



Developing a listening culture

For all those working with and for young children aged birth to five

Young children, practitioners (all those working directly with young children) and parents have experiences and views to share that can help shape the way in which services are planned and delivered. Early years settings that have a listening culture enable these experiences and views to inform day-to-day practice; develop the quality and sustainability of settings; enhance local authorities' ability to respond to community needs; and, ultimately, improve outcomes for children.

What is a listening culture?

A listening culture is one in which listening to individual experiences and views is identified as a core feature of the setting's approach and ethos. It involves practitioners interacting respectfully with young children and adults and explicitly documenting the listening process, including examples of resultant change. It is an environment in which practitioners value the importance of listening, are aware of and reflective about how they listen, and acknowledge and respond to experiences and views without discrimination.

We listen to young children, their families and those we work with for a number of reasons:

- **It nurtures respectful and confident relationships**, and creates positive environments that families want to use and staff want to work in.
- **It supports and enhances learning and sustained thinking.** Individual plans can be based on children's needs and interests. Children's thinking can be extended through shared, sustained dialogue.
- **It may reveal inequalities.** It helps practitioners to find out and understand the realities that individuals face, and reflect on their own practice to make sure settings are fully inclusive.
- **It contributes to quality improvement** in early years services and provides opportunities for ongoing evaluation and responsiveness.

YOUNG CHILDREN'S VOICES NETWORK (YCVN)

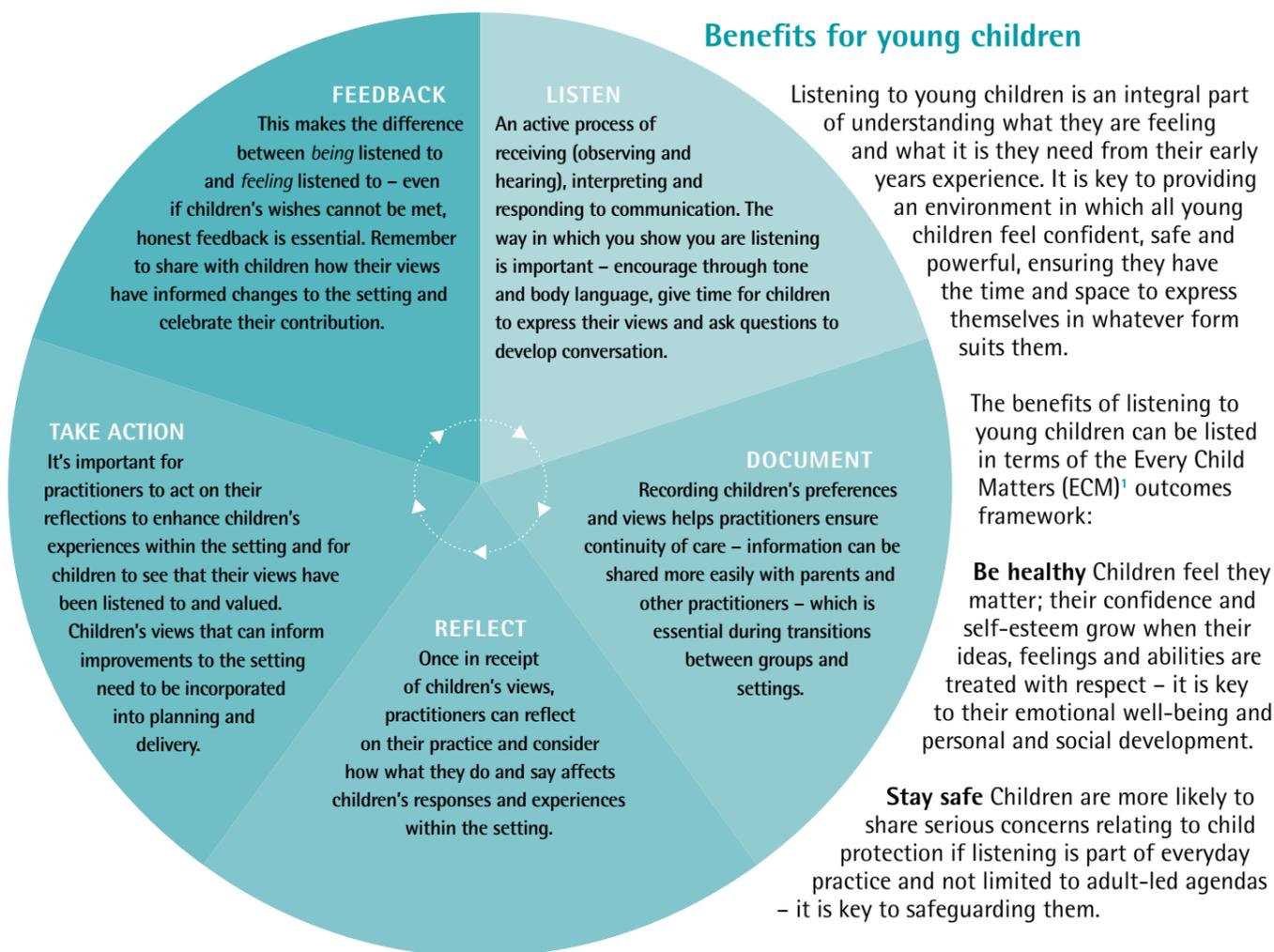
Young Children's Voices Network is a national project promoting listening within the early years. The network supports local authorities in developing good practice in listening to young children, so that young children's views may inform policy and improve early childhood services. Local authorities across the country have established local networks that focus on developing a listening culture. These networks support practitioners by offering opportunities to share effective practice, providing training and undertaking projects. This leaflet celebrates the work of YCVN and provides case studies and guidance emerging from the project. YCVN is funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

