books with images that are positive and include children or adults with a disability, minority ethnic and traveller children and families. Toys can be chosen that promote diversity, for example having dolls of different skin tones. Cooking equipment needs to reflect the cultural background of the project users. An inclusive after school project will have the right facilities for a disabled child or young person and will employ qualified workers. Inclusion is not just about allowing disabled children and young people to be there because there is a ramp, for example, but is also about making sure there are the appropriate facilities, resources and workers to ensure they can get the most out of their time in the club.

THE PROVISION OF A PARENTS ROOM

This clearly gives the message that parents are welcome and that their involvement and participation in the running of the project is valued. If the project’s space does not allow for a room for parents, workers can ensure that a quiet meeting room is available, both for workers to meet with parents and for parents to meet with each other.



EVALUATION AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Reflecting on and evaluating the after school environment is important if your project is to continue to meet the needs of the children and young people who attend. This can be done quite simply by asking the children and young people to tell you what they think about where their project is held. Perhaps ask them to bring you around and show you their favourite spaces and what they like about them.



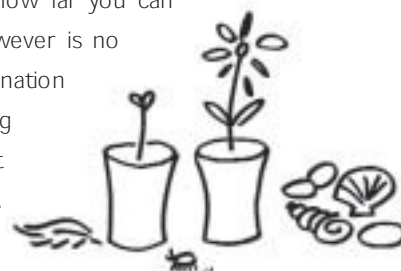
TO THINK ABOUT:

With your team, list any issues that are causing difficulties for you in creating the right environment for your after school project.

Are there any immediate and longer-term ways your team can improve this situation?

WHAT IF THE BUILDING ISN’T OURS AND WE SHARE IT WITH OTHERS?

The project may share its building with others so you may be limited as to how far you can make it your own. This however is no excuse, as with a little imagination and creativity, the building can be customised to suit the project’s needs.



Transforming a bare hall every day is challenging work and needs careful planning and good teamwork. A hall that is a big open space can be sectioned off using screens, tables, plants, moveable furniture such as bookcases or couches, in order to create a number of spaces within the one large space.

Here are some suggestions for claiming ownership of the space where your project is held:

1. The after school project can be given an interesting name. The name of the project is very important and needs to reflect the needs of the group it is servicing. If it involves nursery, childcare or crèche, the older children will not be impressed. It needs to be snappy, lively and fun.
2. Children's artwork can be displayed.
3. There can be a noticeboard with project newsletters, photos and local information on it.
4. Children and young people can claim ownership of the project using their creative skills by, for example, painting their names on their own mugs.

If the after school project rents or shares its space, it is essential that a **health and safety audit** is carried out to ensure compliance with **health & safety standards**.



TO THINK ABOUT:

The provision of individual lockers could allow children and young people to have a special place for storage of treasures and encourages self-reliance and independence in addition to offering a degree of privacy.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- The after school environment refers to both the indoor and outdoor space where the project takes place.
- Attention to detail when planning the after school environment is important because it will affect the way the children and young people act and feel. It should reflect the developmental needs of the age group it is dealing with.
- The premises where the project takes place needs to meet certain basic requirements or standards, for example health and safety.
- In the spirit of participation, children and young people should be involved in decisions about what happens in their after school project; they can be consulted if changes are to be made to the after school space, and can provide feedback on what they are happy with and what they would like different.

This section has endeavoured to give the reader a flavour of what works in terms of planning and designing an after school space appropriate to the needs of the young people who attend. Again the reader is invited to reflect on their own project and encouraged to take on board some of the ideas presented.

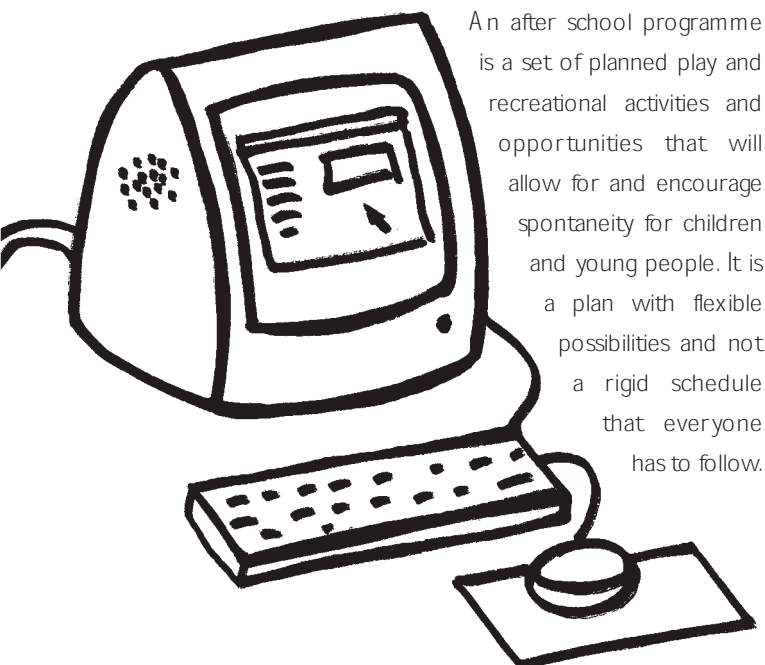
The next section presents a detailed outline of the programme of activities for consideration in after school work with 8-14 year old children and young people.

SECTION 4: PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT FOR AFTER SCHOOL PROJECTS

"A programme is a plan with flexible possibilities and not a rigid schedule which everybody has to follow. It provides a planned range of safe, creative, positive opportunities which provide ownership by children and young people for many elements of the programme"(Bonel & Lindon, 1996:78).

Safe play and recreational programmes for children and young people require planning to ensure quality. Children and young people between the ages of 8-14 years will go to after school projects because they enjoy both the programme of activity and the interactions with adults and peers. Remember, children at this age can vote with their feet and stay away. From the previous sections on development and relationships, it is clear that this age group needs to participate in the project and input their ideas into the programme of activities in order to establish a sense of shared control and ownership. They need to exercise choice in relation to the activities they pursue during the time they spend in the project. They cannot do this if the setting is bare and any activity that is suggested is followed by a delay while workers sort everything out. Neither can children nor young people have shared control in a project where everything is planned down to the last detail. Flexibility is the key to providing programmes for 8-14-year-olds.

SO...WHAT IS AN AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMME?



An after school programme is a set of planned play and recreational activities and opportunities that will allow for and encourage spontaneity for children and young people. It is a plan with flexible possibilities and not a rigid schedule that everyone has to follow.

It includes activities, transition times, chill out time, time to chat with other users and adults, personal care and nutrition and even homework in some projects. In the context of after school, a programme is the sum of the events that occur within a session, planned and spontaneous. It is the schedule of the day that is flexible, offers security, independence and stimulation and meets the needs of the children and young people.



TO THINK ABOUT:

Planning for different age groups
8-10s kite making, games, outdoors
10-12s computers, sports, drama
12-14s discussion group, homework, music box

There are several inter-related features of a successful after school programme. These include:

- Workers knowing and understanding the interests, abilities and preferences of the individual users.
- Workers and children and young people planning ahead to meet individual needs and planning what kind of activities could be provided, for example, the options on a particular day or over a longer period of time.
- Workers ensuring that the necessary materials are available and providing choices in materials, equipment, ideas and space.
- Workers planning staffing arrangements in advance so that children and young people are adequately supervised.
- Workers ensuring the health and safety of children and young people.
- Workers providing built in options with different degrees of complexity and a wide range of interest for different age ranges.
- Children and young adults having the opportunity to choose from a wide variety of materials.

