

### A Report into Racism

E2 Introduction

It is important to carry out this investigation because in the long term children who are in our care at the moment will be the next generation of adults who will run the country one day. By teaching children values and respect at a young age, society will be fairer to everyone.

It is crucial to learn about anti-discrimination practice as it may affect children's development, for example a child that experiences racial discrimination may lack confidence throughout their lives.

Racism occurs at times when people do not understand cultures and traditions that are different to the ones they follow themselves. These thoughts and ideas are usually passed on from parents and carers to a child from a young age and stay with them as they grow up so that they form stereotypical views.

E10 *Research by Milner (1983) shows that*

*“children as young as 3 years attach value to skin colour, with both black and white children perceiving white as superior to black.”*

This supports the theory that children can absorb messages about racial stereotyping from a very young age.

By undertaking this investigation I will become an efficient diploma childcare and education worker in how to avoid discrimination in a setting and reinforce my knowledge on best practice. I will observe the influence of resources in promoting anti-racism within the day nursery. I will learn more about children's rights, the law that protects them from racism and where I stand in the eye of the law. In the future my knowledge from this study will raise my awareness of racism and prevent it occurring – after all, prevention is better than cure.

E3 Discrimination is the ability to identify differences between individuals or groups, then to deny one individual or group favour of another. From a health and care point of view this means denying access to services and preventing equal opportunities.

A definition of racism by Meggitt et al. (2000) states:

E10 *“Racism is the belief that some ‘races’ are superior to others based on the false idea that different physical characteristics (i.e. skin colour) or ethnic background make some people better than others.”*

Racial discrimination can occur to anyone, at any time in their lives, at any age from babies to the elderly.

Examples to show this:

- ✱ In a nursery – a child may be refused a place because they are black
- ✱ In a school – a child may be bullied by other children because of their skin colour
- ✱ On the street – black teenager may be stopped more often by the police than white teenager
- ✱ In the workplace – when applying for a job, the manager may favour white over black people
- ✱ Elderly homes – elderly residents may have a dislike to people from different cultures joining

E4  
E10

*“There has been a rise in racial attacks in Britain, some resulting in death. The experience of racial attacks can be devastating for an individual and their family...”*

Beaver et al. (2001)

If a child suffers from racial discrimination the effects are lifelong. Here are some effects children may have:

- Lack confidence in themselves to try out new activities
- Not fulfil potential because of the way other people view their status
- Suffer low self-esteem which may interfere with their ability to form relationships
- Feel ashamed of their culture / race
- Discriminate against other cultures
- Feel guilty and think they deserve poor treatment
- Negative images about themselves
- Be too scared to go out in case racist comments are said about them
- Blame themselves for any trouble that occurs
- Be so affected by stereotyping that events become a self-fulfilling prophecy, for example, if a black child is told that black people are destined to be lower classed and not achieve well then the child behaves accordingly with expectations.

E5

### Review of Literature

Stephen Lawrence was brutally murdered aged 18 years on April 22<sup>nd</sup> 1993. He was waiting with his friend Duwayne Brooks for a bus home at 22.30. Stephen walked into the centre of the road to see if a bus was coming and his friend called out to him. A group of 5 or 6 white youths across the other side of the road called out ‘what, what nigger?’ and they all approached Stephen and stabbed him twice, once in the chest and once in the arm. Both these wounds severed arteries and he would have died instantly if he had not been so physically fit and ran 100 yards before he fell to his death.

Stephen Lawrence’s unprovoked attack was solely motivated by racism. Nobody to this day has been convicted of this appalling crime. The police have been criticised for taking prolonging the investigation. No other witnesses have come forward to identify the killers apart from Brooks even after the huge publicity of the murder. Three of the prime suspects were taken to trial in 1996, however the prosecution failed due to lack of sustainable evidence and they can never be tried again in the present law. Two other suspects were released in 1995 and there is no chance of them being prosecuted with existing evidence. This shows that the police force involved needed to work harder at the time to ensure that the murderers were jailed when they were trailed. The police force must work harder in the future to prevent any further racial violence cases reaching the same conclusion as the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. Also, legislation and laws will have to be looked at very carefully to avoid the same issues raised.

