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| How would I define inclusion? | **Round table discussion** | Have you read **Inclusion in the Early Years**  By Cathy Nutbrown, Peter Clough, Frances Atherton? |
| Section  3.1  Hmmm, if only we had a resource to encourage reflective practice | **Question;**  **What do we mean by inclusion?**  **What do we mean by diversity?**  “........That’s the thing, I think a lot of people think they know what inclusion means, sort of the dictionary definition, but it probably means something different to each of us round the table.  … so what do we mean by inclusion, what do we mean by diversity…  …and I think, like we said didn’t we, when we were first talking about the questions, that diversity is sort of all of us round this table, all the people that we come into contact with, and inclusion is how we involve everybody in what we’re doing or making everybody feel a part of what it is that we’re doing.  I think lots of people think in practitioner settings, that inclusion is treating children the same or, y’know, saying to them we are all the same but......it’s about equality of opportunity.....not actually the same, we are different  What might some of these be?  Yes celebrating diversity.  To ensure equality of opportunity, there are different steps to take for different children, different families, for them to take and for practitioners to take I think.  For me, I think one of the biggest things is the reflective element, for people to be reflective about their own values and I think along with what you were saying about in that process of including people, you have to identify what might be a barrier for people to be inclusive, and for me, one of the big ones is my own prejudice or my own – just my own self, it doesn’t even have to be prejudice, but in the process of being how we might exclude people consciously or unconsciously or kind of inadvertently?  ......and I mean on top of that as well, there’s individual, not necessarily prejudice but practices, which may exclude groups as well and group cultures which may exclude families and children, and it’s being reflective about that and how you work with that as well.  **[There’s ]**quite a good diagram for that....... these three circles, the individual in the middle and the culture around them, and then society bigger than that structure, and how those three things relate, so interrelated and ......together...... Like the Brofenbrenner but this is person, culture, structure, and it’s recognising that society and policies plays a part, our environment plays a part and our individual perceptions and attitudes.  Here is a link to the Brofenbrenner Model  http://cer.upei.ca/files/cer/RECD.Monograph.Framework.pdf  .......it became very clear that the one thing we felt very passionate about inclusion was that it wasn’t something that you just wheeled out when you needed to……it was something that was just good practice, so for instance, doing Makaton on a daily basis, not because you have any non-verbal children in, so when you do get a child in that would respond well to Makaton, it’s already in place, so the other children aren’t turning around and going, well why are we doing this, oh it’s for them, y’know, it is sort of making inclusive practice part of your daily practice even down to the subtleties of the books you read and the sort of…....the images you have. and even the food in your home corner and that sort of thing.  It’s embedded throughout  It’s embedded in the practice, it’s a part of kind of what you are, who you are…  And when you say, even down to the subtleties, if you sort of reverse that and say, those are actually the basics, it starts from there…it’s how you feel and think and how that’s shared between the practitioners within the setting and how the setting is....  And to ensure that it is actually meeting and reflecting the groups of children that you actually have, as well as representing wider than that, so that anybody who comes in is included and you have to revisit that as a practitioner and as a group again and again and again to ensure you don’t ever hit a stage where its like, that’s it, we do that, it’s coming back to it again and again.  I mean a bit of a sticking point for me as well is how we can do that as adults or practitioners, it’s how do we know that children feel included that is difficult, y’know.  Leuven scales  **A Process-Oriented Child Monitoring System for Young Children**  Ferre Laevers  It’s usually when you sort of start to look at the Leuven scales isn’t it, as long as their sort of wellbeing and they’re involved and engaged in stuff, it usually means that all is OK.  Children’s voices.....but how about the youngest or voiceless?  it’s still difficult to really ascertain with young children isn’t it.  I think that’s part of it and I think that’s really where children’s voice comes in, when building for children a concept, that they can have a say in their own environment and a say in their own wellbeing so – and you could have the observation that we do with a baby, you say, well we’re looking at the indicators of wellbeing and what they’re doing, and I think – because I don’t think one is born with an innate expectation to be included, I think there’s the desire there but I think, people – children can become socialised into not being included and expect that to be a certain way, so it’s about teaching from that very first stage that they can expect to be included.  Talking about how we reflect on our practice and this is something that’s come up with us quite often, we’re very lucky in the fact that we get to have staff meetings, right now we’re getting to sit around and do this, and it’s not always easy for people, group, practitioners, parents, carers, to do that, and how you manage that and how you maintain that, and reflect on all these different ideas, and refreshed practice reviews and just talk things through, cos I think that in terms of how we do manage to be as inclusive as we are, and I’m not saying we always get it right, but a huge part of that is working together, respecting each other.  How can we facilitate this process if working within a settling where opportunities for group discussion are rare?  ........questioning each other........Challenging each other.  That’s why things like the scales of involvement and wellbeing I think are very good actually, as a way of talking with the staff group, cos if you’re going through a list of children and looking at that, and working out, well if the child isn’t feeling involved and their wellbeing scores are quite low, that can be a really helpful tool in looking at your practice and talking about, well is that child – what’s happening for that child and looking around in the environment. I think it’s a really useful tool, it’s really helpful to have tools when you’re talking about differences like that.  I think especially if it’s something that you monitor regularly so then you can see the dips and the peaks and the troughs and…  Point of interest: The Index was mentioned by a trainer and most practitioners had not heard of it or were not using this model of audit......  How do we connect up theory and practice , keep up to date etc, etc  How helpful do you find the Index for Inclusion for now, do you use that in your setting – cos that’s a good tool as well because it looks at those policies and practices and attitudes doesn’t it, cultures… Do you use that then?  No we don’t.  Do you want to say a bit about what it is?  