

Safeguarding children and young people: Early Years Summer 2024

The voice of the child: understanding lived experience

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Voice of the child: learning from case reviews

Summary of key issues and learning for improved practice around the voice of the child

May 2024

[This briefing](#) by the NSPCC is highly relevant to Early Years practitioners in understanding the lived experience of young children. The voice of the child doesn't only refer to what children say, but also to how they behave and what their behaviour can tell us. The review says: "There was a lack of consistency in how the child's voice was sought, heard and recorded,

particularly among very young children."

The briefing highlights learning from a sample of case reviews published between 2019 and 2023 where practice issues around hearing the voice of the child were identified as a key factor. Working Together 2023 makes it clear that one of the core principles of effective safeguarding practice is a child centred approach which aims to understand children's lived experiences and seeks their views about their lives and circumstances .

Children in the case reviews were harmed, seriously injured, or died in several different ways including:

- neglect
- suspected fabricated or induced illness
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- unexplained death of an infant
- death caused by parent or carer.

The briefing highlights that the views of pre-verbal or non-verbal children were sometimes sought solely through conversations with parents instead of seeking ways to interact with the child such as through observing behaviours, observing their interactions with parents, relationship dynamics, and play.

Local Poverty Support

[Citizens Advice Richmond](#)

[Citizens Advice Kingston:](#)

[BBC Children In Need Emergency Essentials Programme](#)

[Connected Kingston](#)

Richmond council Cost of Living [Support Hub](#)

Kingston Council Cost of Living [Support Hub](#)



Early Years play an important role in supporting good long term mental health

A collaboration of experts from the Department for Education, National Children's Bureau, Early Years professionals and the NHS, have written [this article](#) on Mental Health in the Early Years.

The article explains: "The term 'mental health' for babies and young children describes their wellbeing in terms of their social and emotional development. Each baby or child will have different experiences with their mental health. Many factors can influence their social and emotional development and wellbeing. This includes things like the quality of their relationship with their parents and carers, nutrition and their experiences in the womb." Children's self regulation ability, which plays a really important role in mental health, is developed throughout the Early Years



through responsive and sensitive care from the adults that look after them. This means that adults notice and respond appropriately to the children's emotional needs by soothing and calming them and understanding when and why they are upset.

The article says: "Babies and young children feel more secure when they form close relationships with reliable adults who are consistently available to them. When they experience loving and nurturing environments and relationships, they are also more likely to:

- learn how to build and maintain healthy relationships
- develop a healthy stress response system, which reduces the risk of stress-related illnesses
- learn how to self-regulate
- communicate their needs
- develop the skills that support good mental health throughout life"

The article explains that sometimes children behave in heightened emotional states and that a key person in their life during the Early Years is so important because they can be professionally curious about these changes in behaviour. If you have any safeguarding concerns you must follow your setting's safeguarding procedures.

The article is worth reading as it gives tips about managing common emotions in the Early Years, recognising concerns, supporting the development of self regulation skills and how developing good mental health in the Early Years can provide life long protection to children as they grow up.

Useful resources for EY practitioners

USEFUL STUFF



The DfE has lots of free resources for Early Years practitioners [here](#), including free training and materials to improve your practice across a range of areas including safeguarding and welfare.

Nappy sack dangers

The Child Accident Prevention Trust has highlighted the dangers of nappy sacks being stored within reach of young hands. In some cases, nappy sacks had been left near to or in the baby's cot for ease of changing the baby's nappy in the night. These loose nappy sacks are within easy reach of babies and are a risk for suffocation and choking.

Nappy sacks are a relatively recent phenomenon and whilst parents and carers are generally aware of the dangers posed by plastic bags, they may not make the same link to nappy sacks and so are less likely to take the same safety precautions. The risk of this potential hazard is increased by the lack of a mandatory suffocation warning advice on the packaging.

The Child Accident Prevention Trust says:

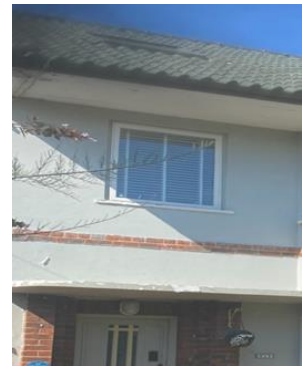
Suffocation is not the only risk – choking can also happen if a baby inhales a bag.

