

Nurturing My Potential – In Practice



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Wellbeing and Learning

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Aims

- An overview of Early Years Theorists
- The importance of relationships and environments on Brain Development
- A closer look at Child Development
- An in depth look at the key aspects from RTA and NMP
- A closer look at how NMP links to our Quality Improvement Framework
- A closer look at the Observation, Assessment and Planning Cycle

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'Nurturing my Potential'

- NMP is a document created by practitioners for practitioners and can be used as a tool to guide and support practice.
- NMP compliments Realising the Ambition and provides greater depth in practices to support provision birth to three and beyond.
- NMP is **not** a 'tracker' or 'assessment tool'
- NMP is **not** intended to be used linearly
- NMP is not mandatory – it is to be used as a supportive tool if you choose to use it.

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Froebelian Principles



1. Unity and Connectedness

- Young children learn in a holistic way and learning should never be compartmentalised for everything links.

2. Creativity and the Power of Symbols

- Creativity is about children representing their own ideas in their own way supported by a nurturing environment and people. As children begin to use and make symbols they express their inner thoughts and ideas and make meaning.

3. The Central Importance of Play

- Play is a part of being human and helps children to relate their inner world of feelings, ideas and lived experiences, taking them to a new level.

4. Engaging with Nature

- Through real life experiences children learn about the interrelationship of all living things.

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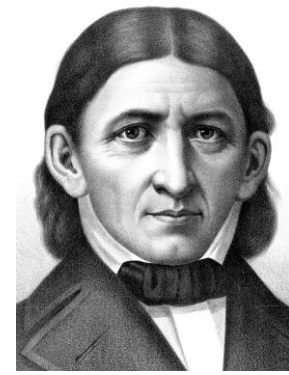
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Froebelian Principles



5. Knowledgeable, Nurturing Educators

- Froebelian educators facilitate and guide, rather than instruct. They provide rich, real life experiences and observe children carefully supporting and extending their interests through "freedom with guidance."

6. Autonomous Learners

- Each child is unique and what children can do rather than what they cannot do should be the starting point for a child's learning. Children should have agency to make decisions about their learning.

7. The Value of Childhood in its own Right

- Childhood is NOT a preparation for the next stage in learning.

8. Relationships Matter

- The relationships of every child with themselves, their parents, carers, family and wider community are valued. Relationships are of central importance in a child's life.

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Lev Vygotsky's ZPD



- Vygotsky's theory introduced us to the **Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)** which is the **distance between a child's actual developmental level and their potential level of development with guidance and support from adults or more skilled peers.**
- This zone is where the **most significant cognitive growth occurs**, as children are challenged just beyond their current capabilities but within reach of their potential development.
- **Scaffolding** is a teaching strategy derived from Vygotsky's theory – this involves **providing support and guidance within a child's ZPD** to help them learn and develop new skills.

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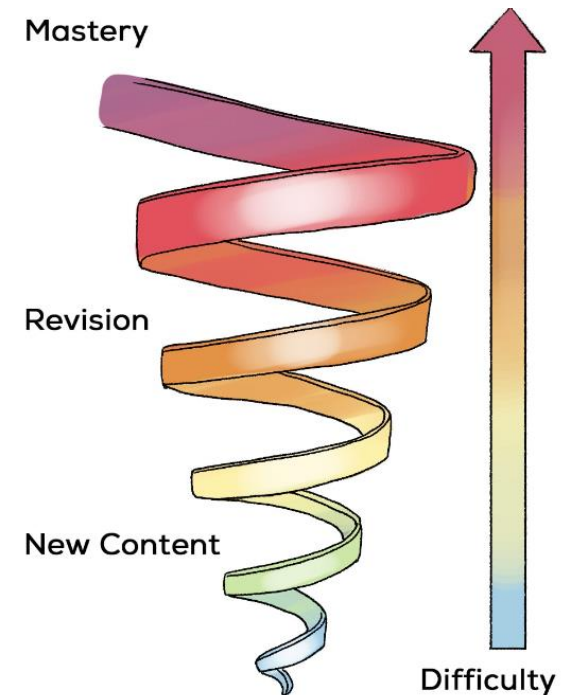
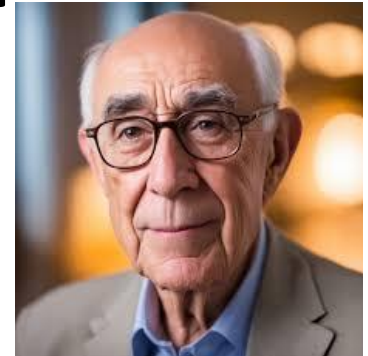
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Bruner's Spiral Curriculum

- Children's development should **not** be seen as progression up a ladder.
- Bruner's (1977) concept of a **Spiral Curriculum** – as young children's abilities evolve they are able to explore an ever-widening world.
- They do not leave behind the interests and understandings of earlier stages but **add on to these to develop an increasingly complex view of the world and their relationship to it.**
- For example: The young child using her fingers to spread spilt food is developing an understanding of the way in which marks are made. She will build on this to develop an understanding of drawing and other forms of representation.



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Start With The Child

*"I believe our primary goal should be to **nurture happy, engaged children** who are fulfilling **their desire** to learn in environments that **stimulate, provoke and intrigue**. Children need to be **supported and guided** by educators who **care** about them and who do **all they can** to bring out the **best versions of the unique individuals they are.**"*



Julie Fisher - independent Early Years Adviser, author and trainer
(Nursery World, June 2024)

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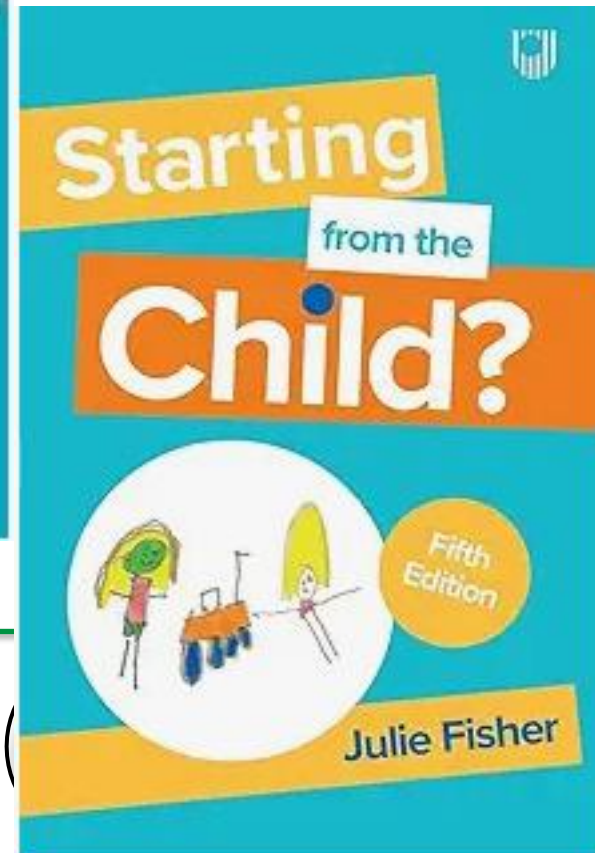
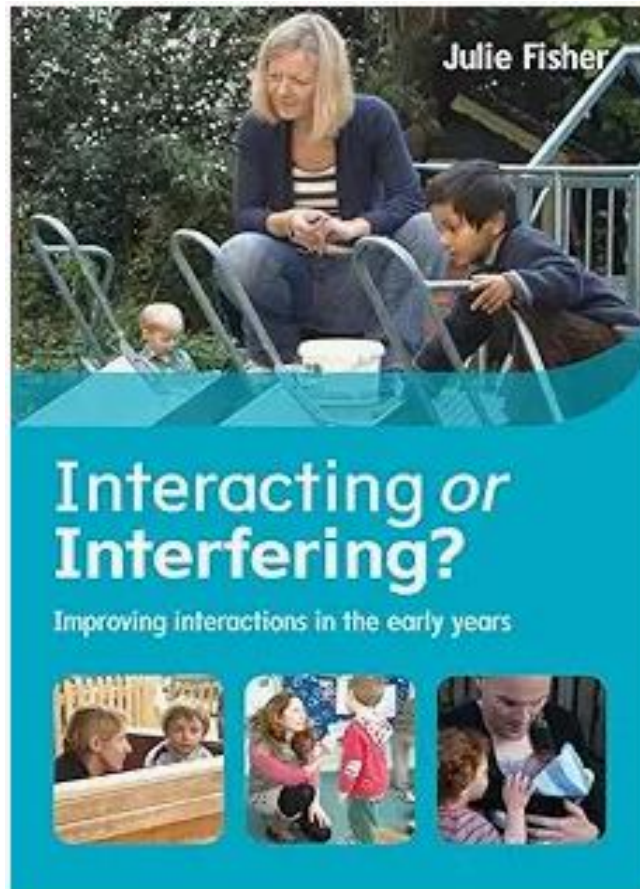
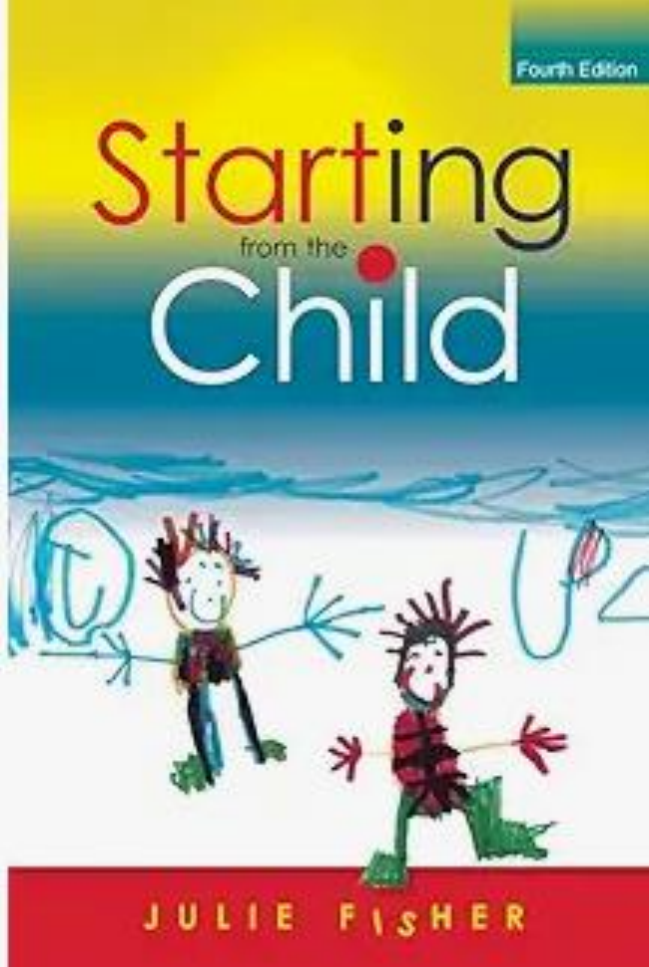
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Discussion Task

- How do these theories relate to your everyday practice?
- Are we starting with the child?

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The Role of the Adult

The most effective way to meet the needs of individual children is through experiences that are **developmentally appropriate**.

As in all aspects on their development, **children's character** and **disposition** will play a part in how individual children respond to opportunities offered to them.

Adults' attitudes are crucial to the development of **creativity** and **imagination** in young children. If children are surrounded by **informed** adults who give clear messages that creative and imaginative experiences are to be **valued** and **enjoyed**, then children's development will be enhanced.

If we do not create an atmosphere that values these areas of learning and development **children will not respond**.



(Duffy, 2006)

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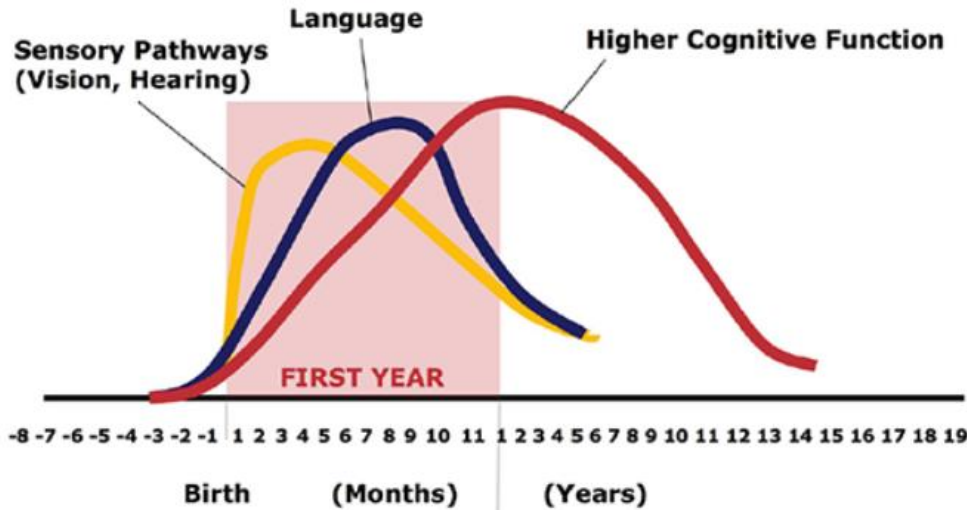
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The First Year is Crucial for Brain Development

In the first few years of life, more than 1 million new neural connections are formed every second.

Human Brain Development
Neural Connections for Different Functions Develop Sequentially



90% of brain growth happens in the first 5 years of life



Relationships



Calm environments with fewer visuals



Repetition

Batcheler & Partnership, 2023)

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Child Development

Much of what children learn in the first few years, they often **discover naturally for themselves**, in their **own way** and in their **own time**. For this development to be successful, babies in particular, need to know their **caregiver is nearby** and that the support they provide is **unconditional, continuous, reliable** and **predictable** (O'Connor, 2018).

Everything we do in ELC and early primary should be about helping the child to grow emotionally, socially, physically and cognitively.

RTA, p15 (Education Scotland, 2020)



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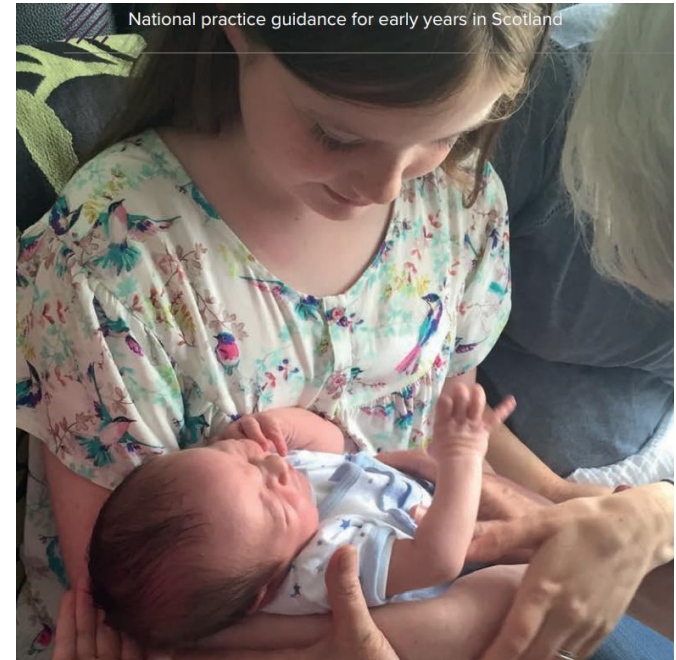


Being a baby, toddler and young child

Progression is often uneven across different aspects of development. This is to be expected and is quite **natural**. Understanding this helps to provide experiences, opportunities and interactions which are more **developmentally appropriate**.

Accepting and **appreciating** that this uneven pattern of development is how children develop and learn gives practitioners the **confidence** to make changes to their environments and practice that will provide the **best experiences** and **meet children's learning needs more effectively**.

Responding to the child's actual development in order to adapt and provide what is best at that time for the child is key, rather than expecting a child to fit into a fixed and pre- determined group programme or plan.