LISTENING

In this leaflet, listening is defined as:

- an active process of receiving (hearing and observing), interpreting and responding to communication – it includes all the senses and emotions and is not limited to the spoken word
- a necessary stage in ensuring the participation of all young children, as well as parents and staff, in matters that affect them
- an ongoing part of tuning in to all young children as individuals in their everyday lives
- sometimes part of a specific consultation about a particular entitlement, choice, event or opportunity.

When are we having candyfloss? (McAuliffe 2003) is one of the reports that has helped us think through a model for listening to young children called 'The Listening Cycle' (shown below).



Who benefits from a culture of listening?

Those who benefit from a culture of listening – young children, practitioners, parents and carers and local authorities – gain in a variety of ways.

Young children, when they are listened to, feel respected, able to express themselves, and know that their perspectives are valued; they benefit when their ideas are taken seriously, responded to and extended in shared conversations.

Practitioners feel supported in reflective practice; confident in knowing how best to meet the needs of individual children; and able to record children's progress using children's own perspectives.

Parents and carers benefit when they know their children are listened to; and when they are valued and acknowledged as partners in their child's learning and development.

Local authorities benefit because they are more aware of effective practice and challenges at setting level. They can ensure plans and resources are well used, maximising outcomes for children.

Enjoy and achieve Children become more involved and competent in activities that they have chosen and when their own interests and thoughts are responded to and developed with practitioners – it is key to their play and learning.

Make a positive contribution Children have unique insights and information to offer: only they know how they feel and what is important to them. Listening provides opportunities for young children to learn that their views about their daily lives are valued.

Achieve economic well-being Children can benefit from practitioners listening to parents to help find solutions for balancing family and work priorities, particularly those parents who need help in accessing training opportunities and employment.

The Early Childhood Unit identifies a sixth outcome '**Being equal – feeling you belong**'.² This outcome focuses on identifying and countering inequalities, including racism, by taking positive action.

It is important for settings to take account of this outcome and its specific factors – any discrimination relating to participation and belonging, which otherwise may not be addressed in the original ECM outcomes.

The effective involvement of children, young people and their families in the

development and delivery of services is a key element of the Every Child Matters: Change for children programme:

It is expected that children and young people should have a say about issues that affect them both as individuals and collectively, and that they should be involved

in decision-making at local as well as national level. All agencies involved with children and young people should involve them in a meaningful way which is effective in bringing about change and which becomes embedded with the organisational ethos. (www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)

Case study 1 illustrates how listening to young children can make a difference to their learning and development and how it can enhance practitioners' delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage.