- Workers ensuring that children and young people have plenty of scope for spontaneity and recreation as well as the planned activities on offer.
- Workers following the lead of the children and young people and responding with flexibility to the events of the session.
- Flexibility in adapting the programme to take into account the environment in which the after school project is located or situated.
- Provision to allow individual children and young people to move smoothly from one activity to another at their own pace.
- Workers and children and young people taking time to review how well the programme, and the built in options, are working for all of the users of the project.

The programme on offer should reflect the mission statement of the after school project and promote the development of all children and young people attending the project.

Write your mission statement here and refer back to it as you read this section.

RANGE OF ACTIVITIES

The activities on offer will depend on the purpose of the project and the children who use it. After school projects will also have different sets of opportunities and possible restrictions based on the premises, storage space, resources available, skills and preferences of workers and whether the space is a shared space, for example, is it shared with a pre-school or a scouts den? Wherever the after school is located, it is important to make the most of the environment in which you work. Individual activities within the programme should be designed to meet the developmental and care needs of the users in a relaxed way and include:

- Regular opportunities for active physical play and a chance to use physical skills such as building and climbing.
- Regular opportunities for creative arts, dramatic and imaginative play.
- Regular opportunities for quiet activities and socialising.
- Helping out in the routine of the after school project.
- Shared activities such as board games or cards.
- Time for conversations with other users of the project and with the adults.
- Plenty of opportunity for free play and encouragement to do this.
- Trips out to local amenities or amenities further afield.
- Enjoyment of books and story time and selected use of television or video.



TO THINK ABOUT:

Activities should include – art, sculpture, textiles, drawing, music, homework, reading, dance, drama, computers, cooking, eating, outdoor activities, special interests, games, sports, visits, groups, relaxing, talking, the environment, celebrating birthdays and festivals, spending time with friends.

Children and young people should feel a sense of satisfaction at having enjoyed a really good time in the

after school project. Some users may have created an end product either individually or in a group, with the help of an adult. Others may simply have had a good time chatting with friends and hanging out in a fun safe space.

PREPARING FOR AN AFTER SCHOOL SESSION

For a new project that is under development, team members need to spend quality time together as a team before the project opens. The team must develop a group understanding of what needs to happen before the project starts. The team needs to spend time reflecting on how they plan to meet the aims and objectives of the project through their programme of activities. Some of the following questions may be helpful in reaching this point.

- What are the strengths of the proposed project?
- What collective training and experience do we have?
- What are the gaps in our training and experience?
- What training is needed both individually and for the group?
- What special skills, experience or training do we have both individually and as a group, e.g. stained glass making, football, sewing, woodwork?
- What local resources are available to the project, e.g. swimming pool, library, park?

As was discussed in the previous section, careful consideration needs to be given to where the project is held. It might be useful if you discuss the following:

- How much space do you have?
- Is it yours or do you share it?
- Can you time-table the space so you have more choice of activities on offer?
- How creative can you be in adapting the space to suit your needs?
- Can furniture be moved and screens put in to separate areas?

Section 2 looks in detail at how important it is for workers to spend time together as a team, planning for the development of a service and striving towards best

practice. Inputting ideas and sharing experiences and knowledge during team meetings will develop and promote a stronger sense of team ownership by all.

It is essential when preparing a session, group of sessions or a more extended programme such as a school holiday programme, that the workers have a clear planning and communication process in place. Time should be set-aside on a regular basis in order for the team to meet and to plan. Weekly team meetings allow team members the opportunity to share relevant information about children's and young people's interests and abilities. This is 'important time', as knowing your group will enable you to plan to meet new and developing needs. Later in this section you will be asked to find out some information. It would be ideal to use this practice guide at team meetings to help plan.



TO THINK ABOUT:

- In your after school project:
- Can children and young people move at their own pace from one activity to another?
 - Is meal/snack time a relaxed social experience?
 - Is it always necessary for all children and young people to participate in the same activity at the same time?
 - Do you have special interest groups or clubs for the older users of your project?
 - Do activities help children and young people learn new skills or explore interesting topics?
 - Can children and young people become involved in long-term projects and productions?

PLANNING A PROGRAMME

One of the biggest planning challenges facing workers working with this wide age range of users is making a decision about how much preparation to do in advance and how much to leave until it becomes clear what children and young people would most like to do on the day. There are a lot of factors to consider, e.g. the mixed age group, gender, culture, interests, ability, numbers, activity levels and so forth.

These can broadly be grouped into the following headings:

- The individual child/young person
- The age range
- Children/young people with disabilities
- Ethnic and cultural diversity
- Girls and boys

Let's have a closer look at each of these in the following paragraphs.



TO THINK ABOUT:

- What do the children and young people enjoy doing?
- What ideas do they have?
- What do they want to have at their after school project?
- How will they take part in making it happen?

THE INDIVIDUAL CHILD/YOUNG PERSON

Workers have to make the effort to get to know individual users of the after school project. This may not be easy, especially if the session is short or attendance varies from day to day. During sessions workers need to talk to children and young people about the activities.



TO THINK ABOUT:

Characteristics of temperament include: activity level; regularity; rhythmicity; approach or withdrawal to novelty; adaptability; intensity of reaction; level of awareness; mood; distractibility; attention span; persistence; continuity in later life including openness to new experiences; fearfulness and extroversion.

Recognise that in any project users will differ in their interests, abilities and their age. Temperament is the general disposition we have towards life which reveals how active, emotional and sociable we are. In general, individual temperaments will also differ and users may choose to lean towards either quieter or more physical

activity based on their temperament. Cultural background must also be taken into consideration. In addition, whether users are boys or girls and whether they believe themselves that the difference should be reflected in a different choice of activities or play companions is important to know and to facilitate.

THE AGE RANGE

The provision of an after school differs from most other services for children as the age range of users who attend may vary from 5-14 years in any one project. This practice guide specifically looks at the 8-14-year-old age bracket. Children of 8 are in middle childhood while 14-year-olds are on the brink of young adulthood. For special events such as a Halloween party or sports day, the whole age range might be interested in participating. However, it is more likely to be the norm that plans will have to be flexible and activities provided for different age groups. It can be difficult to meet the challenge of planning for this degree of developmental difference. Refer to the section on child development if in doubt about the abilities of users at different ages. The younger members of the group will be discouraged if the level of an activity is too high, but equally feel patronised if the level is too low.



TO THINK ABOUT:

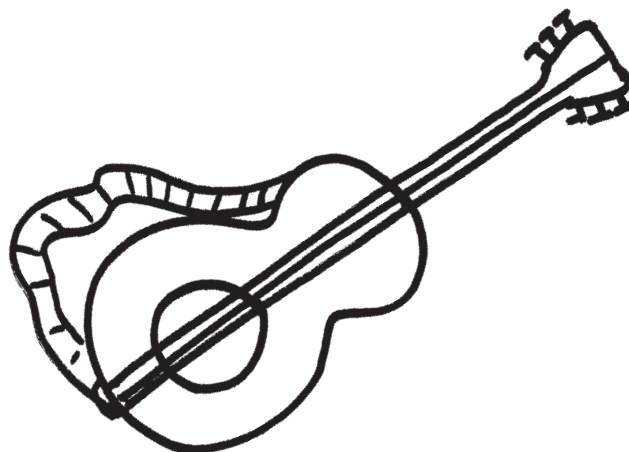
- What activities can you use successfully to include all of the age ranges in your project?
- What activities are not suitable for use with all of the age ranges in your project?
- What group games or activities can you provide for the group as a whole?
- When is a good time to provide group activities in your project?