It’s developed by the centre for Studies in Inclusive Education (CSIE). They’ve done one for early years and schools. A copy of that went into every school in the year 2000, I think as a sort of response to – it was some …agreement that was sort of Europe wide, sort of worldwide agreement about how we should support children with special educational needs and disabilities into mainstream settings, and so sort of arising from that sort of legislative move, they developed this Index for Inclusion and it went into every school I do believe in the country, and so it’s got sort of lists of questionnaires, sort of that help you go through and its very, very detailed  …do you use it in your setting?  We have, yes, we have used it and we thought – we’ve kind of incorporated it into our training because it’s for practitioner settings too.  it’s sort of in use in primary schools and there’s an early years one, and it looks at policies, how we develop policies, how we develop practice and how we develop cultures to support inclusion, and each of those layers are then investigated in more detail, so it goes through a whole sort of questionnaire, is everybody welcomed, is everybody given…  So it’s like an audit?  It’s like an audit – thank you, that’s the word – of your practice…  …and you can identify areas, [which need attention, for example] oh actually we don’t do or actually that parent doesn’t feel welcome, and the idea is that you ask parents to complete the audit and you ask all colleagues so you get a sort of whole list of who – of everybody that’s involved in your setting, so it’d be interesting to see if anybody else sort of – do you find it helpful? Because actually a lot of people don’t use it and…  I think it’s quite weighty material isn’t it…what we tend to promote more is the Inclusion Development Programme booklets – did you see those?  They did one on behaviour and one on communication…  They were great.…and actually those, yeah, those are really good cos it’s a sort of slim booklet with a type of checklist thing inside......And you get a disc, .....But they can just like do little bits of it at a staff meeting  National Strategies  The one on the traveller’s is great as well isn’t it, it’s really good.........  Follow links from Reflective Teaching website  I believe the website to go with the book actually would be able to have the National Strategies things on it..... so we’d be able to put some links to some of these things.  -------------------------------------------------------------  **To what extent is inclusive practice an attitude of mind or a collection of policies, procedures and theories?**  I think it can be bits of all of those as well because you as the individual can be working in a setting because you’re working inclusively and maybe the setting has policies that are inclusive, it doesn’t necessarily mean the whole staff team will work inclusively or that the team works inclusively all of the time, it goes back to that checking on what you’re doing, reflecting on how you work with other professionals.  *“Inclusive policies only really find meaning in inclusive practices”*  Nutbrown & Clough  I suppose if the policies procedures are good, they should be developed and something that should be looked into regularly……so that if people – if somebody new comes or if somebody’s steering a little away from what everyone had agreed, there are ways of reminding one another that’s what they should be for and not just be something for Ofsted to approve.  Well I think that’s it, it kind of, I think those things, they go in a cycle you’ve got your individuals, your members of your team, their attitudes, their experiences, as a team you feed into your policies and your policies feed back into your practice and it’s that constant cycle which, like you say, you review regularly…  And I think if you join a setting......a lot of it is really… embedded and so when you’re fairly new.....and you get there and you can feel the ethos and you sort of know whether you’re right for that setting or not, so you know whether you already fit into their policies and procedures, and I think a good setting should – that the ethos should – it should scream out to you as something ongoing.  I mean that’s done through.................the sort of questions you ask when you’re recruiting and what’s important to you.  I was just going to say, things come along that challenge you all the time and we reflect and you respond so that your attitude of mind doesn’t stay the same as you go through your life, it’s constantly changing cos people do come along and present us with new experiences and new ideas, and that’s part of being reflective, so again, that will feed back into your policies and procedures and they will change and they will shift, and they might do their own cycles and what have you but that’s just part of…  .....But it’s also being able to come into a team as somebody really new and still feeling that you have a voice and you’d be heard and influence what happens, and as well as learning through the culture of the group, it’s – cos in lots of ways, having a group where lots of members of staff have been there for a very long, to come into that as a culture can be quite off-putting and quite a challenge to work with sometimes.  **Working With Others**  http://www.workingwithothers.org/early-years/  that’s putting inclusion into practice isn’t it…  …it’s part of your – if you’re a longstanding member of staff, part of your good practice for inclusion is to ensure that newcomer feels welcomed isn’t it, it’s not just about the children, it’s about the adults as well…  The other side of that.....it just makes me think about it is – and if someone’s been there for a very long time and they feel that they’re becoming bypassed because new people are coming in with ideas, it’s a matter of making sure that everybody is constantly on the ball…and that everyone has a voice.  **Perceptual Positions**  Carmen Bostic St. Clair John Grinder  …and I think, as I said, about attitude of mind, I think it can go even again below that, when you look at what everyone’s perspective from their own different experience cos that’s where the attitudes come from, so when somebody feels or finds it difficult to include a child or a member of staff, then it’s usually something to do with their personal experience in the past or recently or whatever, then that’s where I think really good reflective practice can help because being able to look at where that’s come from and understand it, and make that person feel aware and able to deal with that is really important because otherwise it can become very much just, oh, y’know, I’ve obviously got the wrong attitude.  In a non-judgemental way....  …and so airing that and talking it through with colleagues in a sort of very safe environment and not – where you’re not gonna feel judged but you can discuss it, move forward with it, maybe have a couple of steps back, but you know what I mean, I think it’s a whole process and then…  Because if you can’t say how you feel, then how are you ever going to move forward with it….  ….sometimes, people have a real fear or a real unhappiness about these things, it’s not necessarily, just really have to try and understand what it is that’s going on for them because actually it can be, very emotional and very, very difficult for them actually.  Yeah, it can really affirm or help to affirm a staff group as well …if that’s done well, I think if somebody is struggling with something and maybe you use a policy that somebody might be struggling with or some aspect of a policy, to actually go through that together, so it’s not just do like a yearly review but it’s getting those policies out if, and that can be quite affirming cos it can be quite challenging for the staff group but it can be – if people can be honest about what their worries and concerns are, it can bring everybody more together.  **Citizenship and Inclusion in the early years**  http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09669760903424523  definitely.  