

A Learning Framework for Artist Pedagogues

The National Children's Bureau (NCB) project manager Helen Chambers and Professor Pat Petrie Director of the Centre for Understanding Social Pedagogy at the Institute of Education have developed a draft learning framework, for artists who work with looked after children, based on learning with three high quality arts organisations. We offer this as a working document for consideration and consultation by commissioners and colleagues nationally.

The document suggests the (i) principles and values to be considered, (ii) workforce knowledge and skills to be built and (iii) quality indicators for work with looked after children (iv) methods for training and networking artists and creative practitioners. We have also made suggestions about quality improvement of work and accreditation of artists who work with looked after children. The term "children" is used to include children and young people aged 0-19 years.

The work is intended to fulfil the contract requirements of Creativity Culture and Education (CCE)'s commission of March 2009 by Becky Swain and Hassina Khan at CCE.

1. Principles and values for artists and creative practitioners named here as "artist pedagogues" for work with looked after children, but with application to a wider population of children. The principles and values are based on the application of social pedagogic principles to creative practice and provide the focus for a learning framework.

Artist pedagogues:

Aspire to provide the best for all children, to build confidence and open doors to opportunity.

Ensure safe boundaries of confidentiality for the exchange of information and the building of mutual relationships.

Work with their head, hands and heart to support children's well-being and to make sure that the approach to creative practice is flexible. This is to accommodate the variety of situations that may arise for looked after children and the children's responses to these.

Aim high with regard to artistic achievement **and at the same time are realistic** about what is achievable, ensuring the child's well-being must be given priority over other considerations.

Work in partnership with carers and members of children's services to ensure children's participation is adequately supported and resourced.

Keep children and workers safe from harm, by putting child protection procedures, appropriate risk assessments and enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks in place.

Reflect on their practice based on the values and principles of Social Pedagogy.

A framework for reflection is detailed below in figure 1.

Figure 1 Reflections on principles and practice for artist pedagogues

Area for reflection	In practice
Children as whole persons	<p>There is a focus on children as whole persons and support and consideration for their well-being physically, emotionally, socially and creatively.</p> <p>There is place for the expression of fun and joy, as well as more difficult emotions.</p>
Relationship with children	<p>The artist pedagogue sees her/himself not only as an artist, who inspires children's creativity, but also as someone whose relationship with the children can have a wider effect.</p> <p>The relationship between the artist pedagogue and the children should be based on respecting the children and building their trust.</p> <p>The children need to experience a sense of security as a basis for developing confidence and a feeling of worth, in themselves and in their creative practice.</p>
Relevant theories and self-knowledge	<p>The artist pedagogue is open to learning opportunities such as finding out about relevant theories, such as attachment theory.</p> <p>Artist pedagogues are also observant of their own emotional reactions to the work. They need to reflect on the feelings that arise in the sometimes challenging demands they may meet when working with children.</p> <p>The artist pedagogue applies both theory and self knowledge to their practice.</p>
Every-day activities, as well as creative work	<p>Artist pedagogues are practical. They pay attention to the every-day activities that their work involves, alongside those that relate more directly to creativity. This may include, for example, arranging and giving consideration to mealtimes and snacks, settling-in times at the beginning of work; and transport arrangements.</p>

<p>Being and working together</p>	<p>The artist pedagogue fosters the importance of working together as a group. This applies to all the children and adults who are involved in a piece of work, including, for example, carers.</p> <p>There is no feeling of 'us and them' among the different professionals who may be participating, or between adults and children. This understanding can be demonstrated, for example, by everyone sharing mealtimes or snacks, or clearing up.</p> <p>The artist pedagogue acts to ensure that the group values all its members. The whole group contributes to the creative work, to the emotional climate and can be an important source of mutual support.</p>
<p>The rights of children to be heard</p>	<p>Artist pedagogues do not limit their understanding of children's rights to procedures and legislation. They believe that children have a right to contribute their experience and ideas to the activities in which they participate – creative and otherwise.</p> <p>A strength of creative practice is that it is a means by which children's voices may be heard about matters that concern them deeply. However, creative activity with looked after children should not <i>necessarily</i> be "issue led". Play and fun can be just as appropriate.</p>
<p>Team around the child</p>	<p>Artist pedagogues value teamwork and respect the contributions of others in bringing up children. They form good working relationships with other professionals, members of the local community, and especially with parents and carers. This is for the well being of the children concerned and to underpin the success of the creative activities undertaken.</p>
<p>Positive role models</p>	<p>Artist pedagogues should be aware of themselves as role models for the adults and children with whom they work.</p> <p>This should be reflected in the respect they show to others and the importance they attach to attentive listening and responding supportively to other group members.</p>

2. Knowledge and skills that build into the wider children's workforce and the specialist creative skills of the artist pedagogues

While social pedagogy provides a set of principles, knowledge and understanding are also required for working with looked after children. The Common Core of Skills and Knowledge also applies to the artist pedagogue and fits well with the principles and values set out above.