Younger users of the project may be capable of doing complex activities but require closer supervision, therefore staff cover is an important feature when planning. The focus of an activity for all age groups should be skills based, built on existing capabilities, and aim to develop or refine skills with support. Overall, it is good

practice to aim to have one activity in a session that can bring all users of the project together. The end of the session is often an appropriate time for this. Activities such as relay races, run outs, charades and so forth will work with mixed age groups and will help in forming a more coherent group.

CHILDREN / YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

It is important when planning activities that workers consider if they include provision to enable participation for children or young people with disabilities or learning difficulties. Taking a skills based approach will help you in planning. Ask children and young people with disabilities what they can do and what they feel they might like to try. If a difficulty might arise for a user with a disability, identify the difficulty and then talk to them about what can be done together about what is posing the difficulty.



ETHNIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

When planning a programme, examine how much of the programme is multi-cultural. The programme may celebrate different festivals or events such as Easter, Halloween, Christmas, Eid, Hanukkah, Diwali, Chinese New Year or Kwanza.



TO THINK ABOUT:

- What are the consequences of the individual disability?
- Are any training opportunities available for workers?
- How does each individual pattern of disability affect physical movement, communication skills, and the capacity to take care of oneself?
- Is the equipment safe and the setting appropriate for children or young people who may have severe physical or learning disabilities?



TO THINK ABOUT:


- How many and what ethnic groups are represented in your project?
- Is this representative of the area in which the project is located?
- How can you encourage more children from different ethnic groups?
- How can you develop a broader awareness of different cultural traditions among users?

To meet the needs of all of the users of the project should be the primary consideration in developing an integrated after school programme. However, in some cases, children and young people with disabilities may only be able to enjoy a safe opportunity for play and recreation in a project that has been specifically equipped and designed. Workers must establish a balance by providing an integrated project that supports all users to be successful members of the after school group, develop positive relationships with peers, and feel that they belong and want to attend an after school project.

However, children and young people may enjoy activities without knowing their cultural origin. Workers need to introduce children and young people to the cultural origin of the activities on offer in the project and these origins need to be explained and celebrated. Where a majority of users from one ethnic group prevail in a project, it should not stop the use of activities that stem from different cultures.

GIRLS AND BOYS

Workers need to acknowledge that average differences between girls and boys exist in some areas of their development and interest. When planning a programme, workers should be aware of how girls and boys are playing. It can often be the case that one sex will lay claim to a particular area or space, boys in the football or pool table area, for example. A good plan will ensure that the sexes get equal access to all of the equipment in the project. Time set aside for boys or girls only groups can be used to redress the balance.



TO THINK ABOUT:


- What patterns of play have you seen emerging in the project?
- In your project, which sex crosses the gender line more frequently or with greater ease to pursue activities?
- How can you discourage gender lines from being drawn by the children and young people in the project?
- Can you time-table activity based girls or boys groups only?

Work on removing the more obvious signals towards boys and girls activities, for example, are girls encouraged to play football and are boys encouraged to cook? Plan how an activity is introduced, paying particular attention to the words used. Decide in advance if an activity is to be run by a male or female worker or outside professional. Prepare yourself for the activity by seeking out background information, for example, female workers may have to learn the off side rule in football. Workers should not undertake to supervise an activity unless they have a competent skills level. Continue to challenge stereotypical remarks made by users of the project, parents, children and young people and workers.

USING A PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

A programme of activity can be used effectively as a tool for creating and evaluating play and recreational opportunities for children and young people so long as it does not

become a rigid structure that dictates all that happens in the after school. It can be used to plan a day's activities, a week's activities or even a summer programme. When setting up a new project it may not be possible to have all of the information and participation from users that you would like, however, the users of the after school should be the first consideration in planning a programme.



TO THINK ABOUT:

Do you have a programme of activities?
 Can you involve the users of the project in planning the programme?
 Do you display your programme on a noticeboard for all users to see?
 What are the benefits to the users of the project of displaying your programme?

The provision of a programme does not automatically ensure quality play and recreational opportunities for children and young people. Providing children and young people with choices and involving them in planning is key to quality and shared ownership. Spontaneity is an important element of the programme, it is often the case that a week's programme may be altered because one activity is so successful that the users want to extend it to the rest of the week.

When you plan a broad based flexible programme it means that:

- You work more effectively with your co-workers
- You share ideas
- You can organise materials and arrange supervision
- You can plan trips and outings



TO THINK ABOUT:

Check out Section 2 to see if you can link activities to development opportunities.

In order to help you plan a programme it is helpful to use an activity checklist. An example of an activity checklist is given below. Spend time going through this list at team meetings and planning sessions. Develop awareness of what works and doesn't work with children and young people by getting to know their likes, dislikes and interests. Remember that the after school will continue to develop over time as children change and new children join.

Here are some ways you can continue to ensure quality in your programme:

- Actively involve the users in ongoing planning.
- Share ideas with other workers.
- Use an activity/programme checklist regularly.
- Use the numerous ideas books now available (see Appendix A, *Resources for Activities with Children and Young People*).
- Attend training courses.

Programme Planning Checklist
Children
How many children are you planning for?
What are their ages?
Do you know their interests, language and cultural backgrounds?
Have you considered the needs of all children including those with disabilities?
Will your activity or programme cater for the whole age-range or have you provided alternatives to suit different stages of development and abilities?
Materials and Equipment
What materials and equipment will you need?
Make a detailed list.
Do you have enough materials?
How much will they cost?
Do the materials and equipment comply with health and safety requirements?
Will the users need to use protective clothing?
Do you have materials and equipment for related activities if children want to change their mind and make something else?
Activity
Have you planned for variety, choice, stimulation and fun?
Does your planned activity promote positive images of children from different family types, cultures or circumstances and avoid negative stereotypes?
Will all the children have the opportunity to participate regardless of gender, race, and religion?
If yes, how? If not, why not?
What will your own involvement be?
What will you do if an activity flops because children are not interested or find it too difficult?
Adults
Are all workers in agreement as to how your activity fits into the session (or how the programme fits together) and the roles or responsibilities they are each expected to take?
Will extra supervision be needed to carry out particular activities?
Do you need special parental consent or approval for outings, for example?
How will you make use of special skills within the team, or do you wish to bring in other adults from outside.

(Template adapted from Davy, 1998:81)

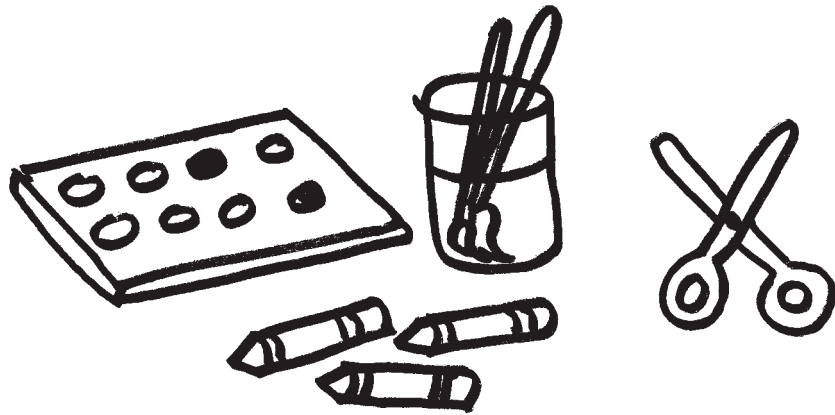
MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

There are many factors that influence the suitability of toys and the range of play materials in an after school project. Children and young people should have sufficient choice of equipment to allow them to develop their own ideas. When you are looking for toys and equipment O'fsted (2001) suggests thinking about the following:

- The intellectual, social, emotional, cultural and physical development of the children and young people cared for.
- The need for appropriate challenges to stimulate children's inventiveness.
- Enhancing the range of materials available to children and young people.
- Using clean and safe natural materials or recycling household objects as well as manufactured items.
- Checking that books and other materials show positive images of people of all races, cultures and abilities and that they avoid racial, family and gender stereotyping.

