



Naiscoil na Seolta Participation Policy

The aim of the policy is to ensure the involvement of all children and families who use the provision and for staff to be committed to the meaningful engagement of children and their families. All children and families benefit from being involved in decision-making and also the organisation that involves children and families will benefit from their involvement.

Participation is a Right; the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that: '...it is the right of children and young people to express their views in relations to matters that affect them and to have those views taken into account.'

Staff working directly with children have a vital role to play in listening and responding to the voice of the child. It is key to provide an environment where children feel confident and safe thus ensuring they have the time and space to express themselves in whatever form suits them.

Early years providers have a crucial role to play in developing a listening culture which nurtures day to day listening and provides opportunities for children to make decisions about matters that directly affect them.

Listening to children is an integral part of understanding what they are feeling and what it is they need from their early years experience.

There are many ways children and families can participate:

- engaging with children and asking them their opinion on things that affect them will empower them
- listen to their views
- make decisions with them rather than for them
- provide children with a choice
- discuss choices to help influence not change their decisions

- staff creating positive attitudes about participation in the setting support and encourage children to take responsibility
- provide appropriate resources and involve children in the planning of resources
- children have ideas, therefore encourage child initiated play, not adult led
- parental participation will include informal feedback, verbal, comment book, suggestion boxes, thank you cards etc
- formal feedback will be obtained by questionnaires or surveys

To support families essential work as the first educators of their young children, we will:

- Make all new parents aware of the Naíscóil's systems and policies.
- Encourage parents on an individual basis to play an active part in the Committee of the Naíscóil.
- Ensure that parents are informed on a regular basis about their child's progress.
- Ensure that all parents have opportunities to contribute from their own skills, knowledge and interests to the activities of the Naíscóil.
- Consult with families about the times of meetings to avoid excluding anyone.
- Hold Parent Consultations meetings which are accessible and appropriate for all.
- Welcome the contributions of parents, whatever form these may take.
- Make known to all parents the systems for registering queries, complaints or suggestions.
- Provide opportunities for parents to learn about the Naíscóil curriculum and about young children's learning in Naíscóil and at home via newsletters, Interactive Learning Diaries, school website, Twitter and Facebook.

Participation provides many benefits e.g.:

- children and families having a voice, having a choice
- if children are given choices it will increase their self-esteem
- children will feel valued and this will provide a sense of worth
- children will gain new skills and confidence and make a real difference in something that matters to them
- improving accessibility to children and families
- staff will be more aware of children's need therefore more able to meet their needs
- reflect and value difference

- the involvement of children and their families will enhance their experience of the services they receive.


Participation is part of a process of involvement therefore communicating and consulting with staff will also be part of the participation process. All staff will be involved in and influence decision making in matters that affect them and for those views to be listened to and taken account of.

Staff involved in the setting will participate by:

- weekly staff meetings
- regular staff supervision
- yearly Performance and Review Development meetings
- good communication skills
- open door policy
- Key Person system
- working in Partnership e.g. Parents, Speech and Language Therapists, Early Years Team, Health Visitor etc.

The HSCNI require registered settings to conduct ongoing review of the quality of care and complete annual assessments. All providers are required to demonstrate that they have consulted with children, families and staff.

This approach will reflect the views and ideas of those with whom you work and help to provide the best service possible.

This Policy last reviewed	Date: 29 10 2021
Signed: 	Position in Naíscoil na Seolta: Chair