Case study 1: Practitioner and child

Practitioners from Halesowen Day Nursery in Dudley, West Midlands, are members of a local Young Children's Voices Network. Members of the network were encouraged to listen to children's views, consider an aspect of their setting that would benefit from involving the children in decision-making, and establish this as part of everyday practice.

By listening to the children, it became clear that they had some views about the choices offered at breakfast time. A practitioner decided to introduce a variety of activities to stimulate discussion about the choice of different drinks. Elliot was in his last term at the nursery. He did not always find cooperation with his peers easy. This sometimes led to outbursts of disruptive behaviour. The discussion about more

choices at breakfast time, however, really engaged him. Elliot was keen to join in with the group discussion and offer his views. He listened to other children's views and talked to staff a lot about the changes. He drew pictures about it and then something quite remarkable happened. While playing outside, the staff noticed that Elliot had started to construct something that looked very interesting. He was using bread trays and other objects in the garden to build a 'juice machine'. Other children were as intrigued as the staff – not only were they all working together, but they were also enjoying Elliot leading the play. Elliot was very happy in this role and the children were very happy to work with him. His creativity came to the fore when he collected different coloured plastic balls to roll through the 'machine' and represent the different juices on offer. Green balls were 'apple juice' and purple ones 'Ribena'[™], he said.

Because Elliot's ideas were listened to and responded to by other children and practitioners, his confidence grew, inspiring him to lead play and be creative. The practitioners at the setting were impressed by the leadership and cooperation skills Elliot had shown, as well as his ability to convert his ideas into a 3D construction.

As Elliot was due to go to school the following term, his key person and parents had been concerned about how he would manage the transition. They could see that the need to cooperate with other children might impede his development within the school setting. The discussion about choices for breakfast, the opportunities staff provided for imaginative play and the skills they showed in listening to Elliot enabled him to show his true abilities and potential. This also provided positive examples for his learning journey and transition into school. This new knowledge was used to inform Elliot's future learning and development, building on strengths identified within his early years setting.

Listening to young children can challenge assumptions, provide unexpected insights into their capabilities and raise expectations. It can also help identify prejudice and promote positive behaviour.

¹ Government programme for a national framework to support the 'joining up' of children's services; see www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

² First proposed at NCB Participation and Belonging conferences in 2004 (<http://www.ncb.org.uk/earlychildhood>).

Delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The importance of listening to young children and parents is implicit throughout the EYFS. The framework emphasises how listening is fundamental to taking a child-centred approach and is essential for enabling good relationships with parents to best support their children's learning and development.

Two examples from each EYFS theme are shown in these extracts from the EYFS Principles into Practice cards (many more examples are given in these cards) (DfES 2008).

A unique child

- 1.2 All children are citizens and have rights and entitlements. All children have an equal right to be listened to and valued in the setting.
- 1.3 Making choices about things, such as what they will do or what they will wear, helps children feel some sense of control over their day.

Positive relationships

- 2.2 Parents and practitioners have a lot to learn from each other. This can help them to support and extend children's learning and development.
- 2.3 They (practitioners) are able to tune in to, rather than talk at, children, taking their lead and direction from what children say and do.

Enabling environments

- 3.2 When children's needs are central to the learning process, children are listened to.
- 3.3 Encourage children to help plan the layout of the environment and to contribute to keeping it tidy.

Learning and development

- 4.2 Make learning plans for each child based on information gained from talking to them, their parents, and your colleagues and by observing the child.
- 4.3 Sustained, shared thinking involves the adult being aware of the children's interests and understandings; and the adult and children working together to develop an idea or skill.

How listening practice feeds into ongoing assessment

Listening is not an 'add on', but rather an approach to the pedagogic work that practitioners are already engaged in. Recording the listening process provides examples of children's progress and development, as shown in the table below.