What you choose within this will depend on the age and interests of your users. It is important that the materials you use are safe. Carrying out a risk assessment will determine the associated risk of using certain equipment. There are many good publications with ideas and instructions for a whole range of activities (see Appendix A). It may be helpful to choose a theme around which to plan activities in the programme. Some or all of the activities on offer can be linked to a theme lasting a day or a week, for example. A theme can extend knowledge and interest and can include games, stories, arts and crafts activities, outings and even cooking.

This section makes suggestions on a range of activities and play materials that might be included in a programme of activity. A good store of equipment will include the following examples and more, but should not be viewed as a complete list of ideas. It is up to individual after school projects, workers and the users of the project to decide which are appropriate for their own needs and the needs of the project.



ARTS AND CRAFTS EQUIPMENT

Write up a list of basic materials for your arts and crafts area. There should be enough materials for a variety of activities such as mask making, puppet making, painting, weaving, collage, model making, frieze, printing (paper, t-shirt, fabric) hat making, construction and much more.

Paints - face paints, fabric dye, fabric paints, oils, watercolours, acrylic, glass paints, pearl paint, egg shell and gloss paint, brushes both fine art and up to and including standard household paint brushes for mural painting.

Construction - craft knives, scissors, glue (pvc and pva), frames, bamboo, material, foam, cork tiles, corks, sugar paper, card, crepe paper, tissue paper, colour film, textured and coloured paper.

Woodwork tools - hammer and nails, chisels, screwdriver, wood bits, saw.

Craft - tiles, mosaic tiles, tile adhesive, grout, wood, beads, wire, jewellery making and candle making kits, drinking glasses, mugs, pottery, gallery glass, glitter, sparkles.

Drawing - pencils, charcoal, pens, markers, crayons, pastels, chalk.

Modelling - plaster modelling, modelling clay, papier mâché, junk modelling.

Printing and collage - trays, sponges, material, pasta, rice, boards, boxes, bottles and bottle tops, wool, thread, carpet off-cuts.

Natural or found materials - shells, conkers, flower press, bug box, stones, feathers.

WOODWORK

It is important to use real tools when doing woodwork. Refer to the tools listed above. Ensure that the tools are

in good repair as blunt or broken tools can lead to improper use, which is a safety hazard. A workbench and safety devices for clamping as well as protective goggles, in addition to close supervision by a worker who knows how to use the equipment is an absolute necessity. Store and maintain the tools properly and have clear rules about when, where and with whom the tools are used.

MODELLING

There are various types of modelling and potters clay on the market. Some clay is enhanced with nylon fibres to enable it to dry and be handled without firing. This is useful if you do not have access to a kiln for firing, as it will enable users to paint and keep model figures or utensils. Modelling materials also include salt-dough, play-dough, plasticine, wax and fimo.

GAMES EQUIPMENT

Games are always a popular option with children and young people. A wide variety of games should include some or all of the following.

LARGE-SCALE ACTIVE PLAY EQUIPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION

Active play is not difficult to encourage in this age group. It is limited only by the space that is available, safety considerations and the imagination of the workers. Think about junk in a new way and on a larger scale than for junk modelling. Use items such as boxes of all shapes and sizes, barrels, tubes, climbing-frames, planks, tyres, slides and chutes, see-saws, rocking boats, trampolines, skipping ropes and materials for making dens, ramps, jumps, tunnels and hidey holes. Items such as skateboards, roller skates, scooters and go-karts are also very popular with users.

A soft play area can offer wonderful possibilities for play, movement and sensory experience for children with mobility difficulties or sensory impairment. Think about combining homemade materials with one or two pieces of commercially produced soft play equipment. Soft cushions, beanbags and mats are readily available.

Games that need no equipment	Table top games	Sports equipment
<p>Guessing games, circle games, quizzes, hiding games, traditional children’s games, singing games, chasing games, co-operative games, mime games like charades and so forth. Such games are suitable for both indoors and outdoors.</p>	<p>A large selection of board games might include monopoly, scrabble, drafts, chess, ludo, snakes and ladders, dominoes, connect four, mouse trap, hungry hippos, cluedo, trivial pursuit and lotto. Other games such as card games, jacks, air table hockey, club football table, pin ball, giant tower blocks, twister, pictionary, cross track, jenga, and games with pen and paper such as noughts and crosses and hangman, bar football and pool add to the variety of activities on offer and encourage spontaneity and choice among users.</p>	<p>Sporting activities can be of interest to children and young people. Many team games encourage co-operative play. Provision of equipment such as assorted sized balls (ping-pong, bouncy, tennis, baseball, basket ball, soccer, Gaelic, rugby), bean bags, bats, racquets, hoops, cones, basket hoops, goal posts, nets, team bands, dart board, parachute, skipping ropes, shuttle cocks and table tennis will encourage an active programme without introducing negative competition. Help to further develop physical skills by introducing balance blocks, walk-way pieces, tactile balance kit, tumble mats, benches and gym equipment, balance boards, cones and frisbees.</p>

SMALL-SCALE TOYS AND CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT

Commercial construction and small play equipment continue to be valuable play equipment and have a place within a programme of activity. Meccano and Lego remain popular toys as do model kits. Jigsaws can attract either individuals or groups and both 3-D equipment and jigsaws with 500-5,000 pieces can provide an unexpected focus of attention, challenge and a long-term project for children and young people. The inclusion of miniatures (small figures representing people and animals) also provides opportunities for children and young people to move through play scenarios without losing momentum.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES AND USING NATURAL AND RECYCLED MATERIALS

Environmental activities can take place almost anywhere. Activities such as treasure hunts, scavenger hunts, nature trails, collecting things – sea shells or rocks for example, observing wildlife – ants, spiders and birds can provide a starting point and lead to art, craft and drama activities as well as special themes or projects.

Natural materials such as stones, shells, sand and water, leaves and wood for example, can provide play opportunities from simple tactile and sensory experiences to elaborate constructions or complex technological or scientific experiments. When recycled materials are used in play and activities a greater awareness of the environment can be developed in addition to offering children and young people an opportunity to engage in creative art and craft projects or undertake a larger project such as the construction of a den or tree house.

MUSIC

Music is a universal activity that can either be created or appreciated. A music centre can be a useful asset in an after school project. A library of recorded music of different styles and cultures can be used for dancing, listening and relaxation. Users can also record their own music and stories.

Instruments can be home made or bought. A wide range of instruments should be made available to users including instruments from different countries and cultures. Include in your collection African skin drums, Chinese bars, Indian bells, maracas, triangles, tambourines, recorders, whistles, cymbals, keyboard, drum kit, guitar and homemade percussion instruments.