The government think that from this case new regulations will be made:

*“...we do believe that the debate about policing and racism has been transformed by this Inquiry...”*

Damilola Taylor was killed among the tower blocks of a run down estate in Peckham whilst returning home from an after-school computer class. He was attacked by a group of Afro-Caribbean boys who stabbed him in the leg and then forced a marble down his throat to keep him from shouting for help.

The police were criticised again for their handling of the case. More than 120 officers worked on the case at an estimated £2.5 million, however at the trial the main witness was found to be a liar and dismissed; and the two of the four defendants were released by the judge.

There has been a great deal of pressure on the government and on the police after the Stephen Lawrence murder to get things right and bring justice to the murders, in spite of this the Damilola case was not conducted properly. Some people blame the system and the police for not providing enough protection for the main witness and checking out the statements fully before the trial. Some people think that the amount of money spent on this case could have been used for safety and prevention measures, as children should be brought up in a safe environment, not in constant terror. Others believe that the local community let Damilola down by not answering to police enquiries. The police are not to blame for not getting the answers needed, but his neighbours and local area for refusing to help to solve his murder.

A1     Legislation in themselves do not stop discrimination just like speed cameras do not stop people speeding. The existence of a law does send out a very clear message that discrimination is not acceptable under any circumstances and there are consequences for those who decide to disregard the laws.

- Race Relations Act 1965 outlawed discrimination on basis of race in provision of goods and services, employment, housing. Any attempts to carry out racial hatred became an offence under this Act as well.
- In 1976 Commission for Racial Equality given power to start court proceedings in instances of discrimination
- Children's Act 1989 required that needs arising from children's race, culture, religion and language to be considered by those caring for them.

All policies are only effective in promoting their aims if staff are committed to implementing them, if they are properly resourced and regularly evaluated, reviewed and updated.

E10     *"Policies can increase awareness, but will not in themselves, change attitudes or practice."*

Beaver et al. (1999)

This quote shows that policy guidelines need to be carried out with good practice; just having the policy is not enough to prevent racism occurring in the future. Good practice is essential for children to enhance their social, physical, emotional, intellectual and linguistic development.

E10     Even with all these Acts, policies and legislation present in the current law, if racism related cases are taken to court, according to Beaver (2001)  
*"Successful prosecutions are comparatively rare."*

The law in its current state needs to be amended so that the legal system defends the accused more than witnesses and the suffering families. The criminal judicial service needs to be reformed so that prosecutions are more achievable.  
As the strongest way of promotion the media should encourage anti-discriminatory practice.

E6     Race Relations Act 1976

The passing of this Act makes it illegal to discriminate anyone on grounds of race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic origin or national rights in housing, education, employment, entertainment and provision of services and goods.  
This Act also set up the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), which carries out research, sends out information, and carries out investigations into cases of alleged racial discrimination both directly and indirectly.

E7

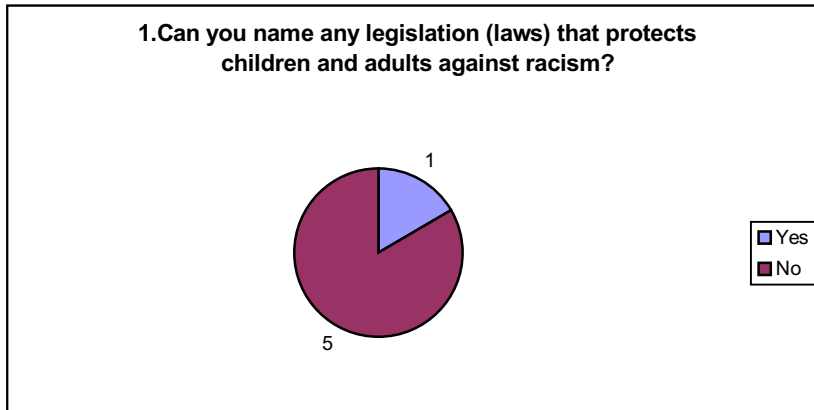
Method

This is how I carried out my investigation.