Listening activity	Area of learning
Recording children's choices; their expression of preference and ability to make decisions	Problem solving
Recording children's use of language within opportunities to express themselves and share their views	Communication
Recording children's independence in everyday routines; children empowered to show their capabilities	Personal/Social
Recording children's developing ideas and use of imagination based on their interests and unique viewpoint	Creativity

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) requires settings to provide examples of listening practice in the early years self-evaluation form (see box below).

FOR SETTINGS DELIVERING THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Part A, Section 2:

- Please tell us about the views of the children and their parents or carers who attend your setting.
- Tell us how you know what their views are, for example if your parents complete a questionnaire. How do you know what the children's views are?
- Give examples of any action you have taken to change your provision as a result of their views.

A listening culture provides practitioners with the opportunity to collect many examples of listening and responding to families within everyday practice. This makes it easier to meet this requirement and to show genuine examples of participation that inform changes to the setting.

Incorporating the voice of the child

A number of ways to incorporate the voice of the child into regular documentation can be used, for example:

Record narrative observations, which include children's responses to what

they are doing, and track how these change over time.

Narrative observations can include comments children make and observations of their body language which express their feelings about their experience; for example their frustration at finding something difficult, or their hurt at something upsetting.

Photos taken of children doing a particular activity can be used as a starting point for discussion and reflection between practitioners and children. Their reactions and expressions about activities can be noted alongside the photo.

Photos taken by children can provide a child's perspective, but make sure, through discussion with the child, that you are interpreting the image correctly about what is important to them. (For more detail please see publications on the Mosaic Approach, Clark and Moss 2001 and 2005.)

Artwork made by children can be used to record the 'learning journey'. The process of making is just as important as the end result. Listen to children's experiences of making by observing and recording each stage of their engagement.

Profile/photo books can be made which contain photos of the child's life at the setting and at home, to share with practitioners and families. Children can be involved in making these, selecting what goes in them and the books can be used as starting points for discussion with parents and practitioners.

Video and sound equipment can be used to record snapshots of children's learning and development. These recordings can be shared with children and their parents to prompt

discussion. Such resources are useful for capturing everyday conversations and group activities, for example role-play, singing and music sessions.

Projects can provide a brief for practitioners to help structure their listening practice. A theme or activity can help practitioners focus on particular aspects of the setting that they want to evaluate or improve. Listening activities that capture children's ideas and views on particular aspects of the setting can then be developed and may include consultation. A project topic could be 'improving the outside space' or 'using cameras', for example.

Benefits for settings and practitioners

Listening practice offers more opportunities for children to make choices and express their preferences, in line with the flexible child-centred approach recommended by the EYFS. Practitioners will therefore be better able to support children's learning and development.

A listening culture reinforces better relationships with families, enabling staff to support parents as children's first educators and partners in their children's learning. According to the EPPE project report,³ the most effective settings share child-related information between parents and staff, and parents are often involved in decision making about their child's learning programme. Parents have insights to share that can support planning.

A listening culture can encourage a sense of ownership by the families who use the setting. A place where people feel welcome and involved means they will want to be there, improving attendance and therefore helping services to be more sustainable.

Children's centres play a key role in improving outcomes for all children and reducing inequalities between the most disadvantaged children and other children. Case study 2 illustrates how intrinsic listening is key to the aims not only of children's centres but all services for young children.

³ EPPE Final Summary Report (2004) Sure Start. The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) project is the first major European longitudinal study of a national sample of young children's development (intellectual and social/behavioural) between the ages of 3 and 7 years.

Case study 2: A children's centre's approach

The head of the Robert Owen Children's Centre in Greenwich, South East London, identified the desire to improve inclusion and foster citizenship as a major reason for making listening an explicit feature of setting practice.



The head of the centre, the inclusion coordinator, and the ethnic minority achievement officer from the local authority came together to develop a Young Children's Voices Network. The network aimed to bring a renewed focus on listening at the centre, as a way of supporting staff and strengthening relationships with families. Families from a range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds and many children with special needs use the centre.