And I think building up policies and procedures and theories over – in something like inclusion gives a certain transparency to the setting as well, from the off, it sort of says, this is who we are and this is what we believe in, and this is what you will expect from us and this is what we will offer and we will deliver.  And also if we get it wrong,.…we will change them.  **Equalities Act**  http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/4  …because policies have to be changed because sometimes, y’know, as a staff group you don’t always get it right do you, so sometimes you have to change them a bit.  Well look at the protective characteristics in the Equalities Act, they change all the time, according to the need of the demographic of the country at the time.  Or according to the politics of the cabinet… (Laughter)  One of the other things, just quickly, on the – thinking about when people start, getting together and talking, I think it’s really useful to have some kind of buddying and/or mentoring system going on in any staff group, because there are some people who find it difficult to speak into a larger group or may speak but not say what’s really coming from the heart so it might be harder for them, and so if there’s a system set up where people can have someone that they can exchange views with on a really regular basis, and also I think having somebody coming in from outside so that whoever is normally in charge of that kind of thing or puts themselves in charge of it or whatever, they can relax and there can be somebody who can kind of, perhaps a couple of times a year, to just lead and help to make sure that everyone gets an equal opportunity to speak.  We struggle with that in our setting when – now we’ve got a lot of part-time staff, you lose that coherence of the group...  Yeah, some coherence but it also brings greater diversity.  Well, I mean typical of our group ......we started a reflective journal, which we’ve continued and if there’s something for discussion– you can sort of have conversations in that and if it won’t go away within the reflective journal, it’ll be brought to the next staff meeting, so that – we found that that’s helped quite a lot with the fact that we don’t often get to see each other.  So how might we enable this?  But going back to your question about this state of mind on policies and what you were saying earlier, about that actually a lot of early years and a lot of childcare in early year settings don’t have staff meetings and don’t have that space for it, it’s actually really difficult to ensure inclusion, in that people feel a part of it or heard it’s quite a big challenge for the early years sector isn’t it,  I think there’s a lot of fear of saying the wrong thing  Absolutely, absolutely.  fear of saying or using the wrong words…  Well again, it comes down to that judgement, you fear that people are gonna make that judgement, I mean it is difficult  I think that, for me, that’s one of the biggest hurdles, is that unless you’ve got sort of policies or somebody that comes in or a strong manager or somebody of strong early years professional, who’s in there saying, y’know, what’s going on in this department, it’s…  Or an outside network to go to, to talk about bringing it back into that group  there needs to be somebody who’s sort of moving this agenda along but I think a lot of – I was quite surprised by how it’s just sort of not thought about at all by some practitioners in early years settings  Section  2.3  …we’re working inclusively with them but they may do or say something that’s not inclusive, you’ve then got the policies as the backbone of actually, within the setting, this is what we do and this is why we do it.  Section  3.3  **What are the consequences of not getting it right in the early years education?**  OK, we’ve got all this theory, evidence…why are these things really important, what are the consequences, why do you work in the jobs that you do – what is it that you don’t want happening in the future?…I think people can become quite blasé and its like, oh another programme, another procedure…  Children are going to grow up to be the adults and have the attitudes that they had when they were little that have never been worked with, and that will just continue the problems that are currently existing in our society which could otherwise have been worked with, it’s another way to work…  I don’t know if I’d see it so much as about consequences but I think one of my great motivators for working in the sector is that actually it’s the age group with the greatest opportunity…cos actually you can’t go back and put things in later and it’s far easier to start off at those foundations with seeing – creating a world for those children that you want those children to continue to live in almost, rather than getting a message about …I think it’s about getting it right from the start because that means it can go on like that…  Section  1  it’s harder when you’re pushing against something that’s already – I can imagine, I mean I don’t know because I don’t work in schools, but I imagine as children get older, if there’s a view or an idea that they’ve already kind of got in them, that’s – you’re battling against something that’s already there…  And probably in schools, you don’t have that communication and that opportunity to work alongside the parents as much, whereas in early years, your relationship with the parents is as important as it is with the children which, I’m not criticising this but in schools that sort of goes a little bit more, you tend to only see them at parents night and, to have a moan (laughs) every now and then but…  Well that’s if the school is inclusive in trying to include parents and include all parents and separated parents and carers and children in the widest sort of description, but that stands for us as early years settings as well.  Look on web for;  **Fatherhood Institute**,  **Out For Our Children**  **AmazeBrighton,**  There’s been quite a lot of research done hasn’t there, I seem to remember … it’s around children being exposed to difference before a certain age and not perceiving difference as anything, taking it in their stride and not noticing the fact, but whereas I think by the time they’ve started school at five/six/seven, they’re starting to pick out the things that make them different, so if they haven’t been exposed to things before then, it’s difficult for them to – other views can come in that aren’t so productive.  ????? link for this  I feel it happens much earlier, I think it happens, from the day they’re born actually, all of that, and that identity formation, it’s just – it’s so deep isn’t it, it’s so deep,  I know from my own children the kind of messages that we sort of try and promote at home and then as they’ve got older and they’ve gone to school and they’ve come home, and I think sometimes they say things and they wait for my response (laughter) or I hear them talking in their bedroom quietly and the next day I was like, what was that…  they pick up on all those from us but even…  It’s all subliminal.  …and that’s why again, it’s so important when you look at our settings and the environments and things that we’re putting the children into, that there is all these messages, that it is embedded in practice, it’s a part of what we do, but they’re just seeing it all around them.  But it’s also about us as well and it’s about our responses, when you said the word responses, and that’s really crucial isn’t it, if a young child says – I mean I’ve heard this a lot, a young child says something, they don’t like this person because, I don’t know, because of their skin or because they’re from a traveller background, if they say, I don’t like, y’know, they live in a caravan, but I hear it quite often where a practitioner will say, well you can’t say that…you can’t say that, right, I’m never gonna say that again in front of those sort of people but I’m gonna just carry on thinking it  You can’t say it…not you can’t think it.  