

BIRTH TO 5 MATTERS

**Guidance
by the sector,
for the sector**

Birth to 5 Matters:
Non-statutory guidance for the
Early Years Foundation Stage



From the Early Years Coalition
www.birthto5matters.org.uk

2nd Edition 2026

From the Early Years Coalition:



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The Early Years Coalition

British Early Childhood Education Research Association (BECERA)
www.becera.org.uk

Coram PACEY
www.corampacey.org.uk

Early Childhood Forum (ECF)

Early Childhood Studies Degrees Network (ECSDN)
www.ecsdn.org

Early Education (The British Association for Early Childhood Education)
www.early-education.org.uk

Early Years Alliance
www.eyalliance.org.uk

The Froebel Trust
www.froebel.org.uk

Keeping Early Years Unique (KEYU)
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/548117901996416/>

National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)
www.ndna.org.uk

Montessori Global Education
montessori-globaleducation.org

OMEP UK
www.omep.org.uk

Pikler UK
pikler.co.uk

Reception Class Teacher Network
uea.ac.uk

Sightlines Initiative
sightlines-initiative.com

TACTYC: Together And Committed To Young Children
www.tactyc.org.uk

Waldorf UK
waldorfeducation.uk

Affiliated organisations:

National Education Union (NEU)
neu.org.uk

National Children's Bureau (NCB)
www.ncb.org.uk



Preface

Since its launch in 2021, *Birth to 5 Matters* has become a go-to resource for much of the early years sector in England. Five years on, this new edition aims to keep everything that is valued about the first edition while expanding and updating it to reflect our constantly changing world, with new sections on digital pedagogy, sustainability and on adapting pedagogy to children of different ages. We have added a focus on children in Reception and beyond and developed additional guidance for primary school headteachers and leaders.

We have also redesigned the Birth to 5 Matters website to improve clarity and navigation, and provided greater integration with the printed version through the introduction of QR codes, allowing readers to more easily seek out further resources in relation to each topic.

The original guidance was developed by the **Early Years Coalition**, the members of which came together to create a resource which was rooted in their members' expertise and experience and embodied their many values, principles and aspirations. The membership of the Coalition has been refreshed, with new partners joining and some of the original organisations having merged. However, the organising principle of the review retained the commitment to the mantra of "by the sector, for the sector".

This guidance remains a reference point for educators developing their practice, not a "how to" manual or a tick-list. *Birth to 5 Matters* should continue to support educators to implement the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in a pedagogically sound, principled and evidence-based way. Acknowledging the inseparable aspects of care and education in early years practice, educators can then use their professional judgement based on their knowledge of the children in their setting and their wider context including family, community and the setting itself to construct an appropriate curriculum.

Our aim is, as before, to provide a resource which is accessible across the range of educators to build an understanding of how children typically develop and learn from birth up to the end of the Reception year (aged anywhere up to 71 months), thus ensuring high standards of care and education are achieved. We have added reference to practice continuing into Key Stage 1, acknowledging that early childhood does not end at age 4 or 5. The guidance looks at the unique child in a range of situations and contexts and seeks to provide examples of how the adults and the environment can support and enhance development and learning. These are examples, not a prescriptive list. The trajectories and suggestions for practice may be most useful to trainees and less experienced staff. More experienced colleagues may wish to engage more deeply with the resources and research evidence which underpins the guidance (which can be found at www.birthto5matters.org.uk or via the QR codes in each section). We hope the mixture of the two provides an accessible starting point as well as opportunities for extending knowledge and understanding for all.

We have once again drawn on a huge volunteer effort from our working groups – including many original members as well as new recruits, and groups newly established for additional content. Those involved included a wide representation of educators, setting types, sector organisations and sources of expertise (see Acknowledgements), and feedback was shared with the sector as we progressed. We have retained the model of publicly sharing our drafts and thinking, inviting any educators who wish to express their views to do so via our consultation surveys. We thank all those who contributed to these processes. We look forward to future dialogues within the sector that build on this guidance as part of continuing professional development and professional reflection, and the continued sharing of professional knowledge and experience.

Early Years Coalition, July 2026

Introduction

Birth to 5 Matters provides comprehensive guidance, drawing on previous guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which has been updated in order to reflect recent research, to meet the needs of educators, to respond to current issues in society, to meet the needs of children today and to lay a strong foundation for their futures.

The purpose of the guidance includes reaffirming core principles which recognise

- the child at the centre of practice
- the child's connections within family, communities, cultures and the natural world
- the need to consider the whole child: physical, social and emotional wellbeing, health, and learning
- the child's rights as members of society under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), including:
 - Non-discrimination (article 2)
 - Best interest of the child (article 3)
 - Goals of education (article 29)
 - Right to be heard (article 12)
 - Right to play (article 31)
 - Right to freedom of expression (article 13)
 - Right to freedom of thought, belief and religion (article 14)
 - Right for children with a disability to live a full and decent life (article 23)
 - Right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family (article 30)
- the sector's responsibilities under the United Nations Sustainability Goals and UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development
- the statutory requirements of the SEND Code of Practice.



What things are really important to you in your early years setting?

“The toys, the garden, my friends. That mummy’s waiting for me.”

Harvey, 4

Birth to 5 Matters will support educators in all their statutory responsibilities within the EYFS areas of learning and development and educational programmes, and to help children make progress toward the Early Learning Goals (ELGs).

While there is a statutory duty “that providers must help children work toward” the ELGs, the government has stated that the ELGs themselves are not the curriculum. Settings can determine for themselves what, when, and how to offer experiences and support to help children make progress in their learning and development from birth onward. In some cases, the organisation of strands within Birth to 5 Matters does not match the structure of the ELGs, where a more logical arrangement aligning with child development has been used. This will help support educators’ understanding of child development and how they might support children’s progress throughout the EYFS.

The “Characteristics of Effective Learning” does not include the word “Teaching” because these refer to behaviours and dispositions of the child, not the adult. We have rephrased “Creating and thinking critically” to “Thinking creatively and critically”, to place a stronger emphasis on the thinking skills that are central to the creative process.

Birth to 5 Matters guidance supports children’s progress toward all of the statutory EYFS Early Learning goals

EYFS Early Learning Goals		Support in Birth to 5 Matters	
CL	Listening, Attention and Understanding	CL:	Listening and Attention
	Speaking	CL:	Speaking
PSED	Self-Regulation	Characteristics of Effective Learning	
		PSED:	Understanding Emotions
		CL:	Listening and Attention
	Managing Self	Characteristics of Effective Learning	
		PSED:	Understanding Emotions: Sense of Self
		PD:	Health and Self-care
	Building Relationships	PSED:	Making Relationships
PD	Gross Motor Skills	PD:	Moving and Handling
	Fine Motor Skills		
L	Comprehension	CL:	Understanding
	Word Reading	L:	Reading
	Writing	L:	Writing
M	Number	M:	Mathematics
	Numerical Patterns		
UW	Past and Present	UW:	People and Communities
	People, Culture and Communities		
	The Natural World	UW:	The World
	(No ELG)	UW:	Technology
EAD	Creating with Materials	EAD:	Creating with Materials Being Imaginative and Expressive
	Being Imaginative and Expressive		

A note on terminology used in Birth to 5 Matters

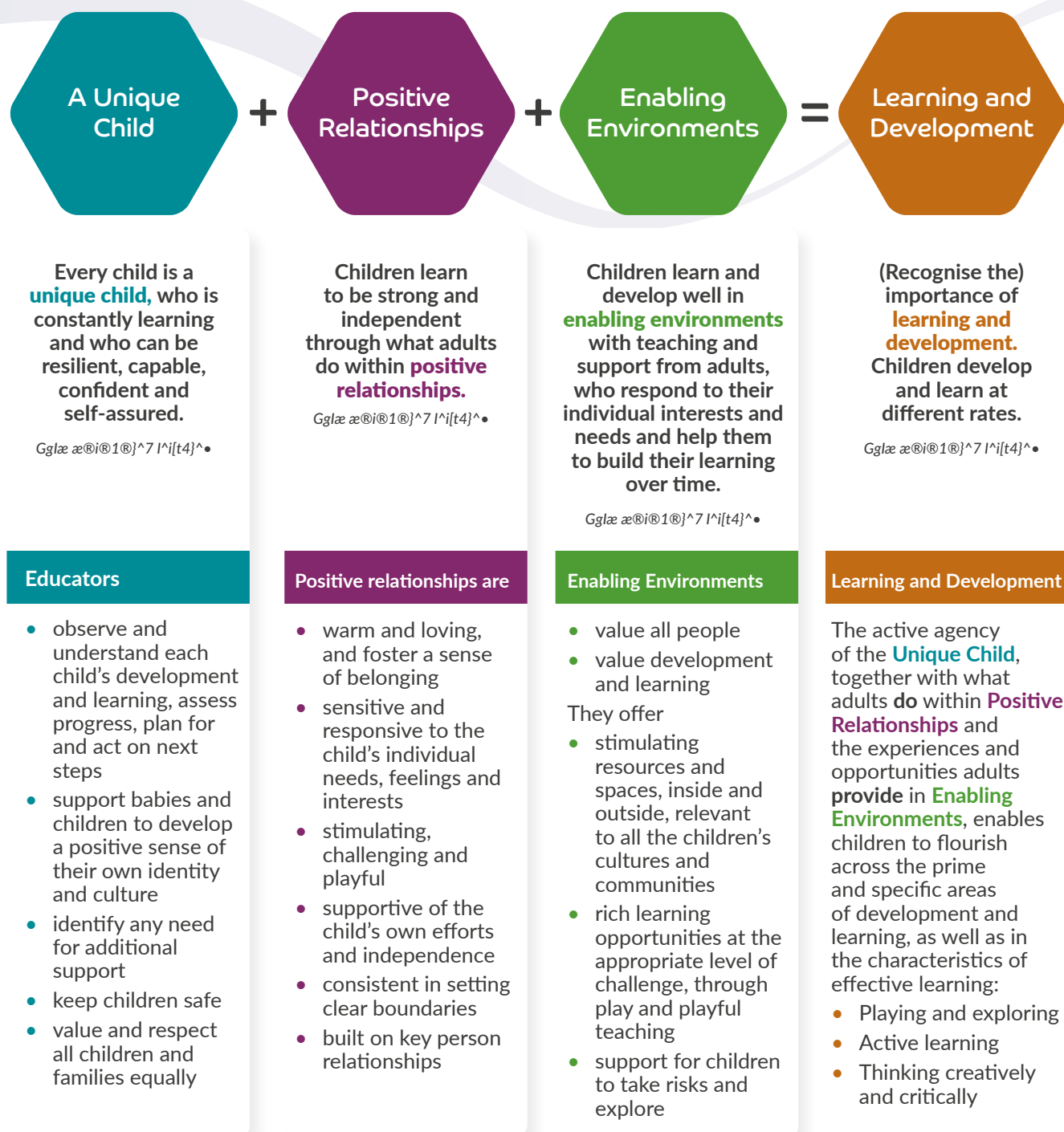
- **Children** refers to all babies, toddlers, and young children from birth to the end of the EYFS, up to 71 months.
- **Parents** refers to all carers of children in the EYFS.
- **Setting** refers to all types of provision delivering the EYFS.
- **Educator** refers to all early years professionals who work directly with children in EYFS settings.

Foundations of highest quality provision

Principles of the EYFS

The four principles of the EYFS underpin all the guidance in Birth to 5 Matters, which is designed to show how these principles work together for children in the EYFS.

All children develop in different ways and development is not a linear or automatic process. It depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments that encourage their engagement and recognise their strengths. All children have agency and curiosity to learn, and will interact with other people and the world around them in different ways. Understanding these different ways of knowing about the world is central to understanding who children are and how best to support their development.



Promoting voice and inclusion

Inclusion is an ongoing process of anticipating, identifying, affirming and welcoming difference to support all children in participation and belonging. A commitment to inclusion should underpin all aspects of the design of educational programmes and the structuring of environments, as well as positively influencing everyday experiences and interactions with children, parents, carers and professionals. Inclusive early years practice is about paying attention, responding to and reflecting on the interests, differences and needs of all children in developmentally informed ways to create enriching environments that are attuned to children's strengths, differences, needs and disabilities.

Settings should ensure their policies and practices align with the 0-25 SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2015), Children and Families Act 2014 and the Equality Act (2010). Providers should also develop their own inclusive ethos that reflects their context, community and type of provision. Children should experience accessibility, belonging and equitable opportunities to learn in ways that align with their developmental profile. A diverse range of provision matters, as different settings may be better placed to support different children at different times.

Understanding each child and listening to the range of ways children share their perspectives is fundamental to inclusive practice. This means developing a holistic picture of every child, including their interests, strengths, traits, differences and support needs. Building on what children already know and can do and their lived experiences will provide a strong foundation for meaningful progress.

Practitioners learn how to offer support through observation, tuning in and active listening in inclusive provision, which:

- has high expectations of children and presumes competence
- is interest-led so that children can play, learn and engage on their own terms
- is built on a strong commitment to diversify practice to affirm children with lifelong differences and disabilities
- understands the starting points of every child, regardless of their chronological age
- accepts and understands children for who they are, including their capabilities and their agency to choose the things they like and enjoy doing, as well as identifying the things they do not like or enjoy
- takes a strengths-led approach to observation that is child-centred, holistic and draws on a network of insights including from parents and other professionals

- recognises a child's voice can be communicated in multiple ways, including being non-speaking or using augmentative and alternative forms of communication
- uses the EYFS framework and Birth to 5 Matters or other guidance to support understanding of typical development, and to enable practitioners to have confidence to observe, question and consider why a child may be developing differently
- bases practice on the understanding that development is not linear and does not progress at the same rate for all children, promoting thoughtful decision-making about suitability of provision and resources for individual children
- works in partnership with parents and professionals to provide developmentally informed support and shared decision-making.

Children develop within relationships and communities. Inclusive practice is strengthened through connection with parents, carers and other professionals to provide well-matched support and belonging. Learning about what children already know and bring with them (funds of knowledge) including who and what matters to them, as well as their interests, likes and dislikes, is a key part of understanding their development and supporting their learning.

Making sure that early years practice meets the needs of all children means thinking about children in context. As well as making sure that the environment reflects the range of developmental experiences of all children, it also means recognising the connections with children's homes, localities and communities, weaving these into practice, and listening to families including parents and carers, siblings, grandparents and others who may be important in the child's life.



Key points

- Inclusion is an ongoing process of anticipating, identifying, affirming and welcoming difference to support all children in participation and belonging.
- Understanding each child and listening to the range of ways children share their perspectives, including augmentative and alternative communication, is fundamental to inclusive practice.
- Children develop within relationships and communities. Inclusive practice is strengthened through connection with parents, carers and other professionals to provide well-matched support and belonging.

Sustainability

Sustainability is underpinned by a deep love for our shared world now and in the future. It is built on core concepts of interconnectedness, collaborative action and holistic learning, which are rooted in the historical bedrock of early childhood education and care. Sustainability learning starts with the child and their everyday experiences, interests and contexts, allowing them to develop meaningful, personal connections to the world around them.

All aspects of sustainability are interconnected, and sustainability is promoted by attention to all aspects. The health and wellbeing of both children and the wider world are completely interdependent. Sustainability thinking is holistic – it crosses subject boundaries and includes emotions, hopes and fears, love, care, imagination and inspiration.