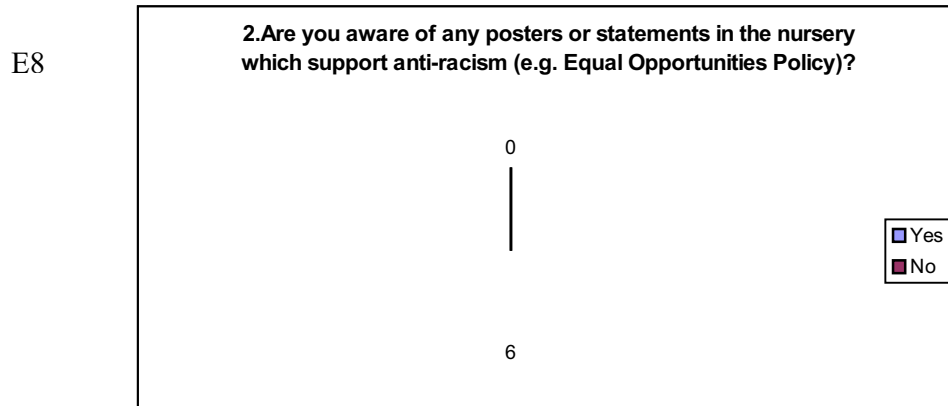
1. I asked my supervisor for permission to do an investigation about racism and anti-discrimination / bias.
2. I photocopied the Equal Opportunities Policy
3. I devised a resources tick chart for all the rooms at the nursery
4. I devised a questionnaire for the staff at the nursery
5. I used textbooks to help me with theory

With the resources tick chart I walked around all the rooms of the nursery checking whether each room had all the resources on the list. If they did it got a tick, if not then a cross. I showed the manager a copy of the questionnaire for approval before I gave them out to each member of staff. I asked politely if they could fill them in if they had time over the next few days. I collected the completed questionnaires and compiled the results together with the results from the resources.

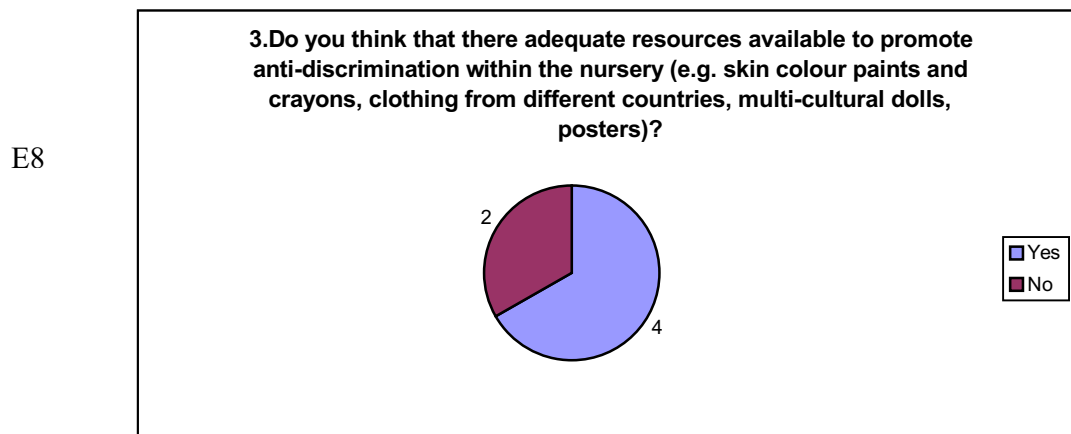
E8 Presentation of my Results



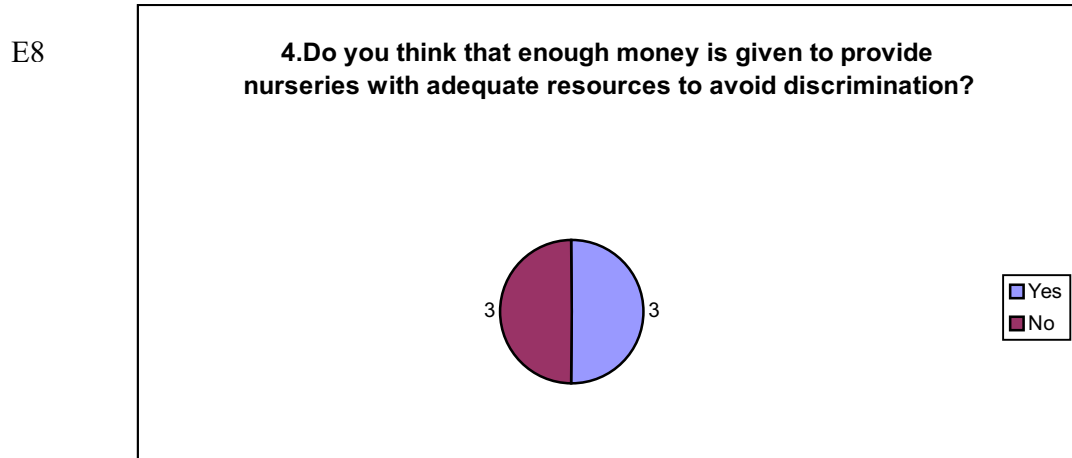
E9 Only one person knew of any relevant legislation out of the 6 people I asked, but still could not name any. This shows that more training is needed to promote the awareness of Racial Equality within the day nursery so that adults know they can be protected against racial allegations and also be a good role model for the children in their care.