TO THINK ABOUT:

- Are children able to find a way to explore their interests and take part in activities?
- Are some children unable to participate because there aren't enough materials?
- Do children enjoy eating the snacks you serve?
- How do you respond to their requests for different snack food?
- Do workers who supervise certain activities such as woodwork have special training?

STORIES, BOOKS AND DRAMA

A comfortable seating area away from the more energetic activities is an ideal area for books. Books and stories can provide a starting point for many different types of play and activities including imaginative play, drama, dance and music. Providing other materials close at hand such as face paints, dressing up clothes, mirrors and puppets for example, can encourage spin off activities. Include books reflecting different themes, cultures and lifestyles and covering a wide range of subjects.

HOMEWORK

If an after school project offers homework support as part of the service, workers, parents and users need to reach agreement about what role the project plays in offering support.



TO THINK ABOUT:

- Should homework be part of your daily routine?
- Are you aware of each individual school policy in relation to homework completion?
- Are you considering the other needs of the children or young person when offering homework support in your project?
- Is there a good system of communication in place between school, after school and home around homework?
- When children and young people have difficulty doing their homework, do you talk to parents about it?

It is important to help develop a positive attitude towards homework where it is offered as part of an after school service. Taking responsibility for homework and learning good habits is an important part of development. Homework space should be located away from the busy activity areas. Children and young people should consider the space as a safe space where they can receive support, if required, from patient and respectful workers who know and understand the abilities of the individual user. It is advisable to develop a policy around homework that takes into account the needs of the users, their families and the school.

MORE TO FOOD THAN NUTRITION!

Although food is an important part of the daily schedule in an after school, it plays a large part in the lives of children and young people other than nutrition. Snack time can provide the ideal opportunity for social interaction between the users themselves and the workers and the users. This is a time when workers can get to know the individual users on a deeper level, talk to users about their day at school and generally check in to see how everybody is doing. Use this time well, sit down with children and young people at meal times and try to spend time getting to know one another, share information about likes and dislikes or spend the time planning the weekly or daily schedule with individuals or groups.



TO THINK ABOUT:

Food can also be a fun activity. Try a tasting session where children and young people taste different foods without looking at them and guess what they are. Encourage children and young people to taste fruits and vegetables from different countries. These sessions can be included in the planned programme as an option.

Children and young people's eating habits will be influenced by family or cultural background. As part of the ongoing approach to developing a programme that embraces and celebrates differences, have international food days and serve dishes from around the world. Children and young people can join in the preparation of the meals and help plan recipes from cook books or personal experience.

Depending on the facilities available, children and young people can be involved in cooking activities both indoors and out of doors. A BBQ is a welcome addition to any after school, as are facilities for lighting fires to bake potatoes or toast marshmallows. Before cooking, talk to the group about hygiene practice and ensure that the exercise is adequately supervised.

TRIPS AND OUTINGS

Organising trips and outings for children and young people is an integral part of the programme for many after schools. Trips and outings, even local ones need careful planning.

There are three main types of off-site activities:

- Local trips that can be done on foot
- Places of interest outside the locality and requiring transportation.
- Holiday activities that require sleeping away from home.

Whatever the activity, take into account:

- The age of the participants.
- Your knowledge of them as individuals.
- Their ability to cope with travel.

- The adult ratio.
- The experience of volunteers/parents accompanying.
- Do you need a specialist, e.g. a swimming instructor?
- The need for mixed gender supervising adults for some activities.
- At the very least, in addition to workers, one supervising adult should hold a first-aid certificate.

ASSESSING RISK

Risk taking is part of everyday life for children and young people at play. There are two types of risk – unacceptable risks and acceptable risks. An unacceptable risk is an activity where a child or young person will cause actual harm to themselves or other people. Taking acceptable risks is part of normal development. Acceptable risk is where a child or young person strives to develop to their full potential, by hanging upside down from a monkey bar, for example. The risk is managed by close supervision by workers, knowledge of the individual child's ability and an impact surface on the ground.

The challenge for workers is to provide opportunities within the after school which enable children and young people to take acceptable risks and to make choices which help them develop their skills of judgement and teach them personal responsibility. Without taking risks children and young people are not challenged and do not have the opportunities to develop new skills or explore what is possible. Almost every decision taken in life involves some level of risk.

WORKERS KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE

Workers must develop an awareness of all health and safety issues when working with children and young people. Current valid first-aid training and certification is essential for all members of the team. The team should work on developing a commonsense and competent approach to accident prevention. Decide what might be a danger to the safety of the users of the project. In any setting, for example an adventure playground, there are probably lots of hazards – high bars, fireman's pole,

overhead walkways and so forth. What workers have to do is decide whether the risk involved in using such equipment is worth it or not, weighed up against the developmental outcome and the enjoyment users will gain. Accidents do happen, but in most cases they are nearly always avoidable.

To prevent accidents:

- Identify what is likely to cause them.
- Discuss safety issues within the team.
- Reach agreement on what are acceptable and unacceptable risks.
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of individual workers for health and safety in the after school.

EVALUATION

It is important to have regular discussions with children and young people about the programme. These might be formal discussions, general discussions or simply listening to what the children, young people and workers wish to raise.

In general it is useful to:

- Review the range of activities within the programme.
- Ensure that you are not overlooking some types of activity.
- Review how well an activity or week's programme has gone.
- Assess what you can learn for next time?
- Review the level of involvement of individual children.
 - Do some appear to be more involved than others?
 - Is there a pattern of involvement according to age, gender, ethnic group or ability, and if so, does this matter?

Written records of programmes of activity will help the evaluation process. The team can develop a user friendly evaluation questionnaire for children and young people, or place a suggestion box in an obvious place such as reception for children's and young people's comments. Consider developing a children's/young people's council to encourage user participation and to allow them have their say.

PLAN A PROGRAMME

This is one example of a holiday programme at mid-term break. Examine it closely and spend time discussing the following with other members of your team.

Pink Panthers After School Project Mid-term October Holiday Programme 8.30 - 5.30 each day Staff on Duty: Aoife, Conor, Bríd, Gita		
Monday	<i>Morning Session</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candle making with Aoife • Ping-pong football in the hall with Bríd • Photography for 12-14s with Gita • (Conor floating) 	<i>Afternoon Session</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trip to local adventure playground with Conor and Gita – ten children • Cooking – what can we make in a wok with Aoife • (Bríd floating)
Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tie dying t-shirts with Bríd • Table tennis in hall – girls only with Aoife • Games outside with Conor • (Gita floating) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glass painting in the small room with Gita • Local trip to swimming pool with Bríd and Conor – ten children • (Aoife floating)
Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costume making with Conor • Jewellery making for 8-10s with Aoife • Chinese cooking with Bríd • (Gita floating) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Videos for 10-12s with Bríd in small room • Conor outside • Connect 4 challenge with Gita • (Aoife floating)
Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girls and boys table tennis tournament with Conor • Drama with Gita and Aoife • (Bríd floating) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halloween Fancy Dress Party and Treasure Hunt in the Spooky Hall
Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video workshop - boys only - with Gita • Games outside with Aoife • Kite making with Bríd • (Conor floating) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mural painting with Conor outside • Theme: "One world" • Junk modelling with Aoife • (Gita and Bríd evaluation... tell us what you enjoyed or did not like about the week)

(Template adapted from Bonel & Lindon, 1996:87)

Questions about the Mid-term Break Programme

- Is there enough variety in the programme?
- Is the programme balanced along the lines of age, gender, ability, culture and individuality?
- Does the programme look as if it is making good use of the workers?
- Look at the use of a floater – why is it important to make this role work?
- Identify potential risks. How would you manage these risks?
- Look at individual activities and make a list of the materials and equipment needed each day.
- Are there activities included that might need additional planning or permissions?
- What happens if an activity does not last a full session?
- What contingency plans should you make?
- Will any equipment have to be bought or ordered?
- Look at 'mural painting' with Conor. How might this develop further?
- How do you think Gita and Bríd could evaluate the week?