Sustainability provides a platform for children to take action and show agency, and to become architects of their own environments over time. Opportunities for sustainability should be embedded within everyday practice rather than approached as standalone topics, allowing children to develop understanding through real, lived experiences. Experiences that support children to learn about sustainability involve:

- hands-on exploration, reflection and interaction with the natural world
- developing awareness of the impact of humanity's actions on the planet
- learning about concepts such as refuse, reuse, repurpose, recycle, reduce
- getting involved in improving the local environment
- making choices about the things that matter to them, where they can see positive impact and the effects of their actions.

Working together is a core aspect of sustainability. Children can be involved in:

- collaborating with a sense of hope and shared purpose to carry out meaningful action in their school, setting or neighbourhood
- sharing knowledge with families, local communities and the wider society about how we can live more sustainably
- working together to research, learn and produce action plans for positive change locally and globally
- noticing and challenging unsustainable practice and offering positive alternatives
- finding ways to minimise or eliminate negative impact in order to preserve the planet.

Early years education is the starting point for developing environmental stewardship and social responsibility. Increasing numbers of children are growing up in a world which does not offer them the

safe and just space they need to flourish. The effects of climate change are already being experienced through drought, water shortages, flooding and extreme weather events. These phenomena affect the basic requirements for life and exacerbate poverty, unemployment, ill-health and pollution that already affect the daily lives of many children and their families. **These significant local and global challenges will only become more urgent as the children of today move forward into adulthood.**

Sustainable practices in early years provision are founded on the development of an ethos of love, deep respect and care for the self, each other and the wider world. This means that sustainability learning can start from birth and should be a **consideration within practice for babies, toddlers and young children.** If principles of sustainability are interwoven through all that we do from the earliest years, children will grow up thinking beyond the boundaries of their family to their group, class, nursery, school and community. As children begin to understand their place in the world and the impact they can have on it, they become responsible global citizens.

Educators need to present sustainability in developmentally appropriate and hopeful ways, ensuring children feel empowered rather than overwhelmed. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer a framework for thinking about the different dimensions of sustainability. **The SDGs permeate all areas of learning** and are imbued with a strong sense of history about how we have arrived at this point and how we can move forward.



Sustainability thinking is clearly woven through the EYFS principles.

A Unique Child

A child's development is deeply connected to the world around them. **Clean air, nourishing food and safe water are fundamental to life.** Every child has their own developmental pathway, shaped by their experiences, environment and relationships. These divergent journeys remind us that there is no single way to learn or grow. When the unique needs of each child are seen and accommodated within the way the setting works, this creates spaces where every child can flourish. Children feel a genuine sense of belonging and are openly ready to engage, collaborate and **develop the confidence to advocate for themselves** and others.

Positive Relationships

Working towards sustainable solutions means working in partnership with others. In the early years, children are developing friendships with peers and positive relationships with the adults who care for them. New people and new situations might evoke feelings of uncertainty, but secure relationships encourage children to explore and try new things. Responding to newness and difference with an appropriate balance of confidence and caution means children learn to show interest in and respect towards people that they meet. Embracing difference early in life is now recognised as the foundation of peace education as well as successful collaboration over management of scarce resources. Children learn from the behaviour of others around them about how to share resources, promote fairness and accommodate multiple perspectives. They develop understanding of what it means to take responsibility, ensure fair shares and anticipate future needs.

Enabling Environments

Sustainability education recognises the need for children to be connected to both the natural and human-made environment. An enabling environment includes community infrastructure such as homes, places of worship and shops as well as parks, playgrounds and green community spaces. **Through regular visits in their local environment, children will begin to notice significant changes and societal concerns, such as flooding or homelessness, that are happening due to climate change.** Access to rich, regular outdoor experiences plays a vital role

in supporting environmental awareness as well as overall development. Educators can support children's agency by encouraging them to ask critical questions and to consider solutions. This is crucial, as just being **in** the environment and connecting **with** it does not encourage critical thinking, creativity or problem solving. In their play children can become advocates and ambassadors **for** their environment.

Learning and Development

Learning and development are holistic and interconnected and aspects of sustainability permeate all areas of the curriculum. Understanding local and global challenges uses concepts such as place, time, natural and synthetic processes, sufficiency, need and loss. To address the challenges that lie ahead, children need to be curious, flexible, critical and creative – but so do adults. We all need to develop positive dispositions towards learning new skills and adjusting to change. These qualities are embedded in the Characteristics of Effective Learning and **21st Century skills**.



Key points

- All aspects of sustainability are interconnected, and sustainability is promoted by attention to all aspects.
- Sustainability provides a platform for children take action and show agency, and to become architects of their own environments over time.
- Working together is a core aspect of sustainability.
- Early years education is the starting point for developing environmental stewardship and social responsibility.
- Sustainable practices in early years provision are founded on the development of an ethos of love, deep respect and care for the self, each other and the wider world.
- Educators need to present sustainability in developmentally appropriate and hopeful ways, ensuring children feel empowered rather than overwhelmed.
- Sustainability thinking is clearly woven through the EYFS principles.

Play

Children have a right to play. Children's right to play is recognised as so vital to their wellbeing and development that it is included in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (1989) and is a fundamental commitment to children throughout the EYFS.

Play, both indoors and outdoors, makes a powerful contribution to children's wellbeing, development and learning across all areas. Children play, not least because it is often fun and offers a joyful opportunity for engaging in many different activities and being with others. As they play children immerse themselves in what most interests them, and in the process find out about themselves, other people, and the world around them. Because play is open-ended and flexible, children can explore and experiment with confidence, take risks and challenge themselves at the limits of their capabilities, without fear of failure.

Play is often joyful, and joy is one of the most powerful features of play because it contributes to children's wellbeing, motivation, a sense of self and a sense of belonging. When children experience joy they are more likely to feel safe, connected, and open to exploring and persisting in their learning. A setting that champions play protects childhood, and creates the conditions for children to thrive emotionally, socially, and cognitively.

In play children can become deeply involved as they take things they already know and combine them in new ways so that their understanding deepens.

When children play, they immerse themselves in what matters to them. Through play, they learn about:

- **themselves** (identity, agency, confidence, self-belief)
- **other people** (relationships, empathy, communication, collaboration)
- **the world** (patterns, materials, cause and effect, stories, culture, possibility)

Play is open-ended and flexible. Because children can adapt play as they go, they are able to explore and experiment, take risks, and challenge themselves at the edge of their capabilities, without fear of failure. Play enables children to rehearse ideas and return to them repeatedly, deepening understanding over time.

This is where children develop mastery, embedding skills, strengthening knowledge, and growing their creativity and dispositions for learning.

High-quality early childhood practice includes environments where babies and children have freedom and time to play deeply. This allows children to process their lived experiences in enabling environments so that they can choose:

- what to play
- where to play
- how to play
- who to play with
- what resources to use
- how long to stay with an idea

This autonomy supports children's sense of competence, agency and independence. It also builds confidence, as children experience themselves as capable decision-makers. Outdoor play is particularly rich, offering children space, movement, connection with the natural world and shared experiences that support collaboration, language, emotional wellbeing, and imagination.

Play is a vital context for relationships. Playing alongside others, whether peers or responsive adults, often introduces challenge, negotiation, new ideas, and shared joy. Through these moments children practise cooperation, learn to solve conflicts, build trust, and develop social understanding.



Adults have an important role in noticing when to join play and when to step back, recognising that children are often building complex thinking and meaning in ways that may not be immediately visible. Play belongs to children. Our role is to remain attentive, respectful, and responsive.

Adults must have a deep understanding of how play of different types supports children to develop and learn, and be able to discuss this with parents.

Research has identified many different types of play, enabling educators to understand the choices children are making and how best to support their thinking. Children may be pursuing different purposes in sensory play, exploratory play with objects, schematic play, symbolic play, pretend play (alone, in role or with small world objects), cooperative role play with others, fantasy and superhero play, physical play, rough and tumble play, risky play, or digital play. As each of these supports children's development and learning in different ways, early years provision should ensure that opportunities are available for all types of play and that children can choose the type of play that serves their needs and intentions. Through observing and reflecting on children's play, adults can gain insights into the child's purposes and how best to support them.

High-quality play provision is inclusive. Adults should understand families' cultural approaches to play, recognising that experiences and expectations vary widely. A play-rich environment must enable all children, including those with additional needs, to participate, contribute, and belong.

Play, while central, is not the only way in which children develop and learn in the early years. Children also have opportunities to learn through first-hand experiences of all sorts, alongside being shown how to do things, having conversations, and taking part in activities which are planned by adults to introduce or practise particular skills. Such adult-led activities are not play but they are most effective when they use some of the features of play to engage and motivate children, by ensuring that they are playful, with elements of choice, hands-on experience, connections to children's interests, and enjoyment.

When play feels under pressure, early childhood professionals may need to advocate for play with clarity and confidence. Because play is spontaneous, flexible, and unique to each child it can sometimes feel difficult to "capture" or justify, particularly in climates where there is pressure for visible outcomes or narrow measures of progress. This is where professional confidence matters. Play is not the opposite of learning; it is one of the most meaningful and developmentally appropriate ways that young children learn.

It is essential for educators to gain insights from play's unique ability to show children's dispositions to learn, and be able to explain how play strengthens children's communication, thinking, wellbeing, relationships, creativity, problem-solving and long-term learning capacities.



Key points

- Children have a right to play.
- Play, both indoors and outdoors, makes a powerful contribution to children's wellbeing, development and learning across all areas.
- In play children can become deeply involved as they take things they already know and combine them in new ways so that their understanding deepens.
- High-quality early childhood practice includes environments where babies and children have freedom and time to play deeply.
- Play is a vital context for relationships.
- Adults must have a deep understanding of how play of different types supports children to develop and learn, and be able to discuss this with parents.
- When play feels under pressure, early childhood professionals may need to advocate for play with clarity and confidence.

Care

Being an early years educator means being part of a caring profession, at the core of which is **caring for** and **about** babies and young children from birth to 5 and beyond. This involves having feelings of concern, responsibility and love for children, and also engaging in nurturing behaviours – being watchful, protective and acting with care, affection and regard for children and their rights to ethical treatment. This concept of care forms part of a loving pedagogy and requires that all early years professionals give careful attention to what they do, and do what is in the best interests of each child.

Effective early years provision pays as much attention to children's care as it does to play and learning as these are intertwined and impact equally on children's development and overall wellbeing.

Care includes emotional aspects, relationships, and also physical interactions. How educators touch and physically interact with children and how they organise to meet children's physical care needs are therefore central to early years pedagogy. Although this may apply most directly to educators working with our youngest children, educators working with older children, including those with SEND, also need to ensure that all physical interactions impart kindness and respect.

Babies and young children first come to understand themselves through their bodies and understand much of what others think of them and how much they are loved and valued through touch and physical interactions. Non-verbal communications are internalised into children's developing sense of self and shape their behaviours, actions and attitudes towards others. Educators must pay attention to their own physical gestures and facial expressions to ensure that they hold, touch and handle babies and young children gently, sensitively and with respect. This will give children a sense of being recognised, understood and valued.

Effective provision includes reflecting on and planning for physical care events such as dressing, washing, feeding, sleeping, changing and toileting, as well as children's play and learning. Settings should ensure physical caregiving is given sufficient time and thought to create situations that are valuable and enjoyable for both child and educator.

Physical care events are precious times when the educator is one-to-one with a child, with many

opportunities for supporting a child's positive sense of self and wellbeing through focused interaction and attentive care, building secure, trusting, relationships which help babies and young children to feel confident to explore and play. These are also times for learning, with rich opportunities for focused attention, sustained conversations and for repeating and recalling experiences, which are essential elements or practising cognitive processes that support learning overall.

Respectful caregiving requires thoughtful organisation. For consistency and continuity, the key person should undertake the physical care of their key children, and for times when the primary key person is away a secondary key person or "buddy" system should be implemented.

- Organise for predictability and flexibility: prioritising physical caregiving means planning for a balance between having familiar, predictable times of day and the flexibility to be responsive to children as they require.
- Organise for individualised care within a group routine: a balance needs to be struck between caring for the whole group and caring for individual children. Practices that treat children as if they have identical needs do not support children's positive self-concept or sense of autonomy. For our youngest children, individual routine and care sequences that reflect their home experiences should be followed where possible and advisable, to provide continuity and connect with the home.
- Organise the environment and resources: a care environment should contribute to the practical effectiveness of the educator through its layout and resourcing, and enable the child to feel safe, comfortable and capable, and able to influence what happens.



Respectful caregiving requires respectful interactions.

In a respectful caregiving approach, the educator recognises the child as a free and equal human being, with whom they are working in co-operative partnership. The adult does everything **with** the child rather than **to** the child, so care events become co-operative dialogues in which the child feels competent, recognised and valued as an individual. Educators should keep in mind that this is time for building trusting relationships with a child and for positively supporting their developing self-concept.

This can be achieved by:

- paying attention to body language, voice tone, touch and gesture, remembering the messages that each of these will convey to the child and how they will make the child feel
- giving full attention to the child, observing and responding to all their communications and following their cues
- slowing down: if care is going to be truly participatory and respectful, it needs to be unhurried
- inviting and suggesting: offering explanations and reassurance, being patient and giving the child time to respond and participate
- adapting your approach, actions and gestures according to the individual child's responses, needs and preferences

- encouraging co-operation and participation through inviting the child to take part, asking permission and letting them know what is intended before taking action, creating opportunities for the child to do things for themselves, giving the child manageable choice and allowing for autonomy of movement.



Key points

- Effective early years provision encompasses and pays as much attention to children's care as it does to play and learning.
- Effective provision includes planning for and reflecting on physical care events such as dressing, washing, feeding, sleeping, changing and toileting.
- Respectful caregiving requires thoughtful organisation.
- Respectful caregiving requires respectful interactions.

Transitions

Transitions describe the changes that occur as children move from one context to another. Transitions may involve changes of activity and/or changes in the physical, social or emotional environment. Transitions include not just moving on from one setting to another in a 'linear' or 'vertical' way, such as from nursery to Reception class. Children also experience many 'horizontal' transitions such as moving from one room to another within the same setting, moving to a more structured part of the day such as lunchtime, or moving from home to childminder, to nursery and back again all in the course of the same day.

Every transition should be seen as a process not a one-off event and tailored to meet the needs of each unique child. When transitions in the early years are managed sensitively it lays the foundations for positive feelings towards the many other transitions children will face through life.

High quality transitions prioritise emotional well-being and ensure that children feel 'known' before they are expected to 'do'. Children may have many out-of-home experiences, through childcare, toddler groups, family daycare and more than one nursery, and they may appear to straddle change with ease. But while transitions may occur with great frequency, not all children navigate these comfortably or happily. Moving from a place or situation in which children feel known into one in which they feel unknown can be worrying.

It is the responsibility of everyone in the setting to ensure that children feel welcomed, gain a sense of belonging and are helped to settle happily. Educators support children to feel a sense of belonging in a nurturing pedagogical environment which is calm and unrushed and where educators tune into children's needs and interests. When educators are open to seeing children as already competent learners with existing funds of knowledge and experience, children feel understood and can make sense of their environment.

Some children are particularly vulnerable at times of transition. While some children and families have the resilience to cope with change, others are more vulnerable to uncertainty. Children who lack confidence or have low self-esteem, those who are summer-born or born prematurely, babies separated from parents for the first time, some children with disabilities or complex health needs, those for whom English is not their first language and those who have simply had to cope with too much change or loss in their young lives may be particularly vulnerable at times of transition. For children who have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), a vertical transition may not be just a new start but can reactivate past trauma.

