



Intergenerational Projects - A Good Practice Guide

We have put this guide together drawing on our experiences of developing and supporting intergenerational work over many years in Northern Ireland. We have incorporated recommendations from the groups we have worked with.

We have also used recommendations from a range of published evaluation documents, accessed at www.linkinggenerationsni.com

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Project planning

A **planning group** should be in place to manage the project. This group will **create and agree** on the structure and delivery of the project. They will take into account the **needs of the participants** and ideally the **younger and older people will have representatives on the planning group**.

It is important that participants are consulted effectively and kept informed throughout the project.

The planning group should draw up a programme of the project, detailing session activities and times, so that everyone knows what to expect.

Project aims

Ideally, the project would **address an issue** that all of the participants can connect with. For example:

- Local community campaign
- Collaborate on a piece of art work
- Address a local need which involves both age groups
- Both groups should have **equal participation** and suit the needs of the individuals
- Relationships are more likely to develop if both age groups are working together for a **common goal**

LGNI regard **mutual respect** between the age groups as essential part of what should be a **two way process**.

ALL Staff will:

- Safeguard children by ensuring that staff and persons in charge of groups and projects are Police checked.
- Ensure workers are competent and will adhere to the Safeguarding Children Policy, Vulnerable Person policy and Good Practice at all times.
- Ensure that a clearly understood reporting procedure for incidents is in place and that all parties involved are aware who to report to. (*Usually the designated Leader In charge of the group*).
- Review the Safeguarding Children Implementation guidelines and Safeguarding policies on an annual basis and update as necessary.
- Share information about child protection and good practice with other partner organisations.

Staff and partner organisation leaders must:

- Ensure risk assessments are completed and all parties are in agreement on Safeguarding Children Implementation Plan.
- Ensure incident, accident forms, insurance, and arrangements for first aid procedures are in place.
- Ensure incidents/suspected incidents are always recorded on Incident Reporting Form.
- Ensure all children and joint age groups will be adequately supervised and engaged in suitable activities at all times – not to be left un-supervised.
- Ensure there is an adequate child/staff ratio to deliver activities safely with designated Police checked leaders in the room at all times.
- Keep a check on all visitors and guests to the premises/room being used. Check they are there by invitation, not unsolicited, and supervised to ensure welfare of children at all times.
- Make activities fun, enjoyable and safe.
- Ensure Health and Safety procedures are adhered to and equipment checked regularly.
- Not put children into situations where they or the child may be at risk of physical injury or personal danger.
- Not spend time alone with a child. If a situation does arise, contact time should be as brief as possible with staff member remaining in view at all times. Ensure other staff are informed of what is happening.
- Not find themselves in sole charge of children in i.e. a school or community group. If this does happen, staff should raise their concerns with the school, organiser, group leader and report incident to the manager/staff member in charge.

Drawing on the underpinning values in our Safeguarding Children Policy, all partner organisations will adhere to the following DO'S AND DON'TS:

DO

- Ensure written permission from parents, carers and adults are in place and check this with teachers/group leaders before taking photographs or videos. Any images inadvertently taken of a child whose parent/carer has not given consent must be deleted at the earliest opportunity. It is often necessary for staff and group leaders to take photographs or video a workshop or activity. These are for media, publicity or archive purposes or at the request of funding organisations.
- Treat all children and young people equally and with respect and dignity, with their welfare a priority.
- Aim to build balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision making process, not forcing them to do something against their will, recognising their contribution and valuing their input.
- Be excellent role models and not engage in rough, physical, or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.

DON'T

- Take photos or video of a child with his/her own personal mobile phone. If staff are using a personal camera all images taken must be submitted to the organisation and deleted from the staff members' camera.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching

- Allow children and older persons to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted on. Children need to be believed and encouraged that some secrets should never be kept i.e. inappropriate touching etc
- Criticise but give constructive feedback and be supportive and encourage

Session Delivery

- All participants will work in the same room, visible at all times.
- There will be adequate space for seating and moving around the room.
- Leader to be in attendance and supervise session interactions at all times.
- 'Do's and don'ts' will be covered with the whole group at first single age session and during first joint age session.

Participant Preparation - Single identity work

Leaders/staff should meet with each age group **separately** before the intergenerational project starts to prepare them for meeting up. Information about how each group views the other can be gathered at this session and can inform a 'before and after' type of evaluation. Suggestions for this session might include discussions around these questions:

- Discuss the contributions different ages make to society and community?
- What are the positive outcomes for individuals, organisations and communities being involved in intergenerational projects?
- What ideas do you have that would be suitable for bringing all ages together?

The First Session

The first session should involve fun ice-breakers and allow time for **getting to know each other**. The aim is always to provide a positive environment where relationships can develop. Suggestions for this first session include:

- Review of the single identity session
- Speed dating format
- Show and tell – bring an object and talk about it
- Arts and crafts
- Human bingo

Include

- 'Do's and don'ts',
- Aims of project
- How each session will be delivered
- Plans for a final celebration event.
- Emergency, fire and health and safety procedures to be highlighted to all.

Duration of project

The longer the better! A key feature of successful projects is that **genuine and lasting friendships** are formed between older and younger people. This takes time and the sessions should allow time within the plan for purely social interaction. Sessions should last between 1 and 2 hours. Sessions running weekly or fortnightly seem to work best as it means there is enough contact to keep participants engaged but not too much or too little to lose interest.

Evaluation

Evaluating is an important part of any project and should be a **continuous process** throughout the project. We recommend the following:

- Using age specific paper evaluation forms / verbal recordings
- Take plenty of photos (with permission)
- Note down any interesting comments participants make throughout the project
- Refer to the information gathered during the single identity sessions to provide 'before and after' information

Celebration

A celebration event is a great way to **recognise the achievements** of the project for both participants and workers. We suggest:

- Contact local papers to see if they will feature your project
- Invite local Councillors, politicians and special guests to the event
- Use the celebration to launch anything you have produced such as a report, photo album, art work, DVD, booklet
- Enjoy refreshments
- A performance of participants musical / dance / poetry talents
- Presentation of certificates for participating
- Celebrate!!

SUMMARY:

- Everyone will be working in same room, visible at all times
- Any issues/concerns refer to staff member in charge immediately.