

Response to Dorothy Selleck's Reflections Paper – Key Group Time

Estelle Martin

Dorothy Selleck's article is really helpful in drawing a distinction between 'circle time' and 'key group time'. This is because the former is more general and public whereas the latter is more private and personal.

I agree with Dorothy's concern that it is inappropriate for children at Circle Time to be encouraged to express difficult or personal feelings in the more public space. This is an important part of children's social development, in which they are learning about the social norms and culture of the larger group experiences in the nursery setting. It is, therefore, important they experience a sense of more intimate relations where they are able to express themselves in a smaller and familiar group such as the key group time described in the article.

Dorothy raises the important role of supervision and mentoring which provides for a more contained space and supportive relationship for staff to reflect and share personal aspects of professional practice. This is where we recognise adults and children as people needing supportive personal spaces to be heard and to share feelings, concerns and to raise questions without risk of judgement or rejection.

A colleague of mine, an *Early Years Professional (EYPS)* with key person responsibility for a small group of children, considered how to take forward the 'islands of intimacy' advocated by Goldschmied and Jackson (2004) in her setting. She calls this 'together time' for her children under three and this works as a distinction for the staff and children from the Circle Time which they also see as being for larger groups and children above three-years of age. They have found that the 'island of intimacy' does provide a more supportive and personal time for being with the children, listening, sharing and communicating in the more contained 'together time' with key group children.