



NCMA Cymru and 'Quality' Childcare

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the research

Following general discussions with NCMA Cymru staff in Wales over the last twelve months NCMA Cymru decided to review the current Quality schemes available for childminders in Wales through the organisation. This was particularly relevant given that NCMA's Quality First scheme was due to end, for new applicants, by the end of 2010 and given the uncertainty in funding for the next financial year from local authorities in line with the Comprehensive Spending Review from the Welsh Assembly Government.

This was necessary to

- Ensure value for money for those providing funding to NCMA Cymru
- Ensure the relevance of quality schemes for childminders in Wales
- To ensure that quality schemes fit with Welsh Assembly policies (for example Rights for Action, Child Poverty strategy, Foundation Phase, Flying Start and Families First)
- Promote access to a quality scheme for more childminders across Wales ensuring that this is not elitist and discriminatory.

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2 Methodology

2.1 How did we do this?

Consultations were held with staff, childminders, key stakeholders from local authorities and children and their families to gauge their opinions.

Two NCMA Cymru staff consultations were held one in the north and one in the south of Wales. Staff that were unable to attend these sessions but

wanted to have input were given the opportunity through meetings and emails. A meeting was held with an individual member of staff following this.

Three consultations were held with staff from local authorities across Wales in Cardiff, Llanelli and Colwyn Bay. These were attended by 18 staff from 16 local authorities across Wales. The remaining six local authorities were contacted by email following the session to again be advised they could have input into the process though none responded.

Around 50 childminders across Wales inputted their views on Quality Assurance through a series of sessions at consultation events, childminding groups, network evenings, questionnaires, telephone and email contact.

2.2 Consultations with children

Topics were raised in a different way appropriate for the age and stage of development of the children present. Information around the sessions that were held was given to parents of the children involved in the sessions. Written consent was sought with parents of all children involved in the sessions and it was stressed that all settings and children involved would remain anonymous.

2.2.1 South West Wales (36 year six children)

Children were asked initially what was important to them when someone was looking after them. They worked in small groups of between five and six children and produced a mind map showing their views. The findings from this are discussed in the key points from the children consultations within section 3.4.

A 'diamond ranking' activity was used as the second activity with this group of children. The children were given 9 statements relating to elements of childcare provision and asked to rank them using a diamond ranking chart. Children were given 9 varying statements from a list of 36 which could be grouped into training elements, personal qualities of carer, children's

emotional development and well-being and the environment of the setting again the findings from this are discussed in section 3.4.

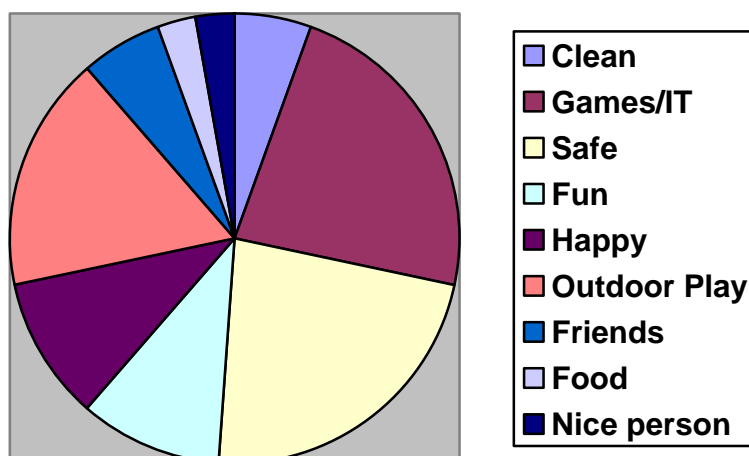
3.4 Consultations with children

3.4.1 Children's Consultation South Wales

This was held in a primary school in the South West with 36 year six children (10-11 years of age) who had differing experiences of childcare.

Elements which were deemed to be of most important to the children who took part were statements which can be linked to the environment of the setting and children's emotional development and well-being. These included keeping children safe, no discrimination, knowing what you like and don't like and having a clean house.

3.4.2 Name one point that is important to you when someone is looking after you (36 children)



3.4.3 Key points from the consultation with children in South West Wales

- Keeping children safe was of high importance to children within this group and was brought up by them in discussions during every activity. They talked about safety in terms of both safety features stair gates,

taking risks etc and personal safety around bullying and abuse. The children were very vocal on sharing the importance of this aspect.

- Another common theme was having access to outdoor play and equipment, games and sports and space to play all featured heavily in discussions.
- A clean setting was important to the majority of the children present and some also placed an importance on what their parents' views would be if it was not clean.
- Access to IT equipment and games consoles was important to a number of children showing the move towards technology.
- Having friends in the setting was seen as important and being happy there was highlighted as another key aspect.
- Bonding; Some of the individual responses from children in discussing this linked to forming a bond between children and the child carer. This included;

'You need to have time to bond with them, you are not just going to go to someone's house and be happy' (Rhian, 10 years).

'You have to make sure they're looking after you because if they are looking after everyone else instead you may feel lonely' (Kingsley, 10 years)

This shows the importance of settling children in even at an older age, babies are usually given settling in periods but often it is assumed older children do not need this. It also shows the importance of ratios within a setting and childcarers having time to form a relationship and bond again with the children.