

IPA World Conference

Calgary 2017



The challenges of Inclusion of ASN children into Childcare in Scotland



Background

- ▶ I became involved in childcare and play in a voluntary capacity, organising Mums and Tots groups when my own children were young. I organised the establishment of Midlothian's first Toy Library in 1987.
- ▶ In 1995, still in a voluntary capacity, I organised the establishment of Loanhead After School Club Charity. When it first operated, it had one afterschool club with six children and two staff.
- ▶ It currently has over 600 children registered, a staff team of 45 and 14 different projects.
- ▶ Irene has gained all relevant qualifications in Playwork and Early Years and has completed to degree level in childhood Practice.



Background

- ▶ LASC is now running satellite clubs in the neighbouring villages of Loanhead Roslin, Bilston and Rosewell, and offering childcare to babies and children through to 16 Year olds six days a week and respite care for vulnerable children and families.
- ▶ LASC provides a free pickup service for the most vulnerable children in these communities to access Breakfast Clubs and provides: Holiday Club, Saturday Club and an Additional Needs Service Monday to Saturday. Play Therapy service, Transport service and an Outreach Crèche Facility
- ▶ Irene was awarded Scottish Business Woman of the Year for her “Outstanding Contribution to Business”. Irene has received an MBE for “services to children and families within Midlothian”





The aims

- ▶ explore a range of ideas, attitudes and expertise by researching the internet.
- ▶ access a number of pieces of literature Including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Play Strategy for Scotland,
- ▶ observe children with disabilities talking to their parents/carers.
- ▶ survey staff at Midlothian After School Clubs.
- ▶ consult with Saltersgate School for children with additional support needs.
- ▶ consult with Hawthorn Children and Family centre that has a special unit for children with disabilities that I accessed for my weeks placement.





Barriers to Inclusion.

- ▶ Every Disabled Child Matters (EDCM) is a consortium campaign run by four of the leading organizations working with disabled children and their families
- ▶ the campaign partners represent over 770,000 disabled children and young people in the UK.
- ▶ EDCM was established in September 2006 and continues to campaign to raise the political profile of disabled children and their families within central and local government.



Barriers to Inclusion.

In their document 'Between A Rock and A Hard Place' their campaign highlighted that:

- ▶ • Employment is a key government strategy to end child poverty. Yet for many parents (and in particular mothers) of disabled children 'employment remains a difficult and unreliable route out of poverty'.
- ▶ • the reason that these families experience barriers to employment is that childcare is neither fit for purpose nor affordable.
- ▶ • this leaves many families with a disabled child between a rock and a hard place and struggling on a low family income that limits the life chances of all family members





Play Strategy for Scotland: Our Vision

- ▶ This was published in June 2013 by the Scottish Government.
- ▶ It's main purpose was to improve the play experiences of all children and young people, including those with disabilities or from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- ▶ It aims to ensure all children and young people can access play opportunities in a range of settings which offer variety, adventure and challenge.



Play Strategy for Scotland: Our Vision

- ▶ They go on to say that The Vision aims to improve play experiences for all children and addresses our obligations in relation to children's right to play as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- ▶ Parents and carers, as well as other adults concerned with children's day-to-day experiences, have a vital role in encouraging and facilitating play
- ▶ Policy makers, planners and practitioners have a collective responsibility to ensure play is embedded at the heart of decision-making throughout our society and to provide the catalyst for culture change and important that it links with the inclusion of children with a disability into childcare and play projects.





Experience

- ▶ (Giangreco, 1996; HORNE 1988) reported that teachers feelings of discomfort and negative attitudes towards children with severe disability have been found to decrease after working with these children for a time.
- ▶ Similarly, childcare providers who have previous experience with additional support needs tended to show greater confidence and interest in working with them in the future.
- ▶ A study showed that 40 per cent of respondents expressed a reluctance to continue working with children with a disability. (Buell et al.)
- ▶ Attitudes towards future working with children with disability is I would suggest likely to be influenced by whether previous experience was positive or negative.





Training

- ▶ Through my consultations with parents of children with a disability hold fears about the ability of childcare staff to meet the special needs of their children.
- ▶ Staff I have spoken to also harbor doubts about their abilities and believe that more training would be beneficial.
- ▶ The greater amount of training a childcare worker has in the area of understanding childhood disability, the more positive attitudes they have towards children with Additional Support Needs.





Research

- ▶ Sure Start March 2005 suggests that families with disabled children are less likely to access childcare than other families
- ▶ Research from 'Aiming High for disabled children: better support for families' (2007) also reported the key barriers to disabled children accessing childcare



‘Aiming High for disabled children: better support for families’

- ▶ Key barriers to disabled children accessing childcare:
- ▶ lack of awareness and information, perception and trust of services amongst parents of disabled children;
- ▶ attitudinal barriers on behalf of some providers;
- ▶ lack of disability awareness training for the workforce, and specifically, issues with the level of specialist training and expertise in the workforce (for example for children with additional communication need or in behavioural management);
- ▶ the perceived and real cost to providers of securing the right capacity (such as facilities and equipment), and capability (such as staff with the right skills); and
- ▶ the cost of providing appropriate transport provision for disabled children and their families, to help them access services. see Appendix 2



Aiming High for disabled children: better support for families'

- ▶ This report also identified that high quality childcare for disabled children will improve disabled children's development, and will help their parents re-join the workforce if they choose.
- ▶ Given that there is survey evidence that families with disabled children find it harder to find appropriate childcare for their disabled children, there is a case for further intervention to encourage better access to childcare for disabled children





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consultation

- ▶ A consultation with parents/carers with children at Saltersgate School, in Midlothian was conducted by MEYCP to discuss their childcare needs and concerns.
- ▶ Their main concerns were:
- ▶ sourcing appropriate childcare
- ▶ Their children have a range of complex additional support needs and the parents/carers feeling confident that their child's support needs were being met.





Partnership working

- ▶ Parents and children should continue to have the opportunity to contribute their opinions to processes for the purpose of review and evaluation.
- ▶ Clubs should further develop and formalize their “feed-back” mechanisms so that children’s ideas can continue to influence the running of the clubs.



Report

- ▶ Dr J, Davis (2001) Final Report After school Clubs Provision for children with “Special Needs” Midlothian, Scotland.
- ▶ findings what is clear to me is that there is without doubt some excellent practice is going on in Midlothian to integrate children with additional needs into childcare settings in particular at the LASC but there is still a long way to go
- ▶ The suggest conclusion recorded by Davis (2001) and evaluating my findings from my questionnaires. I would propose they are still very valid in 2016 and I believe is the way forward to insure that we are proactive in the integration of children with “ASN” into my setting





Conclusion

- ▶ 10 clubs took part in the survey. (With LASC the exception to the rule who have 5 settings and 680 children registered and already integrate 50 children with ASN into their settings)
- ▶ I was not surprised with the results as it confirmed to me that Clubs do want to support the integration of children with ASN.
- ▶ but the lack of funding is the main concern both for trained additional staff and that there is still genuine fears from both staff and parents on integrating children with additional needs into our settings



Conclusion

- ▶ findings what is clear to me is that there is without doubt some excellent practice is going on in Midlothian to integrate children with additional needs into childcare settings in particular at the LASC but there is still a long way to go.
- ▶ My research has shown me that there is not a negative attitude that is limiting the inclusion of children with a disability into childcare settings, but rather possibly the lack of confidence of having the skills and resources to provide the appropriate service

