

UNIT 1

INTRODUCTION TO CHILD FRIENDLY SCHOOLS



Introduction

- Welcome to Module 4 on Child Friendly Schools.
- Various school models illustrate ways to improve the quality of education.
- However, it is the Child Friendly School models that have emerged as the most comprehensive in their approach and the most widespread, both in the number of countries in which they have been put into practice and the geographical distribution of those countries.
- In this unit we will learn about the concept of CFS, principles of CFS, benefits of CFS, steps to becoming a CFS and the implementation of the CFS model in various countries.



Expected learning outcomes

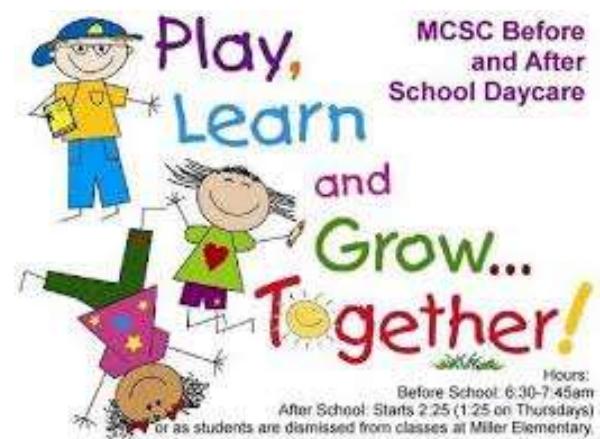
Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- a) Describe the concept of CFS
- b) Apply the principles of CFS
- c) State the benefits of CFS
- d) Describe the steps to becoming a CFS
- e) Discuss the implementation of CFS in various countries



What is CFS?

- A Child-Friendly School (CFS) is one where the learning environment is conducive; the staff are friendly to the children; the health and safety needs of the children are adequately met; the school is community based; and the rights of all children are recognized, irrespective of gender, family status, physical and mental abilities/disabilities, and religious/ethnic differences (FGN/UNICEF, 2000).



- The purpose of the CFS model is to improve quality standards, addressing all elements that influence the well-being and rights of the child as a learner while improving other school functions in the process.
- To this end, CFS models are concerned with harnessing the full involvement and support of all parties in a position to facilitate children's right to a quality education.
- These parties, or 'duty bearers', include parents, communities, teachers, school heads, education planners and civil society groups, as well as local and national governments and their external partners.

Dimensions of CFS

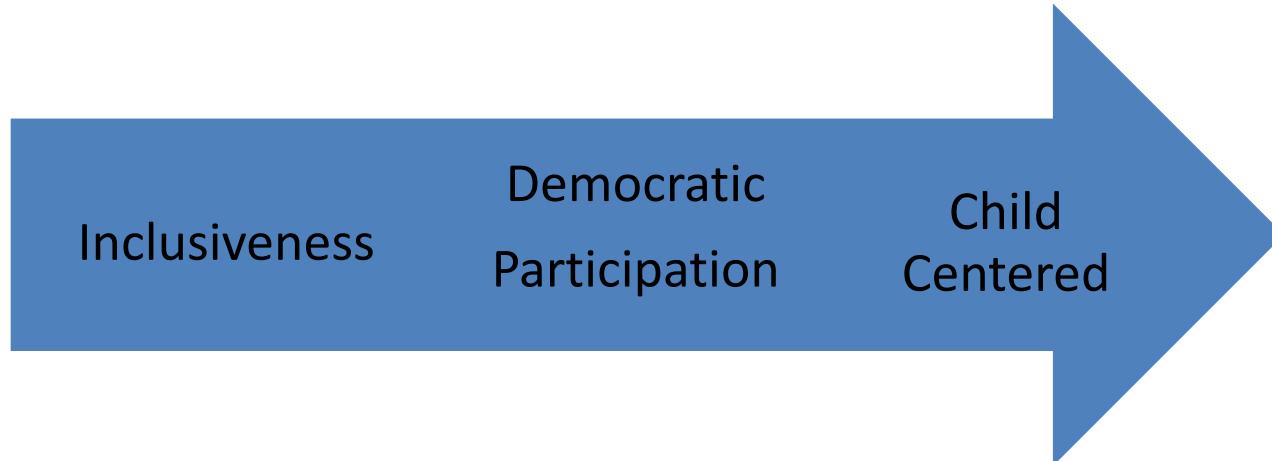
CFS consists of five dimensions namely:

- An Inclusive CFS**
- Safe and Protective School**
- Equity and Equality in a CFS**
- Health and Nutrition in a CFS**
- School community linkages in a CFS**

- a) *Proactively inclusive*, seeking out and enabling participation of all children and especially those who are different ethnically, culturally, linguistically, socio-economically, and in terms of ability;
- b) *Safe for, and protective of*, children's emotional, psychological, and physical well-being;
- c) *Health and nutrition for*, children's emotional, psychological, and physical well-being;
- d) *Equity and equality responsive* in creating environments and capacities fostering equality; and
- e) *Actively engaged with, and enabling of, student, family, and community participation*

Principles of CFS

- There are three principles of Child Friendly Schools, namely the principle of inclusiveness, democratic participation and child centred.





The principle of inclusiveness

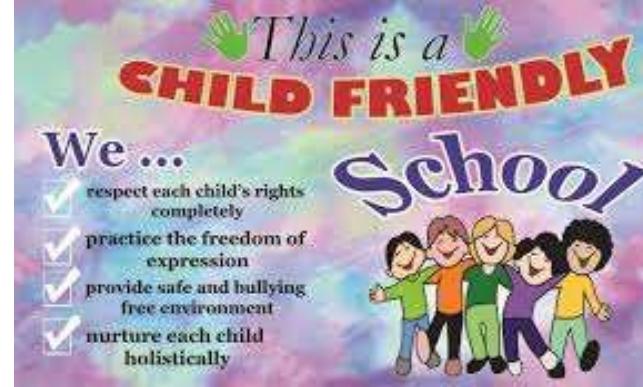
- This principle effectively enables the progression towards child-friendly school status by leading to the implementation of measures that promote access and retention of children from a wide diversity of backgrounds.
- The desired features and standards in this principle include:
 - a) Requires schools to be open and welcoming to all children without exception.
 - b) The school does not just passively receive children who seek schooling but actively seeks out all eligible children for enrolment. Beyond enrolment, it also helps children stay in school and attend regularly.
 - c) Fair, transparent and non-discriminatory rules for accessing school are necessary but not sufficient. There must also be strategies and measures in place to tackle the barriers that prevent children from taking the opportunities to participate in education.



- d) Local school mapping and community monitoring systems to help track enrolment and identify children who are out of school.
- e) Satellite schools that ensure younger children in remote communities can go to school close to home until they are old enough to attend existing primary schools farther away.
- f) Community schools that provide education opportunities for children who do not have access to the existing standard schools.
- g) Mother-tongue instruction in the early grades and multilingual/multicultural education designed to ease the transition from home to school and render education more relevant to minority populations primary schools farther away.
- h) Community schools that provide education opportunities for children who do not have access to the existing standard schools.



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- i) Non-formal education programs that are equivalent to the formal system but have flexible schedules to cater to the learning needs of children engaged in daily or seasonal income generating activities (working children).
- j) Special efforts to combat exclusion and stigmatization of children affected by HIV and AIDS.
- k) Safe spaces to facilitate children's right to education in emergency situations.
- l) Promoting birth registration and strengthening community-based early learning opportunities that help meet the legal requirements for enrolment and better prepare children from disadvantaged populations for schooling (school readiness).
- m) Building partnerships through a mix of education and non-education partners who can promote the principle of inclusion.