I can’t say it but I’m gonna think it though, you’ve got to be so prepared in your responses with young children when they say difficult things.  And the parents.  And workers and…  we have to be prepared to challenge and it will be a matter of challenging other adults but the older the child gets, then it’s going to be challenging the child as well…  …I mean what we present to children is not challenging to them, as you …we’re quite probably challenging someone who has an attitude that’s been embedded in them since they were young  …and that’s what happens within a staff group, secretly, privately or openly, and that’s what happens definitely with parents and however else, and so we have to be prepared to think about how we can challenge without being unkind and without cutting off people’s opportunity to express themselves and to understand what could be different and why it’s important, cos it’s really, really basic stuff and hardly anyone has had that opportunity, and it does start from birth.  I think sometimes just a simple answer rather than, like you say, than a challenge, just you answering. We had a thing where we had a little boy in the home corner making tea, feeding a baby, whilst wearing a dress, and dad came to pick him up and he said, “what is he like, oh what am I gonna make of him, what’s he gonna be when he’s older?” and I sort of looked over at him and he was sat feeding this baby with a bottle, and I said, “a dad” (laughter) like that, and he sort of went, yeah (laughs) you could see it just sort of like, the cogs ticking and that’s not threatening, yeah I’ll go with that, that’s fine, y’know, it’s sort of OK.  I think that’s one of the things about not getting it right which is difficult, is about not – so for me not wanting my child to be a social experiment, so for me to tell him that it’s OK to do these things and it’s OK to wear pink and it’s OK to wear jewellery and it’s OK to – and then sending him out into a world that’s not accepting of that sort of thing, and I think that’s quite difficult when – I think a lot of people have a lot of fear about that, I have, yes but it’s all very well saying that but actually when they go to school, they’ll get beaten up or, …  you have those fears but you still then empower and enable the child to actually to deal with the consequences  You’ve got to have a real self-confidence then.  I was just thinking what happens if you don’t get it right and that example of the dad in the home corner and actually that’s then in the moment to challenge, and I was talking to someone over the half term about LGBT practice and learning, and something that I’ve never really thought about actually is I think when we talk about LGBT families and same sex families, we’re often talking about, well a child with two mums or two dads and how are they represented and how is that child’s experience represented, which of course is really important, but there’s also the children who will grow up to be gay or that, y’know…  and I think the thing I find – the whole – the pink/blue argument, is that actually some children will grow up to be trans and actually did they see their experience, their life experience affirmed at an early age and somebody say, really powerfully say, yes it’s OK, and I think the consequence of getting that right in the early years is that actually that can protect and buffer a child through the discrimination they will face throughout the rest of our lives, they would have formed a concept that that is fundamentally OK and I think that’s – that’s really the question isn’t it.  Yeah I agree and that’s what the unique child is about isn’t it, that whole concept.  Yeah and it goes back to that whole EPPE thing as well…a preschool and a good nursery actually being able to buffer a mediocre primary school and things.  I relate to that as an early years worker who grew up as a white male with all the attitudes that were then put on me, working in early years just completely humanised me (laughs)  …we’re all works in progress as well  … it doesn’t matter what happens in the future, imagine a child who’s got totally excluded the whole way through because nobody’s ever reflected anything about what was going on for them at home, so they kept things totally compartmentalised and a kind of mental health may result from a complete compartmentalisation, who knows.  Absolutely, well that’s what the statistics show isn’t it, about achievement and social exclusion,  But the trouble is, what we’re discussing here is basically what most education ministers and governments – whatever their leaning – doesn’t seem to grasp is that what we’ve said here is, the most important way to get things right is to get a child in the earliest form you possibly can and their parents, and make a difference. I think, y’know, all the problems that you get in early teens and things like that can be really ironed out by decent early years and support and things, not just in inclusion but in a lot of aspects.  I don’t disagree with you, the intention behind that or the passion behind it but, as you mentioned before about cultures and communities and societies, I think early years can do a lot but I would also worry about the entire responsibility of the wellbeing of society to be put, on early years practitioners. I think there are other things that work in tandem so – it’s not that I disagree but I just raise this as issue- early years education can not sort everything out.  I just think saying we’ve got to get it right puts a huge pressure on us  You can only do the best that you can do and you don’t get it right all the time, and that’s where the reflection comes in  That’s fine if you’re dealing with a specific situation like you gave the example of the dad, I gave the example of the child saying something and being told, you can’t say that, I mean in order to work something out sometimes, if you’re talking about specific situation, you can just make, a short comment or if a child says something that might be problematic, you can say, well that’s interesting, we’ll have a little think, you don’t have to respond straight away…  …that’s why reflection is so important because you wanna think about it and maybe you do a group thing with a whole story…, but it’s really important that you do it in a very relaxed way, if a child says something that is problematic, it’s so important that you just are relaxed and you don’t just gasp in horror…  What I find myself is that it’s an OK message to give to a child, we don’t have all the answers but together we can find it out.  Yes and actually being open to coming back and changing your mind.  It’s the dialogue isn’t it.  Yes.  You’re in an atmosphere where you’re able to talk about it and make a mistake.  But also, I think as a practitioner, to be able to say – cos I know we say this a lot and you all might gasp – but because we have so many diverse families at the setting, sometimes we’ll have to say no, we can’t do that at nursery, rather than you can’t do that– cos we don’t want to completely pooh-pooh everything that they might do at home or everything they stand for at home. So I think that there is that sort of understanding that there are two places and maybe behaviours are OK in both places but we just want them still to feel accepted but just say, that’s not acceptable at nursery, rather than that’s not acceptable, full stop  Something that I think we ought to really take on board here though is the amount of contact that any of us has with parents I think… we can’t do it all on our own  well of course not, I was assuming that we were including parents and wider outside places in the community that hopefully we’re engaging with…  …so, children would go into this or that place up the hill, that we build a relationship with that place, that we get to know, we move back and forth between it, it is terribly difficult once you’re in a nursery situation setting to have parents properly involved because naturally they need to do other things, but I think then again, that makes me fully realise how important it is when you’re doing group work in somewhere like a children’s centre and you have the parents with you all the time, and the work is as much with the parent as it is with the child.  