



"Circle Time" Policy

The term 'Circle Time' refers to a regular session where the children get the chance to take turns, talk and to be listened to in a group. This can build children's confidence, self-esteem and gives them an opportunity to talk about their inner feelings.

We recognise that whole group times are often called circle times. In this policy, we are referring to specific planned sessions which address children's personal, social and emotional needs.

The value of "Circle Time"

- It gives everyone equal status (adults and children) and promotes team building
- It emphasises the importance of each individual within the group
- It enables everyone to see each other
- It enables less experienced children to watch and imitate others developing their communication, language and literacy skills
- It builds self esteem through promoting children's personal, social and emotional development

Physical space

- Clear a space for circle time whether it is being held with the whole group or a small group
- Children and adults gather in a circle so everyone can see each other. Carpet squares or cushions can be used if there is enough for everyone, ask the children to collect their cushion/mat and find themselves a space in the circle. This increases their sense of belonging. Adults should sit at the same level as the children.

Talking object.....

- Have an object (talking teddy), which can be passed around the group with the rule, that when some one is holding the "teddy", everyone else listens. "Teddy" may be used to encourage turn taking, speaking and listening.
- You may wish to collect a basket or bag of safe circle time objects e.g. puppets, natural objects (shells, polished stones, cones) and sound makers (rain sticks, bells). Ask children what other objects they would like in bag/basket.

Group sizes

- If the group is too big, children may have to wait a long time for their turn and lose interest. If the group is too small the children may feel vulnerable. An ideal length for Circle Time for Pre school children would be no more than 15 minutes.
- Planning more regular but shorter Circle Times works better than longer more infrequent times, particularly with younger children

When on the time when adults are available who are familiar with circle time so they can support children with additional needs or quiet/loud children

Starting off

- Establish circle time rules e.g. everyone needs to listen when someone is talking, adults and children alike; turn taking
- You could play a particular piece of music to settle the children into Circle Time
- Children may wish to take their shoes off

Ideas for introducing a Circle Time session:

- Sing the greeting song to everyone individually 'Hello everyone , how are you?' and encourage each child to respond to describe their feelings - thumbs up, sideways or down or to call out 'good, OK, sad, angry, fed up, happy
- Or sing 'How do you feel today?'
- A warm up game is played e.g. passing around the conch and introducing yourself or using a soft ball, say the name of the person you are going to throw the ball to and then throwing it or passing round a hand shake or smile
- Smiley face ball can be used to pass round - you could draw sad face on the back
- Using a teddy with happy/sad/cross/excited mask to describe our feelings

Ideas for closing a Circle Time session:

- Sending a Mexican wave round the circle; passing round a hand shake; lying down and listening to some music; singing Good bye song 'Good bye everyone, it's time to go, Good bye everyone its time to go, See you again next time'
- Do always leave time for the children to ask questions and show you are listening by your attention, expression and body language that you value their contributions.

Through creating the right Circle Time environment and through asking open-ended questions, children can share their feelings, views, thoughts, and opinions

- How does that make you feel?
- Why does that happen?
- What do you think?
- What is your favourite....?
- How does it work?
- What does that remind you of?
- Can you think of something.....?
- Can you remember a?

Resources: Both books are in the TCC Professional Library based at Daisy

- 'The Little Book of Circle Time'
- Circle Time for Early Years

Policy formulated on: Dec 2009

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Signed: _____