The Principle of democratic participation

- This principle stresses that as rights holders, children should have a say in the form and substance of their education.
- It is in this principle through which children, parents, communities, employers, political leaders and others have a role in determining the structure, content and process of education.
- It is only through such democratic participation that child-friendly schools can claim to be fulfilling children's right to education.
- This is simply a reaffirmation of good curriculum design principles, which promote 'negotiation' of the curriculum by different stakeholders, including children.
- The desired features and standards in this principle include:



- a) In the process of negotiating the curriculum, it is generally accepted that policymakers are mandated with outlining a vision of society and the country's priorities for development. This usually has implications for the role of education and the type of education in which the country should invest.
- b) It is also accepted that parents and communities have aspirations for their children that schools should reflect. They also expect certain benefits from investing in education, and schools should realize these benefits as fully as possible.
- c) Stakeholders, such as employers or civic and religious leaders, normally should invest
- d) It is also accepted that parents and communities have aspirations for their children that schools should reflect. They also expect certain benefits from investing in education, and schools should realize these benefits as fully as possible.
- e) Stakeholders, such as employers or civic and religious leaders, normally contribute to the process of negotiating the curriculum by advocating for knowledge, skills, norms, values and behaviors that should be acquired and upheld in society.

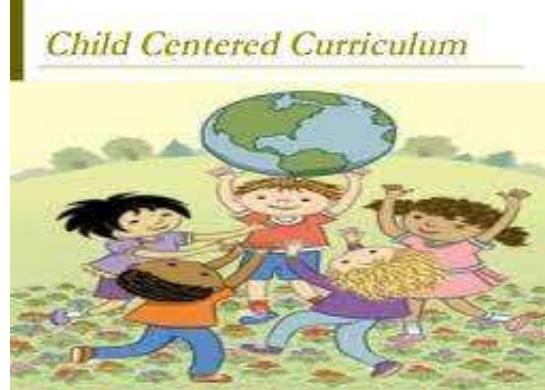


- f) These varied inputs by different stakeholders need to be processed and administrated by professionals, such as curriculum planners, subject specialists, school managers and classroom teachers, whose main role is to translate vision, aspiration and expectation into a viable curriculum that can be interpreted and implemented in schools.
- g) Also brings up issues of the school's accountability to various stakeholders. This discussion can be a springboard for examining links between schools and their communities on the one hand and links between schools and central or local policymakers and administrators on the other.
- h) Having all children in school and establishing the democratic participation of key stakeholders in negotiating curriculum content, structure and method would represent good progress towards fulfilling children's right to a quality education.

Principle of child-centeredness

- This principle was generated because there was fear that the participation of the adult stakeholders, many with powerful voices, could easily drown out the voices of children.
- The CRC emphasizes the importance of safeguarding the interests of the child by making such interests central to all decision making in education.
- The desired features and standards in this principle include:





- It is always important to promote child participation as one of the features of the child-centered principle and to include children's views in the process of negotiating the curriculum and other aspects of a child-friendly school. For example, young children can express their views through drawing and playing games relating to CFS components.
- It is also possible to obtain the views of children by engaging them in open discussion on such issues as discipline
- The aspect in which child participation matters most is in the classroom process of learning and teaching. Learning is central to their views through drawing and playing games relating to CFS components.
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- The aspect in which child participation matters most is in the classroom process of learning and teaching. Learning is central to education and, in line with the child-centered principle, the child as learner is central to the process of teaching and learning. In other words, the classroom process should not be one in which children are passive recipients of knowledge dispensed by a sole authority, the teacher. Rather it should be an interactive process in which children are active participants in observing, exploring, listening, reasoning, questioning and 'coming to know'. This is at the heart of the classroom process in all child-friendly school models.
- Children are active agents in constant discovery of the world around them. Every day brings new learning opportunities and experiences, while every place is a new learning environment to explore, starting with the home and the local community. There is always new knowledge to be gained, and there are always new skills to master, new facts to learn, new emotions to experience, new ideas to explore, new puzzles to ponder and new ways to understand



- To assist the continuous development of children in a constantly changing world, every learning experience and every learning environment should place children at the center as active agents of their own learning process, allowing them to develop to their full potential with appropriate guidance and an informed freedom of choice.
- For children to develop their full potential, schools must provide learning opportunities that help develop children's abilities to think and reason, build up their self-respect and respect for others, and think ahead and plan their future.
- Whether a school or an informal learning space, environment plays a significant role in the development of children's potential. It is in recognition of the importance of the environment that delegates to the World Education Forum, held in Dakar in 2000, pledged to "create safe, healthy, inclusive and equitably resourced educational environments conducive to excellence in learning."