SECTION 4: PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT FOR AFTER SCHOOL PROJECTS

Below is an example of a planning sheet. It might be useful to photocopy and fill it in during team meetings.

Use a planning sheet to plan a week's programme					
Group Time:					
Age Group:					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Special Activity - Theme?					
Risk Assessment					
Opportunities for Energetic Play					
Arts and Crafts Natural Materials					
Building/ Constructing Things					
Stories/Music/ Quiet Games					
Opportunities for Drama/ Imaginative Play					
Outings					
Food					

(Template adapted from Davy, 1998:91)

Before concluding with some key learning from this section, it would be useful to refer to Appendix A, Resources for Activities with Children and Young People which gives a range of books, resource manuals and contact addresses.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN PLANNING

- The needs of the individual should be taken into account.
- Children and young people should participate in planning and evaluation.
- Leave room for flexibility and change.
- Collect resources in advance.
- Ensure that there is sufficient equipment for all activities.
- Include a wide variety of activities.
- Encourage spontaneity.
- Consider the age, individuality, gender, culture and ability of all users.
- Use evaluation and observation as an effective tool to aid in future planning.



APPENDIX A: RESOURCES FOR ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

ARTS AND CRAFTS IDEAS

Anness Publishing Ltd, Hermes House,
88-89 Blackfriars Place, London SE1 8HA

Anness (1998) *The Outrageously Big Activity and Project Book* ISBN : 0 754803 89 9

Anness (2000) *Amazing Clever Crafts*
ISBN : 1 840813 59 8

Klutz, 455 Portage Ave, Palo Alto, CA 94306, USA
www.klutz.com

Klutz (1998) *The Fantastic Foam Book*
ISBN : 1 570541 44 2

Klutz (2000) *A Book of Artrageous Projects*
ISBN : 1 57054 18 5

O'Brien Press Ltd, 20 Victoria Road, Dublin 6
Tel: 01 4923333 www.obrien.ie

Mary Carroll & Katie Long (1999) *Starting Art*
ISBN : 0 86278 6 07 X

Mary Carroll & Katie Long (1999) *Discovering Art*
ISBN : 0 862786 08 8

Search Press Ltd, Wellwood, North Farm Road, Tunbridge
Wells, Kent TN 2 3DR

Falken-Verlag (1996) *Paint Your Own T-Shirts*
ISBN : 0 855328 81 8

Greta Speechley (2000) *Clay Modelling*
ISBN : 0 855329 14 9

Judy Balchin (2000) *Papier Mâché*
ISBN : 0 855329 12 2

Polly Pinder (2000) *Hand Made Cards*
ISBN : 0 855328 87 8

Michelle Powell (2002) *Bead Work*
ISBN : 0 855329 79 3

Kim Solga (1991) *Make Gifts*. UK: Hodder & Stoughton
ISBN : 0 340587 28 8

Neil Buchanan (1992) *Art Attack*. UK: Hodder Children's
Books ISBN : 0 340583 72 X

Vicky Crane & Sandra Rowan (1998) *Arts and Crafts for
Upper Primary*. UK: Educational Suppliers Ltd
ISBN : 1 862511 23 3

Dempsey Parr (1998) *365 Rainy Day Activities*. UK: Miles
Kelly Publishing Ltd ISBN : 1 858339 24 3

Jean Dale (1999) *Create Greeting Cards with Glass Painting
Techniques*. USA: North Light Books
ISBN : 1 870586 39 5

Norman Schmidt (1999) *Marvelous Mini Kites*. USA:
Sterling Publishing Co. Inc ISBN : 1 895569 41 9

Parragon (1999) *365 Things to Do*. UK: Parragon
ISBN : 0 752532 08 1

Freddie Levin (2001) *1-2-3 Draw Wild Animals*. USA: Peel
Productions Inc. ISBN : 0 939217 42 2

ETHNIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Darlene Ritter (1993) *Multi-cultural Art Activities* – (From
the Cultures of Africa, Asia and North America). USA:
Creative Teaching Press, Inc

Deanna F. Cook (1995) *Kids Multicultural Cookbook – Food
and Fun Around the World*. USA: Williamson Publishing Co
ISBN : 0 913589 91 8

Fitzjohn, S, Weston, M, and Large, J (1993) *Festival Together*.
Hawthorn Press (Packed with information and ideas for
celebrating festivals originating from around the world –
stories, legends, customs, rituals, crafts, games and food)

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Sheena Duboust & Pamela Knight (1995) *Group Activities for Personal Development – A Group Leader’s Handbook*. UK: Speechmark Publishing Ltd

ISBN : 0 863883 37 0

Alex Kelly (1996) *Talk About – A Social Communication Skills Package*. UK: Speechmark Publishing Ltd

ISBN : 0 863883 23 0

Alison Schoeder (1996) *Socially Speaking – A Pragmatic Social Skills Programme for Primary School Pupils*. UK: LDA

ISBN : 1 855032 52 X

ACTIVITY BOOKS WITH SEASONAL THEMES

West, Shirley (1991) *Open Sez Me – The Magic of Pleasant Discoveries* (four books in a range of clear illustrated ideas for multi-cultural activities and play ideas for winter, spring, summer and autumn care)

Petrash, Carol (1993) *Earthwise – Environmental Crafts and Activities with Children*. UK: Floris Books

WORKING WITH ADOLESCENTS

Greenaway, Roger (1990) *More than Activities*. UK: The Save the Children Fund.

PLAY IDEAS

National Playing Fields Association (1989) *National Play Ideas Bank*. UK: PLAY-TRAIN

Manchester Play Development Unit/National Play Information Centre (1990) *Playwork That Works Involving Children/Young People*

Blakely, Nancy (1994) *The Mudpies Activity Book and More Mudpies – 101 Alternatives to Television*. UK: Tricycle Press

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES

PARTICIPATION

Hart, Roger (1992) *Children’s Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship*. UNICEF International Development Centre

Westland & Knight (1982) *Playing, Living, Learning*. USA: Venture Publishing

APPENDIX B: USEFUL RESOURCES

LEGAL – LIST OF LAWS REQUIRING FAMILIARITY

1. Child Care Act, 1991
2. Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989
3. Building Controls Act, 1990
4. Planning and Development Act, 2000
5. Fire Safety Act, 1981
6. Relevant Employment Legislation – see Byrne, 2002:15-25
7. Local Government (Planning and Development) Acts, 1963-1999
8. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989

POLICY

Commission on the Family (1998) *Strengthening Families for Life – Final Report to the Minister for Social Welfare*. Dublin: Stationery Office

Department of Health & Children (2000) *National Children's Strategy: Our Children – Their Lives*. Dublin: Stationery Office

Department of Health & Children (1999) *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*. Dublin: Stationery Office

Department of Health & Children (2002) *Our Duty to Care – The Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People*. Dublin: Stationery Office

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (1999) *National Childcare Strategy: Report of the Partnership 2000 Expert Working Group on Childcare*. Dublin: Stationery Office

