

**Edinburgh’s Children, Loved, Safe and Respected**

**FUNDAMENTALS**

***fundamental***

*adjective*

1. *forming a necessary base or core; of central importance.*

[The Promise](https://www.carereview.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/The-Promise.pdf), and [Edinburgh’s Promise](https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/children-families/edinburghs-promise/1) is built on 5 fundamentals:

* What matters to children and families
* Listening
* Poverty
* Children’s Rights
* Language

To take these fundamentals forward we need a collective understanding of what these fundamentals mean to us all. The following document has been written to provide some usability to these otherwise broad headings. Without these definitions and explanations we could end up interpreting the fundamentals in different ways. This would not get us to where need to get to together in ensuring that Edinburgh’s children receive children’s services that will keep Edinburgh’s Promise.

Under each of the fundamentals this document will describe *what it means* via a description of what the fundamental means for Edinburgh’s Promise; as well as a *what it looks like* listing of what keeping to and ensuring our work is built upon these fundamentals actually would look like and involve. These are not exhaustive lists and all people, teams, services and organisations are challenged to come up with their own additional *what it looks like* lists to ensure the fundamentals truly are our **necessary base and core** to keeping the Promise.

**What Matters to Children and Families**

***What it means***

To keep the Promise, Edinburgh’s children and families need people, teams, services and organisations to focus on what matters to children and their families. This means that offers of support and care are made to fully support the child and their family and their needs and wishes, and not as a result of what the service can ‘offer’.

Colleagues working in children’s services, often have clear parameters around what can and cannot be offered, what is and what is not part of that offer and who and when that offer can be made. To keep Edinburgh’s Promise, we are all challenged to focus on what matters to children and families, over and above of what suits the person, team, service or organisation.

***What it looks like***

People, teams, services and organisations will be doing what **matters to children and families** by:

* Supporting that person and their family’s needs, rather than delivering what the service usually ‘delivers’
* Reviewing how people access the support that they need from services and what the service’s offer of support looks like. Making sure that referral criteria fit with what children and families need, and not what services cannot offer
* Using others, with permission, to help the child, young people, parents and carers to help make sure that support is in place and needs are met.
* Being flexible to requests for support and assistance and doing everything possible to meet that request, fully or partially. Where only partially meeting that need, being honest about that and helping with identifying where that need might be met.

**Listening**

***What it means***

To keep the Promise, Edinburgh’s children need to know that when they have shared something, that it is heard, and once heard, their issues, hopes, dreams, challenges and problems are acted upon. Individually and collectively, children and young people’s voice must be listened to and acted upon. Listening means understanding, and we understand through dialogue, discussion and sharing the decision making.

People, teams, services and organisations that listen to understand will ensure that change and improvement comes from that voice.

The Promise stemmed from all of us failing to listen and act. Listening and acting will see the offer of support to Edinburgh’s children, young people, parents and carers evolve and change, as we engage with that conversation of need.

***What it looks like***

People, teams, services and organisations will be **listening** by:

* Putting into place the changes and improvements that are required from the voices that are being listened to
* Using every conversation and interaction with children and their families as an opportunity to be curious and learn what works and what is needed
* Actively gathering and acting upon the views, wishes and asks from children and their families that we receive through our listening
* Providing support for as long as it is needed

**Poverty**

***What it means***

To keep the Promise, Edinburgh’s children should be supported to thrive beyond the social, economic and structural issues that affect families due to a lack of money. People, teams, services and organisations need to be aware that poverty is all around and that without knowing how poverty affects children and their families, our actions and decision can attribute judgement upon family circumstances where poverty is the main factor.

Discussions around having enough money to live on need to be part of the move away from the negative consequences that families without enough money already experience.

People, teams, services and organisations need to do whatever they can to help mitigate the impact and negative consequences living in poverty can have on Edinburgh’s children.

***What it looks like***

People, teams, services and organisations will be addressing **poverty** and its impact by:

* Asking families whether they have enough money to live on and offering help to access support where having enough money is an issue
* Not blaming or judging people for not having enough money to live on
* Not allowing poverty to be the main reason for children not being able to remain in their family’s care
* Being aware of what choices and decisions Edinburgh’s children and families may well be making due to being affected by poverty, and what actions and support can be offered to assist them
* Breaking down the stigma and shame associated with being affected by poverty by being better at discussing with everyone whether they have enough money to live on, acknowledging poverty and finding better ways to include and support children and their families affected by not having enough money
* Naming poverty where it is present as being a major issue affecting children, young people and families and not using the impact of poverty as anything other than an issue that requires planning and support to access more money to live on

**Children’s Rights**

***What it means***

Edinburgh’s children will receive support and help that embodies, promotes and ensures that children’s rights are upheld.

Edinburgh’s children will have their rights equally upheld and no circumstances or situation will see children have different rights from anyone else.

Edinburgh’s children who are not able to live at home, will not see their rights diminish or reduce due to their situation and circumstances.

***What it looks like***

People, teams, services and organisations will be promoting and upholding **children’s rights** by:

* Knowing what children’s rights are and by promoting and upholding these as a core part of all the work we do with children and young people
* Understanding what actions support and uphold children’s rights, and which actions and decisions breach children’s rights
* Viewing all children and their circumstances as being unique and being mindful of how children’s rights will be upheld for each child and young person
* Being confident to call out situations where we have lost sight of children’s rights

**Language**

***What it means***

To keep Edinburgh’s Promise, the language that we all use must be positive and free of stigma. People, teams, services and organisations need to avoid stigmatising labels and groupings.

Edinburgh’s children, no matter their situation or circumstances need to be treated as unique individuals, with their own preferences regarding what and how things special to them are described and the language used to describe them.

Edinburgh’s children and their families cannot be defined by their legal status, and where legal definitions are required to be used, these should never be used to define or describe the child or young person in and of themselves.

***What it looks like***

People, teams, services and organisations will be using **language** this way by:

* Using as few labels to describe people as possible
* Using everyday language
* Adopting a people first approach – where we see the person (first) and not the description of their skills, attributes, challenges and limitations
* Stop using legal definitions to describe and determine a child or young person
* Asking children, young people and their families what language they want to be used when describing themselves, their lives and the events that have unfolded for them
* Writing about children, young people and their families that describe both strengths and areas of concern, in a manner and style that you would be happy with having your own life written in