

Up, up and away!

Building Foundations for Literacy in the Early years



Understanding Behaviour Tool

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The information presented in this resource was gathered via focus groups and interviews with teachers and nursery nurses working in playgroups, child & family centres, private nursery and childcare settings, nursery classes in primary schools and stand-alone local authority nursery schools throughout Edinburgh, alongside foster carers and adoptive parents. We are indebted to these participants who shared their knowledge, skills and experiences with us; without them this document would not exist. We would also like to thank Jai, Leela and Tineyi, the children in the photographs.

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Understanding Behaviour Tool Guidance

This is a pdf of the Understanding Behaviour Tool, taken from: *Up, Up and Away! Building Foundations for Literacy in the Early Years, Identifying Need*. City of Edinburgh Council, Queen Margaret University and NHS Lothian: Edinburgh.

The pdf has been created for staff and carers using the resource to make it easier to create copies for use.

It should only be used when the user has the full resource for reference

It cannot be copied for use if the user does not have a copy of the full resource within their setting

Understanding Behaviour Tool

Why is it important to understand behaviour?

Children may need support to learn positive ways of expressing themselves and responding. Therefore staff and carers need to be confident about observing, analysing and understanding behaviour, so that they can promote positive behaviour and interactions with others.

Early years staff and carers who work with children under 5 told us that difficult behaviour is one of the main obstacles to children participating in activities which lay the foundations for literacy. They described challenges which are more long lasting, difficult to understand and difficult to manage than typical toddler behaviour.

Approaches to assessment and management of behaviour

- Early years staff and carers we spoke to took an eclectic approach and drew on a range of behaviour theories in thinking about positive and more challenging behaviour.
- **Some used behaviour models, such as the “ABC” approach** (Antecedents, Behaviour and Consequences). However the antecedents are not always apparent and it was clear that a complementary tool would be helpful, to understand some of the reasons why a child might find a situation difficult and therefore present with a certain behaviour.
- Staff and carers can use this tool to further understand behaviour. Thinking about environment, routine, motivation and skills provides an alternative/complementary way to analyse the possible explanations for behaviour observed.

Underlying principles of behaviour

- Each child and each situation is unique and there is no straightforward answer for how to promote co-operation, positive participation and relationships
- The underlying reasons for the behaviour you see are not always **immediately apparent, and children often can't explain why they did something**
- It is helpful to develop skills in observing and analysing situations to look for things that work well and support children, or which are making a situation more difficult for them.
- Behaviour can support or alternatively be a challenge to learning. It is simply what you see (e.g. angry responses, ignoring requests, sharing, following the steps of instructions)
- Understanding the possible reasons for positive/negative behaviour, what purpose it serves for the child and the factors which lead to the child repeating or changing the behaviour can help you to identify what aspects of situations facilitate or present barriers to learning
- This tool can be used together with other approaches

Use the understanding behaviour tool

- Answer the general questions opposite. And if these do not explain the behaviour, follow guidance (p57) on how to use the understanding behaviour tool

Understanding Behaviour Tool

Understanding Behaviour : General Questions

There are some observations to consider to understand a child's needs and behaviour which are not dependent on the child's stage, Some questions to consider are:

- Is the child healthy and pain free?
(pain can be diffuse in small children and they may not be able to isolate the feeling. E.g. Toothache may not be obvious but can have a big effect on behaviour)
- Can the child see and hear well?
(If you are unsure, who is responsible for checking this? if not are they using the appropriate aids effectively? batteries in the hearing aid, glasses out of their bag).
- Is the child well rested ?
(is sleep routine impacting on what you see?)
- Is the child well nourished and not likely to be hungry/ thirsty?
- Are their toileting needs met?
(nappy clean, consider possible effects of constipation or other discomfort)

Understanding Behaviour Tool

This tool uses the CIRCLE Early Years Framework to structure your analysis therefore guiding the implementation of strategies.

Using this tool

- Use this tool to identify and understand the possible underlying reason for behaviour.
- There are factors which support positive behaviour or not. The same factor may impact on the child differently depending on the task/ context.
- Observe the child over time in a range of contexts
- Answer the questions about Environment, Routine, Motivation and Skills
- Decide if they support behaviour Always (A), Regularly (R), Occasionally (O) or Never (N). Circle your rating on the form provided (p58-61)

Profile and interpret results

- Once completed profile the child on the form provided (p62)
- For all factors, consider what you have learned about supportive factors
- Reflect as a team on the supportive factors you will build on and what you could plan to change (p63-64)
- The profile highlight which strategies could be helpful. For example it may be clear that motivation is the main factor which does not support behaviour and you can look for motivation strategies

Understanding Behaviour Tool

Child's Name:

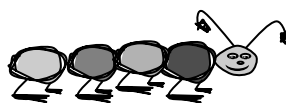
Date of assessment:

Which aspects of PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT are present to support or challenge positive behaviour?

