

## **Boom Active**

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

This policy is written for the Boom Active employees, attendees and parents. It provides information, guidelines and rules for effective communication with a range of recipients according to their age and stage of development and abilities and advises of adjustments where necessary to support communication.

#### **Definition of Communication**

Communication is the way in which information is relayed between people. The methods can be verbal, non-verbal, written or picture symbols and include listening.

The participants may be adults, children or young people. Communication can take part between two individuals or a whole group.

*Communication must be adequate and effective.*

#### **What forms of communication may take place within the Holiday Club?**

Language used

Confidentiality

Tone and volume

Verbal

#### **Communication**

Staff to child/ren, Staff to parent/potential clients

Colleagues to colleagues

Staff to outside agencies

Staff to visitors and enquirers

Non – verbal and signing

Listening

Written/text Special/additional educational needs

## Requirements for normal language development

1. A functioning aroused brain
  2. Functioning hearing and speech ability
  3. Ability to focus attention and concentration
4. Stimulation a) interesting experiences; build concept/ideas and encourage memory b) attractive meaningful adult conversation to accompany child's
5. Motivation activity/experience.

A child will want to communicate if he/she has found it rewarding and pleasurable.

6. Symbolic understanding

## Communication with children

**Names** are an important part of people's identity. Children should be addressed by the names they have or want to be known as (nicknames). Use the correct spelling when writing the child's name and if possible in their original alphabet if English is not their first language.

**Spoken language** must be heard. The overall noise level should allow all children to hear adequately, especially those who are distressed or with hearing problems or learning one or more languages in addition to English. Staff should acquire phrases of the child's home language for and from family members and such words as toilet, hungry etc. This will strengthen the links between the setting and home.

**Conversations** with children must allow them space to reflect, consider the information they have not encountered before and to come to their own conclusions via discussion. Each staff member should be able to involve themselves in conversation in a natural way with children. Staff should be aware of the child's age and development and build on these skills. Staff need to show genuine interest in what the child says through use of non-verbal and verbal involvement.

Where possible group staff should be encouraged allowing time to listen, remember conversation is a two way process.

Sensitivity should be shown towards children, who are having difficulty with certain sounds, words and this information should be passed on to the parents.

**Tone and volume** can enhance the communication by emphasising information, creating atmosphere and bringing enjoyment to the listener. It would be good practice for staff, particularly new staff and attendess to learn from each other the effective use of tone and volume when addressing a child audience.

## Different types of Hearing Impairment

- Some children have a hearing loss only at certain times, such as when they have a cold.
- Others have permanent hearing loss, due to damage to the nerves affecting hearing. This may result in certain sounds only being heard.
- For some it is severe, and likely to be diagnosed before the age of 3 years.
- But sometimes children pass all the tests and yet may be suspected of having a hearing difficulty.
- This means some children will be aware that they have a hearing difficulty because they wear a hearing aid, with others, parents, carers and staff may suspect they don't hear well, but there has been no professional diagnosis of hearing loss.

## Some signs of possible hearing loss in a young child

- Does not respond when called by name.
- The child responds inconsistently to sound, sometimes hearing it; other times not, or seems to attend only when people raise their voices.
- Appears dull
- Appears uninterested, dreamy or distracted.
- Appears withdrawn into a personal and private world
- Displays behaviour problems and poor social adjustment
- Persistent colds
- Complaining of earache or history of ear infections
- Discharging ears
- May turn their head so that one ear is directed towards the sound source
- The child seems more responsive to visual clues in the environment, including watching the speaker's face.
- Delayed language or unclear speech
- Finds it difficult to hear when there is background noise.

## What can we do to help the child communicate?

The hearing impaired child with some speech needs to develop and expand it, while the child without speech needs to be helped to communicate and not be excluded from social relationships because of the lack of speech. It can be frustrating for the child, the group, the parents and carers and staff.

