



# Little Ladybird Creche & Montessori

## Policy #14

### Parent Involvement

## Introduction

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It is widely agreed in research that parental involvement in services has advantageous effects for children. Parents are the 'prime educators and experts on children's needs'.<sup>1</sup> Research evidence suggests that the engagement of parents and families in their child's education improves children's academic performance and their motivation and leads to higher adult expectations and increased parental confidence and aspirations.<sup>2</sup>

## Policy Statement

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This policy is founded on the understanding of partnership between parents/carers and staff members being in the best interests of the children. We respect the different perspectives and needs of parents.

Effective partnerships with parents/carers must be established. All parents (fathers as well as mothers) irrespective of their backgrounds or abilities, are encouraged to participate in the life of Little Ladybird Creche & Montessori and, wherever possible, to join with staff members in ensuring their children's well-being and furthering their development and learning.

Parental involvement will be well planned and purposeful and staff members are skilful in working alongside parents. Resources, space and time are allocated to allow parents/carers to get involved. Every effort is made to ensure that parents/carers feel welcome and included, comfortable and confident.

Staff members value and take account of parents'/carer's knowledge and views of their child's development, interests and personality. Parent's/carers' enquiries are given careful consideration and are always dealt with as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Parents'/carers' privacy is respected and appropriate confidentiality will be maintained.

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<sup>1</sup> The White Paper on Early Childhood Education, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Schweinhart, L., Montie, J., Xiang, Z., Barnett, W., Belfield, C. & Nores, M., 2004. *Lifetime effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study through Age 40*. Monographs of the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 14. Ypsilanti, Michigan: High/Scope Press.



## Procedures & Practices

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*This policy should be read in conjunction with the Admissions Policy.*

In making parents/carers welcome, attention will be paid to:

- Our visual environment.
- Our attitudes and values.
- Our facilities.

**Clear signage (including welcome signs) will be provided in as many languages and formats as needed for our local community.**

**Parents/carers will always be greeted in a friendly way by staff members. When a child first starts, a member of staff will be assigned to make parents/carers welcome (see *Key Person Policy*) .**

There are frequent opportunities for the exchange of information relevant to the children's development and learning. Information for parents/carers about the aims and curriculum/programme of the centre will be clear and well presented. This information is communicated in as many ways as possible and in as many languages as necessary.

Parents/carers will be given information on the key policies and procedures (including the Comments/Complaints Policy and Procedure), on practical issues and on the way in which a stimulating environment is provided for the children.

This information is provided verbally as well as in a Parents'/Carers' Handbook (see below). Parents/Carers will be consulted about how best to settle their child. While working in the best interests of the child, staff members will consider the parents'/carers' needs as well.

*Prior to a child's enrolment with the service, a Parents'/Carers' Handbook will be provided containing the following information:*

- a) The service's Mission Statement and Aims
- b) Contact information
- c) The type of services provided and the age range of the children
- d) The childcare policies and information about the programme/curriculum
- e) The Admissions Policy
- f) Information on staffing – including staff qualifications and ratios
- g) The hours of opening
- h) Costs and charges/Fees
- i) The settling in procedure
- j) Routines and activities provided for the children
- k) The Behaviour Guidance and Discipline Policy
- l) The Specific Educational Needs Policy
- m) Equality and Non-Discrimination Policy
- n) Information about the management structure
- o) A statement to confirm that the service is notified and inspected
- p) Information about how the service engages with other organisations/agencies
- q) Catering arrangements



# Little Ladybird Creche & Montessori

- r) The policy on Children's Illnesses
- s) What parents/carers should bring with them
- t) What the children should and should not bring with them from home
- u) Information about the Key Person system and the system for the regular exchange of information about the child between parents/carers and the staff
- v) Record keeping and arrangements for parents/carers to have access to their own records

Parents/carers are invited to discuss their children's needs, individual characteristics, welfare, health, progress, interests, achievements and difficulties – both informally on a daily basis and formally at arranged meetings.

All written and telephone enquiries from parents/carers will be dealt with promptly.

A Parents'/Carers' Notice Board will be provided for **current** relevant information.

Daily and weekly planning schedules and menus will be posted.

The children's diet and nutritional requirements will be planned in consultation with parents/carers.

To help all families using the service to feel they belong, images and posters will be used that reflect the diversity in the local community and in society generally. The use of stereotyped images will be avoided. (See the Equality and Non-Discrimination Policy)

Parents/carers can become involved in the service in a number of ways and at a number of levels:

- *A suggestion book or box.*
- *A survey which could ask things such as:*
  - *what is appreciated about the service*
  - *what developments the family would like to see in the service*
  - *any ideas on how to bring the developments about*

The fact that some parents/carers may be less able to participate in partnership than others is understood and respected by staff members. Each parent/carer can become involved in the service at a pace and level that they choose.

Parents/carers are entitled to their own child's records. There may be exceptional circumstances, such as where there are child protection issues where parents/carers may be denied access to the records, but this is rare.



## Communication Plan

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All parents/carers are to be informed of *the Centre's* policies and procedures on registration. Staff members will check with parents/carers that they have received, read and understood the Parents'/Carers' Handbook and are aware of the Policies and Procedures and will provide any assistance needed. This policy will be included in staff induction and annual staff training.

A copy of all policies will be available during all hours of operation to staff members and parents/carers in the Policy Folder located in the main office.

Parents/Carers may receive a copy of the policy at any time upon request.

Parents/Carers and staff will receive written notification of any updates.

### Review Date

Date: .....

Person Responsible: .....

### Related Policies, Procedures and Forms

- Admissions Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Equality and Non-Discrimination Policy
- Arrivals and Departures Policy
- Key Person Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Record Keeping Policy
- Comments/Complaints Policy

## References/Supporting Documents/Related Legislation

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- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Child Care Act 1991
- Child Care (Pre-school Services) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006
- **Síolta** – The National Framework for Quality in Early Childhood Education
- **Supporting Quality: guidelines for professional practice in early childhood services (3rd edition)** by Geraldine French. Barnardos' Training and Resource Service, 2008



# Little Ladybird Creche & Montessori

## Contact Information:

Name: .....

## Policy Created

Date: .....

## Signatures

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