RTA, p18 (Education Scotland, 2020)

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Importance of Play

Playfulness does not happen by chance. Learning through play requires **skilful interactions** and **conversations in environments that support and extend thinking and actions.**

It requires adults who are both **playful** and **knowledgeable** of the **building blocks of early development and learning** in order to **support and progress learning appropriately.**

A playful adult **nurtures a child's identity** as a learner through the **connections they make with experiences from home and their ELC settings.**

A playful adult creates a **comfortable space** where children can **experience joy and laughter** and hence develop **playful learning dispositions.**



RTA: P68 (Education Scotland, 2020)

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Why does my child sometimes continually repeat the same actions when they play?

It's possible your wee one is engaging in what's called...

Schematic Play

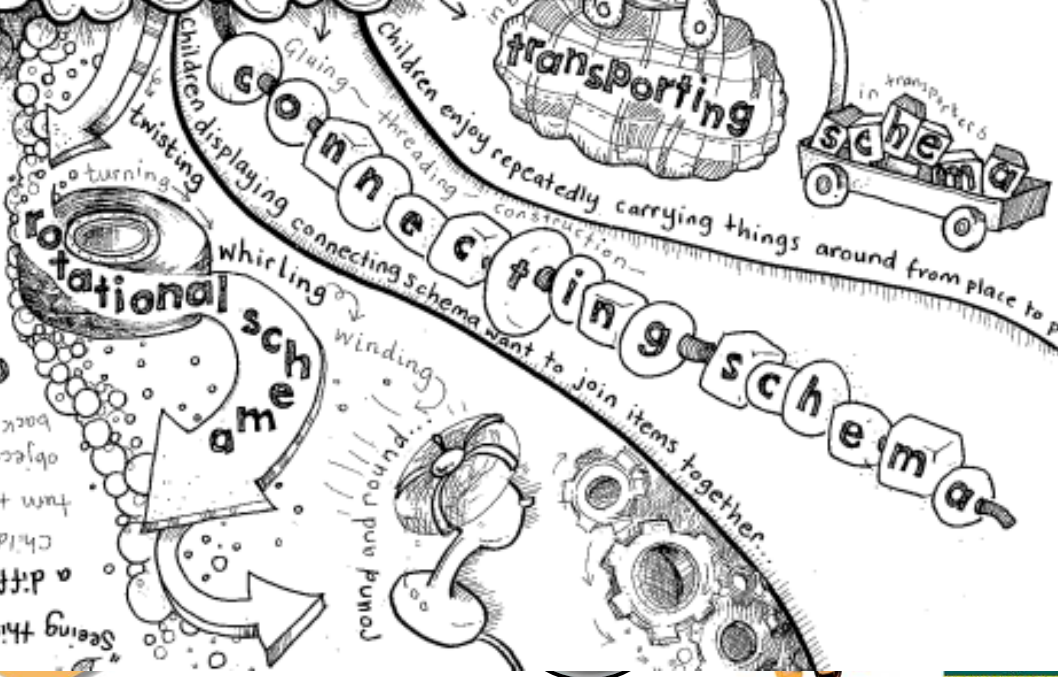
this happens when babies, toddlers and young children repeat actions or behaviours to explore the world around them and find out how things work. There are many kinds of



Young children benefit from opportunities to repeat and practise different actions. This helps their brain development and learning, for example, actions of up and down, going from side to side and rotating supports early writing development.



Schemas...



Self & Social Development

Humans are a social species.

As children develop, they have the dual task of **building a secure sense of self**, and of **discovering how to be with others and do things collectively**. This is not easy, and it does not happen quickly.



RTA, p25 (Education Scotland, 2020)

We can see **development happening most clearly in children's play**. Toddlers will play with us, and often they will play “alongside” each other in what is sometimes called parallel play.

As children develop, they become more and more social, eventually taking part in **long play sequences** with different roles and shared understandings of rules.

Co-operative play requires executive function and self-regulation.

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'Beings' and 'Becomings'

For children, **now is more important** than the futures we plan for them. Rigid ideas of 'school readiness' or what children 'should' be doing, place too much emphasis on the practitioner's concerns about the future (Carlton and Winsler, 1999).

Instead, we need to be confident that in **promoting a happy, interesting and empowering learning environment**, considering the **interactions, experiences and spaces** on offer, we as practitioners **add value to what children already know and can do.**

RTA, p6 (Education Scotland, 2020)



Froebelian Principle: The Value of Childhood in its Own Right...

Childhood is not merely a preparation for the next stage in learning. Learning begins pre-birth and continues throughout life.

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Understanding Child Development

- As Early Years Educators it is important to have a sound understanding of child development to support and extend children's needs.
- What are the different child development domains? (areas in which children develop)
- Some people might remember "PIES" - physical, intellectual, emotional, social
- There is **never** a 'one size fits all' approach to child development.
- **Relationships are key!**
- We must **tune into the individual child** and learn from them how to best meet their needs.
- Choose the tool that works best for your children and setting...
- www.diversepathways.or - neurodiverse lens of child development

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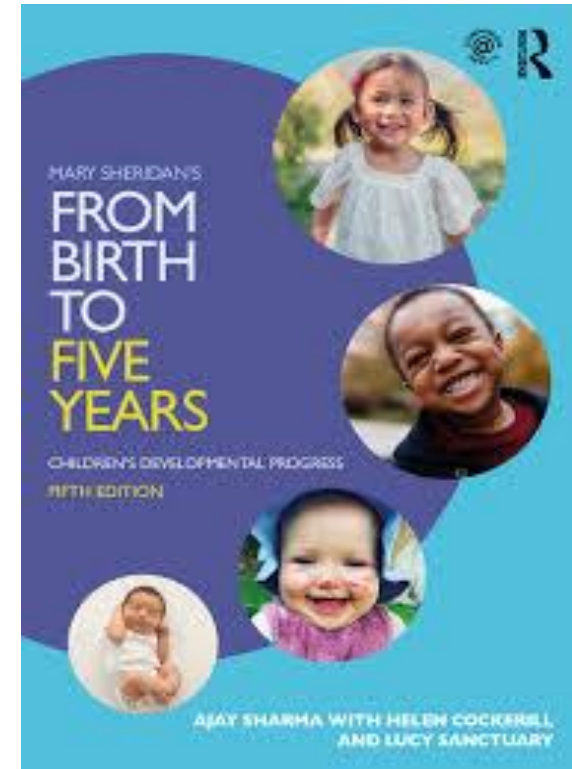
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Mary Sheridan's Developmental Progress

- Motor Development
- Fine motor, perceptual and non-verbal cognitive development
- Speech, language and communication
- Social behaviour and play
- Early Literacy development
- Self-regulation of emotions and attention
- Attachment, temperament and the development of self
- Vision and hearing



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'Teaching Talking' Resource



Teaching Talking

This is a resource which is widely used in Glasgow to support Child Development.

There are suggested milestones under these categories that we would typically expect to see as children develop and grow.

- Physical Skills
- Self-help & Independence
- Hand-eye coordination
- Play and Social Development
- Listening/Understanding
- Expressive Skills

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Realising the Ambition: 'How I Grow and Develop' - The Developmental Dimensions

- Executive Functioning
- Self-Regulation
- Communication and Language
- Confidence, Creativity and Curiosity
- Movement and Coordination
- Self and Social Development

RTA, p23
(Education Scotland,
2020)

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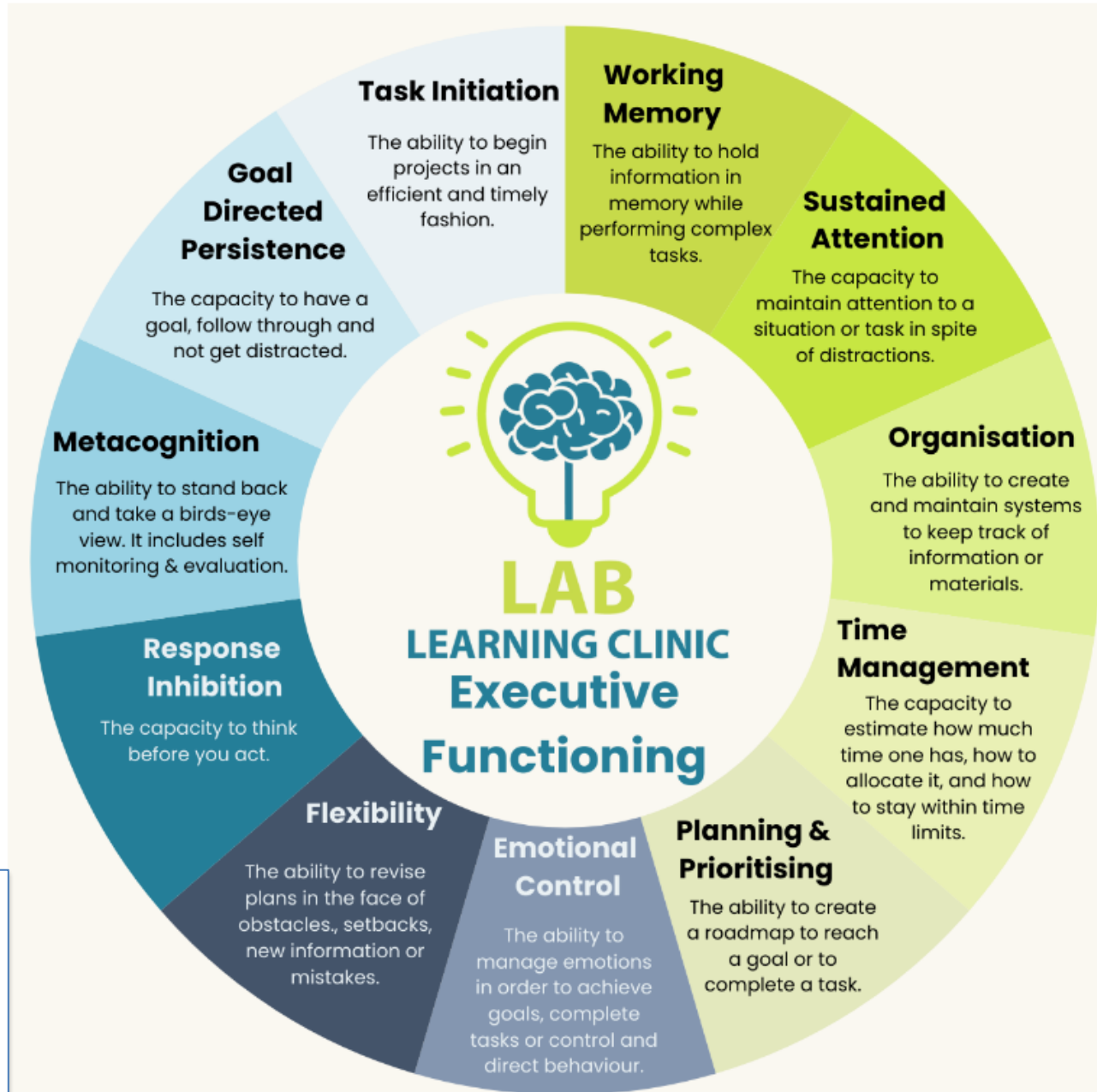
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Executive Functioning ...



Discussion Task

- Do you use any documents to guide child development in your setting?
- If so, what does this look like?

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Realising the Ambition

Nurturing My Potential

Key Aspects

- Wellbeing (including self, social, emotional and communication)
- Movement & Co-ordination
- Confidence, Curiosity & Creativity
- Playful Literacy
- Playful Numeracy

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Wellbeing



This is vitally important, first and foremost it will determine the development of all else – in the same way as **nurture** we must ensure **wellbeing** is present for all children in order for them to learn and excel.

Realising the Ambition looks at wellbeing in terms of:

- Self
- Social
- Emotional
- Communication



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RTA: Wellbeing Key Aspects

Wellbeing - my self, social, emotional and communication development - some key aspects of what I need from my learning environment



Interactions

From birth  through my early years of childhood

- I learn about being me through the way you and others interact with me, look at me, speak to me, treat me and care for me.
- Notice how I show happiness by gurgling or smiling, express my frustration through crying and my stress in my body movements. I need you to help me by responding appropriately. I need you to be patient, calm, consistent and understanding.
- I 'speak' my voice to you through my noises, actions and expressions. I am learning to communicate my thoughts and feelings by responding to others and my environment.
- Notice how I respond to your voice, words and expressions. You help me to learn to communicate and find my words by verbalising what's going on around me.
- Notice how I am beginning to find words to express my thoughts and feelings, but often my emotions are expressed through impulsive actions and gestures. I need you to help me by responding appropriately. I need you to continue to be patient, calm, consistent and understanding.
- Sometimes I am overwhelmed by my emotions. Know when I need to be secure and settled or when I need to be on my own for a short time to find calm and regulate my actions for myself. I need you to be calm and consistent and not annoyed or angry.
- As I am developing my own understanding of who I am know that I'm not yet able to understand and appropriately respond to the thoughts, feelings and intentions of others.
- I need you to encourage my awareness of others and support me and my peers as we play alongside each other and start to play together. Encourage me to be 'socially comfortable' and help me 'read' the messages others may give for example being happy, sad or upset. Help me resolve issues by modelling sharing a toy or giving a hug – but know that I may just not be able and ready to do this yet.
- I learn about self-respect through the way you and others interact with me, look at me, speak to me, treat me and care for me.
- Even as I grow, my emotions are often expressed through impulsive actions and gestures. I need you to help me identify other ways to regulate my emotions...ways that respect my individual physical and emotional needs.
- Sometimes I am overwhelmed by emotions. Help me to know and choose when I need to feel secure and settled or to be on my own for a short time. Help me to know how to find calm and how to regulate my actions for myself. I need you to be calm and consistent and not annoyed or angry.
- Notice how I observe and respond to your voice, words and expressions. You help me to learn to communicate and find my words by modelling empathy. I am learning from you how to be kind, calm and caring.
- I need you to support my developing understanding of the range of emotions that myself and other people experience. With your help I am developing an empathic understanding of the thoughts, feelings and intentions of others.
- I am beginning to develop an awareness of how to work with others when we are playing together. You help me to recognise when others are displaying strong emotions and you encourage me to find ways to relate to and resolve any tensions.

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RTA: Wellbeing Key Aspects

Experiences

From birth

- Over time I begin to respond to the routines of my day. Support my routines by noticing how and when I like to play, be fed, changed or settled to sleep.
- I need support and reassurance to cope with changes to my usual routine, for example if I am separated from familiar people or if I move to a new space.
- Respond to my feeding and changing needs in a calm, patient and unhurried way. Such times are key in building a positive, trusting relationship with me. Take time to talk with me and explain what's happening.
- Showing your warmth and compassion is important for me as I grow and learn. Comforting me if I become upset or playing finger-rhymes such as Round and Round the Garden encourage a close emotional bond with me. Your empathy helps me to develop my own.
- I am constantly learning my likes and dislikes and how to communicate these. You help me develop through your responses. Verbalise what's happening. Be with me at my level and take time to notice and observe me to understand me.
- Stories, songs and rhymes with wellbeing themes help me to recognise and understand my needs and that of others.

through my early years of childhood

- I need routines that help me mark the passing of time and give me comfort. I need a balance of different times in my day to play, relax and rest and have nourishment.
- I understand and respond to the routines of my day. I need you to involve me in these routines and develop my sense of ownership and independence.
- I need support and reassurance to cope with changes to my usual routine, for example if I am separated from familiar people or if I move to a new space. Help me learn to feel secure and to regulate my emotions through your empathic manner.
- Respond to my mealtime and personal care needs in a calm, patient, dignified and unhurried way. I am enjoying becoming more independent and learning to ask for help if I need it. Such times are key in building a positive, trusting relationship with me. Take time to talk with me, explain what's happening and encourage my independence.
- I am constantly learning my likes and dislikes and am learning how to communicate these in a thoughtful manner. You are helping me develop this through your kind responses. You and I share ideas and verbalise what's happening and I feel that you notice and understand me.
- Stories, songs and rhymes with wellbeing themes help me to recognise and understand my needs and that of others. You help me to engage in an emotionally empathic way to the feelings of others.