And the children are seeing these interactions that’s what’s being modelled, that we sort things out by talking and working together and if we can’t do that, we work together to find a solution.  **EPPE Report**  Parents are the primary educators  I was just gonna say, I think on the point about working with parents and including them in that way, I think there has been a trend ever since the start of the children’s centre project towards this sort of Pen Green model of the professional knows best almost, and I think there’s a degree – personally, I feel quite strongly there’s a degree of reclaiming that needs to go on around the sort of model that I work in at the moment, which is the preschool model where we are our parents, we’re owned by them, they are our trustees, they are our committee members…and we move as fast as they do and they set the agenda, and I think having models that are fundamentally about parent empowerment because, y’know, other situations, other – having worked in various different children’s centres, the lengths they’re going to, to pay face value sometimes to including parents is really quite shocking…and I think actually parents fundamentally owning the service or the experience is really important.  Although please do check out **Involving Parents in their Children’s Learning** by Whalley and the Pen Green Team  …the kind of more minute interactions than that though I was thinking, which is of course where it would start with, but the momentary second by second interaction between the parent and the child within the group can also help to define that parent’s attitude towards the centre, y’know, is their parenting being responded to positively, do they feel that they’re beginning to belong somewhere and have an engagement with other people, all of those things, and those are the things that will lead them towards wanting to have ownership, otherwise, quite rightly, a lot of them would feel like, no I don’t want to be a part of that thanks.  Children pick up so much as well on that partnership you have with the parents, they see – their parents are their world and if they see you interacting in a positive way with their parents and in terms of, I was thinking about what you were saying about providing an experience or giving children the space that – and in the setting – to feel that they are in that very safe place to do that and to share that with the parents and work in partnership with them, and it goes both ways, so the backgrounds of a family and being seen to work in partnership with them and respond and change and working things through I think that partnership is vital in that message that we’re giving.  So I think something that people potentially reading this and certainly people who I talk to have concerns about, that level, that sort of deep involvement of parents, is how do you then use your expertise to manage a setting and not have, if you’ve got 60 children, you could have 120, all with different ideas or, how do you then mediate all the different ideas and get something that’s cohesive and working – does that make sense…rather than sort of, y’know, trying to please all these different people.. if they’re contradictory or they don’t marry well together, is that through discussion or (pause) sorry, I’ve put you on the spot– but I just see it as quite a challenging…  I suppose you invite parents to develop your policies, so you know then that they helped develop them, that they’re in agreement with what you’re doing.  I think policies are really difficult especially for our setting, where the parents literacy levels are low, or there are EAL families, actually, if I show them a book full of policies, they’re not going to engage…they’ll say no thank you.  I think it is a bit of a mess in a way…  … it’s a clash, in our case, it’s a clash between, 60 odd parents who are experts on their children and seven experts in childcare or, professional practitioners, and I think, that’s what reflective practice is about and that’s something that’s specific to the early years as well, is that there are so many different needs and, even in a two to five setting, you’re working with children who are twice as old as each other so they’ve got twice as much life experience and the needs are so diverse, and it is about striving to include every individual child  I think for people in training, it’s good to hear that actually, that it might be messy, it might not always run smoothly it’s about letting it get messy.  Yes exactly and not fearing that and trying to organise it.  See what rises from the mess.  allowing the diversity to exist rather than imposing order.  I’d go with that.  So I think one of the interesting things that you said there was about valuing each other’s expertise, so they’re an expert in their child but you also have your expertise in educating and caring for large numbers of children at the same time, so actually this is a bit of a negotiation  I think if you’ve got a good key person system as well, that interaction between the key person and parent should be enough to make them aware of how their child’s getting on and have the chance to say what they would like their child to do or not do and all the rest of it, and to build a good picture of the child and the child/parent relationship and the child/other adult relationship, and should also help them to have enough interest in what else is happening around, what’s really going on in here then cos this is what my child is doing, and I think a model at somewhere like a community nursery where albeit doesn’t always have, more than a handful of parents involved in it, but where people are actually elected onto committees and have those opportunities, and so the parents are representing the views of other people and it’s their business to go and say to people that you might not really care whether we get a new toilet or not, somebody would really care…  …because a new toilet will mean, this, this and this, and then it might be about something else, and those models are something that we can build on and try to make sure that they’re working rather than that they’re just, paying lip service to inclusion in any of these things that we set up because we get so good at setting up things that should work, that we then spend a lot of energy in trying to, keep them together rather than noticing that they’re not working.  making people fit into your professional model  And making parents not feel done to as well … they’re included.  .....If parents genuinely feel more included and respected then they become empowered to have opinions but if they just feel it’s tokenistic and they just think, yeah, coat’s over there, that’s no help at all, because that’s how they will feel, and if they’ve had a really crap experience of school then….  … you’re so right there, it brings up all those memories doesn’t it, of how they felt with teacher and…  if someone’s just in/out because they’re off to work, as long as everyone’s smiling and sorting out the issues for their children then their confidence will grow and their trust in the key person and the manager will grow, and they’ll feel empowered to say something and ask the questions. Without building trust, which is quite difficult when you’ve got parents scooting off to work or to cry in the corner, you can find you’ve got to work hard for that.  