Some children become particularly anxious about making new relationships, whether those are with other children or with the adults with whom they will spend their time. The support of their friends and friendship groups can help protect children from the potentially negative impact of transitions.

Transition for children who are more vulnerable is effectively supported when their emotional development and wellbeing is prioritised and they are given additional time and opportunities to make the necessary readjustments to the changes ahead. Educators help with warm responses, recognising that challenging behaviour communicates feelings.

Transitions are opportunities for learning and development for both children and adults. Transitions provide opportunities for children to learn about themselves and their feelings. Acknowledging that different transitions can feel differently to every child is important - for example, a child who manages the transition between home, childminder and school may find the transition from classroom to dinner hall more problematic, or a child who has to stop playing with something or someone they are fond of may struggle if not supported.

Key to a high-quality experience for all children in the early years is ensuring continuity between home, key people and all the settings that make up children's individual learning journeys. At points of setting transition it is valuable to gather the perspectives of the child's parents as well as all those who have worked with the child such as other educators, speech therapists, health visitors, bilingual teaching assistants and educational psychologists. These perspectives enable all those involved with the child to plan for their individual needs more effectively.

Conversations between teachers in Reception classes and Key Stage 1 are particularly valuable in order for the environment, the pedagogy and the practices in Year 1 not to be developmentally different from those in Reception. This does not mean that **what** they learn will be the same, but **how** they learn should be very similar and familiar.

The key person makes essential connections. When children enter their new setting, start a new activity or even move area within a room, the task of providing continuity is made easier by responsive educators. A child's key person is the essential link between home and the new setting, and is vital in providing reassurance and creating close, supportive, ongoing relationships with families.

The key person should consult both children and their parents on how they feel about any forthcoming transition and whether they need support. Parents often have different social, cultural or family perspectives on their child than the key person which should be respected and can help enrich a setting or school's understanding of the child. In turn, parents and carers can learn much from the setting or school to support their child's development at home.

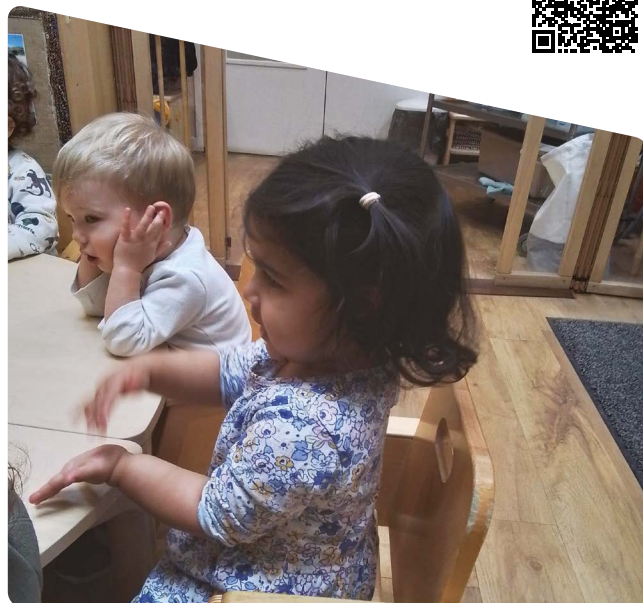
Effective transition is always a process rather than an event. When children are moving to a different setting, educators demonstrate this process by enabling children and their families to become as familiar as possible with where children are going and with whom they will be building relationships before any move actually takes place.

Children's expectations are formed largely by what their families say and how they act, so educators need to work in partnership with children, families and communities in a planned and proactive way to make transitions as smooth and seamless as possible.

Educators can first visit children in the setting in which they are known, confident and comfortable. Ideally, this would be the home as the place where children feel most secure and where children can see their parents and educators developing warm and positive relationships. Educators can also visit the setting that children are currently attending so children meet new adults in a familiar place. During these times educators can learn about the child from the parents as well as give information.

Children can then visit the new setting with a parent and/or key person so their first experience of any new setting is with a familiar and trusted adult. For all children and parents, repeated opportunities for relaxed contact and visits to the new setting over a sustained period of time can support a positive move. Transition processes that are tailored to meet the needs of each unique child are more effective than a 'one-size-fits-all' process.

High quality pedagogy matters for all children at every transition. Children whose lives are flowing through horizontal and vertical transitions are also rapidly changing physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively. The best early years transition pedagogy therefore rests on a deep understanding of child development and close observation of each unique child.



Key points

- Transitions describe the changes that occur as children move from one context to another.
- High quality transitions prioritise emotional wellbeing and ensure that children feel 'known' before they are expected to 'do'.
- Some children are particularly vulnerable at times of transition.
- Transitions are opportunities for learning and development for both children and adults.
- The key person makes essential connections.
- Transition is always a process, not an event.
- High quality pedagogy matters for all children at every transition.

Quality improvement and leadership

Research shows that effective high-quality experiences in the early years will have a significant positive impact on children's development, their progress through school and on into adult life. The importance of quality improvement and effective leadership sits alongside the four basic principles of practice within the EYFS, acting as a golden thread throughout Birth to 5 Matters. Recognising and valuing the role of the leader results in a more reflective and analytical approach to practice that in turn supports a culture of continuing improvement.

Leadership and quality improvement run through the EYFS Principles. The four principles of the EYFS underpin effective practice in the care, development and learning of young people. Each of these principles can be applied to leadership and quality improvement, just as they apply to young children.

A unique setting Every setting is different in terms of location, finances, resources, educators, children, families, and leadership. Every aspect of a setting is equally important, and should be given due attention, as the setting finds its own way of doing what is best for children.

Positive relationships There are many stakeholders within each setting including children, families, educators, external professionals, the leadership team and the wider community. Respectful and effective communication, compassion and empathy are key to supporting active and confident membership of the group, with the aim of creating trusting and collaborative working relationships.

Enabling environments The environment supports not only the children and families but also the educators and leadership team. The adults working in every setting need to feel healthy and safe, to enjoy and achieve, to make a positive contribution and to experience economic wellbeing, as do the children and their families.

Learning and development Quality improvement and effective leadership rests upon commitment to collaboration and reflective practice where educators do not simply settle for what is, but are open to possibility thinking about what might be. The adults in any setting need opportunities to develop their thinking and their practice through training and development activities, and an opportunity to share their ideas with others.

Quality improvement is a continuous process shown in daily practice, for example where staff pause to adjust a routine after noticing a child's distress, or where a leader protects time for team reflection. At a basic level, high quality early years provision can be defined as a provision which:

- improves outcomes for every child through high aspiration and effective play-based pedagogy
- provides personalised learning, development and support – tailored to the needs of individual children
- builds the foundations for future success, wellbeing and lifelong learning
- involves parents/families in their children's development and learning.

A continuously improving setting needs continuing professional development for all educators. In a continuously improving setting the leaders and the team will be:

Child-centred

- by always having the child at the heart of everything
- having energy, enthusiasm and a principled care and educational vision
- employing a whole setting approach, support collaborative working and the collective identification and clear expression of research-informed pedagogical objectives that promote wellbeing and achievement for all children.

Reflective

- recognising the value of continuous quality improvement and how it impacts on colleagues and children's wellbeing and achievement
- engaging in self-evaluation and quality improvement processes as the basis of ongoing internal review – assessing what the setting offers against robust and challenging quality criteria
- drawing on the wide range of quality improvement tools available, ensuring the tools are fit for purpose

What do you like about your early years setting?

“I love O, M, and E (the educators in her room).
I love the babies. Not real babies, pretend babies.”

Matilda, 2 years 10 months

- leading and encouraging a culture of reflective practice, self-evaluation and informed discussion to identify the setting's strengths and priorities for development
- gathering observational evidence rather than just quantitative data.

Change innovators and external collaborators

- open to change and seeing value in supporting colleagues to voice and trial their own ideas
- looking beyond the setting for advice and support
- seeking and acting upon the views of all stakeholders (families, children, colleagues, outside professionals) leading a collaborative learning culture – providing time and space for sharing knowledge and support for continuous professional development for the whole team.

Trusted and supportive

- paying attention to the health and wellbeing of colleagues as well as their own, seeking external support when / if required
- aiming for each member of their team to feel motivated, trusted and heard, valued and respected
- mentoring colleagues through sharing knowledge, skills and professional perspectives on practice to help them achieve their goals, build confidence and navigate challenges with empathy and compassion
- encouraging colleagues to develop and learn more, to recognise when they are doing well, and to feel positive about their work.

Maintain their skills

- through appropriate training, with up-to-date skills and qualifications
- committed to continuous professional development, and are motivated and supported to raise their skills and qualifications to level 3 and beyond
- seeking professional development and support through external and internal coaching and mentoring
- engaging in supervision, respond to guidance and advice, and know when to seek support and extra help including for their own wellbeing.

Are reflective

- committed to embedding inclusive practice which values diversity and celebrates differences in children
- engaging in regular cycles of planning and review, informed by accurate observation and record-keeping focusing on children's development and learning progress, and any statutory assessments
- committed to the development of sustained shared thinking by offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions which support and extend children's thinking and help children make connections in learning – while ensuring a balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Are collaborative

- open to ongoing professional dialogue, reflective practice, and collaborative work to continuously improve practice to help improve outcomes for every child
- keen to share best practice with other educators through local, regional and national networking
- working in close, supportive partnership with families – sharing information to nurture the child's wellbeing, and involving them in their child's continuous development and learning
- working together with other educators and parents to support transition, within and between settings and between early years settings and primary school.



Key points

- Leadership and quality improvement run through the EYFS Principles.
- Quality improvement is a continuous process.
- A continuously improving setting needs continuing development for all staff.

A Unique Child

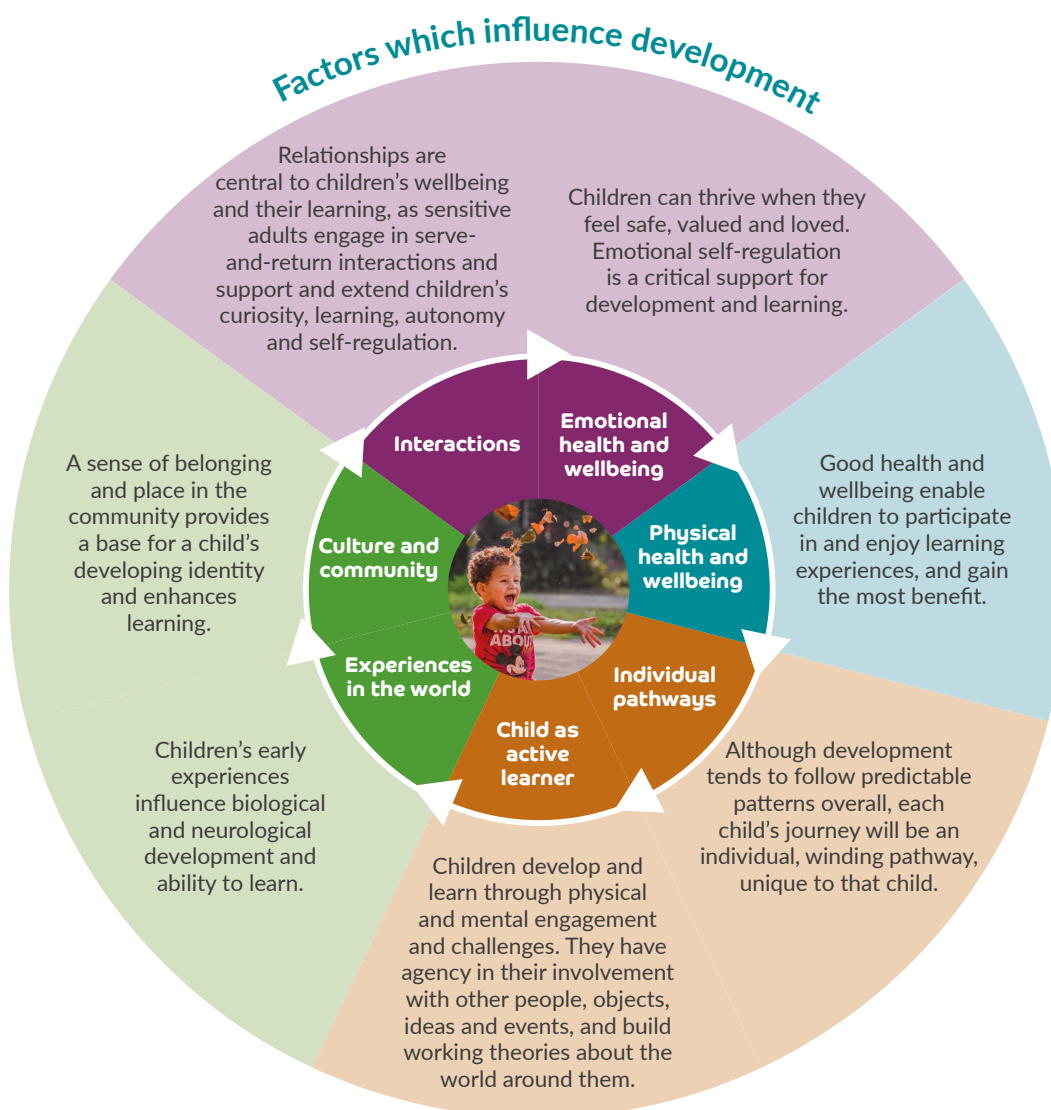
Child development

Each child is unique – we can be guided by an understanding of some general patterns of development from pre-birth into early childhood, but progression is uneven and unfolds differently for each child. The pathways toward maturity should be seen more as dancing around a ballroom than climbing a ladder. Educators have a responsibility to learn about and understand how each child's experiences, from conception to infancy, early childhood and beyond, shape their brain, body, and development across all areas.

Child development is a complex, ongoing process of brain and body growth. It begins in the womb and is influenced by multiple factors, including genetics, nutrition, and experiences of interactions and the environment. When babies and young children play, explore, interact and observe, they form new neural connections in their brains. These connections lay the foundations for children's future health, wellbeing and learning, so the quality of early experiences affects their capability for future learning. Educators should

take a holistic view of children's development, as all areas are interlinked and interdependent.

A baby's brain is not simply a fixed structure which develops in a genetically pre-determined way. It depends on external stimulation from experience to form neurological connections. Babies and children are not passive in the process of their development – they are actively stretching their own capacities in response to all that they observe, their interactions with people and the world around them.



Interactions

Early relationships strongly influence how children develop. Having close, secure attachments to their carers is crucial for children's healthy development. When adults are attuned to children's cues, responding sensitively and consistently to meet their needs, children learn that they are safe, cared for and loved. Responsive, stimulating back-and-forth interactions support children's wellbeing, cognition and language development. The key person plays a vital role by building close and appropriate attachment relationships with babies and children and tuning into children's individual needs and interests. The key person skilfully uses what they know about their key children to provide a safe and stimulating environment for babies and children to explore and learn, while knowing when to step back and when to offer support.

Emotional health and wellbeing

Professionally loving relationships, regular routines and rhythms in a responsive environment will all help to foster children's sense of security and self-confidence. Attuned adults can effectively support children through co-regulation, which helps children to develop the skills underpinning self-regulation. It is important for educators to understand children's early experiences before arriving at their setting. This can help to identify where children might benefit from an approach where adults dedicate extra time and support to building relationships that help children to feel safe and cared for. This could include children who have not experienced warm and responsive relationships with adults, or those who have experienced poverty or traumatic events.