Spaces

From birth

- I need spaces where I can relax, feel safe, happy, content and cosy which gives a sense of care and wellbeing.
- I need to experience a variety of spaces; during my day I need the right balance of stimulating and calming indoor and outdoor environments to suit my needs.
- Take me outdoors frequently to help me learn about my wider world. Experiencing fresh-air and being outdoors in different weathers and natural environments develops my understanding of life and benefits my wellbeing.
- I need spaces where my keyworker can see or hear me and quickly respond to my smiles, tears, or gestures, for example, responding to my preferred way of being laid down to sleep.
- Organise my space to be socially comfortable; an uncluttered space to move alongside others and with toys and other materials to reach and explore. Arrange my play space so that I can be with others in a small group.

through my early years of childhood

- I need spaces where I can relax, feel safe, happy, content and cosy and which give a sense of care and wellbeing. These spaces can be accessed independently by me when I feel the need to regulate myself.
- I need to experience stimulating and challenging play spaces outdoors and in.
- Daily outdoor experiences throughout the year help develop my sense of wellbeing and learn about my wider world.
- I continue to need both open spaces to move freely and small spaces to feel calm, contained and cosy.

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'Nurturing My Potential'

Wellbeing - promoting myself, social, emotional and communication development when I am a toddler (EXAMPLE)

At the top of each section you will have a heading from Realising the Ambition. Each section will be colour coded.

Experiences that...	Developing skills...	Being a toddler...
<p>T/ W1</p> <p>Over time I begin to respond to the routines of my day. Support my routines by noticing how and when I like to play, be fed, changed or settled to sleep.</p> <p><i>This code was included to allow the experiences to be added to SeeSaw. The W - represents wellbeing and T is toddler stage</i></p> <p>Experiences from RTA Key Aspects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am responding to daily routine outdoors and indoors. I am beginning to independently participate in routines for example lunch, toileting and play experiences. <p><i>These are the experiences and opportunities young children should be given to promote their development and learning specific to the RTA experience.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am becoming familiar with the nursery routine and can anticipate what might happen next. (Included) I can join in routines independently. (Responsible) I can verbally express my feelings, needs and desires in real situations and during imaginative play. (Nurtured) <p><i>Practitioners should observe young children development and learning. The above examples should support practitioners to record children's achievements and plan future development and learning.</i></p> <p><i>In brackets you will see the SHANARRI Indicators from GIRFEC which will support practitioners to complete personal/care plans.</i></p>

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Wellbeing

GIRFEC aims to ensure the wellbeing of every child in Scotland by providing a consistent, child-centred approach to support safeguarding, and development.

‘Nurturing My Potential’ makes specific reference to the SHANARRI indicators.

**Getting it Right for Every Child
(Scottish Government, 2008)**



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Calming Spaces

The baby, toddler and young child will grow and develop in an environment of love, care, warmth, motivation and communication.

Our spaces should:

- Be **calming, inviting** and **peaceful**
- Activate and challenge the **senses**
- Have practitioners that are **knowledgeable** and promote **best practice**
- Be **consistent** and manageable with expectations and boundaries
- Promote learning **indoors** and **outdoors**



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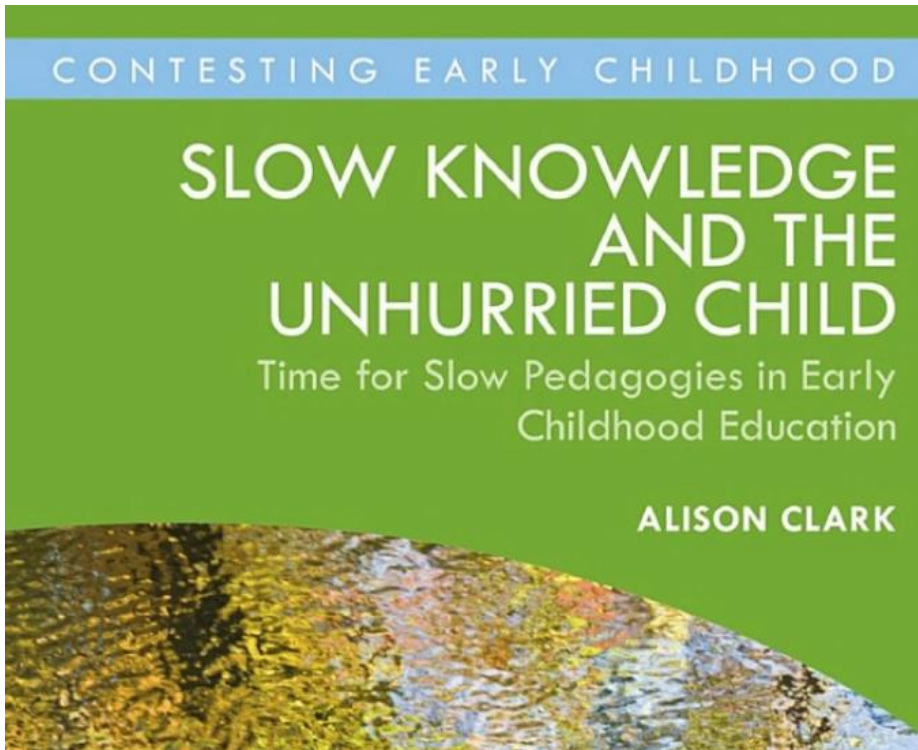
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What is Slow Pedagogy?



Slow pedagogy, is an educational approach that emphasises an **unhurried, child-centred** learning experience.

Rooted in Froebelian principles, it prioritises **play, relationships**, and **deep engagement** with learning.

Rather than rushing children to meet standardised milestones, it values the **present moment**, **creativity**, and the **natural rhythms of learning**.

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What is Slow Pedagogy?

Key aspects of slow pedagogy include:

- **"Being with"** children by giving them time to explore at their own pace.
- **"Going off track"**, allowing for spontaneous, child-led learning.
- **"Diving deep"** into topics through extended play and exploration.
- **"Taking the longer view"**, recognising childhood as valuable in its own right rather than just preparation for the future.



A Froebelian approach

Time for childhood: Slow pedagogy

by Donna Green
and Professor Alison Clark



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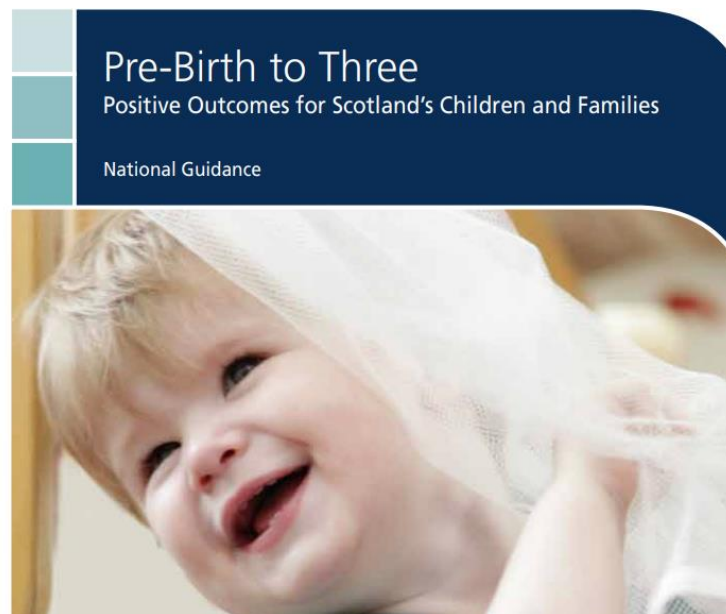
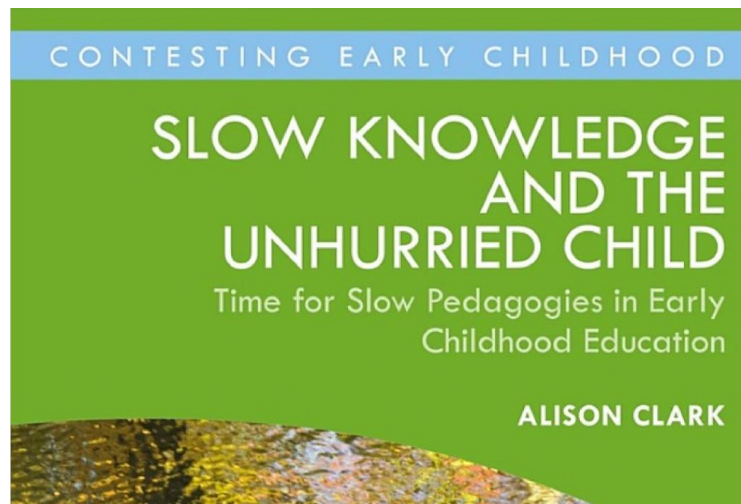
Slowing down and being with children

Relationships

Rights

Respect

Responsive



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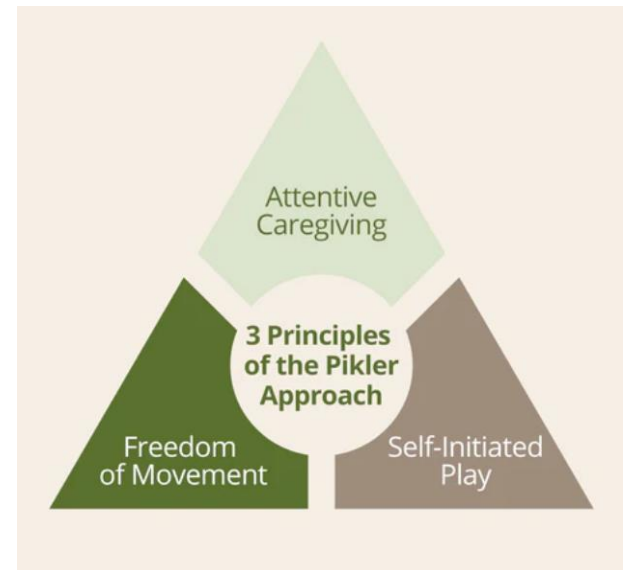
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The Pikler Approach/Philosophy

- The Pikler Approach is a way of raising young children that is **highly respectful of who they are as individuals**, giving great emphasis to **freedom of movement, self-initiated play**, and **attentive caregiving** between the child and the adult.
- Founded by Dr Emmi Pikler in 1946 in Budapest, Hungary.
- She advocates for young children to be given our **highest respect**, focussing on **establishing authentic trusting relationships** between adult and infant.
- Her **peaceful approaches** urges early childhood educators to consider young children as **competent, confident, self-initiating, involved, resourceful, secure, cooperative and curious** (Gerber, 1984).



(Christie, 2011)

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“Caregiving is the Curriculum”

Magda Gerber



Personal Care:

- “The **care moment** is the **most important** moment in a baby’s life”
- “When the experience is a pleasant one, they will be willing to participate again... and again... and again!”
 - **Freedom to move**
 - **Responsive reciprocal relationships**
 - **Making their own choices**
 - **Working together**
 - **Partnership and cooperation**

(Dr. Emmi Pikler in Christie, 2011)

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“Caregiving is the Curriculum”

Magda Gerber

From birth, babies know how they like to be held, be comforted and who they like to be with. They have already gained a range of skills learned in the womb. These skills help a new-born baby make **secure attachments** and **reciprocal relationships** with their caregivers.

Babies are making active choices, even at this early age, and are deciding **how they prefer their world to be**. They want and need to **make relationships with the people around them**.

Babies thrive when they experience **relationships** which are **warm, secure, consistent, loving** and **responsive**. Learning while being **carefully nurtured** suggests an **emotional response** and **commitment to the child**.



Babies are eager and keen to make sense of their world around them.

They have an innate power or drive to develop and revise their thinking processes.

RTA (Education Scotland, 2020: 19)

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Rights and Policy



Nappy changing for early learning and childcare settings (excluding childminders)

Publication date: July 2023 (updated February 2024)

UNCRC - Article 16 (right to privacy)

Every child has the **right to privacy**. This would relate to personal care. Personal information should not be shared in an inappropriate or disrespectful way.

- "In every aspect of early learning and childcare, it is **vital** that staff build **strong relationships** with children. Children benefit from **warm, responsive** and **sensitive interactions** and nappy changes are no different."
- "Nappy changing provides a great opportunity to spend **valuable one-to-one time** with children."
- "**Connection** supports a sense of **wellbeing** and **belonging**, and adults should ensure children feel **safe, nurtured, included** and **respected** when being changed."

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Updated Guidance 2026



This practice note aims to:

- Support staff in upholding children's rights.
- Provide clear definitions of restraint and restrictive practice.
- Promote person-centred care that leads to the reduction of restrictive practices.
- Ensure that any restrictive practice used is justifiable, reasonable and proportionate.
- Help staff support children, families and staff when restrictive practice has been used.

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Respect and Rights

CIFW 1.1 Nurturing Care and Support

Where children require support with personal care, interactions throughout are warm, caring and nurture children's security, confidence and positive relationships.

- An **invitation** and **explanation** is a simple matter of **respect**. Imagine being asked, being heard, and holding the power in matters affecting your physical well-being. **For most adults this is accepted as a basic human right.**
- Now imagine someone **physically lifting** or interfering with you in any way to which you have **not consented**. In the second instance, when you were not invited or consulted, the experience is one of **powerlessness**.
- You might feel more like an **object** rather than a human with individual thought, opinions, freedoms and rights.

UNCRC - Article 12 (respect for the views of the child) Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times.

When an adult speaks quietly about what is happening and waits for a response, the child does not need to be on alert that a change could be coming at any moment unannounced (Hammond, 2009: 17).

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Scenario 1:

Morag is exploring the jingle bells she has found on the floor and has started to play with the tinkling sounds that appear as she shakes the bells.



Jennifer's smiling face appears and says "wow, what a great sound, that looks like fun!" Jennifer sniffs the air and says quietly "would you like to come with me and we will get you a happy nappy?" Jennifer smiles and holds her arms out to Morag. Morag reaches up to Jennifer and is scooped up into a warm embrace.

Jennifer carries her through to the changing room. "Why don't you lie down here and give your bells a shake?" The bell tinkling is more echoey in here and Morag enjoys noticing how they sound with every shake.

"I'm just going to take off your trousers and give you a little clean, this might be a bit chilly" Jennifer says as she gently wipes Morag's vulva. Jennifer tell Morag what she is doing with every step in the care process and takes the time to look at Morag in the eyes and talk to her about her bells.

When she is all clean Jennifer says "Shall we give these bells and your hands a clean then take them back to the playroom and see what other noises we can make from our sound basket?" They happily return to the playroom to investigate more sounds together.

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Scenario 2:



Morag is 9 months, she is exploring the jingle bells that she has found on the floor and has started to play with the tinkling sounds that appear as she shakes the bells.

Morag hears an adult say in a loud voice across the playroom 'Morag is a bit whiffy, can you change her now?' Suddenly, she feels hands around her tummy and she is being lifted high above the ground ... her bells fall to the floor with a thud! The tinkling sound is a distant memory, and she is taken into the bright, smelly room and laid on a cold mat.

Quickly her trousers are removed and silently the adult cleans her with a cold wipe.

Before she knows it, her trousers are back on and she is placed back on the floor as the adults says "there you go, all clean now!"

Morag looks around ... the bells are gone...

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Discussion

- How did reading each of these scenarios make you feel?
- Did you see these themes in the scenarios?
 - Rights
 - Relationships
 - Respect
 - Responsiveness

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Leadership (Heading)	Children Thrive and Develop in Quality Spaces	Children Play and Learn	Children are Supported to Achieve
Leadership and Management of Staff and Resources: (CI) (Quality Indicator) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vision, values and aims (Theme) • self-evaluation, quality assurance and implementing change • staff recruitment and induction 	Children Experience High Quality Spaces (CI) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality, safety and maintenance of spaces • Children influence and affect change • Information management 	Play and Learning (CI) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s engagement • Quality of interactions • Child-centred planning and assessment 	Nurturing care and Support (CI) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurturing care • Personal planning • Connections with families
Staff Skills, Knowledge, Values and Deployment (CI) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff skills, knowledge and values • Staff deployment 		Curriculum (ES) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum rationale and design • Continuity and progression in the curriculum • Partnerships • Skills for life and learning 	Wellbeing, Inclusion and Equality (ES) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive relationships and wellbeing • Universal support • Identification of learning needs and targeted support • Inclusion and equality
Leadership of Continuous Improvement (ES) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedagogical leadership • Leadership and professional learning • Planning and continuous improvement 		Learning, Teaching and Assessment (ES) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s experiences and spaces • Interactions to support learning • Planning and assessment • Tracking and monitoring 	Children’s Progress (ES) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress over time across all areas of learning • Overall quality of children’s achievements • Ensuring equity for all children Safeguarding and Child Protection (CI & ES) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements for safeguarding, including child protection • Children are safe, secure and protected from harm • National guidance and legislation

Quality Improvement Framework for Early Learning and Childcare

- **Children are Supported to Achieve** (heading)



- **Nurturing Care and Support**
(Quality Indicator)

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- **Nurturing Care** (Theme)

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'Very Good' Nurturing Care



Our practice is built on the understanding that **nurturing relationships are essential for children's growth and development**. Children experience **warm, consistent and responsive care** that fosters their wellbeing. They are **safe, sensitively cared for and skilfully helped to express their needs**.

