

## The Common Core of Skills and Knowledge?

Factsheet 3

Aug 09

### the background

The 'Common Core of Skills and Knowledge (also simply known as the **Common Core**) is a set of standard and common values for all people, including volunteers, who work regularly with children and young people. It sets out the basic skills and knowledge that they need. They are part of bringing together everyone who works with children and young people under one banner known as the **Children's Workforce**.

The Common Core is one of a range of initiatives introduced following the enquiry by Lord Laming into the death of young Victoria Climbié in 2000. These recommendations formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. The **Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC)** is taking the lead to support local authorities and Children's Trusts to implement these changes.



Children's Workforce  
Development Council

The fundamental aim of the Common Core is to provide a shared language across all agencies about the skills necessary to support children and young people and act as a foundation for effective training and development programmes.

The Third Sector is a huge part of the Children's Workforce, providing some of the most effective and diverse services. In working together to establish an integrated workforce, third sector organisations need to identify their current skills and training needs against the Common Core.

Use of the Common Core is not compulsory but is seen as good practice. Some funders may also seek compliance with it and third sector organisations may find it helpful in explaining the value of their work and the quality of their staff.

### breaking it down

The Common Core establishes a key set of skills that are generic across all organisations, to help ensure that new workers are competent at a basic level to work with children and young people.

It's about different people in the workforce but all using the same skills.

The skills and knowledge in the Common Core are divided into six key areas:

### 1) **Effective communication and engagement with children, young people and families**

Good communication involves effective listening, questioning and responding and to what is being communicated by children, young people and those caring for them. It takes into account culture and context, and involving children and young people in the design and delivery of services.

### 2) **Child and young person development**

It is important to have a basic knowledge and awareness of the developmental changes in a child's life and how they can affect behaviour. This involves being able to self-reflect and adjust your behaviour accordingly.

### 3) **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child**

This skill involves being able to recognise when a child or young person is not achieving their developmental potential or their health may be impaired and be able to refer to appropriate sources of help. It is important to identify concerns as early as possible in order to move from intervention to prevention.



### 4) **Supporting transitions**

Children and young people go through a number of stages as they grow. These may include school or family changes and are commonly referred to as transitions. It is important to understand a child or young person in the context of their life and the impact of the transitions they may be going through.

### 5) **Multi-agency working**

This is about different services working together in order to prevent problems from occurring in the first place. It is most effective when organisations and agencies are clear about their own role and those of other agencies.

### 6) **Sharing information**

Sharing information in a timely and accurate way is an essential part of helping to deliver better services. It is important to understand issues surrounding confidentiality and when to pass on information.



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**For more information and help on the Common Core go to:**  
[www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/common-core](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/common-core)