Physical health and wellbeing

Being physically healthy includes having nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, healthcare, mental stimulation, movement, rest and sleep, access to the outdoors and loving relationships. Focus on the health and wellbeing of children should be in the 'here and now' and not exclusively on longer-term outcomes. It is important to provide opportunities through indoor and outdoor play for children to develop sensory integration, balance and coordination, gross and fine motor skills. Physical activity for three hours per day is recommended for children between 1 and 5 years old. Physical development is closely interconnected with all other areas of development. In particular, elements such as reflexes, motor development milestones and sensory integration play a vital role in babies' and children's brain development. Accessibility of all environments for children with complex health conditions or disabilities must be ensured.

Individual pathways

Children develop both in different ways and at different rates, both from child to child and from time to time for any child. Each child's unique history, including their experiences and opportunities, is important as the starting point for supporting their development and learning. Emphasis must be on enhancing children's sense of self and on supporting what children can do, rather than focussing on what they cannot yet do. Many factors, such as prematurity, child temperament, a recent move or their family being under stress, can also affect a child's development. Children who have experienced trauma, disrupted attachment and/or adversity in its many forms may have a different pattern of development than those whose start in life is secure and stress-free. For children who have suffered adverse early experiences, settings can be healing spaces and provide some mitigation for what has gone before when they build secure attachments and offer reliable routines with opportunities for creative, free play.

Child as an active learner

Children are innately driven to become more competent. They find and embrace the next stages in their development and learning, meeting challenges and practising to develop their skills and independence. The emotional and physical environment should support children's individual depositions of learning as they make decisions, take risks, try things out, build their competence and confidence through repetition and feel satisfaction at their own achievements, as well as accepting what doesn't work.

Experiences in the world

Babies and children build on their first-hand experiences. The wider and deeper their exposure to, and interactions with, the world, the greater their potential for secure development. Babies and children need opportunities through their play to practise what they know, consolidate their learning, apply it across contexts and acquire new knowledge and skills.

Culture and community

Development and learning are enhanced when there are connections and relationships between early childhood settings, home and other places and spaces in children's lives. Connections across environments support children to share their interests and 'funds of knowledge', which provides an anchor for them and an impetus for learning. Children and families need to feel secure, accepted and that they belong, both within and beyond the early childhood setting. Celebrating and respecting the diversity and uniqueness of every family within the community strengthens each child's sense of belonging and connection.



Self-regulation

Self-regulation is fundamental for child development and learning and is a strong predictor of future outcomes.

Self-regulation is now recognised as crucially important in young children's development, strongly predicting children's later success in relating to others and in their learning, while supporting lifelong mental and physical health. Developing self-regulation, like many elements of development and learning, is not something children do by themselves. It is a process that grows gradually out of co-regulation, within attuned relationships where the caregiver and baby or child are closely attentive to each other and engage in sensitive, responsive exchanges.

Self-regulation involves children's developing ability to regulate their emotions and thoughts to enable them to act in positive ways toward a purpose. The flexibility of brain cells and pathways and rapid brain development in early childhood pave the way for the growth of self-regulation, which develops both through the maturing of the brain's architecture and through opportunities to practise. Self-regulation develops continually, with further development taking place in adolescence and into adulthood.

Self-regulation depends on and grows out of co-regulation, where adults and children work together toward a common purpose, including finding ways to resolve upsets from stress and return to balance. Co-regulation is the supportive process whereby adults help children to manage their emotions and actions, especially when babies and children have not yet developed the skills to do so independently. Over time and with consistent practice, the process shifts from co-regulation between adult and child to the child's self-regulation. Importantly, self-regulation should not be understood as an end destination or fixed state. Children can fluctuate in their capacity to self-regulate just as adults can. All children will continue to need responsive others to act as co-regulators, particularly during times of stress, transition or fatigue, throughout early childhood and beyond.

In its earliest stages, co-regulation involves a carer helping a baby who is overwhelmed by feelings – perhaps from being hungry, uncomfortable, or unhappy for any reason – to return to a state of calm. Through voice, sensitive handling, and tuning in to respond promptly to a baby's signals, the adult helps the baby experience returning to balance after being in a state of emotional arousal. Each experience of co-regulation helps to build the neural pathways that regulate emotion.

Cognition interacts with emotions, as the baby learns to recognise and interpret situations, which then brings a different emotional response. For instance, a fretful baby who needs attention but can wait when hearing the carer's voice, rather than wailing

in deep distress, has learned from the adult's prompt responses to their cues that help will be provided and it is possible to wait. Gradually an adult's soothing a baby toward sleep at bedtime can be transferred to the baby who learns to self-soothe when waking in the night.

For young children, co-regulation also has both emotional and cognitive aspects. It includes the adult modelling calming strategies and naming and talking about feelings and ways to manage. This helps children learn to recognise their feelings and builds their cognitive awareness of strategies to reduce or manage extremes of emotion. At the same time, adults scaffold cognitive self-regulation by talking with children about thinking and learning and supporting them to focus, persist with challenge, choose strategies and so on.

The foundations of emotional and cognitive self-regulation in the early years are integrally tied together, and both are necessary for behavioural self-regulation. When a child is able to self-regulate, they are able to think before they act and can choose how they respond to emotions, situations and challenges. Emotions running very high get in the way of cognitive aspects of self-regulation, as a child who is experiencing very strong emotions will have difficulty in holding back impulses, focusing attention, or thinking in flexible ways to solve problems. Over-arousal of the emotional part of the brain constrains the thinking part, so a child who is very upset will first need help through emotional co-regulation before they can begin to think about the situation.

Cognitive regulation plays an important role in enabling children to choose how to adapt their behaviour in a particular context. This could include being able to focus or shift their attention, set and work towards a goal, or inhibit an impulse (for example, stopping saying number names once they have touch counted all objects in a set). Cognitive regulation also includes self-monitoring, problem-solving, taking different perspectives (such as being aware of others' thinking and picturing the future),

and decision-making. Children's cognitive regulation relies on their executive functions (working memory, inhibitory control and cognitive flexibility), which require experience, practice and repetition to develop.

When feelings are in balance, a child is able to use developing cognitive skills to make decisions about their goals and what actions are needed, such as choosing to apply the executive function of resisting impulses or concentrating. At the same time, children can begin to use cognitive self-regulation to support emotional self-regulation, by monitoring their emotional state and deciding on strategies to calm themselves if necessary. A child managing their actions, then, depends on emotional and cognitive self-regulation working together with both aspects in balance.

Extremes of arousal are not necessarily to be avoided. Children need to be able to safely explore their emotional range, for example through play such as rough and tumble, in order to learn how to shift flexibly between arousal states. A child might also be under-aroused which makes it difficult to attend to their surroundings, and may need to move around to regulate their arousal to an optimum level for focus.

Self-regulation is not the same thing as compliant behaviour, such as sitting still and listening when expected to. A child who is stressed and struggling to resist the impulse to move or speak is very different from a child who is calm and alert, in a balanced state of feeling, thinking, and behaviour.

A pedagogy which includes co-regulation strategies will help children develop self-regulatory skills.

Researchers have identified three basic strategies for co-regulation:

- **Positive Relationships** – Provide a warm, responsive relationship where children feel respected, comforted and supported in times of stress, and confident that they are cared for at all times.
- **Enabling Environments** – Create an environment that makes self-regulation manageable, structured in a predictable way that is physically and emotionally safe for children to explore and take risks without unnecessary stressors.
- **Learning and Development** – Teach self-regulation skills through modelling, suggesting strategies, providing frequent opportunities to practise, and scaffolding to support children to use self-regulation skills.



Key points

- Self-regulation is fundamental for child development and learning and is a strong predictor of future outcomes
- Self-regulation involves children's developing ability to regulate their emotions and thoughts to enable them to act in positive ways toward a purpose.
- Self-regulation grows out of co-regulation, where adults and children work together toward a common purpose, including finding ways to resolve upsets from stress in any domain and return to balance.
- The foundations of emotional and cognitive self-regulation in the early years are integrally tied together, and both are necessary for behavioural self-regulation.
- A pedagogy which includes co-regulation strategies will help children develop self-regulatory skills.



How Children Learn: Characteristics of Effective Learning

While the Areas of Learning and Development outline different elements of what children may learn during their first years, the Characteristics of Effective Learning describe how children learn. These learning dispositions, habits of mind and behaviours are particularly important in the EYFS because they build the foundations needed to support children to become strong lifelong learners and independent thinkers.

Education for children's futures requires supporting children's ability to learn and think for themselves.

We cannot predict what challenges children will face in their unknown futures in a complex and rapidly changing world. The best preparation we can give them in their early years is to promote positive dispositions and help them learn how to learn by providing living experiences of **making choices, innovating, taking responsibility, facing challenge, and thinking flexibly and critically** so that they will be able to respond to their unfolding futures. Supporting children in the Characteristics of Effective Learning, a statutory element of the EYFS, is a central responsibility in early years provision. The three aspects are Playing and Exploring, Active Learning, and Thinking Creatively and Critically.

Each unique child is an active agent of their own development. From birth children are primed to reach out to interact with other people and the world around them, and early development and learning are rapid and powerful. The Characteristics of Effective Learning represent the active role in the learning behaviours children adopt as they follow their curiosity, push themselves to become more competent and to understand more, and are rewarded by the inner satisfaction of mastering new skills and feeling their independence grow. Knowledgeable educators provide the context, enabling these experiences for children by providing responsive, sensitive interactions and rich opportunities to exercise agency in their learning. Educators should recognise and value the cultural practices, languages, and community knowledge that shape how children explore, stay motivated, and solve problems.

Children's emotional wellbeing is the first necessity for effective learning. Children need to feel safe within warm, loving and caring relationships. When children's primary need for emotional safety is met, they can then relax and move into exploring, taking risks, making discoveries, and experiences of the deep involvement through which they learn. Adults can help children to feel confident and at ease by providing environments that meet children's need

for tenderness and affection, relaxation, inner peace, enjoyment, openness, safety, and belonging.

Through co-regulation, over time effective learners develop self-regulation, the ability to regulate their feelings, thoughts, and actions toward a goal. Self-regulation includes both emotional self-regulation developed through emotionally supportive relationships, and cognitive self-regulation described in the Characteristics of Effective Learning. When there is support for children's sense of agency – knowing they have control of their own decisions, goals and actions rather than simply being passive in their experiences – children are likely to be effective in their learning. Experiences which endorse children's agency and autonomy reinforce and develop their learning powers.

Play and self-initiated activities are ideal opportunities to build Characteristics of Effective Learning. In play, children can follow their own innate curiosity and drives to find things out, to relate to others, and to be in charge of their own actions. Adults provide an enabling environment for **Playing and Exploring** through experiences and interactions that respect children's ideas, autonomy and interests. In play, children decide what they will do – often in collaboration with others – what their play is about, who they will play with and for how long. They follow their own curiosity and find their own challenges, using their senses and movement to explore the world and their imaginations to act out what they know and how they feel. They are free to take a risk with new experiences, in open-ended activity. Exploratory play, where babies and young children use movement, their bodies and their senses, is fundamental to each child's understanding and sense of agency.

Imaginative play is powerful in helping children to make sense of their ideas and feelings, their identity, their experiences of the world, and their place in it. It is also highly supportive of children developing self-regulation and executive function. As children engage in pretend play, they regulate their own thinking and behaviour. They need to be flexible as the direction of play changes, remember what they are doing and

What do you like about your early years setting?

“Playing in the writing area, playing with my friends, the climbing frame and the digging area and looking after bugs.”

Olivia, 5

the point of their activity, and follow the rules they set for themselves either alone (*If I'm pretending to be a cat, I don't say "Woof, woof"*), or with others (*You be the shopkeeper and I'll be the customer*).

In play children also have opportunities to engage in **Active Learning**, as they are intrinsically motivated toward their own goals. By tuning in to the children and providing time, space and resources for children to manage, adults can foster children's growing powers to concentrate with deep involvement. Sensitive adults can support resilience by helping children to develop a view that not getting the result they (or others) wanted or were expecting is not a failure, but an opportunity to try again, learn and develop, and that they can keep on trying and persisting even in the face of challenge or difficulties.

As they play, children have rich opportunities for **Thinking Creatively and Critically**. Across all areas of learning, children think of their own ideas, imagine possibilities, and creatively combine ideas in spontaneous ways. They make meaning as they notice patterns and build their own **working theories** to make sense of their experiences, then make predictions and test them to refine their understanding. Problems are identified, possible solutions invented, and with support children become increasingly able to monitor their efforts, to alter their approach flexibly when needed, and to review how well it went and what they have learned. This critical thinking becomes more

conscious and under children's control especially through talking with others about their thoughts, sharing and developing ideas together.

Adult-planned experiences which are intentional and responsive can offer scope for children to reinforce and develop their self-regulation and learning powers, when they are organised to include opportunities for children to explore, follow their interests and think for themselves – building on children's engagement, motivation, and both creative and critical thinking.



Key points

- The Characteristics of Effective Learning describe how children learn.
- Education for children's futures requires supporting children's ability to learn and think for themselves.
- Each unique child is an active agent of their own development.
- Children's emotional wellbeing is the first necessity for effective learning.
- Play and self-initiated activities are ideal opportunities to build Characteristics of Effective Learning.

Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

A commitment to valuing and respecting the diversity of individuals, families and communities must sit at the heart of early years practice. Inequalities persist in society, with far-reaching effects on children's education, health and life chances. Early years settings have a vital role to play in advancing social justice and explicitly addressing all forms of discrimination and prejudice. In doing so, we will meet the Equality Act 2010 requirement that no child or family is discriminated against in terms of the protected characteristics, including age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

Inclusion and equalities apply to all children and families. These protected characteristics apply to all people, not just those in minoritised groups, so equality means considering practices in relation to all individuals and groups. Each child and family bring to their setting their own identity, values and their unique funds of knowledge that are built over time within their communities.

No matter how well-meaning, human beings are subject to bias. We are all influenced by ideas from the society we live in, which affect our attitudes, beliefs and the way we see others and how they may live their lives. By becoming aware of and challenging any bias or misconceptions, educators become better attuned to the realities, experiences and perspectives of children, families and communities and so can develop more equal and respectful partnerships. Creating an ethos of equality involves being aware of how all the practices and environments in an early years setting appear through the lens of each unique child. Managers should ensure that time is given for individuals and staff teams to engage in reflective practice and to adapt teaching approaches that may be needed to meet the unique and individual needs of children.



Educators should share their willingness to challenge stereotypes and misunderstandings as they arise in play, conversation, books or other contexts – whether about communities, families, languages, gender, special educational needs, disabilities, race, ethnicity, faith or cultures. Settings can value the diversity they hold. Educators themselves carry a wealth of knowledge from their own diverse backgrounds that should be celebrated.

As well as legally protected characteristics, diversity in the setting may include children living in temporary accommodation, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, or children and families that have lives or family structures that are different. When families engage with services, it is important to bear in mind that in some families **protected characteristics or identity markers overlap**. This is known as **intersectionality**, which can make some children and families more exposed, or more cushioned by privilege, than others. Educators should also be aware that public narratives or political rhetoric about particular groups can shape children's sense of safety, belonging and identity.

Equity and inclusion require more than treating everyone the same. There is an important difference between equity and equality. Equality provides an essential foundation by aiming to ensure **equal rights, value and opportunities** for all, while equity builds on this by responding to the different barriers people face and offering appropriately differentiated support so that fairness can be realised in practice.

While it is vital for all children and their families to feel a sense of belonging, it is also important that early years educators are aware of the significant physical, emotional and cognitive barriers many children encounter in accessing early education. Poverty, mistrust of the establishment, lack of access to play experiences, overcrowded living conditions, parental illiteracy, etc. all take a toll. Educators should acknowledge the unique situations that families find themselves in, and plan to lessen the effects of these

What things are really important to you in your early years setting?