We recognise the importance of **supportive transitions** and understand that their significance can vary for each child. We regularly **assess each child's individual needs and evaluate the effectiveness of our transition strategies**. We ensure **consistent relationships** to support smooth transitions and minimise disruptions to children's care and learning experiences.

Guided by best practice, such as Realising the ambition, we evaluate our approaches and **continually strive to improve our practice**. The **varied age groups** in the setting positively impact transitions because older children are encouraged to welcome, support and guide younger or newer children. Children's **privacy and dignity are respected**. We balance promoting children's independence with providing support where it is needed.

We continually **reflect on our practice** to ensure it **adapts to children's evolving needs and development**. We create **diverse spaces** that support children to socialise, play in small groups or alone if they wish. This positively impacts children's ability to regulate their emotions and build social skills.

Children's food choices are nutritious, **culturally appropriate** and safely prepared to account for any specific dietary needs, allergies or intolerances. They are aligned with current dietary guidelines including Setting the table and Food matters. Fresh water is readily available throughout the day. We consider daily routines, such as mealtimes, as valuable opportunities to promote children's involvement, independence and enhance their experiences.

We ensure **consistency in who provides a child's care and support** and how it is provided. Consistency in routines such as mealtimes, nap times and personal care provide our children with a sense of safety and security. We recognise these **daily routines provide rich opportunities to connect with children and support their growth and development**. We work closely with families and, when appropriate, children to administer medication safely. We are committed to the safety of all children and ensure our care and support approaches align with current best practice, guidance and policy.

Evaluating Practice

- Take time to familiarise yourself with the new Shared Quality Improvement Framework.
- What are you currently doing well?
- How can you improve quality of practice?

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Tea Break



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Confidence, Creativity and Curiosity



Curiosity is a strong desire to know or learn something. When we are curious we follow our natural urge to learn more, know more, and understand more about the people, places, and things in our world.



“Curiosity didn’t kill the cat, it only made her smarter.” – Toni Christie



Creativity is the ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, and ways of being. When we are creative we can develop meaningful new ideas, forms, methods and interpretations. Creativity is risking what is for what could be.



“You can’t just give someone a creativity injection. You have to create an environment for curiosity and a way to encourage people and get the best out of them.”

– Ken Robinson

Both creativity and play are processes in the human brain which help us to reach our highest moments of learning and understanding.’

Bruce 2004:10

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Confidence, Creativity & Curiosity



- **Confidence** can be described as a set of beliefs that we can do for ourselves, or as part of a group, that are worth doing. It includes being able to keep going even if things are difficult at first, as well as having a realistic sense of when help is needed.
- **Creativity** is about much more than expressive arts, it is the ability to wonder about things, to see them or use them differently. Creativity is vital for all learning. Think about the creativity involved in the everyday problems we face. Consider the pace of change in our world and how we need to ensure our children are equipped with the right skills for their future. The foundations are built from the child's earliest years. Creativity is crucial within science, technology, engineering and mathematical learning (STEM). It is also essential to language and literacy development.
- **Curiosity**, as well as creativity, is an innate part of being human. It is the urge to learn and develop, to see what is around the corner, in the box or what happens next.

RTA (Education Scotland, 2020: p24)

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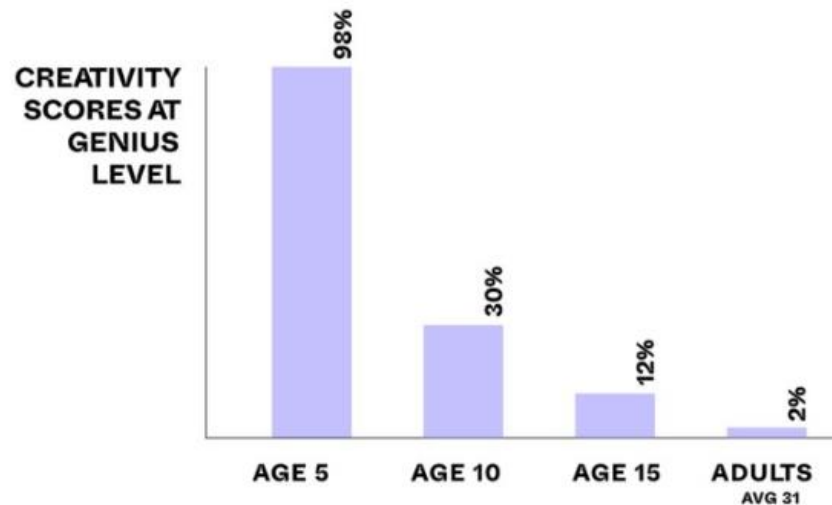
Breakpoint and Beyond: Mastering the Future Today

George Land and Beth Jarman, 1993

- At kindergarteners, 98% scored at genius level in divergent thinking
- At ten years old, 32% of the same group scored at this level
- At fifteen years of age - 12%
- When 200,000 adults were given this same test only 2% scored highly

Dr. George Land and Beth Jarman developed a test to measure creativity by assessing the ability to think divergently: this is the ability to face a problem, challenge or object and find multiple solutions or different ways to use the object.

The more possibilities the subject can imagine, open or explore, the more creative they are said to be. Divergent thinking is what scientists consider most creative.



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What makes a curious environment?

- Indoors & Outdoors
- Staff providing stimulation
- Resources - Sensory / Heuristic Play
- Time and space to experiment

‘Babies play using their **senses of touch, sight, smell, hearing, taste** and using **feedback from their movements**. As their physical co-ordination develops, helped along by the play they engage in, they begin to be able to hold objects, look at things, reach for things and put them in their mouths.’

Bruce 2001:1



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RTA: Promoting my Confidence, Creativity and Curiosity - Interactions

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Realising the Ambition: **Being Me**



Promoting my confidence, creativity and curiosity - some key aspects of what I need from my learning environment



Interactions

From birth

→ through my early years of childhood

- Seek to understand, and tune in to, what I am exploring – appreciate and respond to what I am learning.
- Sensitive support my efforts to be curious and inquiring without doing it for me.
- Respond to my efforts by understanding how I express my interests, for example, through my facial expression, gazing intensity, movement, noises and sounds.
- Interpret my interests for me by talking gently, for example, *I see what you would like, let me help you reach it*, whilst lifting me up to see higher.
- Be aware that the simplest of experiences for you are often full of potential for me.
- Observe my actions sensitively and intervene when necessary to extend my thinking without over-direction. Try not to interrupt my moments of intense concentration.
- Use techniques such as sustained shared thinking; wondering aloud, explaining what is happening – but all the time allowing me to find out for myself what will happen next.
- Carefully observe my play to know when best to stand back and allow me to try things out – and notice the moments when I'm receptive to more support.
- Use my skills by reminding, sharing and keeping previous accomplishments as a basis for new learning.
- Encourage my confidence, creativity and curiosity by suggesting I try things out and see that this is essential to how I learn.
- Don't be afraid to change your plans and take the lead from what I do and say. Act as a support for me when needed.
- Admit when you don't know! Offer me help by suggesting we find out together – see if this is as valuable for both of us.
- Carefully observe my play to know when best to stand back, give me time, and allow me to investigate for myself – and notice the moments when I'm receptive to more support.
- Encourage my ideas, allow me to make mistakes. Offer me further suggestions and praise my attempts.
- Listen with your eyes. Know that my expressions and movements are a fundamental part of my 'voice'. They articulate my confidence, creativity and curiosity.
- Pose questions which encourage my inquiry, such as, *I wonder why you think that*, to extend my emerging ability to verbalise my thoughts and actions.
- *Say I wonder what happens if...* to help me make sense of what happens when I try things out.
- Help model techniques and strategies with me to encourage this new learning in my new challenges or suggest a new context through introducing a provocation.

RTA: Promoting my Confidence, Creativity and Curiosity - Experiences



Experiences

From birth  through my early years of childhood

In all experiences notice and encourage my schematic play - through the process of my repeated actions I am learning about my world and how things work.

- Consider my senses. Provide me with a range of experiences I can see, touch, hear, smell and taste. Talk to me about the sensations I experience and notice how I am responding.
- Encourage my freedom of movement to kick, bounce, roll around and explore with my body.
- Take me outdoors to experience the wonder of nature, for example seeing how things move in the breeze and feeling the sensation of the wind in my face.
- Allow me to get messy and explore and investigate different textures such as painting with my fingers or squelching mud through my toes.
- Provide me with objects and toys that stack, roll and rattle that I can grasp, hold, drop and move.
- Enable my participation in musical experiences by swaying, clapping, bouncing and singing.
- Provide treasure baskets, bags and boxes filled with sensory, real and natural materials to touch and explore.
- Help me understand how things work, for example, how objects can be moved transported around; how similar things can be grouped together, how things balance.
- Provide me with open-ended resources I enjoy such as bags boxes and containers to put smaller items in, to move, to empty out, to scatter about.
- Give me lots of opportunities to mix and combine messy materials.
Provide me with materials to make clear marks with a variety of tools and equipment, such as crayons, chalks, pencils and paints with different sizes of brush. Provide a selection of paper, neatly arranged to help me see what's available and make choices for myself. Value my efforts through how you talk about, display or help me share my creations with my family.
- Give me experience of everyday activities, splashing in puddles, being blown by the wind, digging holes, making collection of stones or natural objects, or items that I feel are special to me.
- See the potential for wonder and promoting my confidence and independence through everyday routine experiences such as getting ready to go outside or during mealtimes. See what I can already do for myself and give me time to develop these skills.
- Help me recall how I have solved a problem in the past and how this learning links to my current challenge.
- Give me time to find out similarities and differences in different problem solving experiences.
- Create a wealth of interesting situations for me both outdoors and in. Carefully consider the possibilities of the objects available to me each day. How do they provoke my interest and extend my thoughts and learning?
- Incorporate different technologies to enhance my learning experience.
- Afford me daily opportunity to learn from nature and living things both outdoors and in.
- Let me experience how materials change by heating, dissolving, freezing, mixing, etc.
- Provide opportunities to find out how artists, dancers and musicians express their ideas and encourage me to try out my own expressions and interpretations.
- Give me opportunities to learn about music through encouraging me to explore tunes, rhymes, rhythms, timing, pattern.

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RTA: Promoting my Confidence, Creativity and Curiosity - Spaces

Spaces

From birth

→ through my early years of childhood

- I need constant and safe spaces, both indoors and outdoors, to explore for myself through my developing movements.
- An unhurried environment allows me time to concentrate on whatever catches my attention without being rushed.
- Carefully consider the resources on offer to me and how they will provoke my senses and encourage my curiosity and creativity.
- Mirrors help me to understand who I am. Notice how I interact with my reflection.
- Daily access to be outside in nature, experiencing all weathers and seasons in comfortable suitable clothing encourages my sense of wonder.
- Point out the features in the world around me and help me access them. For example, hold me up to show me trees and leaves or see birds flying in the sky.
- Bring the outdoors inside for me by ensuring I have access to windows, good lighting and natural objects to touch and explore.
- I need access to a variety of interesting spaces, both indoors and outdoors, filled with open-ended opportunities for me to explore and inquire, for example, the properties of sand, water, clay.
- Carefully consider and review my play spaces. Arrange indoor furniture and outdoor fixtures sensitively in response to my needs and place objects within my reach. Encourage me to share my ideas about the spaces I play and rest in.
- Give me frequent access to resources in which I show interest until I come to a self-satisfying conclusion.
- Mirrors continue to help me to explore who I am - notice how I interact with my reflection.
- Daily access to be outside in nature, experiencing all weathers and seasons in comfortable suitable clothing continues to encourage my sense of wonder.
- Walks and visits extend my curiosity and interest in my immediate world.
- Give me space and time to build, construct and take things apart over and over again.
- Give me opportunities to learn about music and dance through encouraging me to explore tunes, rhymes, rhythms, timing, pattern and movement.

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'Nurturing My Potential': Confidence, Creativity and Curiosity

Promoting my confidence, creativity and curiosity when I am a toddler

	Experiences that...	Developing skills.....	Being a toddler
T/C1	Consider my senses. Provide me with a range of experiences I can see, touch, hear, smell and taste. Talk to me about the sensations I experience and notice how I am responding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I explore using my senses. • I respond to sensory stimulation. • I am learning to identify and name some senses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I engage in opportunities for visual exploration for example mirrors, magnifying glasses or light box. (Achieving) • I can explore different materials like gloop, glue, paper, wood shavings, paint, making patterns. (Achieving) • I use my sense of smell when exploring an experience/ environment for example flowers and various scents. (Achieving / Respected) • I try a variety of healthy foods-smell, touch and taste. (Healthy) • I am interested in baking and making snacks. (Achieving)
T/C2	Encourage my freedom of movement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can use my gross motor skills. • I can move my body in different ways. • I experience energetic experiences outdoors. • I have opportunities to choose bicycles and scooters. • I am given opportunities to take risks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can kick. (Active) • I can bounce. (Active) • I can roll. (Active) • I can explore my body movements. (Active) • I can jump. (Active) • I can crawl over and under. (Achieving) • I can climb. (Achieving) • I can wheel, push or pull different resources. (Active) • I can use different trikes, tricycles, bicycles and scooters. (Active) • I can safely take small risks for example climbing a tree or falling from equipment. (Safe / Responsible)

Are your babies having daily opportunities to spend time outdoors?

Recent research has shown that when evaluating outdoor spaces for babies there can be a **severe lack in 'nature spaces'**.

There is growing evidence that it can be beneficial to babies in many ways to spend time outdoors. For example, it can be beneficial to their learning, to their wellbeing, to their health and to their overall development. At the same time it can benefit the people who look after and care for them.

The 'baby nature engaging and nature enhancing (NENE) toolkit offers ways to be outdoors with very young children. It will help you think about how the environment can be enhanced both for young children and for biodiversity. It will also help you consider some of your practices and the dispositions you would like to encourage the children to develop. The website is filled with useful videos and support materials.



The babyNENE Toolkit

PILOT

Jo Josephidou, Nicola Kemp and Polly Bolshaw



<https://babiesoutdoors.co.uk/>

Kemp, N., Josephidou, J. and Bolshaw, P. (2026)

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Children's Agency

Children's agency is the capacity of children to make decisions, express their views, and take actions that shape their own experiences and the environments they are part of.

"We often talk about 'giving children a voice' or 'offering them choice.' The language sounds generous, but it hides a dangerous assumption."

"Agency is not a gift adults bestow. It is not ours to give. Children are born with it. They make decisions from their first breath, negotiate meaning from the first gaze, and shape their worlds long before we design charts with two options."

"Play is the ultimate act of agency. In play children decide the rules, change the rules, or break them altogether. They choose materials, invent roles, negotiate conflicts, and imagine futures. In play they act with freedom and purpose, and they know their actions matter."

"Agency is not choosing between red and blue pencils. It is having real influence on learning, relationships, and community life"

Aga Chojnacka (Play and Agency Activist September 2025)

How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare?

