

“How can we work collaboratively with SENCOs from PVI settings to strengthen practice and provision for children with SEND?”



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Background to Project



- Challenge for all of us working in Early Years to narrow the gap in achievement for vulnerable groups with a clear emphasis on improving outcomes for children with SEND through:
 - Strengthening strategic approaches to inclusion
 - Developing the skills, confidence and understanding of all practitioners to ensure early identification and effective intervention and support.
 - Time to relationship build and provide appropriate supervision to support emotional wellbeing for all involved
 - Consideration of the best use of limited resources to support the needs of the sector SENCOS

We reflected deeply.....



About the SENCO role:

- ✓ It can be seen as a leadership role to support the development of inclusive practice across the EYFS.
 - ✓ Ensuring all practitioners in the setting understand their roles and responsibilities re children with SEND
 - ✓ Supporting the setting's approach to identifying and meeting the needs of children with SEN and disability in line with the SEND COP
 - ✓ Listening to the experiences of other colleagues and parents
 - ✓ Advising, signposting and supporting colleagues and parents
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- What knowledge, skills and understanding are needed to carry out this role?

Putting the SEND Code into Practice....



- Building capacity in settings
- Plan of action agreed:
 - 20 settings recruited and visits made
 - SENCO Audit tool completed
 - Identified patterns across settings
- To host meetings as well as to get to know the SENCOs in their own contexts.
- EPRNS- a hub; a support mechanism. Relationships built on trust?

Current Context



- Polarity - Early Education v Childcare
- Restricted capacity in current training systems and workplace cultures for reflection.
- Dominant narrative presents a deficit model of those working with the youngest children. Focus is on level of qualification.
- Not the qualifications in themselves that lead to high quality provision but
 - “...the ability of better qualified practitioners to create a high quality pedagogic environments”
(Pacey 2016: 4)
- Underpaid and under valued workforce - but highly committed.

Our Image of the Child

An important principle underpinning early years practice is that of “The Unique Child” recognising babies and young children are as competent learners.

(Malaguzzi, 1993, EYFS Framework 2014).



My research assumes that practitioners are also competent learners and that they should be valued and respected as such. They have gathered implicit and explicit knowledge through their experience, which needs to be recognised and built on.



IMPACT !



How can we make the most effective use of the time we have for this project?



- “How can we work **collaboratively** with SENCOs from the PVI sector to strengthen practice and provision for children with SEND?”
- Wanted to use the opportunity of meeting together to not only provide opportunities for new learning (‘training’) but to learn with and from each other.
- Took an action research approach- shared enquiries. Not what/who can I change? but ‘How can I use the educational influence I have as a SENCO?’

That is what learning is. You suddenly understand something you've understood all your life, but in a new way.

Doris Lessing 2007 Nobel prize for literature

Experience


Knowledge

Creating our
new thinking

Leading to changes in our practice

Researching own practice.....

- Reflective engagement creates an opportunity to make links between theory and practice, bringing together the various forms of knowledge that we hold..
- Reflection helps to develop an awareness of self that enhances personal confidence and efficacy.



“Pedagogy is an understanding of how children learn and develop and the practices through which we can enhance that process. It is rooted in values and beliefs about what we want for children and supported by knowledge, theory and experience.”

Stewart and Pugh (2007)

Self Evaluation- sustained, shared, conversations....





R I P P L E

Research Informing Pedagogy and Practice by Practitioner-Led Enquiry

- Action enquiries begin with an individual's question, 'How do I improve my work?'. When the enquiry is shared with others, and they wish to become involved – possibly by critiquing, or by deciding to do something similar, or by offering ideas for new enquiries – then the question changes to 'How do we improve our work?' providing a context for collaborative learning in the workplace.

Practitioner Enquiry starts with me



- What really matters to me?
- What challenges or concerns me ?
- What can I do about it?
- What is my enquiry question and what actions will I take to instigate change?
- How will I know I have made a difference?

- ❖ Pedagogical discussion around emerging themes
- ❖ Accounting for the difference we have made (Impact).

Impact of project and sustainability.

- Reaffirmed the centrality of relationships.
- Has been a reciprocal learning process between School based SENCO and Setting SENCOs- new skills. Want to continue and build on this...
- Buddying up between less experienced/more experienced SENCOs.
- One Page profiles- not just introduction of a new paper work- a new way of working!
- SENCOs more reflective and confident to instigate and have ownership of the changes needed to put the SEND Code into practice.