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (forthcoming) *Report of the Working Group on School Age Childcare*

Meijvogl, R & Petrie, P (1996) *School-age Childcare in the European Union*. London: European Commission Network on Childcare and Other Measures to Reconcile Employment and Family Responsibilities

CONTACTS

Children in Hospital Ireland

Coleraine House
Carmichael Centre
North Brunswick Street
Dublin 7
Tel: 01 878 0448
Fax: 01 873 5283
Email: davoconn@iol.ie
Website: www.childreninhospital.ie

Children's Rights Alliance

13 Harcourt Street
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 405 4823
Fax: 01 405 4826
Email: info@cra.iol.ie
Website: www.childrensrights.ie

Combat Poverty Agency

Bridgewater Centre
Conyngham Road
Island Bridge
Dublin 8
Tel: 01 670 6746
Fax: 01 670 6760
Email: info@cpa.ie
Website: www.cpa.ie

**An Comhchoiste
Réamhscolaíochta Teo**

7 Merrion Square
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 639 8442/9
Fax: 01 639 8401
Email: comhchoiste@eircom.net

**Department of Health and
Children**

Hawkins House
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 635 4000
Fax: 01 635 4001
Lo call: 1890 200 311
Email:
customer_services@health.irigov.ie
Website: www.doh.ie

**Department of Justice,
Equality and Law Reform**

Bishops Square
Redmonds Hill
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 479 0200
Fax: 01 479 0201/2
Lo call: 1890 555 509
Email: info@justice.ie
Website: www.justice.ie

Dublin Islamic Centre
163 South Circular Road
Dublin 8
Tel: 01 453 3242

**Dublin Travellers Education
and Development Group**

Pavee Point
46 North Great Charles Street
Dublin 1
Tel: 01 878 0255
Fax: 01 874 2626
Email: pavee@iol.ie
Website: www.paveepoint.ie

Employment Equality Agency

36 Upper Mount Street
Dublin 2

**Garda Central
Vetting Unit (GCVU)**

Garda Headquarters
Phoenix Park
Dublin 8
Tel: 01 666 0000

Health and Safety Authority

10 Hogan Place
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 6620400
Fax: 01 6620417
Website: www.hsa.ie

HighScope Ireland

c/o NIPPA
6c Wildflower Way
Apollo Road, Belfast, BT12 6TA
Northern Ireland
Tel: 028 90 662 825 (from the
Republic)
Fax: 028 90 381 270
Email: highscope@nippa.org

Irish Sports Council

21 Fitzwilliam Square
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 240 7700
Fax: 01 240 7777

ISPPC

Head Office
20 Molesworth Street
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 679 4944
Fax: 01 679 1746
Email: isppc@isppc.ie
Website: www.isppc.ie
Childline: 1800 666 666

Katherine Howard Foundation

ISFC
10 Grattan Crescent
Inchicore
Dublin 8
Tel: 01 453 1861
Fax: 01 453 1862
Email: khf@eircom.net

Kid's Club Network

Bellerive House
3, Muirfield Crescent
London E14 9SZ
Tel: 0044 207 512 2100
Email:
information.office@kidsclub.org.uk

**National Children's Nurseries
Association**

Unit 12c
Bluebell Business Park
Old Naas Road
Bluebell
Dublin 12
Tel: 01 460 1138
Email: info@ncna.ie
Website: www.ncna.net

**NATIONAL CHILDREN'S
RESOURCE CENTRES**

Christchurch Square
Dublin 8
Tel: 01 454 9699
Fax: 01 453 0300
Email: nrcr@barnardos.ie
Website: www.barnardos.ie

River Court
Golden Island
Athlone, Co. Westmeath
Tel: 090 647 9584
Fax: 090 647 9585
Email: nrcr@athlone.barnardos.ie

The Bowling Green
White St
Cork
Tel: 021 431 0591
Fax: 021 431 0691
Email: ncrc@cork.barnardos.ie

10 Sarsfield Street
Limerick
Tel: 061 208 680
Fax: 061 440 214
Email: ncrc@midwest.barnardos.ie

41/43 Prospect Hill
Galway
Tel: 091 565 058
Fax: 091 565 060
Email: ncrc@galway.barnardos.ie

National Irish Safety

Organisation

11 Calmount Park
Calmount Ave
Ballymount
Dublin 12
Tel: 01 465 9760
Fax: 01 465 9765
Email: info@niso.ie
Website: www.niso.ie

PlayBoard

59-65 York Street
Belfast BT 15 1AA
Tel: 028 9080 3380
Fax: 028 9080 3381
Email: information@playboard.co.uk
Website: www.playboard.org

HEALTH BOARDS

East Coast Area Health Board

Block B, The Civic Centre
Main Street
Bray
Co. Wicklow
Tel: 01 274 4240
Fax: 01 274 4201
Website: www.erha.ie

Midland Health Board

Arden Road
Tullamore
Co. Offaly
Tel: 0506 218 68
Website: www.mhb.ie

Mid-Western Health Board

31-33 Catherine St
Limerick
Tel: 061 483 286
Fax: 061 483 350
Email: eolas@mwhb.ie
Website: www.mwhb.ie

Northern Area Health Board

Unit 2, Swords Business Campus
Balheary Road
Swords
Co. Dublin
Tel: 01 813 1800
Fax: 01 813 1870
Email: nahb@erha.ie
Website: www.nahb.ie

North-Eastern Health Board

Navan Road
Kells
Co. Meath
Tel: 046 928 0500
Fax: 046 924 1459
Email: info@nehb.ie
Website: www.nehb.ie

North-Western Health Board

Manorhamilton
Co. Leitrim
Tel: 071 982 0400
Fax: 071 982 0431
Website: www.nwhb.ie

South Eastern Health Board

Lacken
Dublin Road
Kilkenny
Tel: 056 778 4100
Fax: 056 778 4388
Email: info@sehb.ie
Website: www.sehb.ie

Southern Health Board

Wilton Road
Cork
Tel: 021 454 5011
Email: communications@shb.ie
Website: www.shb.ie

South Western Area Health Board

Oak House
Millennium Park
Naas
Co. Kildare
Tel: 045 880 400
Fax: 045 880482

Western Health Board

Merlin Park Regional Hospital
Galway
Tel: 091 751 131
Fax: 091 752 644
Email: services@whb.ie
Website: www.whb.ie

**CHILDREN FIRST
INFORMATION OFFICERS
AND ADVICE PERSONS**

East Coast Area Health Board

Block B, The Civic Centre
Main St
Bray
Co. Wicklow
Tel: 01 274 4245
Fax: 01 274 4281

Midland Health Board

Child Care Unit
Training & Development
Market Square
Tullamore
Co. Offaly
Tel: 0506 283 50
Fax: 0506 402 26

Mid-Western Health Board

Child Care Manager's Department
Annbrook
Limerick Road
Nenagh
Co. Tipperary
Tel: 067 383 14
Fax: 067 383 01

Limerick Social Services

87 O'Connell Street
Limerick
Tel: 061 483 520
Fax: 061 468 902

River House

Gort Road
Ennis
Co. Clare
Tel: 065 686 3919
Fax: 065 686 3983

Northern Area Health Board

Child Care Training & Development
Unit
NAHB, 3rd Floor, Park House
NCR
Dublin 7
Tel: 01 882 3431
Fax: 01 882 3491