Practitioners from the centre and neighbouring early years settings and schools meet quarterly to reflect on their listening practice and discuss ways of sharing children's perspectives with parents and other members of staff. Through this project, the centre has raised the profile of listening beyond an accepted aspect of good practice, to a defining characteristic of the setting itself.

Listening practice is now anchored in the annual 'centre improvement plan', which shows all staff that it is a core activity rather than an add-on, raising its

status within setting priorities. Examples of practice include 'photo books' containing photos children have taken; more narrative observations; and a renewed focus on practitioners' interactions with children posing the key question: 'Do the questions we ask make a difference to how children learn?'

CHALLENGE FACED – 'BUT THERE'S NOT ENOUGH TIME'

Some practitioners were initially concerned that listening practice would require more time, particularly in terms of recording and documentation. Through network support, practitioners have seen how the listening work contributes to EYFS records and is, in fact, the way they work – an approach rather than a separate activity. On a practical level, investment in more effective IT equipment such as printers has been useful in saving time on collating material.

Narrowing the gap

The Early Childhood Forum⁴ has defined inclusion as a process of identifying, understanding and breaking down barriers to participation and belonging. This is underpinned by the EYFS principles, in particular, that every child is a unique child, and a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

We need to take personal and collective responsibility to be proactive about ensuring that everyone is included, that everyone belongs, rather than just hoping that events that increase tensions and fears will all go away. (Lane 2008)

By listening to families about their cultures and ensuring that these are accepted and reflected in the setting, all young children are more likely to feel welcome, comfortable about who they are and experience a genuine feeling of belonging.

How does a listening culture contribute to improving the quality of settings?

The National Quality Improvement Network (NQIN)⁵ has identified a principled approach to continuous quality improvement based on the rights of children, in particular UNCRC Article 12, which states that every child and young person has the right to express his or her views freely and be heard. The network recommends an approach to quality improvement that is underpinned by listening to the views of children, families and practitioners. Its guidance is given in the following quotes and explanations.

Ensuring settings consult children, young people and families on what they want to get out of attending the setting. (NQIN 2008)

Use a range of ways to consult with children and parents about their experience of the setting – for example, short questionnaires, parents' evenings or simply informal chats

– what's important is recording what you hear and making sure you ask everyone, not just the more vocal families. Also consider those who may not be using your setting – get support from local authority advisers on reaching out to families who may benefit from your setting and work together to find out what the barriers are, and how to overcome them.

Mapping quality improvement standards, outcomes or benefits on to key frameworks, such as ECM and EYFS, including guidance and tools for gathering feedback from children, young people and families on what benefits they have gained. (NQIN 2008)

Practical resources showing how to enable participation and consult with young children

There are a number of resources available that show the many different ways in which young children can give feedback and share perspectives on their experiences in the setting. For instance the first *Listening as way of life series*⁶ provides examples relating to a range of topics, from listening to young disabled children to listening to young children about equality issues. Members of the national YCVN advisory group⁷ are also authors of a number of resources, including *Never Too Young: How young children can take responsibility and make decisions* by Judy Miller (1997); *Listening to Young Children* training pack by Y. Penny Lancaster and V. Broadbent

(2003); publications on the Mosaic Approach by Alison Clark and P. Moss (2001); *Starting with Choice: Inclusive strategies for consulting young children* by Mary Dickins, S.Emerson and P.Gordon-Smith (2004).

For further information, visit:

- www.ncb.org.uk/yvcn for information on listening to young children
- www.peal.org.uk for information on listening to parents collated by the Parents, Early Years and Learning programme at NCB
- www.participationworks.org.uk for numerous resources on participation and involvement for all age groups.

Case study 3 highlights one of the ways in which local authorities can work towards improving outcomes for children by placing listening at the heart of quality improvement plans.

effective listening practice. The network brings together a group of practitioners – from a range of private, voluntary and community settings across Kirklees – to support them in developing and embedding listening in their everyday practice.