- Suitable toys and equipment A R O N
- Size of the physical space A R O N
- Ease of moving in the physical space A R O N
- Sensory qualities of the physical environment (e.g. temperature, noise, smell, visual or tactile properties) A R O N
- Tasks are accessible in cultural terms to the child A R O N
- The quiet and noisy play areas in the physical environment.. A R O N
- Different spaces assigned for different kinds of activity (e.g. playground for running, circle time for sitting, toilets for toileting)..... A R O N
- Clarity of what happens where (e.g. running outside, painting on paper) A R O N

- Clarity of what goes where (e.g. coat on peg with his/her name and picture, place where meals are served) A R O N
- Safety of the physical environment A R O N
- Arrangement of physical environment to promote play and interaction between peers A R O N

Understanding Behaviour Key:
 Always supports positive behaviour A
 Regularly supports positive behaviour R
 Occasionally supports positive behaviour .. O
 Never supports positive behaviour N



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Understanding Behaviour Tool

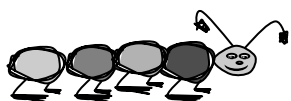
Child's Name:

Date of assessment:

Which aspects of SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT (the people around the child) are present to support or challenge positive behaviour?

- Support to make the child feel safe and secure..... A R O N
- The way rules, limits and boundaries regarding behaviour are shared with the child..... A R O N
- The fun, enjoyment and laughter around the child..... A R O N
- The recognition of the need to motivate the child A R O N
- Support to recognise and express emotions appropriately for his/her stage of development A R O N
- Support given to seek comfort/attention/help appropriately.. A R O N
- The one to one time and attention during the day A R O N
- The way successes are celebrated..... A R O N
- Expectations that the child will succeed/ fail..... A R O N
- Support through calm words and actions..... A R O N
- The way adults show they are happy, warm and kind..... A R O N
- **Positive role models are in the child's daily life** A R O N
- Consistency between adults using strategies to support the **child's individual need** A R O N
- Consistency of approach to managing and responding to behaviour?(across adults/between home and place of care)... A R O N
- Adults recognise the need for routine..... A R O N
- Peers are supported to engage/ play with the child..... A R O N
- Adults acknowledge and reward positive behaviour A R O N
- Adults make expectations clear to the child A R O N
- **Adults adapt to the child's skill level and provide appropriate support** A R O N

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Understanding Behaviour Tool

Child's Name:

Date of assessment:

Which aspects of ROUTINE are present for the child, to support or challenge positive behaviour?

- Regular daily routines: (e.g. separating from carer in the morning, snack time, outside play, groups) A R O N
- Regular social routines: (e.g. waving hello and bye; clapping; smiling; singing action songs) A R O N
- Familiarity with steps in the routine..... A R O N
- Understanding of rules and routines associated with activities (e.g. taking turns) A R O N
- Awareness of the start, middle and end of the routine A R O N
- Support for changes to his/her routine A R O N
- Knowledge of what is expected of him/her..... A R O N
- Realistic adult expectations of duration, skill, and outcome ... A R O N
- **Clarity over what happens when (e.g. timetable, “first we tidy up and then it’s snack time”)** A R O N
- Experiences role or purpose during activities A R O N

Which aspects of MOTIVATION are present for the child, to support or challenge positive behaviour?

- Curiosity..... A R O N
- Initiates actions/ spontaneously makes choices A R O N
- Child responses A R O N
- Asks for more/repetition..... A R O N
- Practices skills or routines A R O N
- Tries to produce effects from others..... A R O N
- Stays engaged/pursues activity to completion A R O N
- Expresses satisfaction in tasks/ activities A R O N
- **Activities include the child’s interests (even if idiosyncratic) ..** A R O N
- Activities include familiarity as well as novelty and variety A R O N
- Enjoys adults recognising level of interest through words, facial expression and body language A R O N
- Meaningful praise and reward..... A R O N
- Experiences success..... A R O N
- Willingness to engage in activities on offer A R O N

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 Regularly supports positive behaviour R
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Understanding Behaviour Tool

Child's Name:

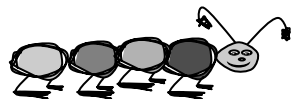
Date of assessment:

Which aspects of SKILLS are present for the child to support or challenge positive behaviour?

- Control his/her movements as needed in activities A R O N
- Use of the equipment/ toys A R O N
- Ability to communicate his/her needs A R O N
- Ability to make him/herself understood..... A R O N
- Understanding of instructions given A R O N
- Understanding of the social expectations A R O N
- Understanding the task..... A R O N
- Understanding why s/he is doing activities/ tasks..... A R O N
- Ability to recognise and label his/her feelings? (sad, angry, frustrated or happy)..... A R O N
- Understanding of how others might feel in different situations A R O N

- Attention and concentration..... A R O N
- Organisation of him/herself and belongings..... A R O N
- Memory for things they have heard/seen or experienced A R O N
- Ability to build/maintain relationships with adults and peers? A R O N
- Ability to ask for help/comfort..... A R O N
- Ability to accept help..... A R O N
- Ability to play as expected with his/her peers, considering his/ her stage of learning..... A R O N
- Ability to share and take turns as you would expect for his/her stage..... A R O N
- Aware of where different rooms are? (e.g. where they will be sleeping, eating, washing, toileting)..... A R O N