Benefits of CFS

i. Benefits for children:

Through a CFS, learners:-

- Become more self-confident
- Develop greater self-esteem
- Take pride in themselves and their achievements
- Learn how to learn independently inside and outside school
- Apply what they learn in school to their daily lives, such as at play and at home
- Learn to interact actively and happily with their classmates and teachers Enjoy being with others who are different from themselves and learn how to be sensitive and embrace the differences.





- Learn together and value their relationships, no matter what their backgrounds or abilities.
- Become more creative and this improves how well they learn
- Appreciate their cultural traditions and realize they may be different from others, which is normal and something to respect and celebrate. They also learn to value their cultural language.
- Improve their communication skills and are better prepared for life and they gain or regain self-respect for themselves as they learn to respect others.



ii. Benefits for teachers:

Through CFS, teachers:-

- Learn new ways to teach different kinds of learners Gain new knowledge, such as the different way children learn and how they can be taught.
- Develop more positive attitudes and approaches towards peoples, children and situations.
- Explore new ideas by communicating more often with others from inside and outside their school, such as in school clusters, teacher networks or with parents and community members.
- Apply new ideas: Teachers can encourage their learners to be more interested, more creative and more attentive. As a result the children and their parents can give teachers more feedback.
- Receive increased support from the community and be rewarded for the good work they doing
- Teachers achieve greater job satisfaction and a higher sense of accomplishment when ALL children are succeeding in school to the best of their abilities.



iii. Benefits for parents:

Through a CFS, parents:-

- Learn more about how their children are being educated.
- Become personally involved in and feel a greater sense of importance in helping their children learn.
- Feel valued and consider themselves equal partners in providing equal learning opportunities for their children.
- Learn how to deal better with their children at home by using techniques that the teachers use in school.
- They also learn how to interact with others in the community, as well as to understand and help solve each other's problems
- They know that their children and ALL children are receiving a quality education.