QI: 3.3: Developing Creativity and Skills for Life and Learning

Developing Creativity

- Creativity is at the heart of play and all aspects of learning. We use innovative approaches to encourage children to be inquisitive, imaginative and to take risks in their learning.
- We ensure that children access open-ended play materials to extend their creativity and thinking.
- Our indoor and outdoor learning environments and engagement with the natural world offer regular high quality experiences that enable children to explore ideas and materials and to use their imagination freely.
- Discussion and interaction very effectively support children to explain their thinking and to reflect on their learning.
- Children have freedom to develop their play and interests and to deepen their learning.
- They confidently lead aspects of their own learning. High quality play enables children to explore possibilities, plan, design and evaluate solutions as they apply their skills across learning.

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Quality Improvement Framework for Early Learning and Childcare

- **Children Thrive and Develop in High Quality Spaces**(heading)

- **Children Experience High Quality Spaces** (Quality Indicator)

- **Children Influence and Affect Change** (Theme)



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Children Influence and Affect Change 'Very Good'

Children have **high levels of involvement in influencing the design and use of spaces**, which gives them a strong, clear message that **they matter**. We actively engage with children to enable them to direct their play and experiences **in the way they choose**. Children are **listened to and know that their views matter**. We understand the **capabilities of all children, including babies**. We adapt our practice to **meet their needs and enable their voices**.

Our environment provides opportunities for children to **make decisions and act independently within the safe boundaries of our setting**. They are encouraged to **lead most aspects of their play**, and we guide them to take on responsibilities at times like snack or when they are in the garden. Through outdoor play, children are learning about sustainability, gaining a deeper understanding of how to care for and preserve their natural environment. **Our approach keeps children engaged and increases their confidence**.

We have an **inclusive environment** where children have a **belief in their abilities**. **Carefully selected and well-positioned furniture and resources support all children to make choices and freely play**. Resources and materials available to children are **varied, adaptive and responsive**, catering to children's **individual abilities, needs and interests**. We understand the positive impact that **rich, multi-sensory play** has on children's learning, resilience and wellbeing.

We have a supportive environment where children are **valued and celebrated**. High-quality resources and spaces promote **diversity, equity and inclusion**. **Children, their families and wider communities are positively reflected in the resources, spaces and experiences available**. Children feel **seen and included**. Our enriching setting fully supports children to develop their **knowledge, respect and understanding of their community and wider world**.

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Children's Agency Discussion

- Use the Quality Improvement Framework to evaluate your spaces – think carefully about how you support children to influence these spaces?
- Do you feel there is anything different that you could do, to ensure children better influence their spaces?

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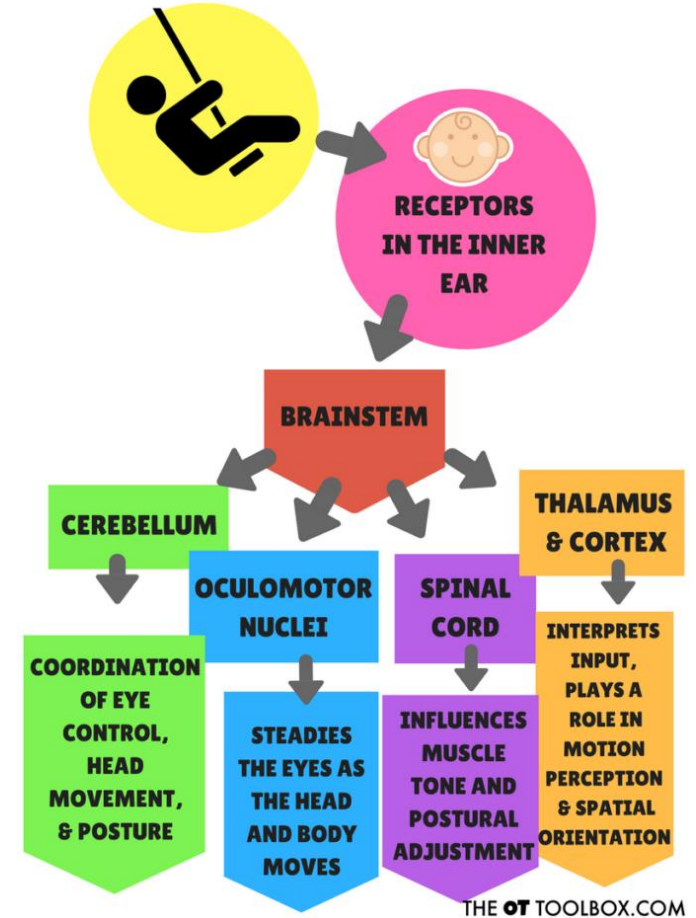
Movement and Coordination

We all have a sensory system called **the vestibular system** which gives us our **sense of balance** and **spatial awareness**. It helps us **coordinate** our **large** and **fine motor movements** and maintain our **posture**.

The development of movement and coordination for a child is linked **to communication and cognitive development**. For instance, a young child with a developing vestibular system will find it almost impossible to sit still for any length of time or possess the fine motor skills and coordination required for writing before they are ready.

This is why observations of a children's actions are crucial to inform our practice and ensure it is developmentally appropriate. The best way to help babies and young children develop this system is through providing **daily opportunities for physical play, especially outdoors.**

THE VESTIBULAR SYSTEM



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The Vestibular system



What is vestibular sense?

It helps us to 'keep tabs' on the position and motion of our heads. It works alongside our other sensory systems (including the proprioceptive sense), enabling us to use our **eyes effectively** and **process sounds** in our environment.

It has a **HUGE** impact on our **physical, emotional** and indeed **learning skills**.

It is often likened to the '**brain's traffic controller**' for **all the sensory information it receives**. It sorts and relays incoming sensory information from other sensory organs and passes it onto to the various sensory regions of our brain.

Why is the vestibular sense important for child development?

It is crucial for a child's development – helping them **work, rest and play**. A typically responsive vestibular system enables a child to **feel secure and confident in their body**, so they can **move, attend to learn, and rest**.

THE MAGIC BEHIND BALANCE AND MOTION

The VESTIBULAR system is the reason why babies and infants love to swing, sway, bounce and rock.



VESTIBULAR System:

- Improves balance
- Helps motor skills to develop
- Accelerates learning of posture, sitting, walking and crawling
- Soothes distressed babies

Activities for INFANTS include:

- Rocking
- Spinning
- Trampoline
- Balance activities

Activities for older KIDS include:

- Swinging on the swingset
- Using the see-saw
- Hanging from the monkey bars
- Riding the flying fox

Adapted from "What's Going On in There?" - Lise Eliot 2000 www.goeybrains.com

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The Importance of Developing a Strong Vestibular System



Means good balance!

As a child wobbles on one leg to get dressed, their vestibular system detects head movements, sending signals to the brain, which after processing, sends signals to the body, telling it how to respond & stay balanced. If a child's vestibular system is not working well, they may appear clumsy.

Improves visual tracking (maintaining a steady visual image while watching a moving object) & hand (fine motor) skills.

Without this eye-head coordination, they may find it difficult to:

1. smoothly look up at a whiteboard, then down at their work.
2. read effortlessly, as they find it hard to scan a line of text.
3. enjoy sports – keeping track of a moving ball!

Develops and maintains normal muscle 'tone'


At rest, muscle tone will be low, but when we want to move, it will rise in response – otherwise we would go nowhere! Without a properly functioning vestibular system, a child may find it hard to 'hold themselves up' properly. They may opt to lie on the floor instead of sitting up during circle time or lean on their elbow while at their desk. Children may manage this problem of a 'sleepy vestibular system' by tending to daydream, or conversely they may want to move and fidget – as this stimulates their vestibular system.

Supports language development by integrating with our auditory & visual senses.

Helps with a child's self-care and independence through co-ordinating both sides of their body. For example, doing up buttons or a zip on their own.

Encourages self-regulation

WHY IS THE VESTIBULAR SENSE IMPORTANT FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT ?



01. Improves visual tracking
02. Develops normal muscle "tone"
03. Supports language growth
04. Encourages self-regulation
05. Promotes core strength

@empoweryour_potential

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My movement and coordination development - some key aspects of what I need from my learning environment



Interactions

From birth  through my early years of childhood

- Notice how my movements express my feelings and emotions. In many ways they are my voice. Learn the cues I give when I am happy and relaxed or tense and upset. I need you to help me by responding appropriately. I need you to be patient, calm, consistent and understanding.
- Notice how I respond to your physical movements. I often mimic your gestures and movements to help me develop my own.
- Carefully tune into my movement and coordination needs. For example, notice when I need a change of position when I am a baby or supporting and encouraging me to try things for myself as I grow.
- Notice the rhythm in my movements as I grow and develop coordination, for example, as a baby I often move my limbs in a rhythmical way. As I grow notice the patterns in my fine and gross motor skills.
- My physical development and coordination is enhanced through you playing, singing, clapping, and dancing with me.
- Acknowledge that I sometimes will look away from you to help my brain make sense of the information around me.
- I need you to understand and observe that I often repeat movements to make sense of experiences and develop my skills (schemas).

Experiences

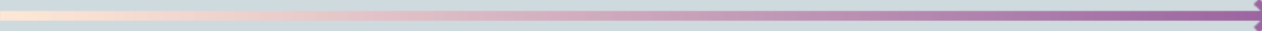
From birth  through my early years of childhood

- I need to move my body in lots of different ways in order to develop both my fine and gross motor skills.
- Before I am able to crawl help me to be physically active by encouraging me to reach out and use my hands to grasp, kick and move my legs and turn my head.
- Tummy time helps me build the strength I need for sitting and crawling. Do this only for short periods (up to 30 minutes spread throughout the day) when I am awake and alert and you are close to me. Never put me on my tummy to sleep.
- It's important that I don't spend too much time in a baby carrier, buggy, baby seat, walker or bouncer as the over-use of these can delay my physical development.
- Involve me in fun games, songs and rhymes where I stretch out and touch my hands, fingers or toes.
- When I'm able support me to sit to watch others, play with toys or roll over. Encourage me to stretch out for items just out of my reach.
- Give me physical support in response to my efforts to move, especially as I start to pull myself up to stand and try my first steps. Help, encourage and praise me.
- I need to move my body in lots of different ways in order to develop both my fine and gross motor skills.
- I need to have space and time to run, jump, climb, build, crawl, balance, stretch, make. I need to move in and around objects both outside and in. I need to have the choice to do this when I need it to regulate myself.
- I need daily outdoor play experiences to develop my sense of wellbeing and connect me to the world I live in. Outdoor play in different environments encourages me to move my body in different ways.
- I am reassured by the routines of my day. Routines continue to help me mark the passing of time and give me comfort. I need a balance of different times in my day to play and be active, relax and rest and have nourishment. Notice how the processes of the routines of the day provide opportunities for fine and gross motor skill development, for example encouraging me to become independent in dressing in my outdoor clothes.
- Access to resources that encourage open-ended experimentation helps develop my fine and gross motor skills. For example, loose parts play can involve large blocks I need to physically manipulate or small parts I need to carefully select and place on an artwork I am creating.
- Provide me with different resources that encourage my physical development and coordination. Help me develop fundamental skills such as throwing and catching, hopping, skipping, stretching, sliding, balancing and jumping.
- Link my experiences to enhance my learning, for instance consider how music can help encourage me to move.

RTA: Movement and Coordination



Spaces

From birth  through my early years of childhood

- As I grow I need access to a range of different spaces to move in and around, outdoors and indoors.
- Observe how I use and move in these spaces and respond to my needs in a flexible way, for instance, if I need more space for block play or small spaces where I can feel cosy and secure.
- Being outdoors daily enables me to learn about my wider world and encourages me to move my body in different ways. Experiencing fresh-air and being outdoors in different weathers and natural environments develops my understanding of life and benefits my wellbeing.
- I need large open spaces to move my body freely. I need daily access to spaces where I can practice movements such as running and climbing. Think about my learning spaces in three dimensions.
- I need spaces that encourage me to test my sense of risk. I need you to notice when I need you to step into support my risky play and when you should step back.
- I need spaces to stop, think and relax.

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'Nurturing My Potential': Movement and Coordination

Promoting my movement and coordination development when I am a toddler

Experiences that...		Developing skills...	Being a toddler ...
T/M1	I need to move my body in lots of different ways in order to develop both my fine and gross motor skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am beginning to move my body in different ways for example running, jumping and climbing. I am developing my fine motor skills by using a range of natural resources. I am beginning to throw a ball overhead. I am putting simple puzzles together. I am beginning to mark make using a variety of media. I am beginning to use cutlery. I am turning pages in a book, one at a time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can demonstrate controlled hand-eye co-ordination. (Achieving) I can use my gross motor skills for example when I am running, jumping, climbing, balancing, peddling and throwing. (Achieving) I can use a pincer grip with growing effectiveness for example to control mark making tools, to fasten or unfasten zips and Velcro. (Achieving) I am mark making using a palmer's grasp/four finger and thumb grip/tripod grip. (Achieving)
T/M2	Involve me in fun games, songs and rhymes where I stretch out and touch my hands, fingers or toes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am beginning to take part in action songs and rhymes. I am beginning to take part in ring games, moving my body in different ways. I am beginning to move my body to music in different ways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can actively take part in action songs and rhymes. (Included) I can move my body in different ways. (Active) I can move my body in different ways to music. (Achieving)

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Movement and Coordination Task



- Are children in your setting getting **daily opportunities** to experience:
 - Swinging; spinning; rocking; tummy time; gentle bouncing on adult knees; crawling; walking; running; climbing; jumping; twirling; rolling; balancing; playing in shallow water; large movement painting; carrying; pushing; spinning ribbon, scarves, hoops
- **How do you ensure that children in your setting are getting an opportunity to use and practise their full range of movement?**
- **What could you do in your interactions, experiences and spaces to improve this?**

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Playful Literacy

Communication and Language

The importance of communication and language development for all aspects of children's lives cannot be overstated.

Communication underlies our ability to manage behaviour and emotions, by expressing what we need or using language to regulate how we feel.

Language is also much more than words. It is understanding and using patterns and cues for interaction, sequencing thoughts and ideas, and making stories that help us understand what is happening, and what is next.



RTA P:23 & Education Scotland, 2020)

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What is Playful Literacy for Birth to Three?

To promote language and communication,

- Eye contact
- One to one communication
- Facial expressions
- Listening
- Interpreting the child's needs and wants
- Body language
- Go Slow
- Be clear
- Repeat
- Use Rhythm
- Follow their lead.

Dr Sam Wass



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What is Playful Literacy for Birth to Three?

When embedding playful literacy and promoting language and communication, it is important to **keep environments calming.**



This promotes:

- Safety and Security
- Sense of Wellbeing
- Strong Relationships

Which leads to:

- A strong sense of belonging
- Confidence
- Exploration and Discovery



Dr Sam Wass

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How to Promote Playful Literacy



- Rhythms and repetitive language of songs and rhymes support language learning
- Reading aloud - speaking / listening / storytelling
- Stories invite children to anticipate and contribute
- Talking about pictures in books just as important as reading the story
- Books to introduce children to vocabulary and situations outside of their lives
- Telling stories of a child's own experiences helps children to learn to express their thoughts and feelings
- Books can help carers to overcome inhibitions and provide topics for discussion.

(Early Literacy Development, Mary Sheridan's From Birth To Five Years P.136)

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Realising the Ambition: **Being Me**



Overarching themes for literacy learning from birth through the early years of childhood

Literacy develops throughout a child's life from pre-birth and underpins all communication and interaction

Literacy can be attached to everyday learning experiences and opportunities

Warm nurturing relationships help open up communication and connect literacy to the child's life

Literacy experiences should weave, build and grow children's interests, vocabulary and knowledge

Literacy learning should encourage children to see themselves as readers and writers, through purposeful experiences which build on the way that children use literacy



When I am a baby...

- It's important to attune to, and mirror, my gestures, facial expressions and sounds to understand me and help me develop my communication skills.
- Listen and react to sounds in the environment with me
- Use natural resources, musical instruments, books and toys which make sounds and noise with me, encouraging me to listen for and distinguish between sounds.
- Respond to my verbal and non-verbal interactions using rich language and vocabulary recognising that my babbling is a form of communication.
- Provide opportunities for me to be involved in varied conversations which may include daily routines and events.
- Encourage my social and verbal interactions with quality picture books (including both pictures and text) and favourite objects, connecting with my interests and family life.
- Connect with personal stories created with my family through familiar photos, words and objects, engaging with the senses.
- Give me sensory and tactile experiences which encourage me to reach out, laugh and mirror sounds.
- Encourage me to make marks through sensory and messy play, to support my communication of my own thoughts and ideas.
- Provide me with lots of opportunities to develop my gross and fine motor skills.