Understanding Behaviour Key:
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CIRCLE Understanding Behaviour Tool

Does the PHYSICAL environment support function?	Suitable equipment and toys	A R O N
	Size of space is suitable	A R O N
	Child can move freely	A R O N
	Sensory qualities of environment	A R O N
	Tasks culturally accessible	A R O N
	Opportunity for quiet/noisy play	A R O N
	Different spaces available	A R O N
	Clear what happens where	A R O N
	Clear what goes where	A R O N
	Environment is safe	A R O N
	Environment promotes play	A R O N
	Child feels safe and secure	A R O N
	Boundaries are clear to child	A R O N
	Sense of fun and enjoyment	A R O N
	Adults see need for motivation	A R O N
	Adults support child's emotions	A R O N
	Adults support child to seek help	A R O N
Adults give child individual time	A R O N	
Successes are celebrated	A R O N	
Adults expect child to succeed	A R O N	
Adults use calm words/actions	A R O N	
Adults seem happy/warm/Kind	A R O N	
Child has positive role models	A R O N	
Consistency between adults	A R O N	
Consistency of approach	A R O N	
Adults see need for routine	A R O N	
Peer support to play with child	A R O N	
Acknowledge and reward	A R O N	
Adults make expectations clear	A R O N	
Adults adapt to child	A R O N	
Child has regular daily routines	A R O N	
Child has regular social routines	A R O N	
Child knows steps in routine	A R O N	
Child understands rules/routines	A R O N	
Start/middle/end	A R O N	
Support for changes to routine	A R O N	
Child can	A R O N	
Child knows what is expected	A R O N	
Expectations are realistic	A R O N	
Child can predict what will occur	A R O N	
Role or purpose in activities	A R O N	
Do the daily and social routines support function?		

Do the adults and activities motivate the child, which supports function?	Curiosity	A R O N
	Initiates actions	A R O N
	Child responds	A R O N
	Asks for more	A R O N
	Practices	A R O N
	Tries to produce effect	A R O N
	Stays engaged	A R O N
	Expresses satisfaction	A R O N
	Activities include interests	A R O N
	Familiarity, novelty and variety	A R O N
	Recognising level of interest	A R O N
	Meaningful praise and reward	A R O N
	Experiences success	A R O N
	Willingness to engage	A R O N
	Child can control movements	A R O N
	Child can use equipment/toys	A R O N
	Child can communicate needs	A R O N
Child can make self understood	A R O N	
Child understands instructions	A R O N	
Child understands expectations	A R O N	
Child understands task	A R O N	
Child understands why	A R O N	
Child can label own feelings	A R O N	
Child understands others' feelings	A R O N	
Child has concentration/attention	A R O N	
Child can organise self and things	A R O N	
Child remembers experiences	A R O N	
Child has relationships with adults	A R O N	
Child knows who to ask for help	A R O N	
Child can accept help	A R O N	
Child plays as expected with peers	A R O N	
Child shares/takes turns	A R O N	
Aware of where different room are	A R O N	
Do the child's skills support function?		

Child's Name:

Date of assessment:

Completed by:



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Understanding Behaviour Tool: Reflect on findings

It may be useful to reflect on the information gathered, as a team.

Consider the general questions.

- Will your plan include targets to support general health and wellbeing?
- Consider with the team around the child how this could be addressed successfully.

Consider responses in the understanding behaviour tool:

Are there obvious things to target, to support positive behaviour?

- In completing the tool you may already have a sense of things which you would like to change or encourage.

Is there a pattern emerging?

- You may see a pattern, where one aspect of the literacy caterpillar clearly explains many challenges. In this instance you can look at the strategy map and look for useful ideas.
- There may be no clear pattern but some aspects which do or not support behaviour will be clearer.

Are some factors having a bigger impact than others?

- The items are not graded, so one area of challenge in one child may have the same impact as several areas highlighted for another.

How clear is the information you have gathered?

- In some questions you could clearly answer, *Always* or *Never*. These give clear information about the child.
- In other question you may have answered *Regularly* or *Occasionally*.

When you answer *Regularly* or *Occasionally*, ask the following?

- What leads the child to be different at different times?
- **Does the child's general health and wellbeing make the difference?**
- Is the child emerging in their skill but needs to generalise learning?
- Do different adults support the child in different ways?
- Are there some activities or environments which affect the child?
- How can you change the ones the child finds harder, by using supportive factors?

Summarise:

- What we have learned about the child:
- What supportive aspects do we use well? And How will we use them more?
- What factors do not support the child at this time? And how will we change the physical and social environment, daily and social routines, motivation or skills?
- How will you share the information and planning with the team around the child inside and out with your setting?



Understanding Behaviour Plan

You could make a plan, below by writing down which areas to target based on the summary.

Child's name	We will take into account the child's need for:	In the next 3 months we will make these changes to support positive behaviour:
Date completed: Date for review:		
Consider the child's general wellbeing		
Consider the physical/ social environment		
Consider the routines present		
Consider motivation		
Consider the child's skills		
Steps towards successful change:		
Main goal:		
Who will be involved?		
Do you need to enlist help?		
Resources / Training Needed		



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