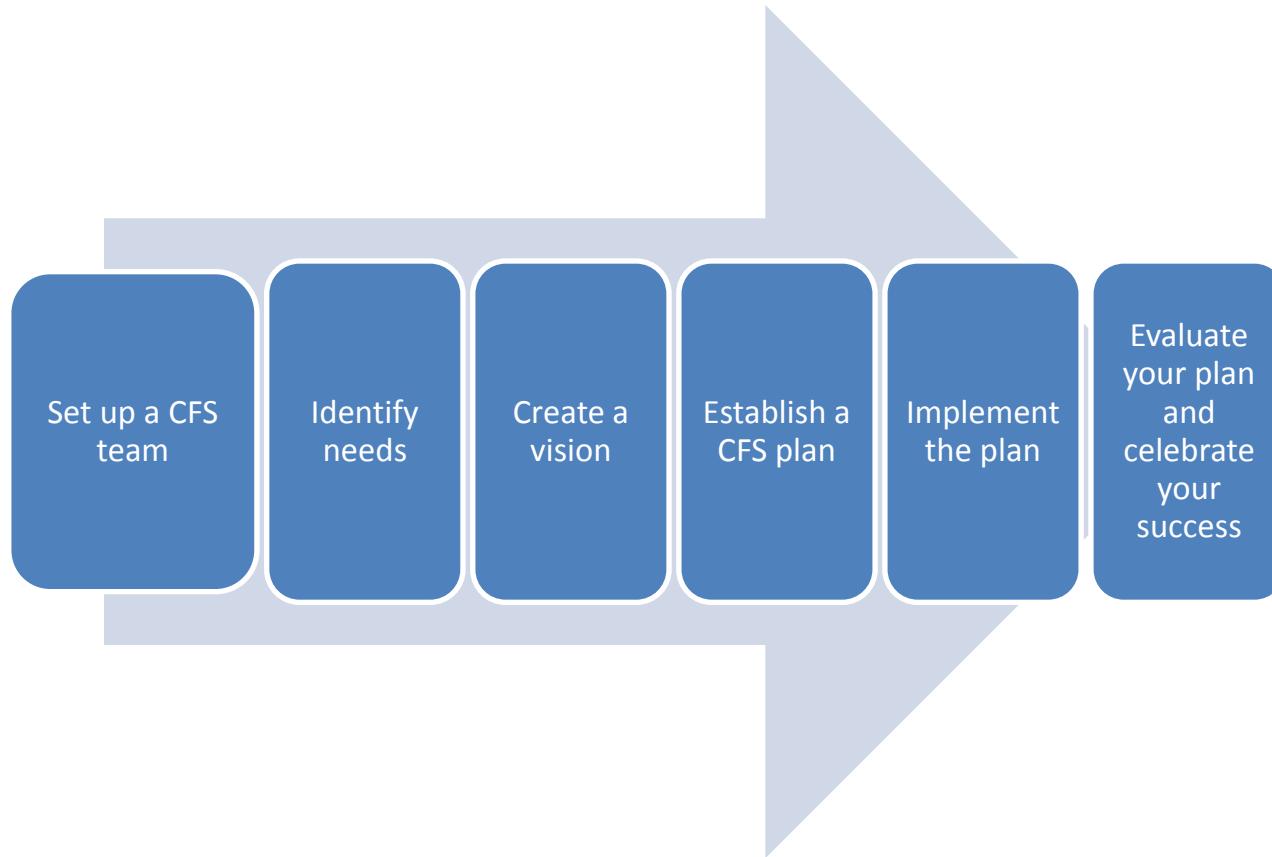
d) Benefits for communities:

Through CFS, the community:-

- Develops a sense of pride as more children go to school and learn.
- Discovers that more "community leaders of the future" are being prepared to participate actively in society.
- Sees that potential social problems such as petty crimes or adolescent pressures can be reduced.



Steps to becoming a CFS



Step 1: Set up a CFS team

- Identify the people who will play a role in planning and implementing a CFS and set up a coordinating group.
 - (a). Establish a CFS technical team. The people who will make up the CFS team include:
 - Head Teacher
 - Deputy Head Teacher - Senior Teacher/HODs
 - BOM Chair
 - PTA



(b). Establish a CFS technical team. The people who will make up the CFS team include:

- Head Teacher
 - Deputy Head Teacher - Senior Teacher/HODs
 - BOM Chair
 - PTA
- Establish a CFS team that shall comprise:
 - The CFS Technical Team
 - Some teachers
 - Administrators
 - Support school staff members
 - Educators and health care providers - Persons with special needs
 - Older learners
 - Parents
 - Local Organizations





Step 2: Identify Needs

- Explore the knowledge of the CFS team. What do the CFS team members already know about the characteristics and benefits of a CFS? What you and your team need to know and how everyone else will learn is for instance, by inviting guest speakers, visiting resource persons and resource centers.
- Explore the knowledge of learners, parents, staff, caregivers and members of the local community. This may involve simple individual interviews or group conversations, or you may design a short questionnaire about CFS.