The Common Core sets out the six items of basic skills and knowledge needed by all whose work brings them into regular contact with children, young people and families:

- Effective communication and engagement with children, young people and families
- Child and young person development
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child
- Supporting transitions
- Multi agency working
- Sharing information

The list of knowledge and skills set out below in figure 2 is based on artists' suggestions, and is not exhaustive, it is however extensive. It covers understanding of the child and their development, the administrative systems that affect them, the cultural worlds in which they live, and the considerations arising for creative practice. Artists pedagogues should be encouraged to prioritise the different areas seen as most necessary for themselves and for project staff, and the level at which they are to be addressed.

Fig 2 Knowledge and skills for artist pedagogues

As well as the skills and knowledge required specifically for achieving high quality child focused creative practice, artist pedagogues need to know and understand both the world of the child and the particular situation of looked after children, including:

The circumstances that bring a child into care, and the consequences for looked after children and young people.

Developmental stages from birth to adulthood and the effects of abuse and neglect on children.

Emotional and mental health issues which affect behaviour, together with implications for working with children.

How children's concerns may be caused by earlier experience (for example their reactions to being touched, or showing a fear of film and being photographed).

The local authority's corporate parenting responsibilities and systems, including transport, permissions procedures etc.

The roles and responsibilities of foster carers, social workers, residential staff, mentors, advocates etc.

Relevant social and educational policy towards children, including those who are looked after by the local authority.

The social position of children in general, and the disadvantaged social position of different groups of children on the basis of, for example, ethnicity, gender, disability, social class and sexuality, factors which may be augmented by the status of "being looked after in care."

3. Quality indicators for work carried out with looked after children and young people

There is need for creative agencies to develop a Code of Practice for their work with looked after children and other children. This would be part of the work of the Network, proposed below.

In order to provide evidence as to their capacity to deliver work of a high quality, artist pedagogues should develop a reflection-based portfolio, embracing the principles of social pedagogy as set out above and in the light of the Code of Practice.

We suggest that such a portfolio should evidence, for example:

- i. The artistic quality of the organisation's/artist's work with children and any information as to how this has been assessed.
- ii. Their organisational capacity to provide a sustainable service. There should be some prospect that they can maintain their work and relationships with children over time.
- iii. Their capacity to provide for the creative educational progression of children, for example through Arts Awards.
- iv. The safeguarding of children and young people through the application of identified safeguarding policies in line with national and local good practice.
- v. The training and support of those practitioners engaged by an agency, to ensure professional reflection and the development of their work both as artists, and in their practice with children.
- vii. An ability to work in partnership with children, carers and children's services staff at a practical level.
- viii. Children's creative and social participation in projects, with some record of children's own appraisal of the processes involved and of their participation in decision making.

Most of the above items would have an application to children in general, beyond those who are looked after. Any 'mainstream' group may contain looked after children, whether or not this is known to the creative agencies.

4. Training delivery and networks

The training delivery favoured by practitioners was principally short courses that included theory and knowledge, supplemented by practice development and with support from experienced creative professionals as mentors. Training resources can be developed by NCB and partners to support implementation of such a programme.

Artists emphasised the importance of networks for exchanging ideas, sharing practice and establishing peer learning and mentoring. Regionally and nationally organised network meetings would provide opportunity for improving practice and disseminating learning.

5. Quality Improvement and Accreditation

The early years National Quality Improvement Network (NQUIN) provides principles for local authorities and national organisations to improve the quality of outcomes in early years. The NQUIN programme identifies quality improvement through building a network of quality practitioners. This quality improvement model fits well with the networking, mentoring and training set out above. More information about NQUIN can be found on www.ncb.org.uk/qualityimprovement

We believe that a similar model would promote higher standards and provide a framework for judging the efficacy of training. The model should be linked to the quality indicators and to the principles, values and reflections we have set out.

Its eventual use should also be in accordance with these principles, and an appropriate accrediting body would need to be identified.

Helen Chambers, National Children's Bureau
Professor Pat Petrie, Centre for Understanding Social Pedagogy
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