Early Years Values
and Behaviours

Releasing our people potential

Early Years – the organisation for young children has always worked within a strong set of values that place children and their parents and carers at the core of what we do. We believe that our members and users have the right to expect and receive high quality services and our colleagues deserve to be valued and respected.

In order that we can provide an exceptional service, we need to understand what we can do for our members and users and for each other. Being values-led means we look at how we work together and our attitude to work. It is this that sets us apart from the rest. Applying these values and their underpinning behaviours will give us clear and positive guidance about what our values look like in practice and what we can do to make the most of our values. At Early Years there is nothing that sits wholly with any one person and therefore how we work together will determine what we can truly achieve.

We need to encourage each other to attain our personal and collective best, continually striving for improvement and recognising that we each have a crucial part to play. The values that we bring to these relationships will underpin our whole approach and the outcomes we can accomplish.

We believe that if we can get the right people who believe in the right core values, then both they and the Organisation will succeed. If we treat everyone correctly, we will be a high-performing Organisation that will be extremely successful.

It is important to explain how this work has evolved. The words used to explain our values and behaviours are not management or text book speak. They are what staff working here in Early Years said they valued, appreciated and what was important to them.

These values serve not only to define what it looks like to work in Early Years but also to demonstrate a high respect culture for all those in this community – children and their parents and carers, our colleagues, members, partners and other users of our services.
What we believe in

OUR VALUES

Childhood in its own right
Listening to children – and those who care for them
A strong voice for children
Parents as first educators
Participation
Community
Partnership
Inclusion and diversity
Excellence and evidence based innovation
Effective stewardship and governance
A professional, committed and recognised workforce
Valuing staff, members and their commitment

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INTRODUCTION

What is this information about?

This information describes the behaviours that we should be demonstrating whilst undertaking our work roles. These identify how we go about our work in order to achieve our objectives. These form part of the whole Early Years ‘ethos’, our approach to working together and underpin our mission and values.

What are behaviours?

Behaviours are critical factors that characterise how we work together. These will distinguish what really makes working at Early Years ‘distinctive’. We all need support to ensure we have the necessary skills and knowledge to undertake our roles effectively, but the behaviours go beyond this to communicate the ‘Early Years way of working’.

How do the behaviours fit with the values?

The core values of Early Years are:

- Childhood - in its own right
- Listening to children – and those who care for them
- A strong voice for children
- Play, fun and creativity
- Parents as first educators
- Participation of children and families
- Community involvement and development
- Partnership
- Inclusion and diversity
- Excellence and evidence-based innovation
- Effective stewardship and governance
- A professional, committed and recognised workforce
- Valuing staff, members and their commitment

Combined with the behaviours, these describe how we need to behave if we are to build a high-performing, values-driven work environment, helping Early Years to achieve its goals.

This information identifies and defines the behaviours that promote these values. This helps to ensure we have a shared understanding of the expectations and standards required. The level of application and the opportunity to display some of these behaviours will of course depend on the specific requirements of our roles and so will vary accordingly.
Why are the behaviours important?

These behaviours are important because they:

- Describe how we will work effectively together.
- Describe what is acceptable behaviour.
- Bring the values of Early Years to life.
- Provide a common language.
- Provide a basis for analysing team and individual development and training needs.
- Provide a basis for recruiting staff with values which are similar to those of Early Years.
- Provide a consistent, fair and objective basis for discussing the *how* of performance.

How were the behaviours developed?

The behaviours are based on the views of staff working in Early Years. Following a year of consultation with staff, the values were revised to the list set out above. A focus group was initially set up to develop the behaviours linked to these values; the focus group, which consisted of staff from a range of backgrounds and levels, met over a number of months to set down what the values might look like in practice. The group considered each value and set out those behaviours which they believed had a positive impact on the ethos and outcomes of Early Years, as well as the behaviours which had a negative impact, i.e. those behaviours which didn’t add value or actually damaged the ethos of Early Years.