- Review the CFS self-assessment checklist already discussed with evidence of a CFS. Make a list of what your school is already doing and what needs to be done to become a CFS.
 - Analyze this information. Describe the changes that need to be made to make the school more child-friendly. Consider class size, instructional strategies, teaching styles, teaching-student relationships, classroom assistants and material used.
- [Child-Friendly Schools Case Study ...researchgate.net](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321510033/Child-Friendly_Schools_Case_Study)



Step 3: Create a Vision

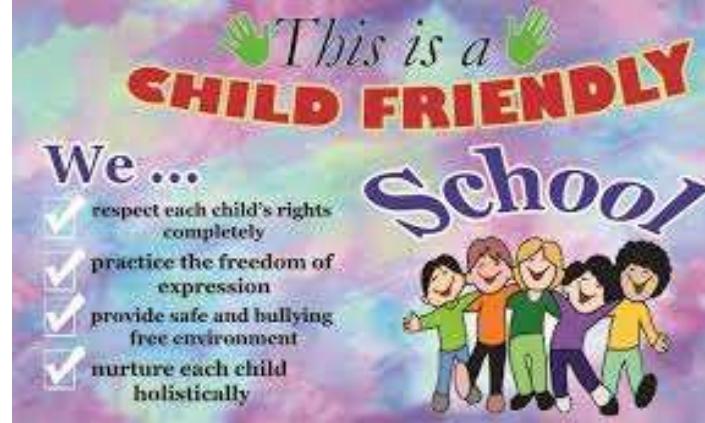
- Describe your desired classroom environment, or even your "Dream (ideal) classroom." Ask yourself when you and your learners walk into the classroom, what will it look like? What kind of furniture will it have? What will the teacher be doing? What will the learners be doing? What will be on the walls?
- Consider girls and boys; those who do not speak the dominant language; those who have visual, hearing or intellectual impairment; children of different religious and ethnic backgrounds- ALL children. If all school-age children in the community are in school, what will their different learning needs be and how will they be met? Write down as specifically as you can your "vision" of your "dream classroom, which will serve as your goal in creating a CFS.

- Describe your desired education program and school environment. Consider the resources described above. What kind of support do you need from the community, from the local government and from education officials? How can you get this support? Who can help you to raise this support? How can children become involved? Write down these actions. They will help you to realize your "Vision."





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Step 4: Establish a CFS School

- Develop a schedule of activities for creating and implementing your CFS.
- You will need to describe in detail the changes that will be needed and when they will be implemented. You should also list materials and services and identify people responsible for providing these services and any other sources that are needed. Your schedule should include realistic dates for implementing changes. It should have solid targets, but it should also be flexible to meet changing needs and conditions.



Step 5: Implement your plan

- Provide technical assistance for staff as needed. Is the technical assistance needed on special topics that can only be given by experienced persons? If so, what type of assistance is needed and who will provide it? How will it be implemented and how often will it be provided? Train school staff (teaching and non-teaching) and learners as needed. Training topics can cover children's rights and their implications on education, gender inequality and gender equity, cultural and linguistic differences and similarities, disability awareness, specialized care instruction, clarification of personnel responsibilities and cooperative teaching strategies.

- Promote active parental involvement. The planning team should develop a system for parent-teacher communication. Who will be responsible for regularly communicating with parents? Parental input should be encouraged and seriously considered throughout the planning and implementation process.





Step 6: Evaluate your plan and celebrate your success

- Monitor progress and modify your plan as needed. The CFS team is an ongoing resource used throughout the school year. Prepare a schedule of follow-up meetings. Decide how monitoring will be done and who will do it. Observe how the existing program is going; to decide if existing supports are adequate or need to be improved or eliminated.
- Celebrate your successes! Achieving significant changes in an education program, especially one that has included an investment in human and material resources- deserves to be celebrated! Since you have involved the community every step of the way, invite the community to celebrate the changes in your school by holding a parents day, a festival, or a "School Open Day." Invite parents, community members, and officials of the school. Display work for ALL children along with new teaching materials. Teachers can then demonstrate their new assessing and teaching skills and children of all abilities can demonstrate what they have learned.



- In this unit, we have looked at the concept of a child friendly school.
- We have learnt the principles of CFS and the benefits that CFS can be derived from CFS the learners, the teachers, parents and community in general.
- In addition, we have gone through the steps of becoming a CFS and we have looked at how the CFS has been implemented in different countries.