And these things take a lot of time don’t they, when you were talking I was thinking, this is really good, and it takes time, and there are certain things that can help like, you were talking about the parents that scoot off and stuff but, perhaps it’s like home visits, outreach work.  There’s lots of ways for parents to feel part of the action, that is really important so that their children’s self-esteem grows at the same rate as their self-esteem, cos if they’re feeling empowered and respected and that their viewpoint matters, even if it’s not on your tick box, , then it will grow, it’s much easier to have a dialogue with someone who thinks that you are interested in them.  it’s so basic, it’s often missed.  That also goes within the staff team and for the children in the group.  I think it’s also questioning it a stage further as well a lot of the time and be not just a partnership but, really not holding the idea of a partnership as something that is offered to parents by professionals and that parents also offer partnership to practitioners, and that can seem really frustrating sometimes cos if you are spending two hours, not two hours a week or, a lot of time a week talking about the contents of Sammy’s lunchbox because he’ll only eat raisins and breadsticks, and that’s the only thing that that parent wants to talk about, about that child, that can seem, to the professional, that can be enormously frustrating but actually recognising that that’s the partnership that that parent’s offering, that’s their starting point. I’ve got my committee at the minute, the parents are very interested in talking about fundraising for the nursery but they’re not very interested in necessarily talking about the children at the minute, well I’m hoping that one, by expecting that partnership that they want to offer, that they feel comfortable with offering, and working through that, they’ll get to another place where actually you can talk about the practice more and how we can all work together for those children in a more – in a deeper way.    I think that’s where the key person thing comes in as well doesn’t it, and it’s getting – it’s knowing your families and that someone who – let’s say if you were the manager of a 60/70 place nursery, that or a nursery that has them on register, you couldn’t hold all of those people in mind and know that their dog got put down last week or this or that, whereas the keyworker does know that and exactly what you’ve just said, knows that they might want an in-depth conversation about that, rather than, something that’s going to enable you to tick some boxes in the EYFS.  It’s similar to when we first engaged with the traveller family, there are a lot of things, for instance, food that they would bring in that if it was another family, we would sort of have to sort of say quite early on, we do have sort of policies and we have sort of procedures in place and we do look at sort of different diets and this, that and the other, but we knew that it was such a whole picture with them, the very fact they were engaging with us was just so great that if we sort of went straight away and deskilled them by saying, you can’t bring that in, why are you giving them this food, and obviously we wouldn’t say it like that but that’s how they’d hear it, and so there were things like, that we exactly – we listened to what they wanted to talk to us about or what they wanted from nursery and allowed that to happen, and then sort of went backwards almost and sort of worked on the little bits once we got their trust and engagement.  You built relationships and we’re back to that engaging, building trust, building relationships.  cos it’s nurturing the relationship, that’s what all relationships are like in our life, we don’t meet somebody and it’s (snaps fingers)…not very often but (laughter) that’s how relationships work, is that you start at those little points, those little things that you might have in common that you’re kind of working towards and then from there, the good things grow and you can adjust  And I think you can learn a lot from what parents – cos sometimes the thing that you go on and on about is the thing that keeps you awake at night so, you might be sort of aware of all these others but there’s one thing that is the thing that you think of when you wake up, so actually that you can pick up messages if they’re going on and on about the same thing and actually that’s the thing that you need to help them with, and that possibly, from that, you can move on to other things that you might not recognise or even feel that it’s a particularly important thing, but you just need to recognise for that person, that’s what’s going on for them, that that’s at the fore.  It’s the power and dynamics between people.  I was just going to say, it seems almost slightly nervy too doesn’t it, about the relationship between the parent and the professional  I’m leaving my child with you, I can’t upset you because I don’t want you to take it out on them…  I can’t speak for everybody but having a young child made me anxious, I was anxious about everything (laughs) which you might not get the same as the schoolteachers but, when they’re small, it’s just like all of it, guilt about leaving them at nursery…  You have all the theory that you know what’s going to be good for them.  it is to keep that in mind.  and that’s what makes this such a hard job because all the things we’re talking about, keeping in your head here at the same time and trying to also deliver all the other things during the day, it’s to recognise that that’s no easy feat…  going back to that, feeling included as a parent for me, always having something to say about your child, they did this today, and people would always notice, and you’d think, thank you…it didn’t matter what it was, whatever it was, I noticed your child  Not how many times their nappy was changed and how many bottles they had.  It can be something so small and I was quite surprised how significant those things are to make you feel and your child feel included  --------------------------------------------------------------------  **How do we professionally work inclusively with families when you may personally disagree with aspects of their lifestyle?**  It depends what aspects doesn’t it  Maybe establish the relationship first.  Yeah, I think you need to develop the trusting relationship and build connections first.  No, I was thinking more of actually just sort of having a conversation with somebody and it might be – it depends what you’re finding difficult, is it on a personal level or, is it … I mean I’ll just say that personally I don’t like boxing for example, which is a very big part for some traditional traveller children and parents, and I’ve had quite a few discussions about that but I certainly wouldn’t have had those conversations when I was first meeting a family, I’d have them later…  The thing is a discussion about your opinions rather than what you think and how they should change.  Yes, otherwise you’re being – you patronise people don’t you, you’ve got to be honest with people, you can’t say, I just think all your culture’s brilliant, because I mean, in the same way I’ve had conversations with traveller families who say, well I just think a lot of you gorgers, which is a term for non-travellers, which is a bit of an overgeneralisation, but a lot of gorgers, say why are your families so spread out, why aren’t you with your families, where are your parents? why do they live up there and you live down here? how do you see each other? how do you connect when you live so far away?,  We had .......the grandma, and we were able to sit and have a great conversation with her, she sat with us for ages and gave us some real insights, and one of the things she said was I never thought that I would allow my babies to come to a nursery and be looked after by someone who wasn’t family, and she said, I just don’t understand that culture, and she said, I’m loving it and it’s great, but she said, I never thought that would happen because we look after our own...  