## Here are some points to remember:-

1. Be relaxed; expect normal social behaviour but be prepared for signs of frustration occasionally.
2. Show by example what you want. Use gestures to enable the child to understand.
3. Speak normally, but make sure the child can see your face clearly and that you are facing the light so that your lips are visible. Speak clearly but do not exaggerate your lip movements or shout.
4. In a noisy room a child may not hear you call. Touch them gently on the shoulder and position yourself in front of them to communicate.
5. Staff need to learn signs already used at home to assist communication, or parents and staff could attend training together and support the child this way.
6. Include the child in an activity without causing them embarrassment or undue awareness of their problem, perhaps as a helper of a regular task, so that they know what is expected of them.
7. Reduce the background noises and use carpets and curtains to reduce the vibrations and echoing.

8. An extra helper may be needed to build up a close relationship with the child, to support when communication breaks down.
9. Use visual support for communication including facial expression.
10. If the child uses a hearing aid ensure it is correctly managed by all who care for the child.

**Parents know more than anyone else about their child and can explain how the child attempts to communicate.**

### **Communication with parents and carers**

#### **Parents' rights**

- To acquire information about the care environment
- To express their views on the care environment
- To alter the care environment of their child
- To contribute to their child's care environment.

#### **The setting's aims must be to create a group in which:-**

- everyone feels they have a part to play, their views and opinions are considered and accepted or rejected courteously and thoughtfully.
- their values, language and culture are respected and welcomed.
- Parents and staff must be encouraged to share as much information as possible with each other.
  - This can be through verbal conversations at the beginning or end of the day.
  - By writing messages in the child's daily diary.
- By telephone
- Through newsletters and letters to parents.
- Developmental records
- Parents consultations or meeting with key worker
- Information on the front desk of each venue.
- Information on website and updated policies.
- E-mail correspondence

## How to develop communication relationships between staff and parents and carers

- Positively welcome their presence in the setting
- Used preferred names and modes of address (e.g. first name, Mr. Mrs or Dr.)
- Create effective opportunities to talk with parents
- Use positive body language, smile at the parents, make eye contact.
- Interaction with parents acknowledges they are the most knowledgeable people about their own child.
- Information given is accurate, relevant, clear and given at the earliest possible moment.
- Information beyond the responsibility of the staff is referred to senior team,
- Remain consistent to the Confidentiality policy
- Communication shows respect for cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- Comments made by parents and views expressed are shared with colleagues only in ways that benefit the family.
- Information provided by the parent is accurately recorded and passed to relevant Staff on a need to know only basis.
- Information provided by parents is used to develop understanding of the child and their family.
- Staff draw parent's attention to child's efforts and achievements.
- Positive aspects of the child's day are clearly explained to parents, which enables them to feel proud of their child.
- Positive reassurance is given to anxious parents.
- Share methods and strategies for managing children's behaviour and development.
- Parents and carers need to be responsible for passing on their child's experiences outside of the setting, to enable an all round picture of the child to be formed and any areas of concern explored.
- Practitioners to complete all child's records accurately and promptly.
- ***It is the parent's responsibility to return questionnaires and reply slips promptly to enable planning and decision making to be effective.***

## Communication with other staff - How to develop communication relationships with each other

- Use preferred modes of address. E.g. First name. Nickname, shortened name
  - Acknowledge each other's presence.
  - Pass on verbally messages from parents and carers to those in immediate care of the child.
  - Remain consistent to the confidentiality policy
  - Participate in planning meetings and staff meetings.
  - Cascade training evaluations back to Manager and colleagues.
  - Inform Boom Active of absences as soon as possible.
  - Acknowledge other people's skills; seek support from them in areas you are unsure about.
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- Accept that some information will only be passed on, on a need to know only basis. Do not pressure other staff into releasing such information.
  - Summarise what has been said to ensure you understand what is being asked of you.
  - Inform Manager or most senior staff about changes to child's emergency contact or collection immediately.
  - Spend time chatting freely during lunch breaks about personal interests to develop working relationships further.
  - If conflicts arise, seek assistance in dealing with them, if you do not feel able to speak to the individual direct.

**What methods are available to us?** Verbal, in person or by telephone system. Written messages or memos.. Planning meetings Staff meetings and minutes