Staff working with Glasgow’s youngest citizens are using a new framework to help support and develop the quality of their interactions with children and their families. Five To Thrive ([www.fivetothrive.org.uk](http://www.fivetothrive.org.uk)) has been developed by Kate Cairns Associates and uses five key activities to remind parents and carers of the essential building blocks needed for healthy brain development. Focusing attention on how key adults Respond, Cuddle, Relax, Play and Talk when engaging with babies, toddlers and young children highlights the positive impact of sensitive and responsive relationships on healthy brain development.

Glasgow’s journey towards being ‘The Nurturing City’ has involved staff in all sectors of education developing their understanding of attachment and attunement, nurturing principles and child development and learning. Supporting children and young people to develop crucial social, emotional and communication skills provides the foundation for successful social interactions, respectful relationships and a resilient, solution focused approach to life’s challenges. These skills underpin children’s potential to attain and achieve, key priorities for Education Services in Glasgow.

The approach also aligns well with national and local guidance and drivers such as Building the Ambition and One Glasgow, the authority’s early years collaborative model.

Five To Thrive provides staff working in the authority’s Early Learning and Childcare settings with a very practical framework for practice which enables them to develop and embed their professional knowledge and understanding and improve the quality of everyday interactions and routines. Staff described the ‘light bulb moment’ when theory and practice came together and made sense!

Parents too, have responded very well to the positive and encouraging messages about the importance of their role as educators. The tips which accompany each of the five key activities focus on the powerful impact of positive early experiences in influencing their child’s development and future success in life and learning. Staff working in the city’s Young Parent Support Base have found the framework valuable in building confidence and a sense of empowerment in the young parents they support.

Following a number of sessions which brought staff together for training on brain development, attachment theory and the five key activities, a steering group has been formed to further develop the Five To Thrive approach in Glasgow. Comprising of enthusiastic practitioners, an educational psychologist, nurture training officer and a quality improvement officer, the group are planning a number of events and activities including further training, Open Doors events and twilight reconnect sessions. Work has also begun to evaluate the impact of the approach on children, parents and staff. Key partners including Social Work, Glasgow Life and Health are keen to learn how this approach can be used to support family learning and engagement and enhance the bonds between parents and children.