

Listening to Young Children, 2008

Nine early years settings across Buckinghamshire took part in the project which began with two days training from Penny Lancaster, author of the publication 'Listening to Young Children' (Coram Family).

Practitioners asked children to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of their settings. The children used digital cameras to record their views.

The projects that took part all demonstrated that young children are able to express their views in many different ways and that when these views are taken into account the quality of practice in settings improves considerably. Relationships between children and practitioners are strengthened, children become empowered and their self esteem increases.

Children have a legal right to express themselves and to be heard. Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that 'a child has a right to say what they think and be listened to by adults when adults make decisions that affect them.'

Whilst this legislation does not in any way set out to undermine the responsibility of adults who provide care and education for young children it clearly challenges practitioners to consider the interests of young children.

The projects illustrated the different ways in which children can be encouraged to participate in the development of the early year's curriculum. Results showed that not only did the quality of practice improve in each case but also that children who would not normally be heard were given the opportunity for their ideas to be listened to and incorporated into practice.

The Learning to Listen, Listening to Learn publication is the result of a pilot project on listening to the views of young children which took place in the summer of 2008.

To request a hard copy of the publication please contact participation@buckscc.gov.uk giving your name and postal address.