

Tackling racism in early years

Racism exists in all areas of life, and Hillingdon Children's Centres aim to reduce this in the Early Years as much as possible.

Over the past few years, Hillingdon Children's Centres have worked to address the barriers to race equality in the workplace and in our service delivery. This has included being more intentional in our recruitment practices to ensure the service is more representative of the community, as well as developing the practice of staff.

Tackling Racism in the Early Years Training

- Staff wrote a half day training workshop. The aims of the training are:
 - to increase awareness of race and discrimination in practice
 - to think of ways of change our practice to tackle racism within Early Years
 - to gain an understanding of Equal Opportunities and what it really means
 - to reflect honestly on personal attitudes, feelings, pre-conceptions and tendencies to stereotype.
- Between July 2021 and January 2023, 80 staff have been trained, including all managers and frontline staff in Children's Centres and Early Years Centres.
- It is difficult to assess the impact of this kind of training, as it is dependent upon personal reflection and will require time to assess the long-term impact. However, in the short term the staff have observed and shared the following:
 - Increased knowledge of racism within society and the impact in the Early Years.
 - Awareness of unconscious bias and how this may affect practice.
 - Increased confidence to learn about different cultures directly from families, e.g. invite to read a story/sing in their home language. Families are encouraged to share their customs and traditions.
 - Recognition of the importance of reflecting a wider range of cultures and traditions in everyday practice, e.g. resources in home corner, stories and books, music, images.
 - Reflecting on own practice and feeling more comfortable to have honest conversations and discuss what can be changed. e.g." I reflect on this subject to enhance and improve my own practice"
 - Using the Blue Anti Racist diagram (blue circle) to plot their changing attitudes
 - Personal development and knowledge through reading

Developing practice and promotion

- Being proactive and intentional with our budget, this has included:
 - Using a professional photographer to take photos of families we work with and working with our Communications Team to update our publicity materials to be more representative.
 - Promoting the benefits of Two-Year Funding through videos in 5 different languages (English, Polish, Somali, Urdu & Punjabi)
 - Buying more multicultural books and developing book bags (with associated resources) for each locality to be used during sessions
 - Setting money aside for translation services
- Creating a calendar of events, celebrations, and religious festivals, to include in Early Years Planning.

- Notice boards updated to celebrate key events such as Black History Month, Chinese New Year, and religious events, such as Eid and Easter.
- Encouraging families to share songs and teach single words in their home language during stay and play. Music play lists reviewed and developed to include music from different countries and cultures.
- Using recipes from different countries and cultures in cooking groups and buying different foods and fruits for snack time e.g. mangoes, papaya, kiwi and pomegranate.
- Activities to celebrate culture e.g. chapati making with playdoh with photos in home-corner, and including pictures of Indian, Chinese, and Polish food in the home-corner.
- Working with partner organisations to support families new to the UK, including voluntary groups, such as Bell Farm Christian Centre and the Baby Bank.
- Developing information to support asylum-seeking families.



Embedding - keeping up momentum

- EID included in the practice observations checklist that managers complete.
- EID Sharing Good Practice workshop during the service development day.
- Recommendations moving forward:
 - Ensure EID is a regular agenda item at team meetings, to maintain the current commitment and momentum.
 - Ensure EID is reflected in all Early Years Planning.
 - Use data to effectively promote recruitment of staff who are more representative of the local community
 - Develop volunteering opportunities for 'language befrienders' to support parents who don't speak English and are new to the UK or may be struggling with isolation etc.
 - To encourage parents to share their culture through telling stories and singing songs.