

Chapter 5: The principles of children's law

This chapter sets out the principles of children law and introduces the reader to a number of key features in the Children Act 1989. In practice, it is not uncommon for confusion to arise in respect of the principles in the legislation. You might therefore think it appropriate to spend some significant time exploring the principles with your students and exploring some of the case law where the confusion has arisen.

Slides 2-6 provide the major principles and you might want to use these slides with others exploring some of the case law as a means of expanding understanding of how the principles work or should work in practice.

Slide 7 and 8 provide a summary of private law provision. On the whole, in practice, this is of less relevance to social workers, but it is still important to ensure that students are aware of this part of the Act.

We have left the Munro review recommendations in this edition. In a way these recommendations are fading in respect of their relevance to contemporary practice. However, the review was a watershed moment in respect of reform for the profession. You may well want to invite your students to reflect on the impact of the recommendations and to debate whether that impact has made sufficient difference to outcomes for children and families.

The arrangements for working together is described over several pages in the book and slides 9-14 should be helpful to you in setting out those arrangements. The new Safeguarding Arrangements in the Children and Social Work Act 2017. You may want to explore how they are working in your own areas in the coming months to see if they are achieving the desired outcomes envisaged in the Wood Review. Sir Alan Wood is also currently (Nov 2020) evaluating the new arrangements. Look out for updates about this from the DfE.