

With the underlying assumption that schools treat all of their children as individuals and recognise that each one has different needs and experiences, the details below are taken from National Strategies '*Building Futures Developing Trust*' (2009) and summarise best practice for Gypsy, Roma, Traveller children.

What do practitioners need to do?

Practitioners should never underestimate the influence they can have on the lives of children and families. While the role of setting leaders and managers is vital for policy change, all practitioners have a responsibility to reflect on their own practice and can:

- ensure that they provide a learning environment in which Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and their families feel welcomed, respected and valued;
- enter into genuine partnerships by creating a space for dialogue – listening to the voices of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and their parents;
- provide a rich learning environment with relevant, culturally reflective resources. and creative and challenging learning opportunities;
- recognise that good teaching is a vital ingredient in achievement and ensure that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children experience good role-models in all areas of learning and development;
- include positive role-models where possible from the Traveller community to be involved in the setting;
- develop patience, understanding, respect, adaptability and flexibility and be prepared to think of different ways to engage with families and to meet their needs;
- keep careful records of children's progress from entry to the setting, ensuring that expectations and progress of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children is in line with other groups, and investigating possible causes where variance arises;
- consider assessment procedures – checking that observational assessments of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children are fair, honest and free from influences of stereotyping;
- reflect honestly on personal attitudes, feelings, preconceptions and tendencies to stereotype, challenging negative attitudes within the setting (this is both possible and necessary);
- work closely with the LA's Traveller Education Support Service to draw on and learn from their experience and expertise in working with Traveller families;
- encourage families to ascribe to the appropriate group by ensuring a positive attitude to diversity and encouraging pride in all heritages;
- recognise the status of Gypsy, Roma and Travellers of Irish Heritage within the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000), now Equality Act 2010;
- make race equality and cultural diversity training a priority for whole-setting professional development;
- review and implement, monitor and evaluate their race equality policy.

National Strategies '*Building Futures Developing Trust*' (2009)