These meetings allowed ‘real’ examples to be shared and this enabled the behaviours to be developed using our own language.

How will the behaviours be used?

This document provides guidance to all staff on the behaviours that support the overall ethos of Early Years.

Staff and line managers should use this document:

- As a basis for recruiting and selecting the right people.
- As part of the induction and probation process to support new staff.
- For discussion at team meetings and 1-2-1 meetings.
- For discussion of values within the relevant section of the appraisal process.

It is important to appreciate that staff members will have a greater opportunity to demonstrate behaviours in some values than others. This is understandable, as we all have different roles and focuses within Early Years and we all make a valuable contribution to the whole.
Behaviours and the future

The behaviours were developed in 2009, so it is expected that they will evolve to reflect our continuous development and in response to feedback. Managers will be encouraged to be involved in ensuring these behaviours remain live, dynamic and applicable to everyone.

We demonstrate commitment to our values by the behaviours below.

Champions the rights of children:

Remembers at all times that Early Years strives to create a world where children are strong, competent and visible in their communities; physically and emotionally healthy; eager and able to learn and respectful of difference.

- Supports staff, members, branches, parents and management committees to be a strong voice for children.
- Uses opportunities to champion rights of the child.
- Speaks and acts in a way that demonstrates an understanding of how own job contributes towards the achievement of team/department objectives.
- Communicates in a way which demonstrates understanding and belief in Early Years vision and values.
- Treats everyone with respect and behaves consistently towards colleagues, external customers and users of Early Years services.
- Takes time and makes an effort to keep up to date with issues that affect own area of work.
- Actively promotes community development.

Builds trust

Creates an environment of trust through communicating in an open and honest way.

- Supports an open environment where feedback is given in an open and positive way and encourages colleagues to do the same.
- Consults with children and those who care for them.
- Values people, appreciates the different abilities, strengths and expertise that different staff, members, branches, parents and management committees contribute to a situation.
- Meets commitments to colleagues and Early Years service users.
- Demonstrates honesty and integrity, respects confidentiality.
- Shares ideas, learning and experience with other team members and encourages others to do so.
Inspires leadership

Leads by example and encourages leadership in others.

- Supports Early Years vision and values, is consistent in words and actions.
- Encourages colleagues to act in support of Early Years vision and values.
- Acts as a role model for colleagues.
- Strives to develop to his/her full potential to achieve high performance.
- Willingly accepts change and encourages others to do the same.
- Demonstrates accountability for the organisation's resources and funds.

Promotes teamwork

Promotes collaboration and teamwork across Early Years.

- Is supportive and co-operative, adopts a ‘we’re in this together’ approach, works with colleagues to achieve team and department objectives.
- Support colleagues working in different teams/departments; works together to solve problems.
- Shares important and relevant information with others in the team.
- Works with others to ensure the delivery of service and quality.
- Recognises when someone needs help and offers assistance.
- Does fair share of work of the team, pulls their weight.

Champions the brand

Makes the most of opportunities to gain positive exposure for Early Years.

- Is flexible and adaptive, works to get the best value for Early Years.
- Portrays a positive image of Early Years when dealing with colleagues, member groups, external contacts and other organisations.
- Thinks creatively, finds different ways of doing things.
- Acts in a way which demonstrates strong commitment to the organisation and its stakeholders.

Delivers results

Provides a service that meets or surpasses the expectations of internal and external customers and stakeholders.

- Works to provide an excellent service that is appropriate for children, members, branches, parents and management committees.
- Asks for feedback on how to improve performance and demonstrates an interest in learning.
- Learns from mistakes and builds learning into future plans.
- Values, praises and rewards effort and good performance and celebrates success.
- Demonstrates enthusiasm in tackling tasks and activities and completes them to agreed standards and quality levels.
- Meets commitments and promises to staff, external customers and stakeholders.
• Shows determination and tenacity when facing problems, does not give up easily; deals with set-backs in a positive way.
• Delivers projects and activities to agreed deadlines and within budget.

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