You see, I don’t understand it either and I do it, that’s the guilt every day…that I shouldn’t be leaving my children, there’s part of me, a strong part of me, doesn’t want to leave them with strangers, I want to be there…  but for all sorts of reasons you make choices  I think the thing about the language you were saying, just that I wanted to add, was about if you say, no you shouldn’t do that or that’s wrong, like you’re just pushing someone into a corner anyway and the chances are that even if they can also see the problems with it, I know I would just come out fighting and defending my position, whereas actually, if you say to somebody, oh have you thought about this, about that or, y’know, potentially I might see this like this which might be different to you, it’s different.  One of the few resources to look at this in depth is **Men in the Nursery: Gender and Caring Work** by Cameron, Moss and Owen.  I think sometimes as a male worker, sometimes you’re presented with assumptions, presumptions and attitudes that are really like, you shouldn’t be looking after my child, and sometimes it’s directly said to your face as well but then remaining professional within that and remaining inclusive…and I guess leading by example just do your job very professionally, as well as you can and as part of a team, but you get those, the family present all sorts of things that you may or may not individually agree with.  And there’s also, I’m just thinking of an example that we’ve had recently where I think ideally you do, you want to build up that relationship and nurture that relationship that you have with the family and the child, but where on a child’s first day, something happened, like you said, it depends if a child is safe, so there was an incident where we were actually starting from a point where we had to deal with that, that was our first interaction with the family, was dealing with that situation where we weren’t sure if the child was safe, and then how you then continue that relationship and continue to be inclusive to a family who are going through all the things that they’ve got going on there and that they’re still wanting to be a part of our community and have that inclusive nurturing relationship that we’re all talking about, so it’s thinking it can work the other way as well.  I mean sometimes that can make a relationship difficult – I mean it must be very hard if they arrive and, you have to have a difficult conversation on the first day, but sometimes, if it’s not about opinions about lifestyles when the relationship’s further down the line that sometimes might come up, but if it’s, dealing with something like safeguarding and – but sometimes actually, not always, but sometimes actually, if it’s dealt with honestly and in…  …in a supportive way, as non-judgemental as you can possibly be, then actually you can be stronger because the relationship’s more honest afterwards isn’t it.  And I think this is where you can lean on your policies and procedures, that’s where you have that transparency…  Yeah, this is sort of like, this isn’t about me as a person and you as a person, this is about me as a setting and responding to you as a parent, carer or whatever your relationship with the child is.  I think you have to be forgiving as well, I know when I’ve suddenly reacted to something and then wished that I hadn’t or I’ve been shocked by something and then thought, well I shouldn’t, I wish I hadn’t presented like that, so you need to – which is hard as well, particularly if it’s you who feels the brunt of that, but actually to be forgiving of people because sometimes people react and then go away and think about it and wish they’d behaved differently…  …and then you carry that with you every time you go in, sort of like, oh no, I said that last time (laughs) OK, I said that last time they came.  I think there’s a difference between working with choices that parents make that we don’t necessarily agree with and then there’s a negotiation there and perhaps sometimes there is agreeing to disagree on things  …but then I also think that are innate fundamental issues that sometimes either it is put off because it’s too weighty an issue to address properly, one of the things that I was thinking about for instance was parents from a very religious background who object to same sex families, a very common issue in Brighton, and actually I would argue that that makes it very difficult for LGBT affirmative practice because actually, when you bring that practice up, they are parents from a religious background that started objecting. Where does that go and how do you have that conversation, is that a conversation that’s being done in practice?  I think that’s when again, when the policies and procedures kick in, I think if they’d chosen your setting to a certain extent, they know where you’re coming from, they know you’re inclusive, they know that you’re going to embrace all diversities where possible and .....  not all families choose to come and will know what your policies are and what you think about everything…  No, exactly.  See box in section 1 for **Protected Characteristics**  …cos we have families that are sent to us as well.  So talking about what we were saying earlier, about changing your policies as you need to for your demographic, yeah, that’s a thought (pause) where do you draw a line at that, I think in going back to the – you can look at the law though then and you can say, basically sexuality is a protected characteristic in our country  --------------------------------------------------------------------  **How do we support those who are working inclusively and how do we challenge those who we feel are not.**  I think sometimes I’ve found that with some staff, leading by example, they just don’t pick up, for example, so I’m having a rethink and I think OK, my example hasn’t worked, what is – I have to try, I think one of the things is, if it’s absolutely recognisable that this other person might be...thinks that a way of dealing with something is different and unnecessary and a whole variety of other things, that it’s important to just go on and do, but also to do exactly what we’ve been talking about with both child and parent, so building relationships, find what that person’s interests are, find out what it is that makes them tick and what it is that they think is important, and to build a relationship to the point that you can then say, I think this is important and this is why, will you talk to me about it, cos I think that’s really the only way that it ever actually happens and it can take quite a long time…  …and I think that business of allowing somebody to feel secure even though they feel that they may be radically different to you in their approach to the work, in that they might think that you’re going to think that they’re silly because they don’t want to work in the same way as you.  Yeah, it’s again that fear isn’t it?  We keep going back to this, this … for that to happen, whatever the concept is that we’re discussing, is that a relationship needs to be in place first, whether it’s a longstanding one or one that, you’re trying to hit the ground running a little bit with, but that’s the cornerstone of any sort of inclusive relationship.  