North Eastern Health Board

Community Care Office
Dublin Road
Dundalk
Co. Louth
Tel: 042 933 2287
Fax: 042 933 2496
Old Rooskey Offices
NEHB
Rooskey
Monaghan
Tel: 047 304 70
Fax: 047 811 96

Family Resource Centre
Commons Road
Navan
Co. Meath
Tel: 046 907 3178

North Western Health Board

Markievicz House
Barrack Street
Sligo
Tel: 071 915 5133
Fax: 071 915 5131

South Eastern Health Board

Community Care
SEHB, Castlehill
Carlow
Tel: 059 913 3797/913 6520
Fax: 059 913 6550

Southern Health Board

Ellis House
Ballyvolane Commercial Park
Ballyvolane
Cork
Tel: 021 452 9010
Fax: 021 452 9028

South Western Area Health Board

Children & Families
Training and Development Unit
SWAHB
Unit 4044, City West Business
Campus, Saggart, Co. Dublin
Tel: 01 469 1720
Fax: 01 469 1728

Western Health Board

Community Care Services
WHB, ALDI
Seamus Quirke Road
Galway
Tel: 091 548 440
Fax: 091 524 226

Mayo Community Centre

St Mary's Hospital
Castlebar
Co. Mayo
Tel: 094 904 2579
Fax: 094 902 0452

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- Scottish Out of School Care Network (2000) *Aiming High Scotland*. Scotland: SO SCN
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INDEX

- Accessibility** 25, 33, 35
- Adolescents** 9-15
- Areas** 32, 35, 36, 38, 39, 43, 51
see also *Zones*
- Aims and objectives** 4, 16, 43
- Amenities** 31, 42
see also *Resources*
- Arts & crafts** 9, 48, 54, 56
- Assessment** 6, 17, 52
- Behaviour management** 5, 18, 22, 23, 24, 27
- Child abuse** 18, 19, 24, 29
- Child development** 3, 6, 7-15, 16, 19, 22, 26, 27, 29, 30, 32, 34, 36, 37, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46, 47, 48, 51, 52
- Child protection** 5, 18, 19, 24, 29, 58
- Child welfare** 5, 18, 19, 24, 27, 29, 58
- Colour** 34-38, 48
- Communication skills** 11, 14, 45
- Community based after school projects** 34
- Confidence** 12, 13, 14, 16, 24
- Consultation** 29
- Creative play** 12, 13
- Cultural awareness** 16, 25, 26, 27, 39, 45, 47, 50, 48, 53, 56
- Developmental delay** 7, 8, 14
- Genetic factors** 7, 8
 - Environmental factors** 7, 8
 - Developmental stages** 7, 15
 - Cognition and learning** 8
 - Behaviour** 8
 - Emotional** 6, 8, 11-15, 48
 - Social** 6, 8, 11-15, 48
- Disability** 5, 8, 11, 19, 25-27, 35, 39, 45
- Discrimination** 25
- Diversity/inclusive practice** 5, 19, 25, 28, 39, 45
- Emotional development** 8, 9, 11-15
- Emotional security** 11
- Empowerment** 4, 21, 26
- Entrance area** 27, 34, 38
- Environment** 3, 4, 6, 11, 12, 16, 22, 32-40, 42, 50
- Legal requirements** 32, 58
 - Basic requirements** 33, 34, 40
 - Best practice in the design and organisation of after school space** 34-40
- Evaluation and reflective practice** 4, 5, 17, 26, 27, 28, 31, 39, 52, 53, 55
see also *Questionnaires; Observations*
- Family** 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 19, 29, 30, 32, 47, 48, 51
- Family and cultural influences** 8, 51
- Fathers, working with** 29
- Floor surfaces** 35, 39
- Furniture** 33, 34, 36, 37, 39, 40, 43
- First-aid** 18, 34, 52
- Good practice** 4, 5, 7, 19, 21, 26, 30, 31, 37
- Health and safety** 5, 18, 33, 36, 39, 40, 41, 47, 52
- Homework** 3, 22, 36, 37, 41, 42, 50, 51
- Identifying need** 5-6, 26, 31
- Indoor space** 32, 35-37
- Induction** 17, 18, 19, 20
- Intellectual development** 8, 10, 11, 15, 48
- Identity** 12, 13, 14, 38
- Interrupted development** 10, 12, 13, 14
- Junk modelling** 15, 48, 53
- Mission statement** 3, 42
- Monitoring** 17, 33, 35
- Moral reasoning** 13
- Needs analysis** 31
- Non-physical activities** 9, 12
- Nutrition** 8, 17, 41, 51
- Observations** 5, 7, 8, 17, 55
see also *Evaluation and reflective practice; Questionnaires*
- Outdoor space** 32, 37-39, 40
- Ownership** 4, 22, 35, 38, 40, 41, 43, 46
- Parental involvement** 27-30, 39
- Parents** 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 23, 26, 27-30, 37, 39, 46, 50, 51, 52

- Participation** 4, 5, 16, 17, 22, 27, 34, 37, 39, 40, 45, 46, 52, 57
- Partnership** 5, 17, 28, 29, 30, 31
- Peer group** 9, 13, 14, 19
- Physical development** 8-10, 11, 15, 36, 48
- Physical play** 9, 10, 42
- Planning** 4, 11, 15, 22, 25, 27, 28, 30, 32, 35, 40, 41, 43-47, 51, 53-55
- Planning permission** 32
- Play** 3, 5, 8-17, 20, 21, 25, 28, 32, 36-39, 41, 42, 44-50, 52-54, 57
- Policies** 5, 17, 28
- Behaviour management** 5, 23
 - Child welfare and protection** 5, 18, 24, 29
 - Children's participation** 22
 - Equal opportunities** 5, 25, 35, 38
 - Health and safety** 5, 34, 35, 36
 - Partnership with parents** 28
 - School collection** 5, 29
 - Staffing** 5, 17
- Programme** 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 17, 19, 20, 22, 30, 35, 40, 41-55
- Project newsletter** 27, 30, 40
- Questionnaires** 5, 26, 28, 52
- see also Evaluation and reflective practice; Observations
- Ratios** 11, 20, 26, 33, 52
- Relationships** 6, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16-31, 41, 45
- Worker to worker** 16-19
 - Worker to children/young people** 19-26
 - Worker to parents** 27-30
 - Worker and wider community** 30-31
- Reviewing** 8, 11, 17, 18, 23, 42, 52
- Resources** 8, 16, 30, 34, 42, 55, 31, 39, 43, 56-62
- see also Amenities
- Role models** 8, 17, 19, 20
- School collection** 5, 29
- Self-esteem** 12, 13, 14, 18
- Social development** 6, 11, 13-15, 48
- Social play** 14
- Social skills** 13, 57
- Socio-economic influences** 8
- Storage** 34, 35, 38, 40, 42
- Suggestion box** 52
- Support systems** 18
- Support and supervision** 18, 19
- Team** 6, 16-19, 23, 31, 38, 39, 40, 43, 47, 49, 52, 53, 54,
- Volunteers** 20, 27, 29, 52
- Worker experience** 4, 17, 18, 19, 43
- Worker qualifications** 17, 19, 20, 39
- Worker role/function** 4, 9, 12, 13, 16, 17, 20, 24, 25, 27, 30, 47, 52, 53
- Worker skills** 5, 6, 7, 8, 17, 18, 19, 30, 31, 42, 43, 47
- Worker training** 4, 16, 17, 18, 19, 26, 31, 34, 43, 45, 47, 50, 52
- Zones** 36
- see also Areas