**Children’s Play, Learning and Development: Unit 3**

In this unit you will:

A understand the importance of inclusive practice in early years

B explore ways in which early years settings implement inclusive practice

C understand how children are empowered in early years settings

D understand the importance of the key person approach in supporting children’s development

**Topic A:**

**How children benefit from inclusive practice:**

Inclusive practice is the way in which children and their families are valued and support is given regardless of age, disability, race, background, gender or lifestyle in order that children and their families can benefit from the services and opportunities available. Learners must understand how children benefit from inclusive practice.

**The positive effects of inclusive practice on children’s outcomes, including:**

* Development of a positive self-image affecting confidence, motivation and positive attitudes towards others
* Developmental benefits as any needs are identified and a wide range of opportunities is available and, if necessary, adapted to meet needs
* Opportunities to play and socialise with other children and thus gain social skills and learn to express feelings and emotions
* Development of self-efficacy, a ‘can do’ attitude, that gives children confidence to try out new activities or cope in unfamiliar situations
* Emotional wellbeing as a result of being accepted and cared about by others
* Positive benefits to health outcomes as physical needs are met through inclusive practice
* Development of enduring positive attitudes towards others as a result of observing how to value and support others regardless of their age, disability, race, background, gender or lifestyle.

**How non-inclusive practice may affect children’s outcomes**

In this topic, you must understand how children may be affected by non-inclusive practice, these include:

* Poor self-image as a result of feeling unwanted
* Helpless or inferior
* Low self-efficacy as children may have ‘learnt helplessness’ or see themselves as victims
* Delayed development as a result of late identification of needs or needs not being met
* Poor health outcomes if physical care needs have not been attended to, e.g. individual dietary needs unmet
* Educational outcomes lower as a result of not being given the same opportunities to develop skills and knowledge because needs were not met.

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**Topic B:**

**Ways in which early years settings implement inclusive practice**

For this section, you must understand how early years settings ensure that children and their families are respected and valued and how children’s unique needs can be met, allowing all children to be included and supported. Inclusive practice in early years settings, including:

* Adopting a non-judgemental attitude, e.g. respecting individual differences, cultures and beliefs, uniqueness of each child
* Implementing a welcoming environment, e.g. posters in different languages, greeting parents
* Using or displaying resources that reflect children’s lives and celebrate diversity, e.g. home corner, dressing-up clothes
* Developing strong relationships with children and their families to ensure that children’s individual needs are fully understood
* Adapting provision to meet the individual needs of children
* Keeping children safe
* Establishing routines
* Adults consistently acting as positive role models.



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**Topic C:**

**The importance of empowerment of children in early years settings**

In section C, it is important for you to understand reasons why early years settings seek to empower children and how empowerment contributes to children’s learning and development.

**Definition of empowerment:**

**Giving children involvement in decisions that affect them, appropriate to their age and level of understanding.**

**Why early years settings seek to empower children:**

Children have a right to be informed, involved and consulted about all decisions that affect them

* To value children as their feelings and opinions are taken into account
* To show respect to children
* To help children to respect themselves and others
* To involve children in decision making, e.g. play opportunities, routines.

**How empowerment benefits children, including:**

**P:** Benefits to physical development, e.g. children gain confidence to try new challenges, more motivated to practise skills, helps children to make decisions about risk

**I:** Benefits to cognitive development, e.g. involvement in decision-making process encourages motivation, perseverance and concentration.

**E:** Benefits to emotional development e.g. self-esteem encouraged from being given opportunities to be involved in decision-making processes, more likely to be able to manage own behaviour if they have had some input in decisions about appropriate behaviour, boundaries and expectations

**S:** Benefits to social development, e.g. children develop self-respect and learn to respect and value others and the feelings of others

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**Topic C**

**How adults in early years settings empower children**

You need to research and understand how adults in early years settings empower children, and the importance of ensuring children are empowered in ways appropriate to their age/stage of development.

Ways adults in early years settings empower children appropriate to their age/stage of development, including:

* Involving children in physical care routines and encouraging them to be involved in self-care to support independence, e.g. washing, dressing
* Giving children appropriate control and privacy when dressing, e.g. half closing a door so that toddlers can use the toilet in private ● encouraging children to help themselves at meal and snack times
* Supporting child-initiated play whereby children can make choices as to what and how they play, and with whom
* Involving children in planning so that children feedback what they have enjoyed doing and can make suggestions as to what they wish to do next
* Involving children in all aspects of preparing the environment, e.g. choosing equipment to put out, tidying away, and preparing snacks.

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Topic D

Why the key person approach is used in early years settings

For the final section to unit 3, you need to understand that the key person approach is the way in which early years settings meet children’s emotional and care needs through the development of a strong and consistent relationship with a child and their family.

**Definition of key person role as someone who develops a strong and consistent relationship with a child and their family to ensure emotional and care needs are met.**

Main roles of key person:

* Developing a special bond with the child,
* Sharing information with parents,
* Supporting transition and observing the child.

**Key person approach is a requirement of early years education/care frameworks, e.g. Early Years Foundation Stage (England), Foundation Phase (Wales).**

● Key person approach helps parents to effectively exchange and share information effectively to support children’s physical care and development, e.g. dietary needs, allergies, health conditions, ensuring medical and physical needs are met.



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**Topic D**

**How the key person approach supports children’s development**

Finally, you must understand how the key person approach, in meeting children’s emotional needs, enables children’s development to be supported.

How the key person approach supports children’s development:

* Emotional development is supported as young children are prevented from becoming distressed when separated from parent/carer, e.g. key person understands children’s individual emotional needs and ways to comfort them, children feel more secure
* Language development is supported, e.g. children communicate more to people with whom they have a strong relationship, key person knows how best to communicate with child
* Children’s learning is supported, e.g. key person knows children’s interests, children feel more confident to try new experiences and explore
* Children’s physical development is supported, e.g. key person is aware of the child’s stage of development, recognises suitable equipment and resources
* Children’s social development is supported as children learn to make relationships beyond their family circle, e.g. key person approach helps children to develop relationships with others in the setting