From birth

When I am a toddler...

- Give me opportunities to mirror and listen to adults and other children using gestures, sound and visual cues. This encourages me to participate in and explore language.
- Encourage me to explore, distinguish and react to sounds in the environment with you.
- Play with language - encouraging me to have fun investigating and experimenting with words, rhymes, songs and musical instruments.
- Enrich and extend my verbal and non-verbal interactions using familiar and unfamiliar language and vocabulary.
- Provide opportunities for role-play which combine familiar and new environments, routines and objects to deepen my language experience.
- Continue to share quality picture books with me (including both pictures and text) connecting with my interests and family life, encouraging reciprocal story-telling between you and me.
- Help me connect with stories on a personal and imaginative level, developing an understanding that text conveys meaning.
- Give me sensory and tactile experiences which encourage me to babble, talk and have fun with books.
- Incorporate a wide range of interesting resources which encourage me to communicate ideas through mark making, painting and drawing.
- Provide me with lots of opportunities to develop my gross and fine motor skills.

When I am a young child...

- Provide different opportunities for me to express my thoughts, feelings and opinions, and consider those of others, with adults and my peers in one to one situations and in small groups
- Encourage me to notice patterns, similarities and differences in sounds and words.
- Play with language - encouraging me to have fun investigating and experimenting with words, rhymes, songs and musical instruments, drawing attention to familiar words, phrases and names in my environment.
- Continue to enrich and extend my verbal and non-verbal interactions using familiar and unfamiliar language and vocabulary, relating to my home and life experiences.
- Extend role-play - building on my life experiences and interests encouraging interactions, conversations and new vocabulary.
- Continue to provide me with quality picture books alongside a range of different media, fiction and non-fiction texts, connecting with my interests and family life, encouraging reciprocal story-telling between me and you.
- Encourage enjoyment, engagement and meaning of stories and explore the connections between text and illustrations.
- Continue to give sensory and tactile experiences by providing resources which support talking about stories and factual texts and having fun with books.
- Encourage me to notice the purpose of writing in all environments and to enjoy communicating my ideas through the written word.
- Provide me with lots of opportunities to develop my gross and fine motor skills.

'Nurturing My Potential': Playful Literacy

Promoting Playful Literacy Development when I am a toddler

Experiences that...		Developing skills...	Being a toddler...
T/L1	Give me opportunities to mirror and listen to adults and other children using gestures, sound and visual cues. This encourages me to participate in and explore language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am learning to express my feelings. I am learning to understand other's feelings. I am learning to play with other children. I am learning to communicate with others, adults/peers and share my opinions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can make eye contact when communicating with others. (Achieving) I am beginning to display a range of emotions appropriately. (Nurtured) I am beginning to show empathy/concern when someone is upset or hurt. (Respected) I am beginning to play appropriately together/alongside other children. (Included) I am beginning to share and take turns. (Included) I can use words to get adult attention for example "watch me!". (Achieving)
T/L2	Encourage me to explore, distinguish and react to sounds in the environment with you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I respond to sounds in my environment such as birds, traffic, wind, rain and lightning. I respond to sounds in my community for example visiting the woods, playparks and library. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can react to familiar sounds within my environment, such as, fire engines, bin lorries. (Achieving) I can identify and respond to sounds in my community. (Achieving)
T/L3	Play with language - encouraging me to have fun investigating and experimenting with words, rhymes, songs and musical instruments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am having fun with language when creating music I am learning to sing songs and rhymes. I am learning to discuss my favourite song/rhyme. I am learning to display my enjoyment of language through gestures and words. I am learning to clap along with a song. I am beginning to identify patterns and similarities in nursery rhymes. I am learning to new sounds/words through singing experiences. I am learning about words that rhyme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am beginning to copy simple words/sounds. (Achieving) I can say a few nursery rhymes. (Achieving) I can sing several nursery rhymes. (Achieving) I am starting to recognise/use rhyming words. (Achieving) As I join in with songs, rhymes and stories I am beginning to follow rhythms/patterns in language. (Achieving) I try out language for example 'me go park'. (Achieving) I have expressive vocabulary for example 500 - 700 words. (Achieving) I am beginning to create silly rhymes and phrases. (Achieving) I am beginning to sing, as well as listen to songs and rhymes. (Achieving) I can convey my enjoyment of language through a variety of

Playful Numeracy



Children are curious about the environments surrounding them, even before they are born. They **want to know how things work** and can use **problem solving skills** from an early age. **Children constantly explore cause and effect through their play.**

Numeracy is not just about being able to count. It is about developing **number sense** which encourages **creativity of thought**, and it allows children to interact with the world around them. Number sense can be used to understand everyday activities. Being able to recognise that symbols have different meaning in different contexts and the ability to quantify e.g. understand the two-ness of 2, is an important life skill.

RTA P.74 (Education Scotland, 2020)

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Heuristic Play

Principle One: Natural Materials and Real Objects

At the heart of heuristic play lies the principle of **using natural materials and real objects**, as opposed to "traditional" toys. The idea is to provide your child with items that **mirror the objects adults engage with in their daily lives**. This approach **nurtures a child's innate curiosity and desire to imitate the world around them**. By exploring objects such as wooden spoons, scarves, or jar rings, children engage their senses and develop an understanding of **different textures, shapes, and properties**. This principle **encourages creativity** and paves the way for **open-ended play**, where the **possibilities are endless**.

Principle Two: The Role of Adults

While heuristic play encourages **independent exploration**, the **role of adults is crucial** in setting the stage and maintaining a supportive environment. You are the facilitator who arranges the play space and selects the objects. Once the play begins, **assume a passive yet available role**. This means finding a spot nearby where you can **observe without interfering**, allowing the **child to take the lead**. Your presence acts as a **safety net**, **providing comfort** while fostering the **child's autonomy** and **decision-making skills**.

Principle Three: Timing in Key

Heuristic play sessions are **most effective when timed right**. Children are more receptive when they are settled and content. Avoid initiating play when children are hungry, tired or unwell, as these factors can hinder their engagement. By choosing the optimal timing you set the stage for a positive and productive play experience that aligns with the child's natural rhythms.

(Project Play: Ignite the Imagination)



Froebel said that adults should be:
"externally passive and internally active"

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Principle Four: Creating the Ideal Play Space

To fully immerse the child in heuristic play, it's important to create an environment that **minimises distractions**. Designate a specific area for play, away from noise and potential distractions. **A quiet room, or corner of a room, with a large play space** is ideal for this purpose. This dedicated area fosters **concentration** and **exploration**, allowing the child's **imagination to flourish** as they interact with the objects at hand.

Principle Five: Abundance of Materials

Unlike traditional play scenarios where sharing and taking turns are emphasised, heuristic play encourages **solitary exploration**. To facilitate this, provide an **array of materials** and **objects**. This abundance allows the child to **freely interact with the items they choose**. As they engage with various materials, they develop a deeper understanding of cause and effect, spatial relationships, and sensory experiences.

By adhering to the five principles outlined above, you provide the child with the opportunity to **explore, create, and learn** in a manner that is both **natural** and **engaging**.

As you embrace heuristic play, remember that your role is to **facilitate, guide, and support**, allowing the child's **innate curiosity** and **imagination** to take centre stage. Through this approach, you not only enhance the child's **cognitive abilities** but also create **cherished moments of discovery and growth together**.



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Realising the Ambition: **Being Me**



Overarching themes for numeracy and mathematical learning from birth through the early years of childhood

Numeracy and mathematical learning begins at birth and is evident throughout a child's life experiences

Numeracy and mathematical learning can be found in all aspects of the curriculum and all areas of the setting

Numeracy and mathematical experiences should weave, build and grow children's interests, vocabulary and knowledge

Numeracy learning is enhanced by adults who use purposeful mathematical language when carrying out experiences

Numeracy and mathematical learning should be actively encouraged by providing different materials in different contexts to encourage opportunities for exploration, enquiry and problem solving



When I am a baby...

- Provide a range of richly illustrated books for me. Discuss the illustrations with me using language such as bigger, smaller, up, down, under, over.
- Involve me in simple counting songs with repetition of rhyme and rhythm.
- Encourage me to notice how numbers are evident in my environment.
- Give me time and space to explore toys and materials from different angles and move around freely to investigate my surroundings in terms of position and how my body works.
- Water and sand play are important for me, model pouring and measuring for me to experiment with.
- Provide materials such as paint and clay for me to explore, discussing with me categorising concepts such as hard, soft, wet, dry.
- Encourage me to sort and recognise and make patterns, supporting me to notice differences.
- Encourage my awareness of shape within natural contexts and environments.
- Enable me to play outdoors every day which includes discussing, for example, how the wind blows, the features of natural materials, exploring the textures, weight and size of items such as stones, twigs and plants.

RTA: Playful Numeracy



When I am a toddler...

- Provide richly illustrated books with representations of number, shape and pattern to support conversations with me around these concepts.
- Sing and recite counting songs and rhymes with me, linking to visual representations using rhyme and rhythm.
- Encourage me to notice and use numbers as I explore my environment.
- Encourage me to have fun and play with numbers; investigating and experimenting with quantity, through comparing and contrasting a variety of objects using mathematical language such as less than, more than, same as.
- Continue to give time and space for me to explore toys and materials from different angles.
- Encourage me to move around freely to investigate my surroundings in terms of position and how my body works.
- Ensure my water and sand play is developing more specific language around pouring, measuring, volume, and capacity.
- Provide a variety of materials for me to explore, discussing with me categorising and sorting concepts such as hard, soft, wet and dry.
- Encourage me to sorting and play with patterns, supporting me to identify the characteristics of different objects.
- Encourage me to identify and explore shape within natural contexts and environments.
- Enable daily outdoor play which encourages me to explore natural materials through movement and to gain an understanding of textures, weights and sizes of items.

When I am a young child...

- Continue to provide me with richly illustrated story books with representations of number, shape and pattern to support conversations around these concepts.
- Continue to sing and recite counting songs and rhymes linking to visual representations of numbers that involve counting, ordering and recognising number.
- Encourage me to notice how numbers are evident in my environment and to enjoy using and writing numbers for a purpose.
- Continue to encourage me to play with numbers, having fun investigating and experimenting with quantity, through comparing and contrasting a variety of objects using mathematical language such as less than, more than, same as.
- Support my understanding and use of positional language within everyday experiences and through activities such as role-play, board games, digital technologies and programmable toys.
- Continue to include water and sand play to encourage me to explore, experiment, test and extend ideas developing more specific language and understanding around pouring, measuring, volume, and capacity.
- Provide a variety of materials which encourage my reasoning through experimentation, trial and error and prediction based on my developing understanding of mathematical concepts.
- Encourage me to create my own patterns and sets of objects, identifying and talking about the characteristics we notice together.
- Encourage me to identify and explore shape and symmetry, developing an understanding of characteristics within natural contexts and environments.
- Enable daily outdoor play which encourages me to explore size and perspective through my movements and by seeing familiar objects from a different angle, height or distance.



'Nurturing My Potential:' Playful Numeracy

Promoting Playful Numeracy and Mathematical Development when I am a toddler			
Experiences that...		Developing skills...	Being a toddler...
T/N01	Provide richly illustrated books with representations of number, shape and pattern to support conversations with me around these concepts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am learning to take part in songs, rhymes, short stories relating to number, shape and pattern. I am learning through a variety of books for example sound, material and paper of what basic shapes visually look like and are called. I am learning the concept of basic numbers using visuals in books as prompts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am beginning to understand and recognise basic concepts of number, shape, pattern in books. (Achieving) I am becoming curious about patterns that are visible in books. (Achieving) I can answer simple questions about shape and number in a story. (Achieving) I am becoming familiar with what a written number looks like. (Achieving) I am beginning to finger count visuals in a book. (Achieving)
T/N02	Sing and recite counting songs and rhymes with me, linking to visual representations using rhyme and rhythm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am learning to explore numbers through songs. I am learning to name my favourite numeracy nursery songs. I am making connections between visuals and songs and rhymes. I am learning about rhythm by using various techniques such as my hands to clap or using instrument to beat. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I sing spontaneously and enjoy group singing that promotes number. (Included) I join in counting rhymes and songs. (Achieving) I can name familiar counting and number songs and join in. (Included) I can use prompts to count and identify different characters. (Achieving) I am making positive attempts to use my fingers and hands to count the rhythm and beat of song. (Achieving)
T/N03	Encourage me to notice and use numbers as I explore my environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am beginning to show an interest in numbers. I am learning that numbers come in sequence. I am learning what a visual number looks like in my environment. I am learning there is a connection between amounts and number words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am becoming curious about numbers. (Achieving) I am beginning to verbally count using number language, but not always in the right order. (Achieving) I am beginning to recognise numerals in my environment. (Achieving) I am beginning to understand that basic number words represent basic amounts. (Achieving)
T/N04	Encourage me to have fun and play with numbers: investigating and experimenting with quantity, through comparing and contrasting a variety of objects using mathematical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am learning about basic quantities using materials such as measuring jugs and scales. I am learning to explore size. I am learning to discuss small, medium and large. I am learning to discuss quantities and use mathematical language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can use materials such as jugs, bottles and pots to explore the concept of empty, half full and full. (Achieving) I am beginning to make comparisons between quantities and size, for example big, little and tiny. (Achieving) I am beginning to use some number and size language, such as 'more', 'the same', 'little'. (Achieving)

Playful Literacy/ Numeracy Task

Think about your current Early Years environment.

Read the section '**Promoting Playful Literacy/Numeracy**' from NMP and reflect on your current practice.

For example, how are you currently 'encouraging children to sort and play with patterns, supporting them to identify the characteristics of different objects?'

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Lunch Break



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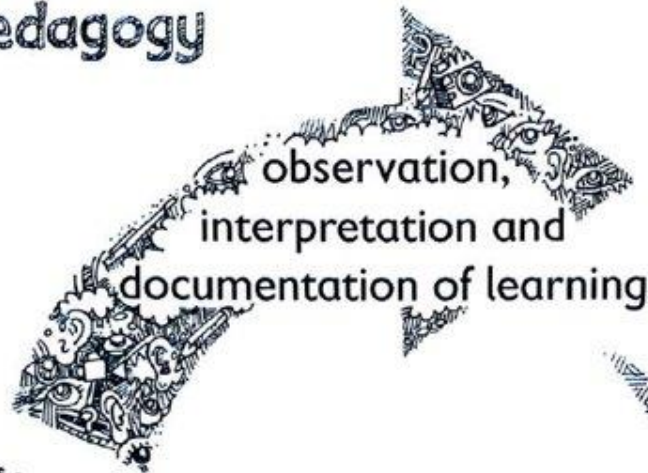
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Observation, Assessment and Planning Cycle...



child-centred pedagogy in practice



observation,
interpretation and
documentation of learning

'Listen with your eyes and ears'

What does the child's **actions, emotions** and **words** tell you about their development and learning?

Are your methods of documentation informative and meaningful to **you, the child, their family** and **other practitioners**?

Sensitive interactions -
honing the skill of stepping in and stepping back

Flexible experiences -
learn from the child to inform practice

Variety of spaces -
outdoors and inside

facilitation



responsive and intentional
planning

Informed by the child's **actions, emotions** and **words**

What needs to **stay** to reinforce development and learning?

What needs to **change** to inspire new learning and development?

Froebel Trust – Time for Play, Space to Learn [video link](#)



Time for Play, Space to Learn
The story of Poppies Pre-School

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Observations are the key to understanding children

There is a longstanding tradition of observation within Early Childhood settings, which contributes to our understanding of how children develop and learn (Froebel, 1887; Isaacs, 1929). Isaacs recognised the importance of observations, noting ...