Case study 3: A strategic local authority approach



Kirklees local authority set up a local Young Children's Voices Network in 2007, building on a strong quality improvement network and a number of years of

Through network meetings led by the quality assurance manager, the group produced a *Listening Book* (Butterfield 2008). The book is part of an easy-to-use pack for practitioners and contains examples of a range of activities and ways of 'tuning in' to young children and enabling participation. The examples have been provided by practitioners and aligned with the quality framework used in Kirklees. The activities are set out in a way that links them to the settings' policies and to EYFS and ECM outcomes. The *Listening Book* comes with a DVD for practitioners that is designed to raise awareness about the importance of listening and to generate further interest in network membership.

By placing listening at the heart of quality improvement and linking good listening practice with the quality framework used in the authority, practitioners are able to see clear benefits to listening and its contribution to children's learning and development outcomes.

The network is beginning to operate in each area locality and will expand to include children's centres and schools, with the ultimate goal of providing ongoing support to all settings in Kirklees.

⁴ The Early Childhood Forum is a coalition of 55 professional associations, voluntary organisations and interest groups, coordinated by the Early Childhood Unit at NCB.

⁵ The NQIN supports early years and childcare settings and local authorities to put in place systems to improve the quality of services beyond basic national standards.

⁶ Available to download from www.ncb.org.uk/yvcn

⁷ A national advisory group oversees the project. This comprises colleagues in the sector with a specific interest and expertise in the participation of young children in policy and service design and delivery.

Benefits for local authorities

Service planners and commissioners can be better informed about what works for children and families and make decisions based on what the community wants and needs.

Having a listening culture embedded within early years services will help local authorities to represent children's views better in plans to support them.

Statutory requirement to listen to young children and their parents

The requirement under Section 3 of the Childcare Act, 2006 states that:

all English local authorities must have regard to such information about the views of young children as is available to the local authority and appears to them to be relevant to the discharge of these duties.

Raising Standards – Improving Outcomes Statutory guidance: Early Years outcomes Duty Childcare Act 2006 states that:

For services to be successful and have a positive impact on young children's lives, the voices of young children themselves need to be listened to and actively taken into account. Undertaking

consultations with young children as the primary users of early years services, can inform not only front-line practitioners and managers of their needs but also reveal barriers to development which can inform more strategic planning to improve outcomes and opportunities for all young children.

Local authorities are also required to take into account the view of parents shown in (1.5) 'What success looks like for parents':

Where necessary, local early childhood services will need to be reshaped to make the involvement of parents a central element. This must include the specific engagement of fathers as they make a distinct contribution to children's development and have a distinctive place in a child's life.

Benefits in relation to the wider context

Some of the key drivers for listening to children include the following.

Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) report (2004)

This report identified 'sustained shared thinking' as crucial in enabling learning and development, a process dependent on listening to young children.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), ratified in the UK in 1991, states in Article 12 that:

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

Aiming High for Disabled Children: Better support for families. Guidance report, 2007

Disabled children and their families have the option to be fully involved in the way services are planned, commissioned and delivered in their area.

Education and Skills Act, 2008 amends the law as follows:

157 Governing bodies of maintained schools to invite and consider pupils' views

After section 29A of the Education Act 2002 insert –

29B Governing body to invite and consider pupils' views

- (1) The governing body of a maintained school must invite the views of pupils about prescribed matters.
- (2) In exercising any of their functions relating to the conduct of the school, the governing body of a maintained school must consider any relevant views of registered pupils at the school about matters prescribed under subsection (1) (whether expressed by virtue of that subsection or otherwise) and, in doing so, must have regard to the age and understanding of the pupils who expressed them.

Practical guidance for developing a listening culture

The following guidance emerged from the YCVN project and includes knowledge and expertise shared by the national advisory group; that shared by YCVN coordinators from local authorities who took part in the YCVN pilot programme; and findings from the YCVN evaluation report, 2008.⁸

Generate and maintain enthusiasm

Strong leadership pushes forward the agenda for listening. A designated person is essential for 'holding' a listening project and enabling it to grow, by offering inspiration and commitment. Otherwise the importance of listening can be lost in the midst of busy and demanding practice.

