

Physical Contact

In early years there are many occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children in our care, but it is crucial that you do so in ways appropriate to your professional role.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances maybe inappropriate in another, or with a different child.

However these are some guidelines.

Physical contact should take place:

In a safe and open environment, a place which can be easily observed by others and last for the minimum time necessary.

It should only take place when it is necessary in relation to an activity i.e. nappy changing, toilet training, changing clothes. Here adults should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the child.

In use to support a child who is upset or distressed after an event i.e. parent/carer leaving or when they have fallen and hurt themselves.

In regards to a child who has suffered previous abuse or neglect adults should be particularly aware that physical contact might be associated with such experiences.

The use of physical intervention should only be used to manage a child's behaviour if it is necessary to prevent personal injury to the child, other children or an adult, to prevent serious damage to property or what would be regarded as exceptional circumstances. (See guidance on use of force and Physical intervention)

When physical intervention is used it should be undertaken in such a way that maintains the safety and dignity of all concerned. It should be **reasonable, proportionate and necessary** and **in the best interest of the child**.

With a child that has special needs staff should have due regard to the child's IEP. Children with extreme behaviours i.e. autistic spectrum disorders staff need to refer to the child's risk assessment and agreed care plan.

Adults should not use any form of physical punishment or use a degrading treatment to punish a child. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils is not acceptable in any situation.