“Sharing with everybody...and listening, everyone does listening.”

barriers by offering additional opportunities, such as increased time on balance bikes for those children living with no access to outside space, or ensuring children with low socio-economic status are supported to access extra-curricular activities that they otherwise may not be able to.

Educators should also be aware that within any organisation there are often ‘taken for granted’ norms which are unspoken and implicit, and can cause harm to children, such as norms around toileting etiquette, food play, manners, hygiene, clothing and cultural practices. Educators need to understand that these are not universal values, and their assumptions may need to change. Sometimes children and their families may require extra support, such as provision of wellies, and sensitive conversations to develop trust and deepen understanding between both parties.

Talking about race is a necessary first step in countering all forms of racism. A common but mistaken assumption is that treating everyone the same, or avoiding discussions of race altogether, is a sufficient response. In practice, this approach allows existing biases and inequalities to remain unchallenged, continuing to disadvantage children and families from Black and racially minoritised groups. Addressing racism requires a proactive commitment to anti-racism. A key way to support this commitment in practice is through educator training which builds on educators’ understanding of systemic racism and the ways unquestioned bias can have widespread effects in early years settings’ policies, practices and interactions.

The common assumption that children do not see race must be challenged. When adults are silent about race, young children’s potential racial prejudice and misconceptions can be maintained or reinforced. Encouraging dialogue and conversation about

difference can evoke children’s strong sense of fairness and help break down the false assumption that everyone can succeed on their merits, so that children are better able to understand and question racism and develop anti-racist views.

This dialogue should also create space for children to explore and articulate their racial and ethnic identities, including multi-racial and multi-ethnic identities, and to see those identities and languages affirmatively reflected in their environments. Without this intentional work, whiteness – understood as the way particular cultural norms come to occupy the centre and are treated as neutral or universal, while other identities are measured against them – continues to operate as the unmarked standard, and children whose identities do not fit dominant narratives may feel marginalised or uncertain about being valued in the environment.



Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Continued

Young children should be supported to develop an understanding of gender and sexual orientations, unlimited by wider social and cultural stereotypes, norms and beliefs that can create inequality.

Developing a strengths-based approach toward gender and sexual orientation is important because negative attitudes toward them can limit children and create inequality. During the early years, children's attitudes and dispositions are continually shaped by their environments and the adults around them, influencing their sense of self and feelings of belonging toward families.

In terms of gender and sexual orientation, young children can develop stereotypical ideas about how they should be and who they should become which can limit their potential. It is important that educators do not shy away from these conversations and instead challenge the effects of prejudice and discrimination. Children's resources and books should avoid stereotypical depictions of people on the basis of gender and sexual orientation.

A child may also be part of a family which is LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, plus other variations). Early years settings have an opportunity to prevent prejudice by ensuring that children and their families feel welcome and valued. In practice, this means that settings should ensure that their environments are welcoming and supportive and actively celebrate the value of diversity. This includes recognising and respecting how families define themselves and wish to be addressed rather than relying on assumptions or default labels – for example, using the child's names for each parent rather than a blanket term such as 'mummy' for both parents.



Building awareness through first-hand experiences has lasting impact.

In order to promote and value diversity, settings should consider ways of sharing and celebrating children's lived experiences, being sensitive to the children's differing circumstances and ensuring that practices are inclusive of all. Parents may be happy to be involved in sharing aspects of their everyday life and community. This might include inviting parents to share aspects of their everyday life, culture, or community in ways that feel meaningful and comfortable for them. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is clear that every child has a right to an identity and part of the goals of education is to foster respect for their own and other cultures.

While it is important for children to see their own identity reflected in positive ways in the setting, it is equally important for children in settings where there is little diversity to become aware of and to appreciate difference. Visits to places where children can encounter different cultures and see ways people live and worship can be memorable – children can taste unfamiliar foods, explore artefacts, and learn about the music, dance, languages and cultural traditions of different communities in respectful ways.

Ensure children can see themselves and their families reflected in the environment.

What children experience day to day, both physically and emotionally, often speaks more loudly than written policies, so it is important to consider how the setting enables children and their families to view diversity positively. This includes both what is visible in the space and the interactions and conversations educators have with families. Children need to see representation of someone who 'looks like me', or 'has a family structure like mine', or 'lives somewhere like where I live', or 'uses the languages I use', etc. Children absorb and develop ideas of who they are and what is possible for themselves from the images and materials around them, such as:

- photographs of the children themselves (where acceptable to the families).
- books, posters, small world play materials that depict and enable acting out a range of identities which actively challenge stereotypical representations and avoid tokenism.
- representation of different races, disabilities, languages, ages, types of families including single parents, same-sex parents, grandparents raising children.

- role-play clothing that allows children to play in gender-flexible ways and reflects diverse cultures, and household items reflecting various cultures and communities.
- educators who have some of the same identity markers as children and families – race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and language.

This celebratory approach should also include children who are bilingual or multilingual. Having an understanding of how a second or third language is acquired is important, including knowing that children will experience a “silent period” in which they absorb and begin to make sense of their environment, is important. Educators should support children by:

- ensuring the environment provides pictorial references, such as picture and word cards, for labelling spaces, resources, and routines
- not assuming a mono-linguistic setting in which English is the only language spoken
- welcoming, celebrating and including children's home languages, and encouraging them to speak in their home languages alongside any new language acquired
- inviting families to share songs and rhymes for everyone to learn
- paying attention to the tone and pace of adult speech and prioritising positive interactions with bi-lingual and multilingual children.

“I get to see my friends. Safety with equipment. Choose it, use it, put it back. I love Hannah, Oscar, Byron, Ellen, Ida, Ilana and all my friends.”

Wilfred, 3



All children have their own feelings about their lives and their identity. Their voice should be central and their funds of knowledge respected.

Educators working with children identified as having Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) acknowledge and value each child, emphasising what they can do through a strengths-led perspective on developmental difference and disability. By

ensuring accessibility, children should have greater opportunities to explore, discover and take risks in early years provision which helps them to develop autonomy, competence and resilience. This position also endorses the UNCRC article 28 that every child has a right to an education and article 29 which states that education should develop a child's personalities, fascinations and unique abilities to the fullest.

The statutory SEND Code of Practice sets out the action early years providers should take to meet their duties in identifying and supporting all children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities, whether or not they have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. Identifying and assessing special educational needs for young children who are learning languages other than English requires particular care. Early years educators should look carefully at all aspects of a child's development and learning to establish whether any delay or difference is related to learning languages other than English or whether it arises from SEN or disability. Difficulties related solely to learning languages other than English are not SEN.

Ableism is the discriminatory and harmful set of ideas, practices, institutions and relations that view

Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Continued

typically conforming and non-disabled ways of being as the right or preferred way to exist. To disrupt ableism, we have a shared responsibility both to challenge exclusionary thinking and practices and to create environments where difference and disability are understood as natural parts of human diversity. All children should grow up to understand that neurodivergence and disability are not lesser ways of being.

To thrive, all children need access to equitable care and education that is underpinned by anti-ableism. It is also vital that children have opportunities to notice and learn about each other's differences so that they can build relationships rooted in empathy not pity.

Experiencing belonging is an important part of inclusive practice. Having differences viewed in deficit ways or being marginalised can lead to feelings of social isolation and exclusion. When children and their families' funds of knowledge are actively welcomed and planned for, this can reduce these feelings and provide children with a more secure base from which they can develop, learn and flourish. Early years



settings can be well placed to promote feelings of belonging through explicit teaching of diversity and difference as a natural occurrence. Educators should actively plan to support children to develop empathy and understanding towards one another. For example, children should be supported to recognise that there are different ways of playing, communicating, regulating and interacting. Celebratory approaches can be used to push back against normative assumptions about childhood, fostering cultures of 'me and we' rather than 'us and them'.

There is a growing awareness in early childhood education of neurodiversity which recognises the diversity of human minds, bodies and ways of being.

This means that children will develop in different ways and will vary in how they communicate, move, regulate, play, learn and sense. It is essential that developmental needs are understood and supported. It is equally important to recognise and affirm developmental differences, such as being autistic or physically disabled. Variation in development should not immediately be seen solely as a problem but could indicate a different way of developing. For example, a non-speaking child may not use 'mouth words' but this does not mean they cannot communicate. They may prefer to express themselves through gesture, sign or visuals. Developmental norms can often be used to suggest that there is a right or ideal way to develop, but human development is dynamic and varied. Neurodiversity approaches recognise that there is no superior or inferior way of being – rather all humans need to be in supportive and compatible conditions to thrive.

What do you like about your early years setting?

He just smiles but when he realises we're going to nursery he often signs "friends".

Idris, 2 and a bit

Some children will benefit from support that is additional to or different from our foundational practice, for example, if a child has a lifelong difference such as being D/deaf. We should actively strive for access, participation and belonging in a learning-rich environment. We may also need to draw upon support beyond our own expertise, such as health specialists, to ensure well-matched provision and practice.

For children with developmental differences, needs and disabilities, it is important to recognise that the way they share these perspectives may not always be through conventional means such as speech. It is usually through behaviours that we come to understand a child might be thinking or feeling. For example, a child with complex needs may show increased alertness during certain routines or look away as a way of saying no.

When a delay or difference is identified, support does not involve reverting to age-inappropriate expectations.



Key points

- Inclusion and equalities apply to all children and families.
- Equity, equality and inclusion require more than treating everyone the same.
- Talking about race is a necessary first step in countering all forms of racism.
- Young children should be supported to develop an understanding of gender and sexual orientations, unlimited by wider social and cultural stereotypes, norms and beliefs that can create inequality.
- Building awareness through first-hand experiences has lasting impact.
- Ensure children can see themselves and their families reflected in the environment.
- Educators caring for and educating children identified as having Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) acknowledge and value each child's uniqueness, emphasising what they can do through a strengths-led perspective on neurodivergence and disability.
- Experiencing belonging is an important part of inclusive practice.
- There is a growing awareness in early childhood education of neurodiversity which recognises the diversity of human minds, bodies and ways of being.
- Some children will benefit from support that is additional to or different from our foundational practice.

Positive Relationships

Parents as partners

Parents and carers and other key adults make a crucial difference to children's happiness, health and educational outcomes. It is vital that early years educators recognise parents' commitment to their children's early development and education and give priority to working with parents and key adults, including kinship carers, blended families and guardians (the term 'parents' used here should be taken to refer to all carers). An important predictor of children's future outcomes is the quality of the home learning environment, and working with parents in respectful partnership to support their children's learning both at home and in the setting is a significant factor in enabling all children to do well. Working together ensures a good understanding of a child's needs, leading to appropriate provision within the setting and the potential to further support learning in the home.

Parents are their children's lifelong promoters of development and learning. Most families have been constantly observing their children from birth and building up knowledge of the most effective ways to support them. Educators need to consider how to knit parents' voices and deep understanding of their children into daily practice. Sharing how children learn can provide opportunities for both parents and educators to deepen their understanding of personalities, dispositions and interests.

Partnerships with parents can be truly effective only when parents and educators work together to enable children to create meaningful connections to their wider world and to foster a love of learning. No parent or family should be excluded from this process. Parents must feel included, listened to and trusted in their own key role supporting their child's wellbeing, development and learning. Building strong, collaborative relationships with families would enhance this.

Each unique family should be valued, welcomed and heard. A warm, inclusive that encourages families to engage and participate should be evident from the moment an enquiry is made to a setting, and it is essential that all families feel that they belong. This is expressed through the attitude of the educators and methods of communication and language used, as well as the resources and environment of the setting. The key person's role includes establishing relationships with families as soon as the setting has been chosen and confirmed. Working with families will often entail developing relationships with the extended family as well as the child's parents. This is not only a responsibility but also a great privilege. Each child and family is unique and this needs to be respected and celebrated, as each brings aspects of their own personal and cultural knowledge and values which enrich the whole setting.

Time is needed to listen to parents' concerns and value what they say about the way in which children

learn and behave at home. Only through listening attentively to parents can educators build the trusting and respectful relationships needed to achieve the best outcomes for children. Educators who show they are listening, understanding and valuing what parents say empower them to make effective choices for their children and wider family. Listening helps educators become aware of parents' beliefs, their aspirations and their concerns. When educators look at situations from a parent's unique perspective, they gain new insights and avoid preconceptions which can lead to misunderstandings. These insights can be used to improve practice.

Listening attentively involves listening to what parents say but also recognising non-verbal messages and actions communicated by parents, as they can be even more powerful than words, particularly where English may not be the home language. Parents may wish to share information about:

- significant events in the lives of their child and family, adding to the picture educators have of the child
- key aspects of the individual care of their child, such as the way they like to be held, changed or soothed
- how they could contribute to the setting, e.g. with offers of time, skills, knowledge or resources.

Parents may also seek reassurance and support regarding their own wellbeing alongside their child's welfare, learning and development.

Parents differ in the frequency and ways they prefer to communicate with educators. Creative management of the environment and educators' work schedules is needed to provide sufficient time and opportunity for parents to feel comfortable about sharing information and for educators to listen attentively without compromising the needs of the children in their care. Home visits help to develop relationships and build trust in a more relaxed environment. The use of phone

“I am very happy that my son is happy. He enjoys his time at preschool. The staff have been very helpful concerning my son’s speech delay and are always happy to chat if I have concerns.”

calls or online platforms can be useful additions to daily face-to-face opportunities. It is important to ensure that all families can access information through non-digital means such as newsletters or posters, to promote equality in communication.

Reflect on approaches to enhance relationships with parents. A setting’s policies may outline an aim to work alongside parents, and describe a range of opportunities such as everyday conversations at the start or end of sessions, parent meetings or workshops. Just offering opportunities, however, does not necessarily mean that those opportunities will be taken up by all parents equally. Sometimes there is a perceived imbalance of power between educators and parents, so it is up to educators to take responsibility for developing those relationships.

Thinking about approaches to working with parents means reflecting on the quantity and quality of joint engagement:

- With which parents are there relationships? Which relationships need attention?
- Where relationships are not strong, why might that be and what could be done differently to encourage participation?
- Considering each unique relationship, what is the communication about? Is it simply about organisational issues, such as reminders to parents about setting events or parents informing the setting about pick-up arrangements? Or do some conversations include discussions about children’s wellbeing, their learning and their personal interests? Are those discussions two-way? If parents are finding partnership difficult, what could be done?

Educators have a responsibility to work with all families. Educators work closely with many different families who continually support and encourage their children in what they do at home, within partnerships based on reciprocal engagements. Leaders and educators should identify and challenge areas where unconscious bias may be damaging relationships between the parents and families and educators. Identified factors might include:

- social attitudes towards religious groups, cultures, classes or sexual orientation
- the need to make reasonable adjustments to support inclusive access, where factors might include disability, illness or location, or

communication barriers such as EAL, deafness or lack of access to digital information

- parents’ own previous experiences of education and relationships with authority.

Educators should develop a shared language with parents and a joint understanding about how children develop and learn, both at home and in the setting. Sensitive communication, where educators understand parents’ own theories about the development of their child, requires skill and continuous professional reflection and dialogue. Embracing diverse family contexts can enrich practice and offer new insights. Educators need to get to know the families and understand the challenges that they face, and then be prepared to adapt the way they work in order to accommodate diverse families’ needs. Working in this way has the potential to transform children’s life chances.

