

## More about Síolta - Standards Three and Four

### Standard 3: Parents and Families

**Valuing and involving parents and families requires a proactive partnership approach evidenced by a range of clearly stated, accessible and implemented processes, policies and procedures.**

Research demonstrates that the more involved parents are in their children's learning and development, the greater chance children have to succeed, particularly (later on) in their academic performance.

Standard Three has three components as follows:-

#### Component 3.1

**Staff and parents have both formal and informal opportunities for communication and information sharing about the child.**

Do you have arrangements in place for regular formal and informal meetings and discussions with parents? How do you provide information to parents? How do the formal and informal opportunities for communication with parents support the child's learning and development?

*Childminders have regular informal meetings with the parents, and are aware that discussions in depth of any particular matter are best kept for a regular friendly cuppa or agreed phone call each month. Parents and Childminders therefore have an in-built opportunity in their relationship to raise concerns about development or learning in an unembarrassed way.*

*Childminders usually communicate verbally directly with parents, but for clarity, written policies and procedures should be given to parents at the time of enrolment. Consider holding an annual get together with parents to review and update the policies and procedures.*

*Good communication between parents and caregivers/teachers obviously affords the opportunity to identify areas of focus and a collaborative approach among the adults.*

#### Component 3.2

**There are a variety of opportunities for parents to be involved in activities within the setting, taking into account the range of parents' interests and time-constraints.**

Do you actively support and encourage parental involvement in your setting and how do you do this?

*Let parents know that you would welcome involvement and ask them for suggestions as to how they might like to be involved. They may have business or child activities to share with you and they may join and assist with outings or bring information and examples of different cultures to you and the children. Remember that parental involvement is not substitute care and your obligation to supervise the children remains at all times.*

### **Component 3.3**

**Childminders are responsive and sensitive in the provision of information and support to parents in their key role in the learning and development of the child.**

How do you provide information for parents?

*As well as good verbal communication, consider suggesting to parents particular toys, exercises, books or games to support a specific area of development that you know needs attention. You could also inform and assist parents in locating such materials. Have you thought about you would share a concern about a child's development with a parent?*

### **Component 3.4**

**The setting has written records of all policies and procedures regarding parental involvement and makes them available to all stakeholders.**

How does your setting use its policies and procedures in support of parental involvement? Were the parents involved in compiling the policies? Have all parents read and do they understand them?

*Be clear about the extent of involvement you expect of parents. Talk to parents about policies, keeping them familiar with them and ask for their help with reviewing and updating them. Make sure that the children understand your policies at their level of understanding.*

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Standard 4: Consultation**

**Ensuring inclusive decision-making requires consultation that promotes participation and seeks out, listens to and acts upon the views and opinions of children, parents and staff, and other stakeholders, as appropriate.**

*“The quality of the relationship between the child’s different carers and interested adults is a crucial determinant of the quality of the care and education received by the child...Essentially, working together is about putting the child’s welfare first..”  
(Kay, 2004:121)*

Standard 4 has two components as follows:-

### **Component 4.1**

**The setting actively invites contribution to decision-making processes and strategies for the development and delivery of the service from a wide range of interested stakeholders.**

How do you encourage consultation with other adults, parents, children and other appropriate stakeholders? What plan has been developed to ensure that the sharing of views and opinions is actively encouraged and appropriately recorded? What strategies do adults employ to encourage and develop children’s capacity to contribute their views and opinions on issues relating to their daily experiences? What opportunities are available to children to make plans and indicate these plans to you? How do you show respect for parents’ goals and preferences for their child? How is the input of children, parents, families and other relevant stakeholders recorded so as

to inform decision-making processes? How do you give feedback to the participants that are consulted?

*Demonstrate from the questionnaire you use with parents at initial meeting that you actively invite their contribution and suggestions as to the type, activities and overall childcare service they would like for their children. Review this as children grow and are capable of being involved in the process. Discuss your plans with parents at your formal monthly meetings and keep a record of their suggestions, along with any agreed area of focus. Consult with children on a daily basis about their choice of activity that day – it could be dependent on the weather! Other stakeholders would include County Childcare Committees, Childminder Advisors or any Professional who have recommended any specific exercises or activities to support a particular child's development.*

#### **Component 4.2**

**The setting acts upon contributions to decision-making processes and strategies for the development and delivery of the service from a wide range of interested stakeholders, as appropriate.**

How are the views and opinions gathered through consultation with stakeholders used to regularly review and revise all aspects of your practice? How do you keep records of your policies and procedures? How do you make sure that your policies and procedures are put into practice and are revised and updated on a regular basis? How do you share your policies and procedures with parents and other relevant stakeholders and, where appropriate, the children in the setting?

*Demonstrate how you take account of parents' and children's opinions about your childminding service. How do you take your own family members' comments and concerns into consideration? Video clips of short interviews would probably be useful to record children's views and opinions, parents' goals and preferences for their children and to review and repeat this a couple of times each year. You could have a "Suggestions Book" and keep records of suggestions and actions.*

Do you keep in Contact with your Childminder Advisor for information on training and networking opportunities provided locally through the City and County Childcare Committees.