STELLA LOUIS

OBSERVING LEARNING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD



*"It cannot, of course, be very easy for us to gain a clear idea of what the world is like to a very young child, just because it must be so different from our own. But by **patient listening** to the talk of even little children, and **watching what they do, with the one purpose of understanding them**, we can imaginatively feel their fears and angers, their bewilderments and triumphs; we can wish their wishes, see their pictures and think their thoughts."*

(Isaacs, 1929; 15)

The Role of the Adult

(RTA, Education Scotland, 2020; 65)

- **Start with the child!**
- **Take time** to observe children at play – **Listen with your eyes and ears**
 - *"by **patient** listening to the talk of even little children, and watching what they do" (Issacs, 1929:15)*
- Aim to evidence **how children make meaning/sense of the world**
 - *"**with the one purpose of understanding them**" (Issacs, 1929:15)*
- **Carefully consider when to step in and when to step back**
 - **"this is a skill even the most experienced of us can often misjudge!"** (RTA, p65)
- **Open-ended** experiences and materials allow more exploration
 - They often lead to **deeper** and **more creative** learning as the child is empowered by the fact they cannot respond in a "wrong" way. **Process** is more important for learning than 'end products'. Different children will get different learning from apparently doing the same thing. (RTA, p65)
- **Adult-led??**
 - "It is quite alright for us to initiate and suggest intentional learning experiences, as long as we are **sensitive to the child's response**. Doing interesting things can sometimes be more important than any routine or practitioner's plan; children can often determine the duration and focus." (RTA, p65)
- **Pondering statements:** When supporting and extending play, pose questions which encourage inquiry such as:
 - *"I wonder what happens if..."*

Why observe?

- To gain knowledge of what a child **can do**.
- To understand their **strengths**.
- To understand **where** a child likes to learn best.
- To understand how a child is **disposed** to learning.
- To understand their **stage of development**.

Want to read more?

L. Sancisi & M. Edgington (2015)
*Developing High Quality
Observation, Assessment and
Planning in the Early Years*

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High Quality Observations in a "nutshell"

1. What did you see/hear? (actions, words, emotions)
2. What does it mean? (analyse - child development, learning)
3. What are you going to do? (support and extend)

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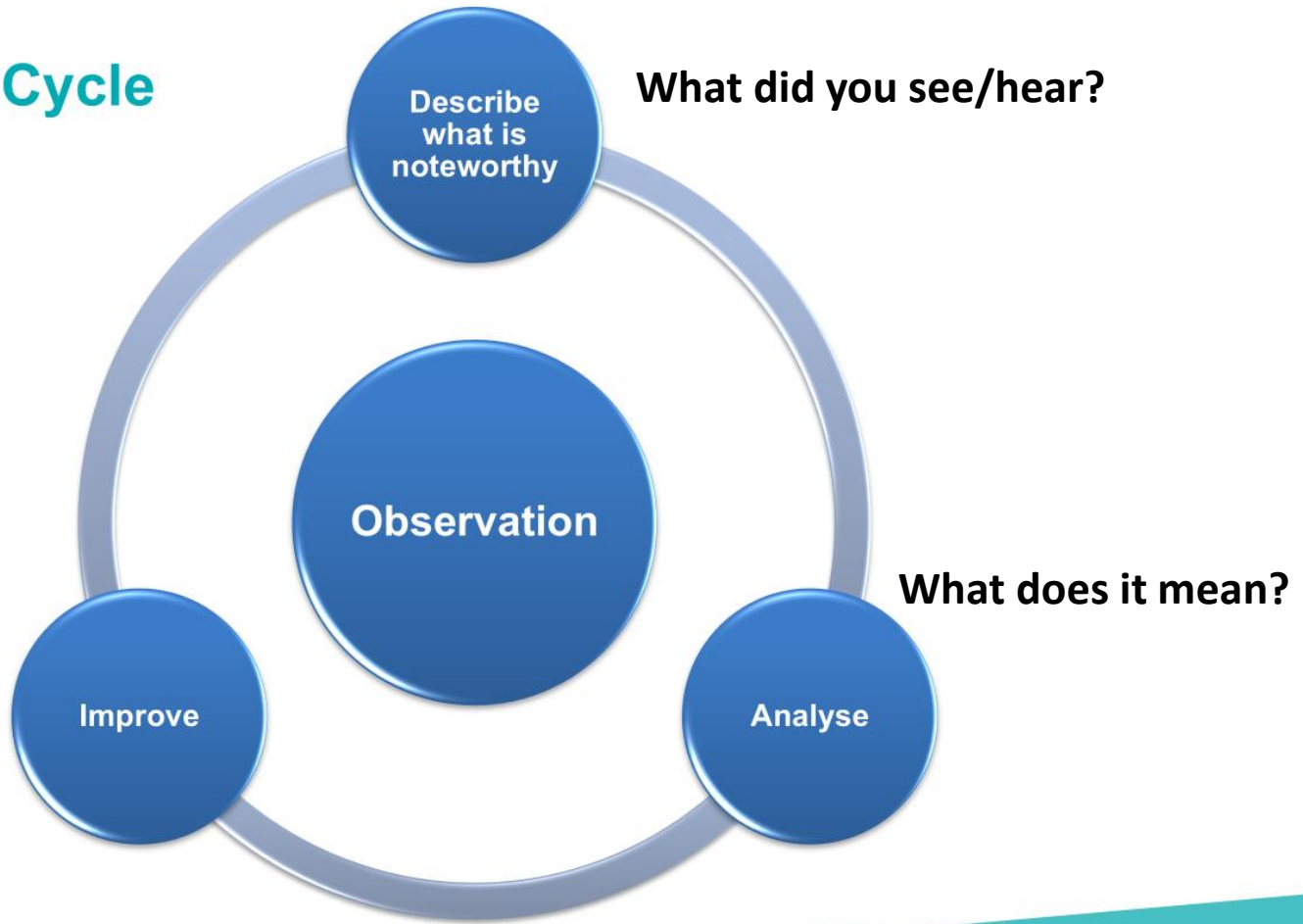
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Observation Cycle



Transforming lives through learning

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Achievement and Progress

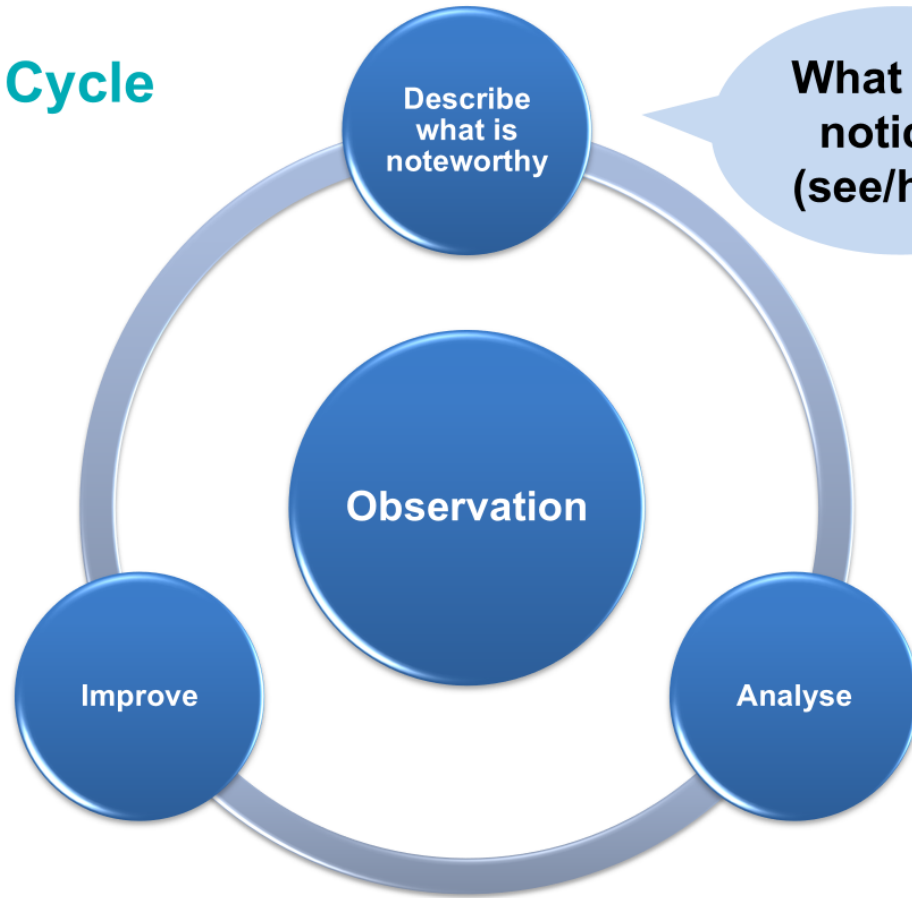
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Observation Cycle



**What did I notice?
(see/hear)**

Caleb for the first time (unprompted) joined two others in the house and took part in the scenario that was underway. He took on the role of dad and pretended to serve tea and cakes alongside his friend. Caleb asked his friend, 'can you make more tea, please?' His friend responded by filling-up the teapot with water.

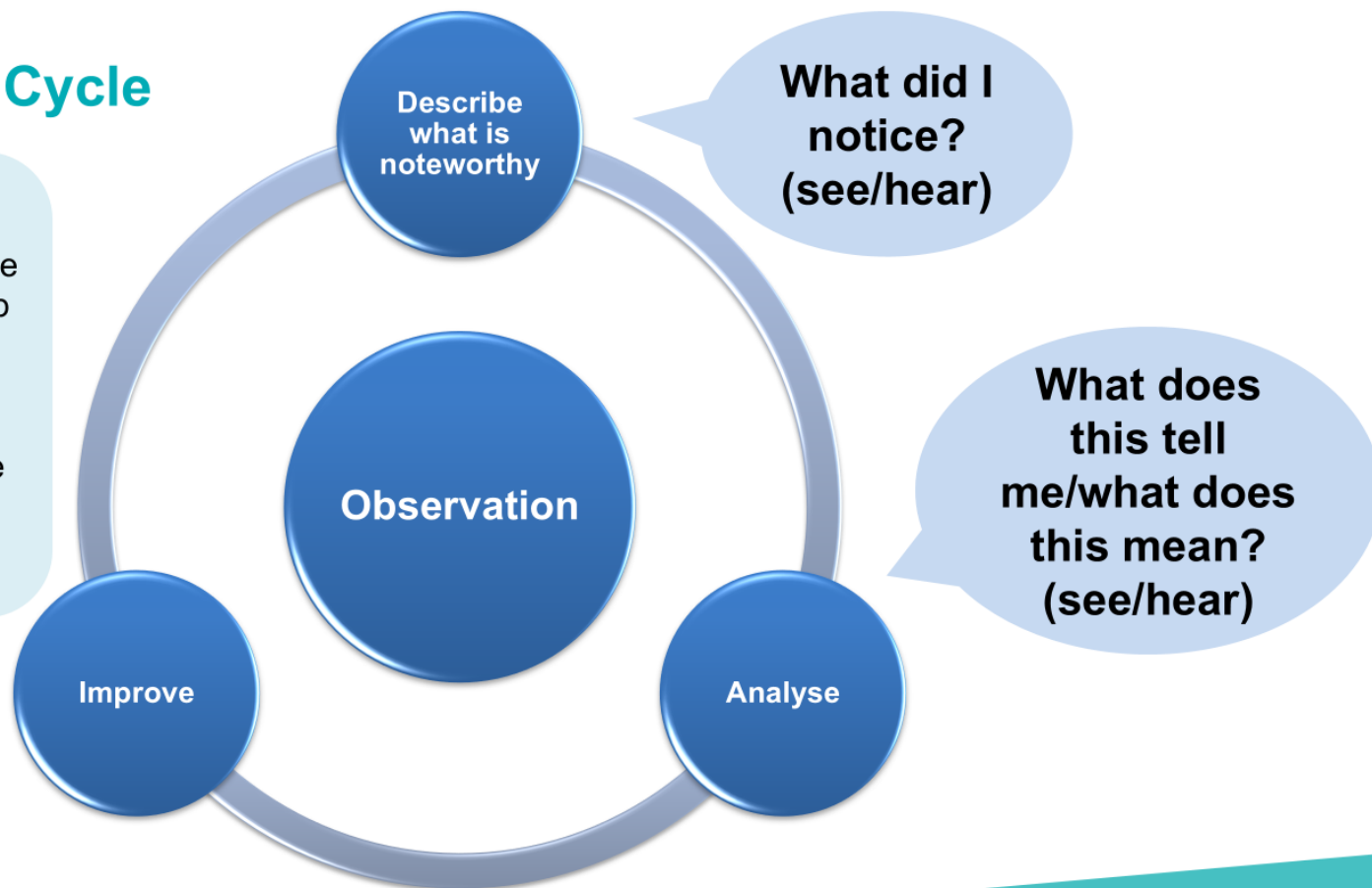


Transforming lives through learning



Observation Cycle

Caleb has made a transition in his play from playing alongside to playing with. Caleb has begun to recognise that other children have the same interests as he does and he is beginning to enjoy their company.



Transforming lives through learning

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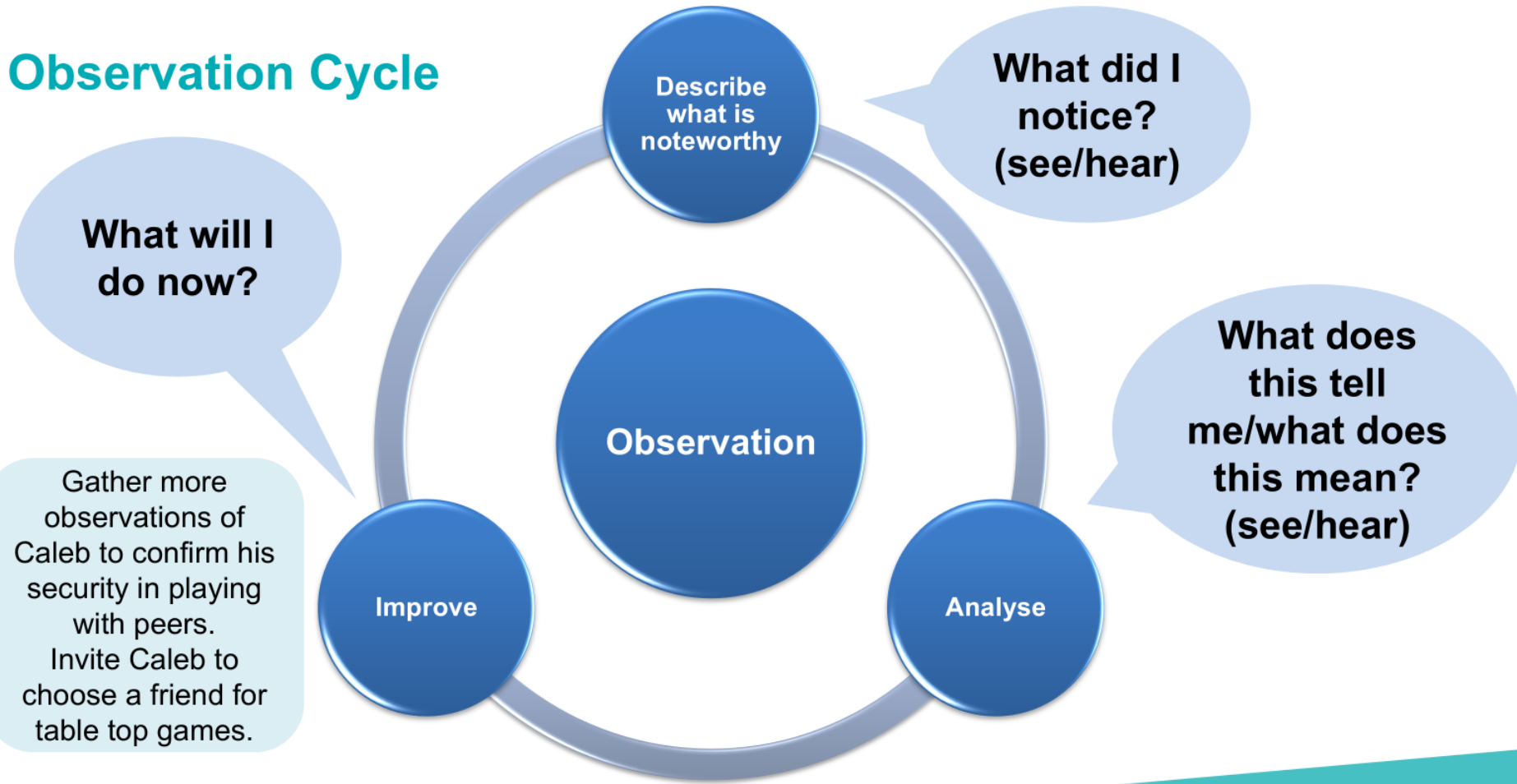
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Observation Cycle



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A Deeper Look at “high quality observations?”

