



ICT (Information, Communication Technology) Policy

Rationale:

ICT is commonplace and pervasive in today's world and has a major and profound impact on the daily lives of everyone, including the youngest children. This can have positive effects e.g. the availability of information and instant communication but also negative impacts whereby the technology interrupts the normal developmental process for children e.g. when a parent makes excessive use of a mobile device and this takes precedence over their communication with their child.

As such there is a need to recognise that proficient use of ICT is increasingly a requirement for all children and this is only likely to expand over the coming years. With this in mind consideration needs to be given to what is the appropriate experience for children in the Day Care and Nursery School settings within the Federation and to what extent and to what level their engagement with ICT complements and extends the remainder of the curriculum. Siraj-Blatchford (2015) states 'ICT education is not about spending lots of time sitting at a computer, which might hinder children physically and reduce their cognitive capacity. Instead, experience with ICT should be woven into the many experiences contributing to children's broad and holistic development in their early years'.

The contribution of ICT to learning:

Technology can contribute to three main areas of learning:

- developing dispositions to learning that thread through personal, social and emotional development, promoting the 'characteristics of effective learning' and across the EYFS in general;
- extending knowledge and understanding of the world in the broadest sense of communication, language and literacy, problem solving, reasoning and numeracy, creative development and recreational/ playful behaviour; and
- acquiring operational skills and specific knowledge of ICT itself.

The manner in which children develop these areas of learning is the nub of the debate concerning effective practice. On the face of it children can appear deeply involved when using a computer game on the screen but this involvement has been shown, through brain scans, to be limited to small areas of the brain when compared to activities such as den building etc. This can be compounded if a child is accessing the screen in a solitary manner and research has also shown that the most effective learning takes place when a child is working alongside a more knowledgeable other who can offer a more social/linguistic interpretation for the child. Computer games can also become addictive and early exposure to these patterns of behaviour can lead to sedentary future life patterns and contribute to the growing obesity crisis. It is incumbent upon us as early years educators to ensure that children have a positive introduction to ICT in school that shows

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them the usefulness of the technology but also provides them with a love of alternative forms of play, learning and pastimes. Additionally for the majority of children they will have significant exposure to ICT in their life outside of school and it is becoming increasingly common to hear of children who have their own 'tablet' at the age of 3. The EYFS (2012) ELG for technology states 'Children recognise that a range of technology is used in places such as homes and schools. They select and use technology for particular purposes'. This statement gives us a good guide when we are considering the range of experiences that children should have.

Guidelines for good practice:

Siraj-Blatchford (2015) suggests a seven principle approach to assessing whether ICT equipment will provide the best possible experiences:

1. Ensure an educational purpose
2. Encourage collaboration
3. Integrate with other aspects of the curriculum
4. Ensure the child is in control
5. Choose applications that are transparent
6. Avoid applications containing violence or stereotyping
7. Be aware of health and safety issues.

Developmentally appropriate technology:

It is only at the development matters age band of 40-60 months that children are required to begin to complete simple programmes on a computer, at 30-50 months the requirement is that they should 'know that information can be retrieved from computers'.

The knowledge and experience prior to this relates to operational skills with on/off technology and attitudes to and knowledge of the use of technology in everyday life. The positive relationships and enabling environments columns of the EYFS aspect technology provide sensible advice on how to provide these experiences for the children (see appendix one).

The integration of 'real' and 'pretend' ICT devices in children's play e.g. mobile phones, electronic cash tills etc. can support the acquisition of the required skills and used alongside meaningful use of ICT such as digital cameras will help children to make the links between the ICT they see being used in the real world and that which they see and use in school. Thus the assimilation and accommodation by children of the skills and knowledge around ICT can be facilitated in the same manner as other skills and attitudes. As children develop the skills, knowledge, attitudes and co-ordination skills so the range and complexity of the equipment provided can evolve providing it meets the seven tests outlined above.

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Teaching ICT:

ICT skills can be taught in both Day Care and Nursery Schools in a similar manner to which children may learn them at home i.e. through observing adults modelling their use in functional contexts. Therefore children should be exposed to ICT in its broadest sense through activities such as:

- taking photographs
- using the photocopier
- simple switch technology
- visits to the office where computers are used.

In addition the continuous provision should reflect ICT use in a similar way to which literacy is promoted through:

- resources both real and toy in the home corner or other role play
- digital cameras and video for children to film their play
- resources for recording and playing back music and other sounds
- Simple electronic instruments
- small programmable toys such as 'bee-bots'
- remote control vehicles
- on/off toys such as torches
- accessing information through the internet, e.g. finding the name of a tree by looking up the leaf.

There will also be appropriate opportunities for adults to more formally teach ICT skills as the children's skills progress and develop and to complement their interests. These may include teaching children how to:

- operate a programmable robot, (often following opportunities for free exploration and discovery first)
- operate musical recording and play back devices such as cd players
- operate computers, laptops and whiteboards
- find information on a website.

As children develop their ICT skills they will be able to use these to extend their thinking and problem solving by, for example, obtaining further information from the internet, in a similar manner to which they would by using non-fictional texts. The advantage that the internet can provide to the child and the practitioner is that any interest of the child can be followed up and extended in an almost simultaneous manner, whereas other reference materials may not be immediately available.

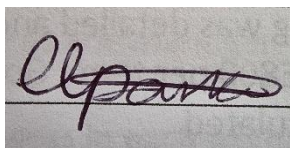
Conclusions:

Early ICT education is about children initially playing with the ICT they see around them in the everyday world, whether that be through demonstrating behaviours such as switching equipment on and off or playing with toy or 'dead' real equipment as part of role play. Later they will explore more control technology such as robots, photocopiers etc., cameras and video recorders before moving on to using computers for social game playing or to research ideas and follow up interests.

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The role of the adult is to ensure that they model ICT behaviours, provide relevant resources throughout the continuous provision and have the skills and knowledge necessary to enable them to support children with their exploration of computers and the internet through being a 'knowledgeable other'.

Given the above children's experiences at school will complement those they gain at home and balanced with the other learning experiences on offer will ensure that they develop a healthy approach to the use of ICT.

A rectangular image showing a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'L Parker'.

Signed:

Chair of Governors: Linsey Parker

To be reviewed by: December 2025