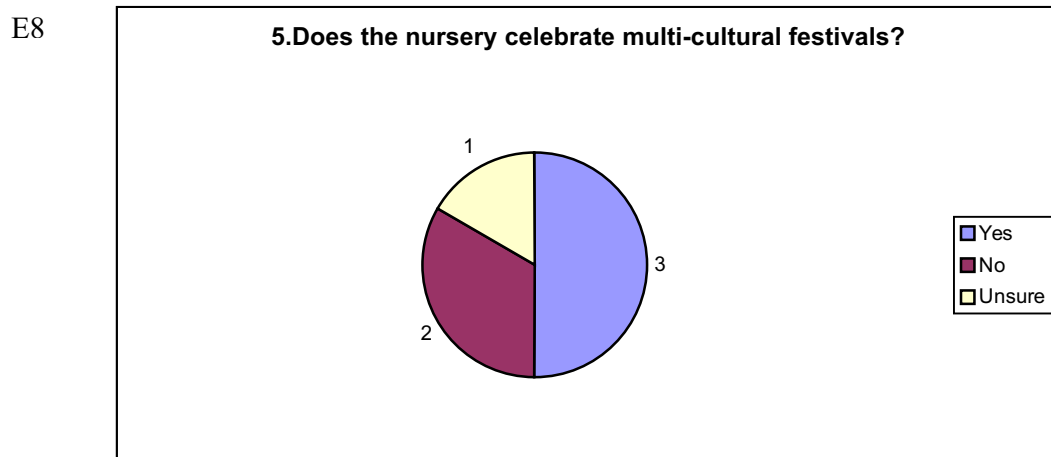
E9 All 6 people were aware of any posters or statements, but only half of staff knew where the Equal Opportunities Policy was kept. The majority of people knew there was a poster promoting children from different cultures. There could be more staff meetings to discuss and refresh staff on the whereabouts of important policies.



E9 60% of staff thought that the resources were adequate but these opinions were from the staff from rooms of the older children 3-5years, where they appear to use the resources more than the under 2's children. The staff from the baby unit felt dolls with disabilities were missing.



E9 Opinions were divided between there being adequate funding for resources. 50% of staff felt the need for multi-cultural toys, 2 members of staff wanted dolls with different clothing from different countries.



E9 The majority of people recognised that the nursery celebrated festivals, however some were unsure of the certain festivals. More posters could be shown in rooms to remind staff about different festivals throughout the year.

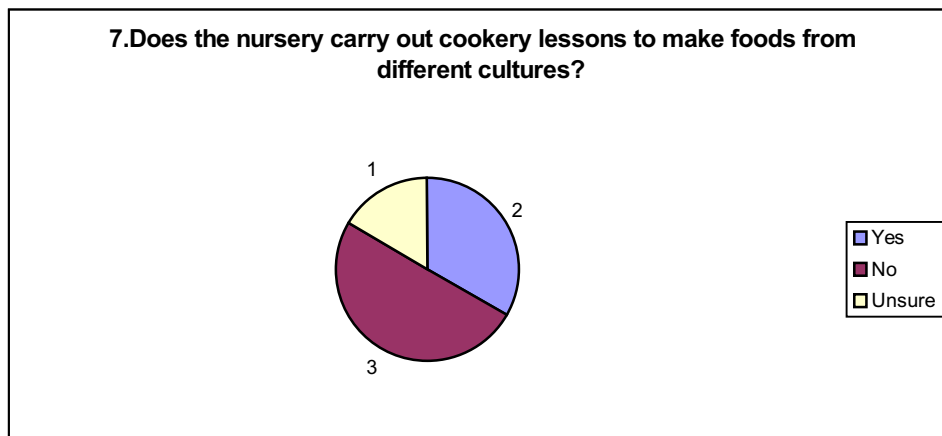
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66% of staff thought that the daily menu was adequate, however the rest thought that the menu did not cater for vegans. If there was a vegan child, special arrangements would be made at snack and mealtimes.