Clear leadership regarding working together with parents will provide the right foundation. Leaders should show commitment to developing a genuine interest in each family. Regularly reviewing the experience of families is essential for settings to develop their vision and practice. This should extend to parental participation in policy making, and collaboration with parents on practical issues such as the timings of meetings in order to develop a more inclusive environment. Early years leaders require current, research-led practice that enables them to support their teams in high quality pedagogical practice when collaborating with parents.



Key points

- Parents and families make a crucial difference to children’s happiness, health and educational outcomes.
- Parents are their children’s lifelong promoters of development and learning.
- Each unique family should be valued, welcomed and heard.
- Reflect on approaches to enhance relationships with parents.
- Educators have a responsibility to work with all families.
- Clear leadership regarding working together with parents will provide the right foundation.

Attachment and the role of the key person

The key person approach, which is statutory in the EYFS, reflects relationships within families – it helps babies and children become attached to significant adults within reliable, respectful, warm and professionally appropriate loving relationships which are essential in order for children to thrive. Babies and children experience wellbeing and contentment when their physical and emotional needs are met and their feelings are accepted. Early experiences of attachment have lifelong benefits.

The key person helps the child to feel known, understood, cared about, and safe. The key person helps the baby or child feel confident that they are “held in mind”, thought about and loved. This experience of being cared for by reliable adults who meet their physical needs and remain attentive and playful, affectionate and thoughtful allows children to form secure attachments. Such a grounding provides a “secure base” from which children feel confident to explore the world and form other relationships..

The key person role involves a ‘triangle of trust’ between the key person, the child and all significant adults in the child’s life. A key person approach is a way to ensure that all children and families have one or more persons within the setting with whom they have a special, nurturing relationship. The presence of a key person helps the child to feel emotionally secure when away from home and provides a reassuring point of contact for parents. There are different ways to ensure a key person is always available (e.g. shared and paired caring, or support partner or buddy).

A key person has special responsibilities for supporting a specific group of children and building relationships with them and their families. The role will involve close physical and personal care for a baby or young child. It is therefore important that parents feel able to share vital information about their child’s intimate care preferences, likes and dislikes, motivations and interests, and how they feel about being away from home. Parents might want to talk about their child’s feelings or development, as well as their unique family contexts circumstances.

It is most helpful for a key person to attend a home visit with another colleague. This frees up opportunities for parents to talk with the colleague while the key person makes playful connection with the child. If a home visit is not practically possible, adults should meet somewhere comfortable and quiet, with resources to encourage relaxed and playful introductions.

The key person’s role includes, but goes far beyond, administrative and operational activities such as keeping records or communicating about the child with parents or other professionals. It is an emotional, reciprocal relationship, and it is important to develop secure attachments while fostering independence.

As children grow, the key person may not always be present at the setting. Despite this, the child should still feel “held in mind” when they are apart. The key person approach is statutory throughout the early years phase, including in Reception. The role may look very different in a large class of children with often only two adults, but the principles remain the same. A teacher can retain overall knowledge of the children in their class and benefit from particular knowledge that other people working with them might have. The stronger the relationships are, the more supported the child (and their family) will feel about subsequent transitions, including to Key Stage One.

An effective key person approach needs strong leadership and committed practice. Leaders should have a good working knowledge of the key person approach and be able to implement it to maximise consistency and continuity for the child and family, while offering the best possible support and supervision for educators. Although there is legally no minimum qualification to be a key person, leaders can support less experienced staff, including giving careful thought to the pairing (or mentoring) so that all can benefit from wide expertise. Key persons communicate with a wide range of people involved in the child’s world and community, encompassing family, educators and other professional staff and agencies both within and beyond the setting.

The role of the key person involves building a relationship of “professional love”, with specific and potentially heavy demands. It is important to have professional support and supervision in order to share the challenges of the role. It is also a joyful and privileged position to share in the care of a baby or young child, so having opportunities to celebrate and share those joys are equally important.

What do you like about your early years setting?

“I like nursery and the thing that Zoey has in her ears that the doctors have (stethoscope). A sofa would make it better. My grownups and my friends.”

Eden, 2 years 6 months

Children benefit most when their key person has special qualities and dispositions. Ideally, a key person:

- has passion for their work and sees the value and rewards in being a key person
- is empathic and understands the different ways of being a family
- appreciates and respects the cultures, identities and diverse backgrounds of the children and families with whom they work
- is able to draw on their own informal knowledge of childcare practice from within their own experience and reflect on how best to use or build on it
- is able to reflect on and understand the influence of their own attachment experiences on their work with children and families, with the confidence to know when to ask for support and further training
- is willing to research and reflect on the importance of relationships and attachment, so that they can see its relevance to their work as a key person
- finds effective ways to connect with families including as many opportunities for face-to-face communication as possible
- is not judgemental and has the skills to communicate with other agencies and settings involved with the child and their family
- is well qualified, and/or has wider knowledge and understanding of, for example:
 - child development
 - attachment theory, including social and biological factors that might affect a child's capacity to form attachments
 - trauma-informed and trauma-responsive practice
 - co-regulation and self-regulation
 - neuroscience (brain development and how it links with all the Prime areas as well as self-regulation and executive function)
 - pedagogy of effective, relation-based practice
 - bias and prejudice – how an anti-bias approach promotes equity and inclusion, how bias affects the babies, children and families they work with as well as themselves, and strategies to challenge bias
 - how to identify and support the individual needs and unique development of every baby and child
- recognises that it is a personal as well as a professional relationship which brings with it much joy, as well as challenge.
- engages in supervision to support professional development, wellbeing and self-regulation as a co-regulator for babies and children
- works collaboratively with other educators, to ensure consistency for the child, and supports transition as an ongoing process, not just an event.



Key points

- The key person approach, which is statutory in the EYFS, reflects relationships within families and helps babies and children become attached to significant adults within reliable, respectful, warm and professionally appropriate loving relationships which are essential in order to thrive.
- The key person helps the child to feel known, understood, cared about, and safe within the setting.
- The key person role involves a triangle of trust with the child and significant family members or carers.
- An effective key person approach needs strong leadership and committed practice.
- Children benefit most when their key person has special qualities and dispositions.

Supporting development and learning

Warm, trusting relationships with knowledgeable adults support children's learning more effectively than any amount of resources. We are all social beings, and babies and children who feel secure and listened to will turn to their trusted adults to share their experiences. Emotional wellbeing is the first necessity for successful learning, and adults who respect children's feelings, show empathy, and support children to manage their feelings are helping to lay the foundations for development and learning.

The quality of adults' interactions with babies and children has an immense impact on whether their experiences result in making the most of the learning opportunities. Children learn from adults both supporting their current development and learning by allowing time for this to deepen and be consolidated, and from adults introducing new possibilities.

Follow the child's lead to the meeting of minds. It is necessary to establish rapport in an interaction, so that children are ready to include the adult in their activities. This means being careful not to impose the adult agenda on a baby or child, but finding a meeting point within an experience where attention and interest can be shared. Adults are able to put themselves in others' shoes to understand what might be in someone else's mind, and can direct their mature attention at will. These abilities are at early stages of development for young children, who cannot necessarily be expected to understand, find interesting, and be able to pay attention to what an adult proposes. It is up to the adult to meet the child at their point of interest.

As children gradually develop the ability to focus on an adult agenda, brief and lively adult-led sessions can be opportunities for thinking and learning. Within group sessions which are planned in response to children's interests and current levels of development and learning, the adult can still interact with individual children according to their own needs and differentiate through tailored responses to each child.

Tuning in, observing and wondering come first.

By being a sensitive observer, tuning into the baby or child's actions and communications – whether through gesture, facial expression, or words – the adult can begin to focus on the central question that characterises an effective educator: **“What might the child be thinking about, and learning about right now?”**

Knowing the child well helps in understanding what might be in the child's mind – the links they are making, and whether they are exploring new ideas or gaining more information about existing thinking,

as in schema play, for example. A sensitive observer can show interest in what the baby or child is doing, but will also wait to be invited with a look or a word before joining the child's point of interest. The adult may wonder aloud about what is happening so as not to impose their ideas or to demand a response. Respect for the child's autonomy matters, and even very young babies can indicate whether or not they welcome an interaction.

A sensitive and knowledgeable educator can decide when to stand back, when to interact, and how to respond to the child. Sometimes a child is deeply engrossed in what they are doing, and the adult can stand back to **observe** and gain understanding about how they might later build on this experience. At other times, the adult may decide to offer support for the learning. A to-and-fro exchange in words or actions, or helping to keep the child's attention on the activity, for example, might **support** the child to consolidate ideas and refine skills. Or it may be the moment to **extend** the learning through introducing a new idea or resource, new information or a new challenge, scaffolding the child's engagement, and finding opportunities for sustained shared thinking.



What do you like about your early years setting?

“Everything, the whole class! I love learning, I love playing, I love playing with building blocks and my friends and everything in the class. My teachers are cool and it’s really fun to play in my class.”

Leo, 5

Learning together with adults and with other children is important across all contexts. Carefully tuned interaction with skilful adults makes a difference all the time – when supporting children engaged in their play or other child-initiated activities, and also in adult-led activities. When adults plan experiences with particular learning objectives in mind, it is important to remember that learning occurs when a child makes sense of information and links ideas to existing understanding. Direct instruction of material with no meaningful link in the mind of the child is likely to result at best in shallow recall, without the child being able to use the knowledge. Instead, adults can support the way a young child learns. Starting with information from physical, real-world experiences, a child then shapes and sharpens their thinking as they represent ideas through playing, talking, drawing or other graphics, and finally forms a clear mental image that makes sense to the child.

Through tuning in to the child’s thinking and working together to find the links to what is already known, the skilful adult can provide a bridge as the child steps into new ideas. It is the way that the learning opportunities are tailored in the moment to meet the needs of each child.

Children are not just learning in collaboration with adults. Playing and interacting with other children in all types of activities are opportunities to find themselves stretched, and sometimes pushed out of their comfort zones, by other children’s ways of thinking, communicating and behaving. Adults can ensure children have opportunities to engage together, to collaborate, or just to play alongside each other and learn from each other’s support and stimulation. Adults also support learning by planning for opportunities for children to learn by themselves, as they engage with the world around them in a well-resourced environment.

Key points

- Warm, trusting relationships with knowledgeable adults support children’s learning more effectively than any amount of resources.
- Follow the child’s lead to the meeting of minds.
- Tuning in, observing and wondering come first.
- A knowledgeable educator can decide when to stand back, when to interact, and what to offer the child.
- Learning together with adults and with other children is important across all contexts.



Enabling environments

Learning environments

Children are unique and holistic learners, thriving within environments that support their individual and diverse motivations, interests and needs. They require a wealth of possibilities within varied contexts, and this is best supported within stimulating and challenging environments that value exploration and play. The outdoors offers unique possibilities, and daily opportunities should be made available for children to immerse themselves in outdoor spaces, offered through regular visits to suitable local places if the setting has no outside space. Within environments that offer engaging activities with real choice, autonomy and time, children can engage and wallow in independent exploration and enquiry. They can connect with other children, adults and the natural world, benefitting from with freedom of movement and activity within a framework of supportive adult guidance.

Enabling environments offer children security, comfort, engagement and opportunity. Children benefit from the opportunity to choose their own learning and enquiries through play when settings embrace free flow and choice as children move between activities and experiences, not simply from inside to outside. Given access to natural resources and first-hand experiences, children will independently explore, discover and investigate, choosing the items and the environment that best suit their own interests and their development and learning needs. Such an environment will support a child's creativity and critical thinking, building the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

Provision is needed for:

- diverse forms of active play, both indoors and outdoors
- experiencing the real physical and natural world, as well as the social world
- the space and time for children to fully discover, test and revisit their ideas and theories
- cosy and quiet space for sleeping, resting, sitting quietly and sensory engagement
- experiences in familiar and predictable spaces, and in those that are unfamiliar, complex and exciting
- routines and adult involvement which offer support for development and learning that may be planned or may arise informally, for example when a surprise event or spontaneous opportunity presents itself
- opportunities for children to explore things that they would not otherwise have access to
- exposure to things where specific skills need to be taught, which would only happen if an adult initiated it, eg woodwork, cooking, sewing.

Children's learning is best supported when they have opportunities which allow for movement and action, creativity and imagination, independence and collaboration. An enabling environment offers:

- opportunities for negotiation and collaboration with other children, as their communication, language and social skills are employed and developed
- open-ended play opportunities allowing imagination and creativity to flourish, with children exploring their own ideas and theories as all areas of learning are unlocked rather than specific intended learning outcomes
- opportunities to challenge their own emotional, social, physical and cognitive abilities and to take risks
- time simply to be within the environments, to develop a sense of self as children explore their capabilities
- a balance of relevant, interactive and celebratory displays at the child's level, as well as natural, calm and neutral backdrops that invite children's own ideas.

Time outdoors and immersed in nature benefits children by offering unique opportunities. Being outdoors offers children unique possibilities to see longer distances, observe the horizon, experience the natural world as they feel weather, hear sounds in nature or experience changes in natural light. There is also greater scope to manipulate loose parts and other versatile resources, and to engage in appropriately energetic, risky and adventurous play. Time outdoors benefits children's health and wellbeing and promotes all areas of development and learning. First-hand experience outdoors helps children to make sense of the world, and to learn to care for their environment. Through a sense of belonging and understanding the

impact of their actions on their environment, children can become confident caretakers and problem-solvers of the future.

Natural environments support children's imaginative play and the development of peer relationships, encouraging collaboration with others. The relative freedom from rules outdoors can lead to more relaxed interactions between adults and children. The outdoors also offers the chance to experiment with the larger scales of space, shape and measure.

Open-ended resources enable children to access and combine processes of development and learning.

Easily accessible, well organised and appealing resources inside and outside allow children to make choices and transform their environments. In the process, they can develop flexible thinking as they may be surprised by what happens, and they are challenged as they learn across the curriculum to develop their own working theories, critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Inclusive spaces are nurturing and supportive of all children. Spaces should be planned to both nurture and inspire children, recognising their interests and curiosities, encouraging questioning, awe and wonder, and sustained shared thinking. The environment should allow free movement, with support if needed, including easy access to the outdoors. Spaces both indoors and out should be safe and supportive, and able to be adapted responsively to children's

emotions, interests, and needs through an array of engaging opportunities which take account of cultural diversity. Stimulating environments allow children to engage with all their senses, but should not become overwhelming through too much colour, noise or artificial textures.

Within an enabling environment, knowledgeable educators optimise the development and learning potential of every child. Knowledgeable educators:

- consider the environment from a child's perspective, supporting a broader understanding of the real world around them and their own community
- consider all locations available to children with equal priority – indoors, outside and beyond the setting – and value the time that is spent on journeying
- understand that their role includes facilitating an enabling environment, rather than prioritising specific activities
- consider the messages conveyed within the environment, questioning what the space is inviting children to do
- support children's autonomy, explorations and risk-taking, confident that much is within the children's capabilities, with assistance if necessary.



Key points

- Children are unique and holistic learners, thriving within environments that support their individual and diverse motivations, interests and needs.
- Enabling Environments offer children security, comfort, choice, engagement and opportunity.
- Children's learning is best supported when they have opportunities which allow for movement and action, creativity and imagination, independence and collaboration.
- Time outdoors and immersed in nature benefits children by offering unique opportunities.
- Open-ended resources enable children to access and combine processes of development and learning.
- Inclusive spaces are nurturing and supportive of all children.
- Within an enabling environment, knowledgeable educators optimise the development and learning potential of every child.

