

child protection case. Friendly and open communication, a positive approach to children's behaviour or helping children learn to keep themselves safe are all significant parts of the work of a early years, school or out-of-school setting. Such approaches will not, unfortunately, guarantee that children in your care are never abused. There is no certain method for total child protection. Yet good practice will increase the chances for children to speak up rather than keep silent and turn to a trusted adult to help them deal with and recover from the experience.

Scenarios

These scenarios raise issues that are not all focussed on individual children or young people. Use the information in each scenario to explore ideas yourself or through a discussion with colleagues or fellow students. You could consider the following questions:

- 1 What are the main issues raised in this scenario?
- 2 How might some of the problems or dilemmas have arisen? Some difficulties can have developed from good intentions that have gone awry.
- 3 What needs to be done or said now and by whom?

You will find a commentary on the scenarios from page 234.

Meadowbank Nursery

A division has developed between staff in a large nursery over approaches to the physical care of babies and toddlers. Two practitioners feel that very young children should be given time and attention for their personal care routines. The other two practitioners who work with the youngest children argue that everyone is supposed to focus on educational activities and that changing and feeding time is 'just care'. A situation has now developed where toddlers vote with their feet and go to the more caring practitioners to be changed and if they want any personal attention. Their colleagues now say that the children are spoiled and should not be able to exercise this kind of choice.

Happy Days Nursery

This private nursery and others within the same chain have promoted access to the nursery website as a way for parents to join in their child's day. The baby room team in Happy Days have reached an uncomfortable position now with one mother who uses the viewing facility a considerable amount. She then phones from her office to direct her toddler's day: that his nap is being allowed to continue for too long or that he is not being given enough attention compared with the other toddlers. Today she has started to comment on the behaviour of other children in the room.

Pike Lane Pre-school

Students on placement at Pike Lane have reported back to their tutor their distress over how the children are treated. Three- and four-year-olds are run through a very structured session in which they have little or no choice about activities and are expected to sit still for a long time. Children who fidget or who try to move across to the 'wrong' activity are told off at length and threatened with losing their short time out in the garden. The students report that children who have toileting accidents are told they are 'dirty' and 'stupid'. The end of session group called circle time is run mainly as a way to highlight which children have failed to behave well today. The students tried to raise their concerns with the pre-school leader and were told firmly that the parents wanted this kind of strong regime, on the educational and discipline front, and so the pre-school was meeting the demands of partnership.

Longmead Primary School

Staff and parents are keen for the children to learn to swim and groups are walked to the nearby leisure centre. Several children say that they do not like the swimming coach, that he is 'horrid' and 'shouts all the time'. There is an incident in which two parents, who are helping with the group, get into an argument with the coach about his insistence that tired children continue to swim widths without stopping. Their concerns are raised in a meeting but the head takes the view that, although the coach can appear sharp and rather impatient, he is successful in getting children to swim. Plans are raised that the eldest children form a swimming team for a gala and that the coach will give them extra tuition. Parents start to say that their children do not want to have extra lessons from this swimming coach.