- **Always keep nappy sacks well out of reach of babies and never put them in a cot, pram or buggy.**
- **Babies and young children don't have the control that adults have over their bodies. They can wriggle and squirm but it is harder for them to move out of a dangerous situation.**

Window Safety

There have recently been a number of incidents of children tragically dying after falling out of windows or from height across London. In addition to this the London Ambulance Service have provided the data below:

- January 2019-January 2022, London Ambulance Service recorded:85 incidents of children falling from heights
- Six of these children died at the scene.
- 16.5% of these children were identified as having a learning disability



In 2022 each of London's five CDOPs reviewed one or more child death due to a fall from height. Most of these cases would have at least one modifiable factor. Had these modifiable factors not been present then children would not have died.

With the summer approaching and windows more likely to be open window safety is a key area that multi- agency practitioner's can raise awareness about with families.

- Make sure that children cannot reach windows, and that they are kept locked (but easy to open in an emergency)
- If opening a window, make sure children are supervised
- Don't keep furniture near windows that could be climbed upon

For more information, click [here](#)

Managing risk of non attendance



Early Years children are the most vulnerable age in safeguarding and are not robustly protected when absent from Early Years settings because they are below the statutory school age, which means there is no law that says they must be in the setting with you. However, if a child does not turn up, what are your procedures to safeguard them from harm? For example, how do you know their parent/carer hasn't died suddenly and the toddler is alone at home with no one to look after them? What if the family keep the child at home deliberately, perhaps because you have followed up a concern with them?

Consider your processes for absence and missing education and think the unthinkable. Being curious about attendance was identified by local learning from the findings of the Child V Child Safeguarding Practice Review who was subject to medical neglect and had erratic attendance at nursery. The review recommended that settings should seek external advice where poor attendance or chronic medical conditions continue to impact on the child through either plateauing or decline to reduce risk of 'normalising' established patterns.

Do your processes mitigate against these risks? Do you follow up absent children every morning or the start of each session? Have you got consent to share information if you have safeguarding concerns around persistent absence or a child who is removed from your setting. A Home Agreement is a good method to gain consent at the beginning of your relationship with the family. It means you can share information if you have worries about safeguarding. This example is part of a local nursery schools initial registration paperwork.

PARENTAL CONSENTS

- I give permission for information to be shared with outside agencies including transfer records for change in school/setting
YES/NO (delete as applicable)
- I give permission for my child to be given appropriate first aid and for the nursery to seek emergency medical advice or treatment if necessary
YES/NO (delete as applicable)
- I give permission for staff to take photographs and videos to demonstrate how children are playing and learning. This may be used in the nursery for training purposes.
YES/NO (delete as applicable)
- I give my permission for my child's photographs to be used on the school website
YES/NO (Delete as applicable)
- I give permission for my child to be taken out of the nursery with a member of staff for short excursions within walking distance. Further permission will be sought for outings involving transport
YES/NO (Delete as applicable)

By completing this form you are giving your permission to store information onto a secure database.

Stockport nursery worker guilty of baby's manslaughter

🕒 20 May

Nine month old Genevieve Meehan, known to her family as Gigi, suffocated after being placed in “mortal danger” as “punishment” by Kate Roughley, the deputy manager of Tiny Toes nursery in Cheadle Hulme, Stockport in 2022. The baby was placed face down on a beanbag, swaddled and straps were used to prevent her falling off. The nursery regularly used the beanbags for babies to sleep on when their six cots were full.

Roughley, 37, was found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to 14 years in prison.

Stockport Council is carrying out an investigation into possible Health & Safety failings at the nursery. You can read the Police report of this case [here](#). Safe sleep guidance [is here](#)



Baby and Infant Safe Sleeping Practice Guidance

The role of safeguarding lead

The next Safeguarding forum for Early Years is on the evening of Wednesday 20 November and can be [booked here](#). It will be about your role and how you fit into the AfC multi agency response to safeguarding.. The session will provide delegates.. with clear information regarding the safeguarding systems in the borough of Kingston and Richmond (AfC: Signs of Safety, SPA, LADO, Child Protection Conference, KRSCP, training etc)..