The wider context

Children, families, and educators are affected by wider contexts. Beyond a setting's environment which has a crucial impact on children, it is important to bear in mind that the setting exists within a wider context that also influences children and families. Context is the environment people enter or create together, and everyone within a context will influence it both directly and indirectly.

Contexts can have multiple layers shaped by physical environments, personal experiences, social relationships, emotions and ways of thinking. Aspects of a context may be visible to some but not to everyone – although people may share a context at a particular time and place, it does not mean that everyone hears, sees, feels, or values the same things. Some influences operate at larger scales, including contemporary issues such as environmental challenges and climate change, the need for sustainable development, economic inequalities, migration and displacement and a variety of social and political movements. These wider contexts filter into the daily lives of children, families, and educators and find expression in local contexts.

Contexts and communities are dynamic, multiple, and constantly changing through circumstances such as politics, demography and technology. It is important to remember the role that children, families, and educators can play in shaping local contexts, and be aware that communities are not static groups. They develop from living practices that give people's lives shared meaning and value.

Every early years setting is a community with its own values, but it also connects beyond, with:

- children's communities (siblings, cousins, friends)
- trans-local communities (including family members living abroad)
- digital communities (social media, online groups)
- inter-agency/multi-professional communities, and other early childhood education communities
- non-human things and beings that children are attached to (such as animals, insects, imaginary friends, special objects, sounds and images).

Relationships between early years settings and communities can be supported through contact, communication and activity, with scope for mutual benefits. There is potential to tune in to one another's hopes, fears, priorities and beliefs about children and childhood, and to learn from each other through reciprocal support and understanding.

Place, space and histories are important.

Communities and settings are embedded in particular

places with their own geographies, neighbourhoods and local knowledge. They have local histories, group cultures and collective memories that shape the way spaces are created and used. Shared memories and experiences can offer comfort and strengthen connection, while encouraging us to meet the present thoughtfully, especially where there are past experiences of hardship or injustice.

Communities can often take responsibility for creating and caring for local environments and experience a sense of wellbeing and connection to the places they live. Communities may, however, also be subject to negative impacts on the local environment such as pollution, traffic and a lack of accessible, safe public spaces to move and play. In practice, you might consider the role of partnership working with families, and whether there are creative solutions for building stronger community connections.

Children are active citizens now and in their futures.

It is important to respect and recognise children's roles as active citizens in shaping their environments and communities. Children's needs, preferences, thoughts and choices need to be heard and responded to respectfully so that their vision and energy contribute to building healthy communities and environments for all. Children might be considered "active community-makers" as they move with agency between home, family, setting and play spaces.

Active steps can be taken to focus on building children's view of themselves as citizens with both rights and responsibilities, and on supporting their capacities to actively participate and contribute. The expectations children build within the life of a setting community will carry through to how they see their role in other contexts to which they belong, now and as they grow up. Settings can make both rights and responsibilities explicit to young children, alongside providing lived experience of being active agents of change who have influence on others and on decisions that are made.

Settings can promote citizenship by supporting children's sense of agency, such as:

- **Genuinely sharing power in an open way** – Two-way respectful dialogue enables adults and children to experience both learning from and teaching



the other. There can be explicit times when children know they are in charge of decisions. Play is important in building a sense of agency, with children determining how, where, with whom and with what they play. This can be made especially clear to children by encouraging them to articulate what they are choosing to do. When children are in charge this should be respected, without calling them away for adult purposes.

- **Involving children in making decisions** – When decisions are made, children and adults can work together to discuss, problem-solve and try to reach consensus. Even babies and very young children can experience agency when adults recognise and respond to their preferences, initially being invited to communicate a preference between just two things offered to them. Over time, children can suggest options themselves. Enabling children to make free choices within clear boundaries encourages them to develop and express their own ideas, strengthening their identity as active citizens.
- **Responsibility for the shared space** – children can be empowered to contribute towards caring for their environment, developing social awareness, empathy and environmental responsibility. Activities such as tidying and planning play areas or selecting and caring for classroom materials support children to see themselves as active members of their community.

A sense of responsibility for the environment in the setting and for everything to work effectively is built through routines and expectations where children have regular responsibilities, and where they know their contributions and ideas are valued. Responsibility for others grows from a setting ethos of fairness and valuing everyone, so children feel valued members of the group, promoting empathy and cooperation. Educators can give attention to the views and

feelings of everyone involved when conflict arises and problem-solve the situation together rather than relying on an adult-imposed rule.

Early years settings can be communities for social justice and sustainability. By bringing together diverse communities, early years settings lie at the heart of social change. The setting can create a sense of community through the relationships and environments that pull diverse elements together. They are safe spaces for families and generate social and community participation. As early years educators and families engage in the care of these environments, they can experience positive change, social justice and sustainability in action.

Early years settings have an important role to play in challenging unconscious bias and contributing to equity by understanding how race, gender, sexual orientation, poverty, faith, prejudice and disability affect learning and life chances. To address unconscious bias regarding the local context, early years educators can learn more about what families like about the places they live in, engage with and support those who want to improve, and encourage greater ownership of the spaces they would like to change.

Sustainability is addressed through shared respect and care for the material environment, for example collectively coming up with ways to reduce consumption, repair, recycle and reuse. Wider contexts that involve principles of common worlds and climate change can inspire settings to become actively involved in local and broader groups and networks focused on sustainability and environmental restoration. Such involvement can help children recognise their place in the wider world, fostering a sense of connection and responsibility, toward creating a sustainable peaceful society.



Key points

- Children, families, and educators are affected by wider contexts.
- Every early years setting is a community with its own values, but it also connects beyond.
- Place, space, and histories are important.
- Children are citizens now and in their futures.
- Early years settings can be communities for social justice and sustainability.

Digital pedagogy

When using digital technology, it is important to be led by what children will learn and experience.

Digital technology in early years settings takes many forms, including screens, everyday interactive toys, and smart devices using Artificial Intelligence (AI). In their settings, children may have experience of programmable robots, digital microscopes, remote-control vehicles, as well as tablets, interactive whiteboards, and AI-based voice assistants.

To integrate technology effectively, devices should be chosen based on the unique experiences and learning opportunities they provide.

Technology should be treated as a tool, with digital devices representing one part of an educator's wider toolkit. The same level of care should be taken when choosing digital tools as when setting up the role play area or refreshing the book corner with stories that represent children's lives. Ask yourself: "What does this tool make possible for the child?" and "How could technology complement activities?" For example, a digital microscope lets children see textures that are not visible by eye alone. Programmable robots encourage the children to develop **computational thinking and problem-solving skills**.

As well as considering the benefits of technology use, it is also necessary to ask: "What is this digital experience replacing?" Imagine two children building a tower with wooden blocks. As they stack, they are talking, learning to work together, improving hand-eye coordination, and discovering how to stay calm if the tower falls. In contrast, playing on a block-building app may lack such rich opportunities for incidental learning and potentially take away time that could be spent practising other important skills.



Choosing when to use technology is as important as the device itself.

Always consider which experiences might be disrupted by introducing technology. For instance, when capturing a photo for a child's learning journal, it may be better to wait until an activity has finished than interrupt a moment of social interaction or focused play.

Timing also plays a role during transitions.

- Because digital tools can be so engaging, using them right before a transition (like tidy-up time) can make it harder for a child to move to the next task.
- **Screens should be avoided near nap times or the end of the day:** bright lights and stimulating content can interfere with winding down for quality sleep.

Consider how the timing and type of use fits with other activities. If children have been sitting for story time, use tools that encourage movement (such as a Bluetooth speaker to play music for a dance break) rather than moving to a seated digital activity.

The adult's role is important. The educator's role is critical in ensuring technology remains a tool for learning and discovery. Digital experiences work best when they are led by children and shared with adults, helping children to connect learning from technology with broad everyday experiences while supporting their overall wellbeing. Because young children learn through sensitive, responsive relationships, it is essential to maintain back-and-forth interactions while using digital tools. By joining and guiding the process with open-ended questions (eg "I wonder what will happen if you press that button?") adults can scaffold children's thinking and promote a positive, balanced approach to technology. Avoid using technology to replace adult interaction – choose interactive singing with an educator over playing nursery rhyme videos. When educators model purposeful use, such as looking up information together or translating a word into a child's home language, they show that technology is a helpful tool for life.

What do you like about your early years setting?

“Friends. Making play dough, forest school and the fire. Painting. Goo and stories.”

Wilfred, 3

Throughout these experiences, the adult's presence is vital for safety – from monitoring hazards like batteries to ensuring children are protected from inappropriate content – providing a foundation for building healthy digital habits.

Focus on the quality of the experience. The impact of technology depends on how, when, and with whom it is used. Guidelines often suggest no screen time at all for infants - and limited use for preschoolers. But the **quality of the digital experience** matters just as much. Children's “digital diet” should be as nourishing as possible. Poor-quality digital tools might hold a child's attention but without actively engaging their minds to support learning. Watching unpredictable content can reduce children's ability to pay attention. Yet well-designed tools can offer meaningful benefits and encourage social play (for example, turn-taking and collective problem-solving when using an interactive whiteboard to create a digital collage).

Educators should choose technology which is designed using principles of **child development and learning**. Many apps/tools which claim to be educational or designed for children are not of high quality. Look for tools which promote interaction and exploration, move at a pace that the child can follow, and where the child – not the device – drives the activity (such as taking photos for a scavenger hunt). Avoid distracting features such as adverts or autoplay.

In digital pedagogy, inclusion and diversity and access for each child are paramount. Digital tools chosen intentionally can offer powerful ways to broaden a child's world and increase their independence. Technology can help to increase accessibility (eg communication apps for children with SEND) and reflect diversity (eg recording a welcome message in a child's primary language). Children's voices should shape how technology is chosen and used in play, reflecting their interests and experiences across the setting.

Partnership with families includes building shared understanding of digital technology use. By modelling intentional use, educators can help families view technology as a tool for learning and bonding, rather than simply to keep children occupied and quiet. Consider sharing ideas with families about using digital experiences as a time for talking and co-playing. Technology also offers a way to bring a child's home life into the setting, for example through sharing digital photos of a recent holiday or video calls to meet a family pet.

Consider how technology is used to share children's progress with families. Ask yourself: “Is this the most personal and effective way to communicate?” While digital observations can be helpful, a warm verbal update at the door or a handwritten note about a new breakthrough can often be more meaningful. Alongside digital systems, educators should prioritise meaningful communication to build partnerships and connection with every family.



Key points

- When using digital technology, it is important to be led by what children will learn and experience.
- To integrate technology effectively, devices should be chosen based on the unique experiences and learning opportunities they provide.
- As well as considering the benefits of technology use, it is also necessary to ask: “What is this digital experience replacing?”
- Choosing when to use technology is as important as the device itself.
- The adult's role is critical.
- Focus on the quality of the experience. The impact of technology depends on how, when, and with whom it is used.
- In digital pedagogy, inclusion and diversity and access for each child are paramount.
- Partnership with families includes building shared understanding of using digital technologies.

Learning and Development

Across early childhood – progression and continuity

The first years of life are a period of rapid development, with each child in a constant state of transition from the awareness and capacities of a newborn to those of a young child a few years later. This changing development across the EYFS requires educators to meet babies and children where they are, adjusting their pedagogy accordingly. Working with babies is quite different to working with 4- or 5-year-olds, and this shift occurs in a gradual **progression in pedagogy** across the EYFS.

While each child shares overall patterns of development with others, each also follows individual pathways and timing of development. Effective educators observe children's unique patterns of development and focus on their competencies. This is part of the continuity of pedagogy across the EYFS, rooted firmly in the Foundations of Highest Quality Provision and the principles of Unique Child and Enabling Environments.

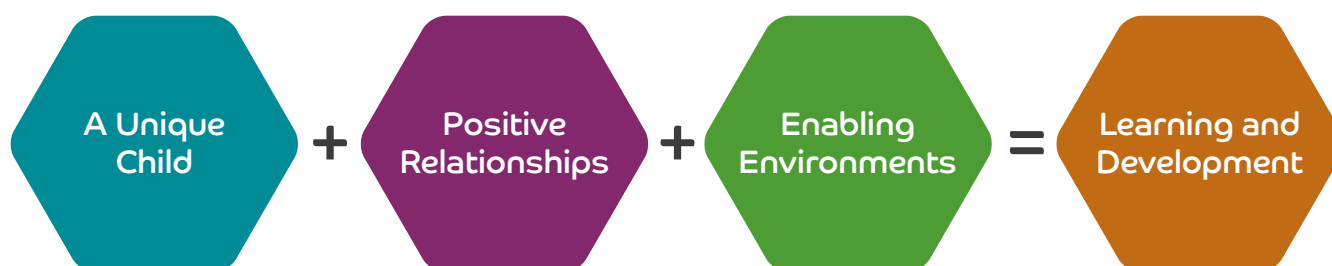
It can be helpful to consider typical aspects of development outlined in the following age/phase discussions, which require appropriate responses from educators. Typical ages are identified as often used in settings' room or class organisation, but it is important to remember that children may be developmentally at a different stage, including those affected by prematurity, neurodivergence, health issues and so on, and that **each child's needs should be met according to their development and not their age**. This is why Birth to 5 Matters prioritises Ranges of development, rather than ages.

Support for every child and family is built on a continuous pedagogy of welcoming and acceptance which is every staff member's responsibility.

As children move through their own pattern of development and into new EYFS contexts, this means:

- accepting that every child is an active agent in their own learning
- ensuring time and space for relationships with adults and peers to develop and grow
- ensuring the "voice of the child" is heard by using active listening strategies and observations that enable understanding of the individual child
- prioritising emotional wellbeing through strategies that enable children to be confident, resilient and able to cope with change
- building relationships with parents, family and community with sensitivity and valuing and respecting the richness of cultural differences.

Continuous, consistent pedagogy



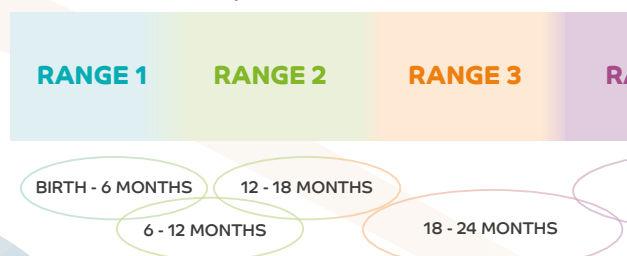
Progressive pedagogy



The following sections outline typical features of development as children move from birth across early childhood, organised by age ranges as often used for grouping in early years settings.

Understanding typical progression helps educators to respond effectively to children's needs at different stages of development. It is important to remember, however, that children develop at different rates – there are no precise age cut-offs in development.

Birth to 2 Baby/toddler room



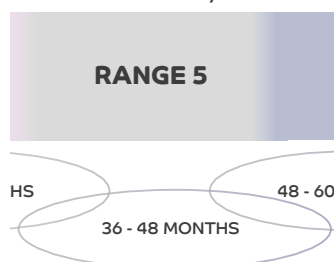
Shown here in relation to Bto5M Ranges, it is clear that any age-linked group such as a baby room or nursery class will typically include children from more than one Range.

2-year-olds 2-year-old group

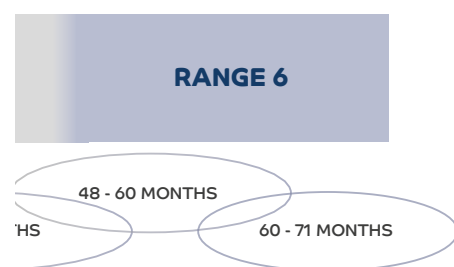


Because development is so rapid during the first 3 years, children usually move through early Ranges more quickly than from age 3 onwards.