- **Attuned to the Individual Child** – Observations are written with love from an adult who knows the child well as an individual (needs, interests, skills to be developed, relationships).
- **Multi Lens** – Informative and meaningful for children, families and practitioners.
- **Pedagogical Documentation** – not purely what happened, contains relevant ‘analysis of learning’ e.g curriculum, child development, theory, research, policy in a non-jargonistic way.
- **Planning Cycle** – These are written as part of the planning cycle – how are you supporting and extending learning? e.g. Adapting interactions, experiences, spaces

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What is 'noticing'?

Skilled practitioners observe all the time. They use observations to make **accurate judgements** about how to support further children's learning.

Skilled practitioners continually carry-out informal observations. They notice the **subtleties** of what children are doing and saying.

This informal and on-going approach is an **essential part** of tuning-in to and supporting children's learning.

This form of observing is a key part of **responsive planning**, where responses to children are made **'in the moment'** and successfully supports and extends learning.

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'Notice and Name the Learning'

- **Notice** - Take time to observe children
- **Name** – Analyse the learning using **appropriate** and **relevant** links...
 - Curriculum - 4 Capacities, Experiences and Outcomes, 4 Rs
 - National Guidance – RTA
 - Local Guidance - NMP
 - Policy documents – GIRFEC, UNCRC
 - Child Development – Teaching Talking, Mary Sheridan's Developmental Milestones
 - Theory – Froebelian Principles, Vygotsky, Isaacs, Bruner etc

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Quality Improvement Framework for Early Learning and Childcare

- **P41: Children Play and Learn**
(heading)
 - **Learning, Teaching and Assessment** (Quality Indicator)
 - **Planning and Assessment** (Theme)



'Very good' Planning and Assessment

Working with **parents/carers, children, partners and colleagues**, we gather a **relevant range** of information about children and their prior learning.

We are **highly skilled in observing and documenting children's significant learning and achievements**. Together this **robust assessment** information provides **reliable evidence** about children. We use this to form a **holistic picture** of the child and make accurate judgements about children's progress and future learning. Our approach to documenting learning **empowers children to talk about their achievements and consider what they might learn next**. Our planning for children's learning is **both responsive and intentional** to ensure an **appropriate balance of child-led, adult-initiated and adult-directed experiences**. We take account of **children's ideas, interests and needs** and use **imaginative and appropriate ways to involve them in planning learning**. We plan **high quality experiences** that are **relevant** to children and families.

Our staff use assessment information **with children and their parents/carers to plan appropriate next steps** to help children continue to **make progress and deepen their learning**. Through talking together **with colleagues within and beyond our setting**, we have a **shared understanding of children's progress and achievements** as they grow and learn.

Mud Kitchen Martin 14th January 2025



Today, Martin, I could see that you were so eager to open the cupboard in the mud kitchen. It was very high up and you were unable to reach it. I decided to bring over a step for you to climb up.

When you were up there, you beamed a beautiful smile and began opening and closing the cupboard happily in your play.

Today you were developing your communication skills as you made your needs known through your actions. You showed your determination as you persevered with difficulty. You are progressing well with your climbing and using your muscles and balance to help you get to where you want to be. You really are a confident individual!

Well done Martin! We will continue to help you develop your movement and coordination skills through a variety of outdoor experiences. (Key worker, Kay Bloggs)

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Analysing the Learning

- Using this observation we have made links to some of the experiences from the key aspects in RTA through the document 'Nurturing my Potential'. This is to show you how these could be observed in practice.
- You would **not** be expected to always record these links, **but** you should be **aware** how these links could be present.
- Remember 'Nurturing my Potential' can be used as a **guide** to support you to plan high quality interactions, experiences and spaces

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You can see how this one Observation link to Nurturing my Potential?

Promoting my Movement and Coordination:

- I need to move my body in lots of different ways in order to develop both my fine and gross motor skills.

Promoting Playful Literacy:

- Give me opportunities to mirror and listen to adults and other children using gestures, sound and visual cues. This encourages me to participate in and explore language.

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You can see how this One Observation link to Nurturing my Potential?

Confidence, Creativity and Curiosity:

- Consider my senses. Provide me with a range of experiences I can see, touch, hear, smell and taste. Talk to me about the sensations I experience and notice how I am responding.

Promoting my Wellbeing:

- I am constantly learning my likes and dislikes and how to communicate these. You help me develop through your responses. Verbalise what's happening. Be with me at my level and take time to notice and observe me to understand me.

Promoting Playful Numeracy:

- Encourage me to have fun and play with numbers; investigating and experimenting with quantity, through comparing and contrasting a variety of objects using mathematical language such as less than, more than, same as.

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Task – Complete an Observation

- Watch the video
- Use 'Nurturing my Potential' to support you to write up an observation – in any style you feel best appropriate
- Remember!
 - What did you see/hear?
 - What does it mean?
 - What will you do?

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Observation Task



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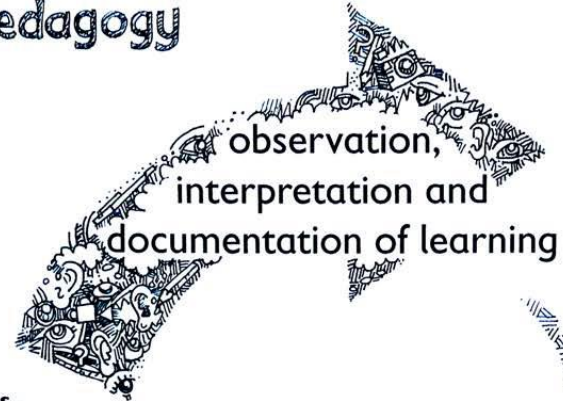
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child-centred pedagogy in practice



Sensitive interactions -
honing the skill of stepping in and stepping back

Flexible experiences -
learn from the child to inform practice

Variety of spaces -
outdoors and inside

facilitation

'Listen with your eyes and ears'

What does the child's **actions, emotions** and **words** tell you about their development and learning?

Are your methods of documentation informative and meaningful to **you, the child, their family** and **other practitioners**?



Informed by the child's **actions, emotions** and **words**

What needs to **stay** to reinforce development and learning?

What needs to **change** to inspire new learning and development?

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Triangulation of Planning

What do we mean by 'Triangulation of Planning':

1. Observations – Children's actions, words and emotions are observed. Practitioners observe children at play to learn from the child about their interests and needs.

2. Intentional and Responsive Planning

- **Targets** – A target is something that will make that child's life better. All children will have overarching 'targets' skills and attributes that they are developing. This will have been collated **collaboratively with the child, family and educators** from observations. This information might be in a care plan, Wellbeing and Assessment Plan (WAP), planning sheet, mind maps, planning wall, profile, See Saw etc
- **Interactions, Experiences, Spaces** - designed in a way that will support and extend children's interests, needs, development and learning.

3. Facilitation – Skilfully stepping in and stepping back to sensitively support and extend learning being flexible with plans in a variety of spaces.

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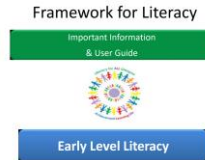


Resources for Early Learning and Childcare



Benchmarks
Early Level
All Curriculum Areas

March 2017



Nurturing my Potential



Milestones:
Supporting learners with complex
additional support needs

Curriculum for Excellence Es and Os	Benchmarks	Glasgow's Early Level Frameworks	Realising the Ambition	Nurturing my Potential	Milestones: Complex additional support needs
<p>Experiences and outcomes are a set of clear and concise 'I can' statements about children's learning and progression in each curriculum area. They are used to help plan learning and to assess progress.</p>	<p>Sets out the national standards for each of the 8 curricular areas. Use for assessing progress towards achievement of a level and to support overall professional judgement of when a learner has achieved a level.</p>	<p>Use to track progress across the Early Level in curricular areas.</p>	<p>Use to make links between practice, theory and policy guidance to reinforce aspects of high-quality provision and the critical role practitioners play.</p>	<p>Used as a tool to guide high quality interactions, experiences and spaces.</p>	<p>Use to assess progress for learners with complex needs whose successes at pre-early level are not effectively captured with NMP/RTA/CfE/ Frameworks/ Benchmarks</p>

Planning Example

Observed Information:



Janey is a 4-year-old girl who attends nursery 5 mornings a week. She is non-verbal but has recently displayed 'echolalia' (repeating words) with familiar words and phrases. She mainly makes her needs known through her actions and emotions. Janey will interact with an adult but when interacting with children still engages in parallel play.

Janey's key worker, David, has observed that she is currently exploring a transporting schema and loves to collect and carry a variety of loose parts. She enjoys exploring sensory and messy play.

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Janey's Targets

- David, Janey and her family would like to support Janey to:
 - **Develop her verbal and non-verbal interactions.**
 - **Empower her to explore her interest in her transporting schema.**
 - **Allow many opportunities to explore sensory play.**
 - **Encourage collaborative interactions with peers via 'two-person task'* experiences**

Where might these targets be found?

- Professional dialogue
- Wellbeing and Assessment Plan (WAP)
- Care Plan
- Passport

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Planned Experiences

David has set up the mud kitchen with a variety of baskets, bags, pots, pans, buckets, pipes and guttering.

He has started to gather loose parts and placed these in the containers as a provocation e.g. stones in one, acorns in another etc.

There is a large water butt with a tap and David has included many items to encourage sensory play e.g. sieve, potato masher, mincer, spoons, scales, herb bottles, eye droppers, tubes and funnels, pipes etc.



The garden is full of flowers, herbs, leaves and grass. He plans to encourage Janey to collect these and explore their smell and texture.

Say simple words to encourage Janey to repeat e.g. “lavender”, “smooth”, “sweet.”

David has decided to use google lens to help them name the plants that they find.

David would like to encourage Janey to begin to work with other children by engaging in a 2-person task e.g. pouring and collecting water.

Promoting my confidence, creativity and curiosity

Spaces:

Set up the outdoor mud kitchen with transporting containers (baskets, buckets, pots, pans, pipes, guttering). Include a variety of utensils to foster sensory exploration – potato masher, mincer, sieve, spoons. Natural loose parts – flowers, leaves, herbs.

Experiences:

Model the collection of loose parts for mud kitchen creations. Use google lens to 'name' natural loose parts. Encourage vocabulary development.

Encourage children to experiment with natural loose parts to explore sensory and messy play creatively.

Encourage children to work collaboratively in two-person tasks e.g. pour and gather.

Interactions:

Work with children on a 1-1 or small groups to collect loose parts, use google lens to name plants.

Engage children in 'two-person tasks' to pour and collect water using pipes – model, support and challenge.

How does this planned experience link to Realising the Ambition, Nurturing my Potential and Curriculum for Excellence? ...

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RTA/NMP

Wellbeing – my self, social, emotional and communication development

- I am constantly learning my likes and dislikes and how to communicate these. You help me develop through your responses. Verbalise what's happening. Be with me at my level and take time to notice and observe me to understand me (TW5)

Confidence, Creativity, Curiosity

- Provide treasure baskets, bags and boxes filled with sensory, real and natural materials to touch and explore (TC7)
- Provide me with open-ended resources I enjoy such as bags boxes and containers to put smaller items in, to move, to empty out, to scatter about (TC9)
- Give me lots of opportunities to mix and combine messy materials (TC10)

Literacy

- Enrich and extend my verbal and non-verbal interactions using familiar and unfamiliar language and vocabulary (TL4)
- Continue to give sensory and tactile experiences by providing resources which support talking about stories and factual texts and having fun with books (TL8)

Promoting my confidence, creativity and curiosity

Space:

Set up the outdoor mud kitchen with transporting containers (baskets, buckets, pots, pans, pipes, guttering). Include a variety of utensils to foster sensory exploration – potato masher, mincer, sieve, spoons. Natural loose parts – flowers, leaves, herbs.

Experiences:

Model the collection of loose parts for mud kitchen creations. Use google lens to 'name' natural loose parts. Encourage vocabulary development.

Encourage children to experiment with natural loose parts to explore sensory and messy play creatively.

Encourage children to work collaboratively in two-person tasks e.g. pour and gather.

Interactions:

Work with children on a 1-1 or small groups to collect loose parts, use google lens to name plants.

Engage children in 'two-person tasks' to pour and collect water using pipes – model, support and challenge.

CfE Es and Os

Health and Wellbeing

- I am aware of and able to express my feelings and am developing the ability to talk about them (HWB 0-01a)
- I value the opportunities I am given to make friends and be part of a group in a range of situations (HWB 0-14a)
- In everyday activity and play, I explore and make choices to develop my learning and interests. I am encouraged to use and share my experiences (HWB 0-19a)

Literacy

- I listen or watch for useful or interesting information and I use this to make choices or learn new things (LIT 0-04a)
- Within real and imaginary situations, I share experiences and feelings, ideas and information in a way that communicates my message(LIT 0-09a)
- As I listen and take part in conversations and discussions, I discover new words and phrases which I use to help me express my ideas, thoughts and feelings (LIT 0-10a)

Technology

- I can use digital technologies to explore how to search and find information (TCH 0-02a)

Expressive Arts

- I have the freedom to discover and choose ways to create images and objects using a variety of materials (EXA 0-02a)

Science

- I can identify my senses and use them to explore the world around me (SCN 0-12a)
- Through creative play, I explore different materials and can share my reasoning for selecting materials for different purposes (SCN 0-15a)

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Please Remember!!!

We are **NOT** suggesting you have a separate planning format for each child!

The interactions, experiences and spaces that we plan for Janey will inevitably support and extend learning and development for a number of children.

Your role is to make sure that **ALL** children's needs are being met when planning interactions, experiences and spaces.

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Your Planning Task.....

Read the scenarios and choose one to focus on:

1. Decide on the **child's targets** - how could you support and extend learning and development?
2. Plan **interactions, experiences, spaces**
3. Make **links** to:
 - Nurturing my Potential / Realising the Ambition
 - Curriculum for Excellence (where appropriate)
 - (Teaching Talking / Mary Sheridan's Developmental Milestones)

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Louisa – 10 Months



Louisa is 10 months old and is due to start settling in nursery. From the home visit, her key worker Kim learned that she is an only-child who lives with her two mums. Both parents are feeling anxious about leaving Louisa in nursery. Louisa is particularly attached to 'Mummy' (biological parent) and has never spent more than a few hours away from her.

Louisa is breastfed and very attached to 'Mummy'. She is a happy child who has a positive attachment to both Mums but does not have a lot of experience with many other adults. Louisa is due to be in nursery for 3 full days.

Louisa is very interested in music. Both parents play instruments and sing to her regularly. Whenever an adult sings to Louisa she smiles, laughs and watches them with keen interest.

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James – 2 years and 1 month



James is living in kinship care with his maternal grandparents due to the death of his mother and his father suffering from addiction. His mother died when he was 5 months old and since then he has lived with 'Granny' and 'Grand pa.'

James' speech is delayed, and he still only says a few recognisable words. James is very head strong and can become very frustrated, particularly with other children. He will often push or hit other children if they take his toys or get in the way of his agenda. Recently he has started to bite when he becomes frustrated.

James is a friendly boy who enjoys the company of all adults. He is very inquisitive and loves to find out how things work so will often be found at the 'tinkering table', woodwork bench or junk modelling. He loves painting and has recently shown a keen interest in drawing.

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Jasmine – 3 years and 11 month



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Jasmine has a diagnosis in Autism. She has a particular skill in reading as she is 'hyperlexic' and can read anything. Her comprehension does not match her decoding skills and so she does not always understand what she has read.

She finds socialising with other children challenging but has started to display parallel play. However still very much follows her own agenda.

Jasmine likes structures and routines and can become very distressed if these change.

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- 2 Stars
- And a wish

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Thank you!



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