Early years participation officers are employed by some local authorities as a designated member of staff whose responsibility it is to develop and embed listening, by working in partnership with settings in their area. A culture, however, requires more than the efforts of one or two people – everyone, from practitioners to heads of children's services, has a role to play.

Listening champions are practitioners who have received training in listening, form part of a listening network and are committed to ensuring their settings are listening to young children and enabling participation. Listening champions promote the importance of listening and support staff in developing and embedding listening cultures.

Build on existing good practice and link into current initiatives

Identify what's working well within your setting and local authority. A strong quality assurance network, communications initiative, parents forum or birth–19s participation projects can be starting points for developing or building a listening project or network.

Locate funding through existing funds, for example, the following government initiatives: Every Child a Talker (ECAT); Social and Emotional Aspects of Development (SEAD); Buddying 0–7; and Making a Big Difference. (For further information on these initiatives please visit <http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/earlyyears>)

Promote reflective practice

Recognise the good listening you're already doing and build on it with the following:

Find out about training opportunities from your local authority. ECU also offers training for advisors and practitioners on listening to young children (www.ncb.org.uk/yvcvn).

Share practice with staff by finding out if your local authority has a local Young Children's Voices Network (YCVN) or whether you can start one. (Also see the guidance on page 10).

Explore the values behind listening as it's important to consider what attitudes and principles underpin listening as well as the practical

methods. Both training and practice-sharing will support reflective practice to ensure participation is meaningful and integrated into daily routines.

Make listening practice visible in the setting

Model good listening practice – you know it's happening when it's experienced first hand by young children, families and staff. The best way to show it is to do it.

Display children's perspectives as it provides feedback to young children that their views are listened to and valued. Involve young children as much as possible in how their perspectives are shown, including their interpretations and their decisions about what is important.

Share with parents by using wall displays, profile books and narrative observations, for example, as these are some of the ways in which practitioners can make explicit the listening process, and share children's involvement and preferences with parents.

Adapt all setting policies appropriately to include the importance of listening to young children and families. This reinforces the central role that listening has within all aspects of the setting and reminds staff of opportunities for involving young children in decisions that affect them.

Sharing documentation is in fact making visible the culture of childhood both inside and outside the school to become a participant in a true act of exchange and democracy (Rinaldi 1998)

Plan and collect evidence

Assess current listening practice within your setting and plan the next steps for developing a listening culture. These steps may be to identify training needs or make children's perspectives visible – sometimes there is good listening taking place in the setting but it is not documented. Some settings use simple audits to record the listening they are doing with young children, which can then feed into the self-assessment forms required by Ofsted.

Make sure your local authority advisors know about your listening work

Practitioners are advocates for young children; they can share young children's perspectives alongside their own views and those of parents to ensure that local authorities hear what's best for young children in their locality and take account of these insights to inform early years service planning and delivery.