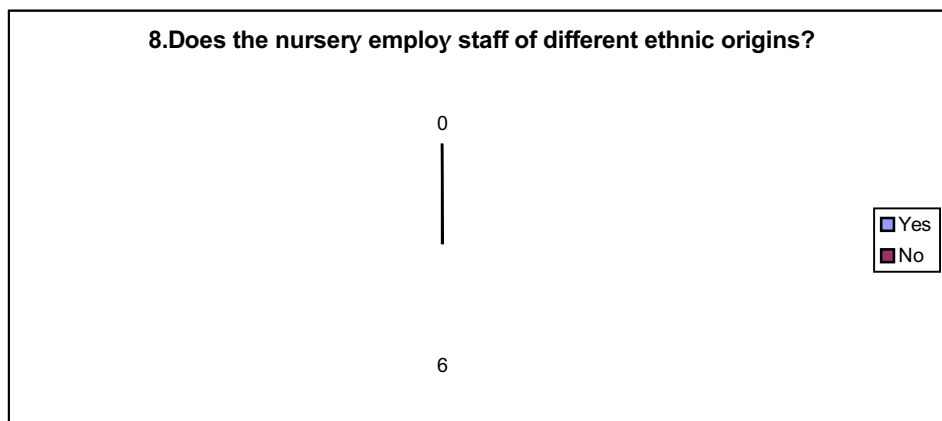
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2/6 of staff stated that cookery lessons were occurring, but once again this was only with the older children 3-5years. This should be brought up at team meetings to include cooking activities that are suitable for all the children to carry out.

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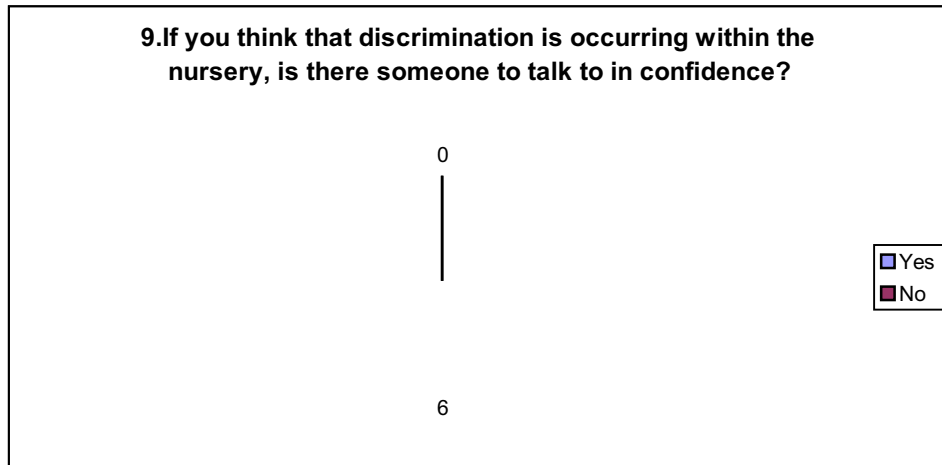


E9

All staff were aware of multi-ethnic staff working at the nursery. This shows that staff know about other members of staff quite well and have close communications within the nursery.



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All staff were aware that there was someone to go to if they had concerns about discrimination occurring. Most people named the Equal Opportunities representative, some name the head of units, and some named the manager and area manager as the person they would go to. This could be brought up at the next staff meeting to clear up any doubts, as there should be one person in particular whom they should go to.

- E9 The results from the resources chart supported the results above. The overview was that the older children had more resources at hand than younger children (13 out of 15 aged 3-5yrs compared to 5 out of 15 aged 12-18mths). None of the rooms had a welcome notice written in different languages or posters showing children with disabilities. When I mentioned this to the room supervisors they were quite surprised, as they hadn't thought about these beforehand. There was a lack of dolls within all rooms, which surprised me because I'd always thought that throughout the nursery there was a very good representation of resources.

