

November 2009

MESSAGE TO EARLY YEARS LEADS – GOOD PRACTICE IN EARLY YEARS SETTINGS AND CHILDREN’S CENTRES

I am writing to you in light of a number of queries about the use of mobile phones and cameras in childcare settings that the Department has received recently. These concerns were in relation to the risk of staff becoming distracted from their work with children when using their mobile phones and the inappropriate use of mobile phone cameras. This note highlights our advice on good practice in this area and that we expect Early Years settings and Children’s Centres to apply common sense.

We need to ensure that childcare providers continue to feel supported to use and make the most of the benefits of modern technology to support children’s learning and development, whilst ensuring that children are kept safe. The Department’s expectation is that, in general, mobile phones should not be used when staff are working with children, and that in developing their safeguarding policies and procedures, managers should set out clearly how mobile phones and other potential distractions should be handled in their settings.

On cameras, we know that one of the key ways that practitioners support children’s development and engage parents in children’s learning is through photographs that record their activities and achievements. We would expect managers to continue using cameras in this way and would encourage them to check with parents that they consent to the use of cameras for appropriate recording purposes.

I would be grateful if you could work with providers in your local area to draw this aspect of safeguarding to their attention.

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