And that you have to be prepared to be really open to that person and to show when you think you’re making mistakes and the way you don’t understand what they’re doing perhaps so that a lot of the work might come from the person who wants something to change in the first place, I don’t mean you want to see that person to change but or rather a dynamic to change, but then gradually that should change and so then I think it does – certainly things can improve, I’m convinced of that.  But then there’s the danger of the breakdown in the team isn’t there, if you’re challenging someone  It’s the same as just shouting at a child, don’t do that, it’s not gonna have a hugely lasting and beneficial effect for anybody is it  Again, harping back, we can rely on the policies and procedures if they’re so…  Unless you’re a practitioner and this person may be perhaps in a position above you and then it goes into power and management dynamic, they’ve got the policy.  ...Mmm, they’ve probably written the policy (laughter) but we’ve talked a lot about that.  I would have said that it brings in leadership styles…  Yes.  …because I also think there is – there are certain gung-ho approaches that sometimes result in a roundabout way, for example, saying, no, we’re going to try this, we’re just gonna have a go, which I have to do quite frequently with my team, well just give it a go, and there’s all the moaning about it beforehand, and I’m going, we’re just gonna try it for two days, and by day nine, they’re telling me how to do it, and that’s actually…  Yeah and saying it was their idea in the first place (laughter).  Exactly and that’s – I think that that’s also part of it, that actually the culture we have as learners in general and having a culture of learning within our setting, so that the need to learn, the need to learn new things about inclusion is kept soft and malleable, rather than it being a rock solid thing of what good practice looks like.  and giving them a reason behind it so it’s an evidence based reason, not just this is what we’re gonna do, but actually being able to explain to people I think, the reasons for trying it and to see if it works.  But you have to develop that culture of learning because not every place is just intrinsically got a sort of attitude to – because learning is about changing usually isn’t it?  And everyone has to be so secure to do that.  And there are places that that won’t be happening at the moment…  People are frightened about losing their jobs for example, they’ve already got enough to deal with emotionally without thinking about something else changing.  Mmm but it’s having that terminology, fixed mind-set and growth mind-set so what’s your mind-set at the time and if you’re a part of a culture where your mind-set is – the mind-set is very fixed it’s how do you get people to change.  It’s similar to the inclusion stuff, that’s what people see, people see inclusion and inclusive practice as PC and PC has this, that’s a rigid mind-set, whereas actually, inclusive practice ought to be flexible  it’s almost a ridicule isn’t it, you’re being so PC so therefore I’m not gonna think about it cos I wanna put it in a box, that says PC, over there…  And so much of it is about all the things that frighten and threaten me.  Yeah, I was just gonna say that, and it’s about something that’s a fear for other people’s sexuality, other people’s culture, people having jobs and housing and all those things.  And right from the beginning, when we first said, it’s what’s instilled in you, it’s where you’ve come from, your timeline, your story, all those intrinsic things that have been brought up through your childhood, that’s when it comes out, when it starts to challenge you, doesn’t it.  --------------------------------------------------------------------  **Is there a space for separate specialist provision?**  **Mary, are you able to fill this in? There is a voice, I think from outside, ver the recording and I cannot capture what you have said. It doesn’t have to be what you said but just offer an insight. Thank you**  I think that can be a very personal thing and actually causes lots of discussion between us and I think you have your personal belief about it, but actually I do think that some children in Brighton and Hove, there are specialist facilities so we refer to if we do need cos they’re there, so if they weren’t there we wouldn’t but it’s what we have within Brighton and Hove.  And we’re very lucky to have that aren’t we, so…  that does happen with our service but a specialist service, it’s more **???** although parents are trying to have joint provision but they’re not popular within the specialist school or the mainstream schools but it is with parents  And I was just gonna say, I think an aspect of that as well would be separate spaces having empowering space to come back into, so similar for adults, if you had say, dad’s groups or women’s groups or any of those varieties that give people the power to then go back into a mainstream and have that discussion  As you were saying it’s a personal choice and if that choice wasn’t there, then that’s not being inclusive to their sort of needs… those choices.  And as you said earlier, it’s probably affirming – the inner specialist wave, if it’s something that’s not going to happen in a large group platform, to sort of condense it down and make it smaller, you become – you can affirm yourself and make your – and become more unique and become stronger to then go out and maybe deal with whatever life has to throw at you, so like you say, the dad’s group probably helps you to have a voice and deal with other stuff and…  So pushing that question a bit cos I guess it’s different areas to talk about specialist provision because then we could start saying, well should we, have a bilingual preschool that’s just for bilingual children? do you think it would be beneficial to have preschools that cater just for one sex for example, so you’re going, right, we’re going to have girls preschools and boys preschools or…you could push those specialisms, a single parents nursery that’s just for single parents.  And then that might go down to then the ethos of the attitude behind why they are and how they – whether they’re being inclusive or exclusive, so those spaces as spaces for expertise help and being part of everything and everyone around you or whether you’re actually just trying to hide yourself off into your own little space and avoid the rest of that world.  No, it doesn’t have to be a one or the other thing does it, I belong to this group so therefore I’m not going to be involved in this, this and this, it’s about…  Quite often it’s, I belong to this group to give me strength to belong to that group.  Mmm.  Yeah, as a step into something else maybe, yeah. (Pause)  That’s really interesting, I like that concept.  I know, that’s quite a lot to think about, yeah.  Because I just don’t think there’s a right or a wrong, I think there’s some people that really empowers them and other people are just – it doesn’t feel very inclusive, it feels almost too inclusive.  But it’s back to that early years thing that we sort of mentioned earlier, about not having an end result in mind but actually it’s the process and it’s the doing, it’s not that end result and it’s messy and it doesn’t always work, and so, it’s – this is the mess that we’re in and we’re doing it, you do it to the best of your abilities and as inclusively as possible, what happens there, then we’ll deal with that when we get there.”  --------------------------------------------------------------------  JEN PLEASE ADD PARTICIPANTS AND GROUPS AND ANY LINKS TO OTHER CHAPTERS/PAPERS/BOOKS/TLRPS ETC WHERE NECESSARY. | Hidden Curriculum – chapter ??  Institutional practices?  See Brown 1998 mentioned in Section 1  Index for Inclusion  http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/Index%20EY%20English.pdf  Section  2.3 |