

Responsive Care Policy

Statement of Purpose

We recognise that all children have a right to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included and that it is the role of responsive adults to ensure this. Children thrive socially and emotionally when care, interest and sensitivity to their needs is shown by staff. Research has highlighted the importance of nurture and attachment in supporting brain development and the consequences of neglect. This is supported through [GIRFEC](#), using the wellbeing indicators. Relationships are key in making the child feel valued, safe and secure and are at the heart of learning and development. The following policy outlines Torphins Playgroup's guidance to staff on providing an environment based on responsive care.

Nurturing Relationships

Each child will be allocated a key worker within the Playgroup setting who will be their prime caregiver and key link with the child's family. The key worker is determined after the child's settling sessions and determined by who they naturally bond with. It can be changed over time if a child shows a stronger connection or preference to a member of staff. Our staff are trained, competent, skilled, and are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes. It is the responsibility of the key worker to form positive relationships with the child and family that allow them to become aware of the child's preferences, needs and wider family influences that impact on the child in order to respond sensitively at all times. All staff should foster relationships of trust and confidence with children and families attending the Playgroup.

Responsive interactions between adults and children encourage language development and social skills. Staff should maximise these opportunities by talking and listening to children during care routines, meal and snack times, play etc. as well as during planned learning activities. Staff should be aware that children are very sensitive to relationships between adults and should strive to present a good role model of positive, respectful relationships and interactions both with other members of staff and also with parents.

Rights of the Child

Staff should respect the rights of the child to influence decisions relating to them. Article 12 of the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#) states that children have a right to express their views and have their opinions taken into account appropriate to the child's level of maturity. Very young children are able to express preferences through use of gesture, smiling, crying and by their level of engagement. Staff need to be sensitive to these indicators.

Respecting Individuality

Children should be valued for their ethnic background, language, culture, faith and family

circumstances. Staff should respond positively to and celebrate this diversity. Staff should always demonstrate respect for children's home values and social experiences. Where children have physical or learning difficulties, staff should support them so that they feel included, responding sensitively to ensure fairness, equality and opportunity.

Children's needs vary as they develop, and staff should be aware of how best to support them. [Realising the Ambition: Being Me \(Scottish Government 2020\)](#) offers practical advice for staff on responding appropriately to the developmental needs of babies, toddlers and the young child. Staff should be familiar with this guidance and use it in practice and observations. While accepting that a child's age offers a general guide to expectations of development, we recognise that all children develop at their own individual rate. Staff will use personal observations and assessments to enable them to support the child's development responsively.

Continuity of Care

Young children benefit from familiar and positive routines. Their key worker should discuss the child's care with their parents, taking their views and wishes into consideration. It is the key worker's responsibility to ensure that other members of staff are aware of any care preferences expressed by parents, as per their personal care plan, in line with statutory requirements. This will ensure continuity of approach.

While consideration needs to be taken of our daily routines, staffing availability and other practicalities, care routines such as feeding, changing and sleep should be responsive to the child's needs in the first instance. In order to support a positive experience for the child, transitions from home to the Playgroup and on to other settings should be carefully planned in conjunction with the parent, taking the child's views into consideration. The nature and speed of the transition will be in response to the individual child's needs.

Sleep

We will be responsive to the needs of children in our care, recognising that sleep is vital to their health, wellbeing, learning and development and support children to sleep when they choose to. We will provide safe and cosy spaces which are comfortable and away from distractions, where children can rest or sleep.

A safe sleep policy for reducing the risks and making sleep time safe is followed by staff.

We will follow the Scottish Death Trust guidance on providing a safe sleeping environment to minimise the risks. Children will never sleep in buggies or chairs.

Partnership Working

We view parents as partners in their child's care, learning and development. As main caregivers, we respect their unique knowledge of the child. We will involve parents in all decisions regarding their child and offer support and information, where necessary, to encourage a consistent approach to the child's care from all significant adults. Where appropriate, we will work closely with other agencies such as Health, Social Work and



Psychological Services in the best interest of the child. We will strive to attain the best possible outcomes for them and ensure they are appropriately involved in discussions and decisions that affect them, all the while recognising that the wellbeing of the child is paramount.

Environments

Article 31 of the UNCRC firmly asserts the child's fundamental right to play freely and make choices about their own learning. Torphins Playgroup environment will reflect opportunities for play that respond to individual children's needs. We aim to provide an environment where all children feel welcome and secure, and which responds to their varying needs for familiarity and safety, stimulation and challenge, quiet spaces, boisterous play, indoor and outdoor experiences, reflection or participation, controlled risk taking, fun and enjoyment. All of these experiences will be supported by attuned staff. Young children are very aware of and responsive to atmosphere and staff should be aware of any subliminal messages given through body language or tone of voice.

March 2024