- ➔ This is a stand alone online course and will be repeated again in March (day time) to capture as many early years practitioners as possible.
- ➔ The session will provide delegates with clear information regarding the safeguarding systems in the borough of Kingston and Richmond (AfC: Signs of Safety, SPA, LADO, Child Protection Conference, KRSCP, training etc).
- ➔ The session is aimed at staff who are: new to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) role; new to the borough; any other staff who may take a safeguarding lead or who want to learn more about the referral systems when safeguarding concerns are raised

Domestic Abuse Support



Physical violence is just one type of abuse – domestic abuse can be any behaviour which is used to harm, punish or frighten someone, or make them feel bullied, controlled or intimidated. This includes mental, sexual, financial and emotional abuse and other harmful practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM), so called “honour” based violence and forced marriage.

Support for victims of domestic abuse

Hestia Domestic Violence Advisors in Richmond - (020) 3879 3544

Monday-Friday 9am to 5pm

One Stop Shop Richmond: A free weekly drop-in service providing discreet support, advice and information from agencies that are all under one roof concerning domestic abuse, stalking and sexual violence. Hampton Hill Citizens Advice, 1st Floor, 94-102 High Street, Hampton Hill, TW12 1NY Open every Friday, 10am to 12pm (excluding Bank Holidays)

Richmond Borough Domestic Abuse [Hub](#) is on Wednesdays in term time and includes a choir, click the link to find out more.

Kingston Borough - Domestic Abuse [Hub](#), click the link for the range of support: **0208 5476046** (Mon – Fri 9.30 – 5pm) or email: kwhub@vog.org.uk

Concerned about a child, call the SPA: **0208 547 5008** (Mon – Fri 8am-5pm)



Paediatric first aid

Is your Paediatric First Aid training up to date and do you feel confident you have enough first aiders to cover the number of children in your care?

Oliver Steeper choked in a nursery in Ashford Kent and died in 2021. The coroner sent the DfE a report called Prevention of Future Deaths, in which she raised concern that staff in Early Years settings only need to renew their paediatric first aid (PFA) every three years, with no requirement for refresher training in between. Also, that only one member of staff with paediatric first aid needs to be ‘on site’ at any one time. Please reflect on this in your settings and ask yourself if you have sufficient numbers trained and do they need refresher training?

No to racism

[This Advice](#) from the Early Years in Mind team is useful when tackling the issue of racism with young children in your settings.

We need to stand firm against all forms of hate, racism and discrimination. Children saying things to each other needs careful management, in a similar way you would manage bullying incidents. Consider the AfC schools anti racism pledge, view it [here](#). Although it is designed for schools it could be useful for Early Years too.



Do you have Young Carers in your setting?

If you know a child is in a caring role, refer them to the local Young Carers groups for Kingston and Richmond. Caring responsibilities have a huge impact on young people and these groups can offer valuable support.

020 3031 2754 Kingston Young Carers Project

020 8867 2383 Richmond Young Carers Project



Cruse Richmond Bereavement Support Service



Cruse has a strong, experienced group of volunteers, all having moved across to providing telephone and Zoom support, to new and existing clients. They can offer regular support to people within weeks of having registered with Cruse Richmond and are able to support families and children through bereavement. All volunteers undergo an extensive training programme and are experienced in providing emotional support to the bereaved - whenever and however that bereavement occurred. Leave a voicemail on **07495 777401** or email referrals@cruserichmonduponthames.org.uk. They will respond within 24 hours (not including weekends) to offer initial support and explain how to get regular telephone or Zoom support sessions with one of their volunteers.

Kingston Bereavement Service

Please contact us on 020 8547 1552 or email

info@kingstonbereavementservice.org.uk

For immediate help, you can call the CRUSE National Helpline on 0808 808 1677

Mental Health support

Charlie Waller organisation has lots of free guides and resources for professionals working with young people. Have a look [here](#)

Child Death Helpline

Sadly colleagues across all partner agencies may at some time be affected by the death of a child known to their service or involved in responding to their death. Besides internal employee support mechanisms which all are encouraged to explore, professionals may also find it helpful to be aware that the child death helpline is available to speak to if you are affected by the death of a child on 0800 282 986. For more information you can visit <https://www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk>

Concerns about adults working with children

If you have any concerns about an adult working with children you can contact the LADO service on 020 8891 7370 or 07774 332 675 or email:

LADO@achievingforchildren.org.uk

The LADO referral form is now online and can be accessed via our website [here](#).

When making a LADO referral remember that if there is a safeguarding concern for a child you will also need to make a SPA referral for the child..