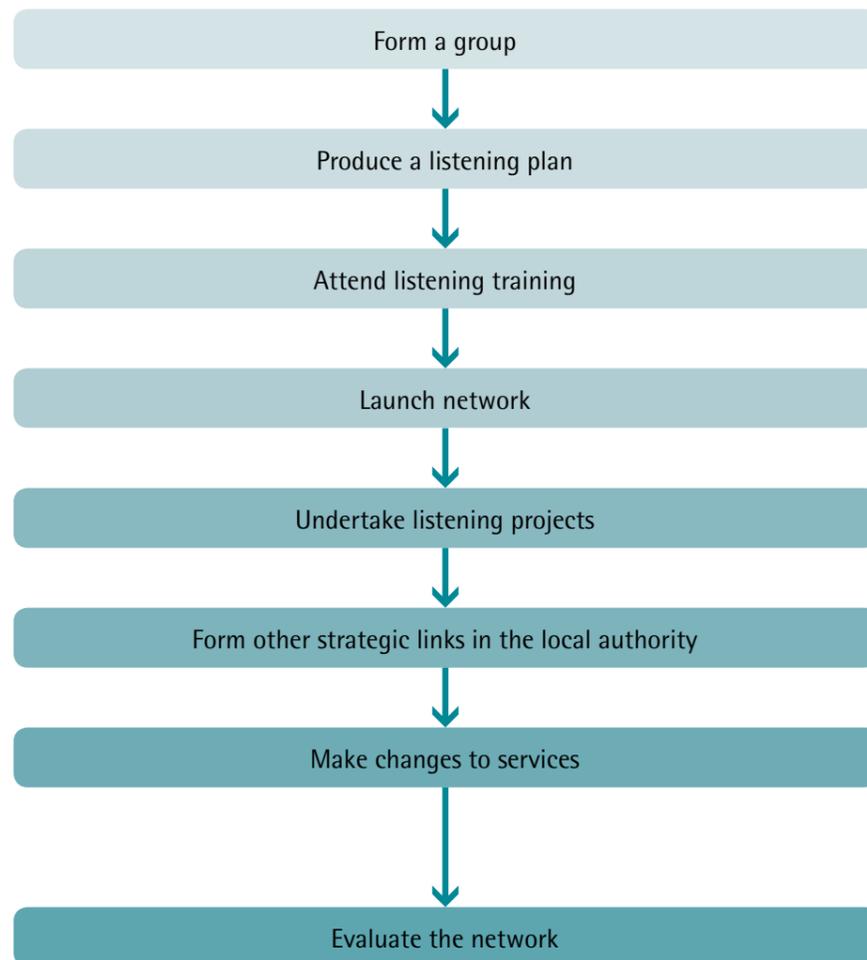
Include young children's voices, supported by practitioner and parents' perspectives, in all policies and strategies which affect young children. The most pertinent of these include children and young people's plans, sufficiency audits and play strategies. Local authorities are working with a birth–19s agenda and, to fairly involve and represent all children and their families in policies that affect them, it is imperative to include early years voices.

Develop a Young Children's Voices Network



This series of progressive milestones has been identified by the local authorities who took part in the YCVN pilot project. They have been summarised in the YCVN evaluation report; and map local authorities' progression in developing a listening culture within the early years.

All local authorities can establish listening projects and networks to support, develop and embed listening within early years services. For further information about how to do this, please contact the YCVN project manager on llwilliams@ncb.org.uk.



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Listening as a way of life leaflets
See page 12 for details.

Useful websites

www.ncb.org.uk/earlychildhood

The Early Childhood Unit (ECU) is based at NCB. This site contains information on specific topics within early years care and education and includes the following networks – The Local Authority Early Years Network, Young Children's Voices Network, Voices of Black Practitioners Network, National Quality Improvement Network and the Early Childhood Forum.

www.participationworks.org.uk

Participation Works is a consortium of six leading children and young people's organisations that provides expert advice to anyone wanting to

give a voice to children and young people. This site contains an Early Years' Room for specific information on listening to young children.

www.nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/earlyyears/eyfs

This site gives information on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It also provides resources associated with Every Child A Talker (ECAT), which helps promote children's speaking and listening, and the Social and Emotional Aspects of Development (SEAD) initiative.

www.ncb.org.uk

NCB promotes the interests and well-being of all children and young people across every aspect of their

lives. NCB advocates the participation of children and young children in all matters affecting them. It challenges disadvantage in childhood.

www.peal.org.uk

PEAL offers training for practitioners in working in partnership with parents. It aims to build parents' confidence and active involvement in their children's early learning and development.

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The Young Children's Voices Network is hosted by NCB.

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Listening as a way of life

This leaflet is the first in the second series of leaflets from the *Listening as a way of life* series and shares learning from the Young Children's Voices Network pilot programme 2006–9, funded by the DCSF.

The first series from the Listening as a way of life project provides a guide to finding more information to help practitioners design creative and individual ways of listening to children and to each other.

Titles from the first series include:

Why and how we listen to young children
Listening to babies
Listening to young disabled children
Are equalities an issue? Finding out what young children think
Listening to young children's views on food
Supporting parents and carers to listen – a guide for practitioners

For copies, contact the Early Childhood Unit on 020 7843 6064, email ecu@ncb.org.uk or visit www.ncb.org.uk/yecvn



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