From the Equal Opportunities Policy the nursery is part of a chain, which shows a positive image regarding children and families. It states:

*“ They (children) will be made aware of different cultures, habits and religious celebrations and festivals as we prepare them for school. ”*

This shows that the focus is on the older children for developing their physical, intellectual, language, emotional and social skills with a wider range of resources, toys and equipment.

- C1 Images in books should be positive regarding people with disabilities, race and culture. Books showing positive images of successful disabled people, for example, are important because children can see that people who are physically different can achieve the same.
- To encourage children to have broad views to race and culture, images of other countries have to show everyday life not a 'tourist approach', e.g. people at work, children in school. Positive images of ethnic minorities, women, different religions, people with disabilities, different lifestyles should be shown to children.
- Reading materials, artwork (including displays and posters), dressing up clothes and games can reflect diversity in society.
- Using skin colour paints/crayons allows all children to draw themselves to the best of their skin colour, not excluding anyone.
- In cookery lessons, foods from different countries can be made to promote anti-discrimination and explore different ways of cooking, tastes and textures. In role-play children can be taught how people from different cultures act and live; videos may be used to stimulate their imagination.
- Celebrating religious festivals allows children to achieve an insight into a different culture; they can eat special foods; make special posters/items to show their understanding etc.

- E10 *“Having the right resources does not in itself ensure equality and diversity is being promoted. It needs positive language and attitudes of staff to place correct values on resources and activities provided.”*

Tassoni (2002)

- B1     The Rights of Children as quoted by Beaver (1999)
- *Have their needs met and safeguarded*
- E10
- *Be protected from neglect, abuse and exploitation*
  - *Be brought up in their family of birth whenever possible*
  - *Be considered as an individual, to be listened to and have their wishes and feelings taken into account when decisions are made concerning their welfare*

A child care and education worker should focus on an individual child's personality as a relationship is built up, not ethnicity, religion or background. They should also promote a broad range of cultures, religions and beliefs by valuing and exploring differences with children in their care. Children's sense of belonging to their culture is very important part of their lives and needs to be acknowledged and valued.

*“Any personal preferences and prejudices must be put aside; all children should be treated with respect and dignity irrespective of their ethnic origin, religion or socio-economic group.”*

Bruce and Meggitt (2002)

Children pick up attitudes and morals from watching others and view the C.C.E.W. as a role model. A good C.C.E.W. would consider the cultural differences and practices before jumping to conclusions about a situation (e.g. 'beat' in British terms would mean 'forceful hitting', but in Caribbean it means 'smack'). Also, the role of the C.C.E.W. would be very important in dealing with any negative incidents promptly.

Actions and words mentioned by the adults around the children could have lasting effects on the development of self-esteem, which shows that,

*“Early Years Practitioners have a strong role in promoting equal opportunities within their settings – they need to make sure every child feels valued and also that children learn to value and respect others”*

Tassoni (2002)

- D1    A child care and education student should be a good role model for children to see. Personal beliefs, attitudes and prejudices should not discriminate against children or families. All skin colours should be portrayed in a positive way. The student should offer to expand children's learning opportunities through knowledge and understanding of the world, food, music, language etc. Questions regarding suitability of activities for all children should be asked before carrying them out, encouraging cooperation and pleasantness through interactions with children. The student should look out for ways to value all children, trying not to favour one child over another, promoting positive self images in children from all family backgrounds and encourage caring attitudes. Questions from children regarding race, culture or religion should be answered honestly using appropriate language. A culture, religion, language or lifestyle should not be promoted as superior to another; however a child's first language should be respected.

<b>Author</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Publisher</b>
Beaver, M.	1999	Babies and Young Children Book 2, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Edition; Early Years Care and Education	Stanley Thornes
Beaver, M.	2001	Babies and Young Children – Diploma in Child Care and Education	Nelson Thornes
Bruce, T. and Meggitt, C.	2002	Child Care and Education 3 <sup>rd</sup> Edition	Hodder and Stoughton
Green, S.	2002	BTEC National Early Years	Nelson Thornes
Meggitt, C.	2000	An Introduction to Child Care and Education	Hodder and Stoughton
Tassoni, P.	1998	Child Care and Education	Heinemann
Tassoni, P.	2002	Diploma in Child Care and Education	Heinemann