3 to 4-year-olds Nursery



Reception and beyond Reception/Year 1



From Birth to 2

Babies and toddlers are unique individuals and need educators who know them well and respect their individual development. They are people in their own right – human beings who are valued for who they are in the present. They are unique individuals and active co-constructors of learning. Effective birth to two educators act as advocates who enable babies' and toddlers' voices to be heard.

Babies and toddlers thrive in responsive, consistent, attuned relationships with their key person. They learn who they are through their relationships with others, beginning their journey of self-discovery from a base of loving and secure relationships. Positive attachments help babies and toddlers to feel safe, secure and loved, able to develop a strong sense of self as a capable and confident person.

Babies and toddlers construct their identities in their social environments. They understand how they are valued from the physical and verbal responses of their caring adults to their unique selves. The physical and emotional needs of babies and toddlers are intertwined. To develop a secure and whole sense of self, they need consistent, caring physical interactions with their key person in a continuity of experience. Each physical caregiving moment is an opportunity to be present and responsive to babies' needs and supports their personal social and emotional understanding

Babies and toddlers experience their emotions very intensely and communicate them immediately. When these are responded to with empathy and sensitivity, they learn that emotions can be managed and that they are loved. Attuned, responsive, unhurried interactions and continuity of care tell babies that they are safe and understood and support secure attachments to key people.

A baby's sense of self begins with their experience of their own bodies. They explore their hands and feet, wave, kick and roll, giving them a sense of their bodily boundaries and of themselves in space. Rapid physical growth and the development of physical competencies are at the centre of babies' and toddlers' experience. They have a great appetite to explore and control their own bodies and to move around their environment – not only learning to move but also moving to learn. Through opportunities and space to move freely and practise, they increase their muscle strength, sense of balance, mobility, agility, and understanding of space. Babies and toddlers study and experiment with one movement many times, refining their agility and dexterity. When handling different objects and materials, they are developing increasing



control of their fingers, hands and wrists, refining their manipulative skills. Repetition also enables their brains to strengthen neural connections and so develops their understanding of the world.

The ability to move freely and repeatedly manipulate objects brings babies and toddlers tremendous enjoyment and learning across all areas of development. For example, readiness for using the potty or toilet is determined by physical maturity and also influenced by social, emotional and intellectual understanding. As toddlers become more mobile, they begin to assert their own choices, decisions and ideas, with the ability to move freely giving them a sense of autonomy and competency.

An enabling environment recognises the importance of slowing down, allowing babies and toddlers to fully engage with people, objects and experiences. Uninterrupted time for exploration, without rushing children from one activity to another, enables valuable repeated play with the same resources and activities while a slower pace supports their sense of security and helps them to remain regulated and engaged.



Babies and toddlers are social beings who develop meaningful relationships with adults and other children from birth. They enjoy being with people, taking an interest in their faces, voices and movements. They show their interest by gazing and reaching and gain others' attention through smiling, reaching and pointing. Babies' social interactions are underpinned by their sensory experiences of touch, hearing, smell, taste, movement and vision, recognising people through their sensory memory.

Being together in close nurturing relationships leads to the wider social development of friendships, to empathy and social understanding. Learning about themselves through having their own needs met enables babies and toddlers to begin to understand the needs and minds of others. Babies and toddlers enjoy playing social games such as "peek-a-boo" with their close carers. They begin to share humour, laughing at funny faces for example. Babies also enjoy being with other babies – watching, touching and vocalising with each other – and they are usually fascinated by older children.

Toddlers may imitate and follow others and notice how they are the same or different. Although they enjoy the company of other children and want to join in their play, toddlers are still developing their social understanding. They may manage to socialise only for short periods of time, and may need time with just one particular friend or adult.

Babies' and toddlers' social communications are best supported in one-to-one attuned interactions. Babies and toddlers are communicators from birth. They are born ready to read and understand adult faces, gestures and movements and adult intentions. They are distinguishing sound patterns – "learning the tune before the words". They imitate the intonation and sounds made by their close carers and understand conversational patterns.

Babies use a wide range of communication strategies such as gazing, smiling, reaching, pointing, looking away, grimacing, and arching their bodies, alongside vocal communications such as crying, gurgling, laughing, screaming and babbling. Toddlers are using signed or spoken language more but still rely on non-verbal communication. They need attuned, listening adults for their voices to be heard, interpreted and valued and for well-matched responses to



support their later language development. When early attempts at finding a voice are received and responded to sensitively, their confidence in communicating grows.

An enabling environment recognises the importance of slowing down, allowing babies and toddlers to fully engage with people, objects and experiences.

Uninterrupted time for exploration, without rushing children from one activity to another, enables valuable repeated play with the same resources and activities while a slower pace supports their sense of security and helps them to remain regulated and engaged.

Babies are curious from birth and want to explore their world. They use their whole bodies and all their senses to find out about objects and people. As they explore, they make connections between experiences, test theories about the world around them and form mental concepts. Babies and toddlers form mental representations of objects and symbolise these through gestures, signs, vocalisations and gradually begin to represent their ideas through imitation and re-creating experiences through actions, words and play. They enjoy being outside, exploring the natural world.

While their curiosity pushes them to find out about what is happening around them, babies and toddlers cannot shut out a lot of sensory stimulation, so busy, noisy, bright environments may become overwhelming. Everything is new and offers an opportunity for learning, but this can also cause anxiety so they may seek reassurance as they explore new things. Some children may be adventurous, coming back only to seek comfort from their key person as needed, while others may want to play near their key person until they become comfortable.

2-year-olds

The third year of life is a period of rapid developmental change, so a child who is nearly 3 is very different from a child just past their second birthday. Each 2-year-old also differs from others in personality, family and cultural experience, and in maturity.

2-year-olds are characteristically enthusiastic about exploring. They continually investigate how things work – moving them around, taking them apart, repeating their experiments and observing closely to see the effect of their actions. Understanding how things work leads to using objects and tools imaginatively, making marks and understanding that one thing can stand for another. Their approach is “in the moment” and they focus on the process of their creativity, not a product.

They may apply their new knowledge of the material and social world to situations in unusual or different ways. Rapid neural development supports making connections between experiences and forming ideas that might be interesting or feel scary. Exploring from a secure base of trusting relationships with their key person, who sensitively balances new experiences with familiar and predictable ones, helps 2-year-olds to explore confidently.

2-year-olds are playing to move and moving to play. When moving around, 2-year-olds see things from different perspectives, which increases their understanding of spatial concepts. They can become absorbed in their play, particularly when an occupation matches their schematic thinking such as transporting, enveloping, rotation or trajectory. 2-year-olds are supported to learn through their play in generous spaces where educators recognise the importance of children using and moving resources in their own way.

The 2-year-old's body is at the centre of their experience. Physical activity refines their growing mobility, agility and dexterity as they become runners, jumpers and climbers. Constantly practising new physical skills can be physically tiring and emotionally wearing for 2-year-olds. Supportive educators encourage free movement in an emotionally safe environment, including finding ways in which children with physical disabilities can be as agile and dextrous as they can. 2-year-olds' fascination with what their bodies can do is a good starting point for learning about how to look after your body in areas such as using the toilet.

2-year-olds are being and becoming themselves, experimenting with their own and others' ideas of who they are. They are exploring being an autonomous person – making decisions, asserting preferences, making choices and experimenting with doing things for themselves. Their persistence and determination are supported by educators who help them to succeed at their task safely but with their sense of competence intact. Adults who support but do not interfere allow 2-year-olds to be confident in their own abilities, while knowing that they can look to others for assistance when necessary.



“I love playing with my friends and the toys at Kelly’s house.” (Kelly is his childminder)

Wilfred, 3

What do you like about your early years setting?

“Lily and Jasper.
(A friend and the childminder’s dog)
I make biscuits.”

Ivy, 3



2-year-olds are characteristically enthusiastic about communicating and being with other people. They are sensitive to others’ feelings and concerned about relationships. They enjoy the company of other children, observing, imitating, initiating contact and making friends with children with similar interests. Their ability to understand others’ needs fluctuates and is easily overpowered by their own needs, which can make prolonged social engagement challenging so they need spaces to retreat to.

2-year-olds are learning more ways to communicate. They are already adept at body language, and their spoken language is becoming more sophisticated. They are rapidly adding new words to their vocabulary, and telegraphic speech is turning into sentences which enables them to express themselves more clearly to others. They are still regularly misunderstood by adults and other children, however, which can result in physical expressions of frustration. 2-year-olds are at the very beginning of learning to balance their own needs and desire for autonomy with

those of others. Their strong sense of physical self and intense emotions mean that they express themselves through physical behaviours, all of which are communications about their feelings and what they need. Attuned educators support 2-year-olds through building positive relationships and empathising with their challenges.

A key characteristic of 2-year-olds is their changeability. Intense and immediate emotional processing means they are on an emotional and social rollercoaster as they meet many new, challenging and often hard-to-understand experiences. An overwhelming flow of new information can result in sensory overload and emotional collapse. Attuned, empathetic relationships with their key person and predictable but flexible routines that help them to manage being part of a community will support 2-year-olds to thrive.



3-to-4-year-olds

Most children aged 3 and 4 are building relationships with peers through rapidly developing social and language skills. They are often very involved in joint pretend play, which provides an important support for both their relationships and their thinking. In taking on a role, they are practising seeing the world through someone else's eyes, while pretending requires an ability to think beyond the here and now into a world of abstract possibilities.

They are still centred in their bodies and need to move, and are neither physically nor emotionally ready for extended periods of sitting still. While 3-year-olds may be in a variety of settings, most children are still age 4 when they enter a school Reception class, with some summer-born children still in this age group through the whole Reception year.

3-and 4-year-olds are enthusiastic explorers and movers. As their balance and stability get stronger, they thrive on opportunities to practise moving through space alone and with others. They practise catching and manipulating objects as they move and play, and benefit from freedom to practise skills on a variety of surfaces in a variety of positions. They learn through first-hand experiences, and as they construct, deconstruct or arrange materials they make plans, experiment and find out about objects, quantities, materials and forces.

3-and 4-year-olds are playing to learn. In their imaginative play – either inventing their own scenarios or acting out favourite stories – there are no wrong or right answers, but built-in rules keep the play going. Children practise self-regulation when they stick to their role and behave appropriately. They can also help others by stepping briefly out of character to keep the play on track, with talk as an important regulatory part of role play. They need interested adults who notice and comment on these skills and perhaps join the discussion – “Who shall I be? What shall I do?” – but do not take over the play. With adult support, children at 3 and 4 are also interested in playing simple turn-taking games with rules which help build their group social skills.

3-and 4-year-olds are keen communicators and talkers. Their language is now much more complex, as many become adept at using longer sentences. They use their language for thinking and can often be heard talking through ideas and plans to themselves and/or with their friends.

To expand their ability to express their thoughts, children need someone who is interested and interesting to talk to. The role of the adult is to be a sensitive and stimulating communication partner

who can scaffold learning during everyday activities, through adult-led games or by joining in play. When it is not appropriate to join children's play, the adult can reflect on the play with the children afterwards. The adult who says things like “I saw you spent a lot of time making the bridge stand up. What did you learn?” is recognising the value of effort and opening a conversation which helps the children to reflect on their own learning. This sort of interaction supports critical thinking. Conversations about concrete experiences also increase vocabulary in a meaningful way. Research shows that good oral language skills in the early years are the basis of good literacy skills both in early years and beyond.

The secure base of loving relationships with their key person and other staff members is still essential for children to feel a sense of belonging and wellbeing in the setting. Their relationships with their peer group and the development of special friendships are also very important to them, as they gradually widen their awareness of the communities to which they belong.



Reception and beyond

Children in Reception and beyond continue to acquire new skills and knowledge, but there is no major developmental shift across this phase of early childhood. Children are still learning how to manage their emotions, sustain attention, negotiate relationships and make sense of the world. While there is continuity in development, children may experience significant changes in expectations and environments which require careful support.

Close, warm relationships with others continue to form the basis for much learning. Children are now building a stronger sense of their own identity and their place in a community and the wider world, learning to recognise the importance of social rules and customs, and to show understanding and tolerance of others. Social skills in cooperating with others may grow rapidly through an increased interest in joint play such as role play and construction, while there remains a challenge in balancing independence and complying with the wishes of others. Children still need the comfort and security of special people.

Children are now able to plan and undertake more challenging activities with a wider range of materials for making and doing. Their language becomes more complex as they express their ideas with increasing sophistication, and literacy and mathematics may develop at a rapid pace.

It is important to remember that each Unique Child follows their own developmental pathway. This pathway is not determined by their date of birth, but it is important to be mindful that some children are almost a year younger than others in their class. Consequently, expectations and pedagogy should follow the development of the children, with no marked jump based on movement into a new year group or predetermined expectations of where children “should” be in their learning.

The Reception Year is an essential and integral part of the EYFS. The overarching principles that underpin practice remain statutory throughout the Reception year. This requires giving priority to the quality of relationships and interactions, rich opportunities and resources for play, and support for the development of the Characteristics of Effective Learning as well as the Prime and Specific areas of learning. Despite this, many schools feel under pressure when children enter the Reception year to move away from what evidence tells us is best practice for young children.

School leaders have a crucial role to play in safeguarding the wellbeing and development of children in the Reception year by ensuring that practice in Reception classes continues to reflect principles of the EYFS and that all staff working in Reception understand the importance of play-based pedagogy.

As children move across Reception and beyond, professional dialogue across phases is essential to ensure children have the best possible support for their learning and development. Such dialogue is supported by sharing best practice and individual learning journeys through the EYFS Profile, which remains a statutory requirement on transition to KS1 in England.

What children learn in Key Stage 1 (KS1) may be different, but how they learn must be similar and familiar. As children move into KS1, curriculum content becomes more formally defined. New subject-specific vocabulary, concepts and knowledge are introduced and focus shifts from the Prime Areas of Learning and Development to the core subjects of the National Curriculum. While new expectations and experiences are part of this change, developmentally there is very little difference in the ways in which children learn in KS1 and so the pedagogy should not alter.

Pedagogic continuity between Reception and Year 1 and a developmentally-informed approach to the National Curriculum support children’s emotional security, confidence and sustained engagement. Young children need long periods of uninterrupted time to make sense of new learning. To facilitate this, the learning environment in KS1 should ideally include indoor and outdoor provision between which children can flow as freely as possible. Both areas should include resources which children can use independently throughout the day. This continuous provision supports the independent play and enquiry with which children are familiar, while also allowing the National Curriculum to be introduced in more playful, active ways.

Reception and beyond... Continued

In Reception and KS1, children continue to be motivated by meaningful learning opportunities, over which they have an element of agency. Research shows that giving children a sense of agency over their learning alongside opportunities for cognitive challenge is essential in promoting metacognition. Although what children are learning becomes more prescribed, with focus on literacy and maths increasing in Reception and again as they begin to follow the National Curriculum in Year 1, removing opportunities for choice too early can lead to reduced engagement, compliant behaviour and a narrowing of children's identities as capable, confident learners. In contrast, being able to make choices that influence the direction of their learning encourages a sense of empowerment which results in greater curiosity and resilience in the face of new challenges.

A balance between adult- and child-led learning is essential in Reception and KS1. Skilled teachers recognise that the role of the teacher changes as they move between **leading** the learning (the adult-led agenda) and **following** the learning (the child-led agenda). When teachers are leading learning, the purpose of the activity and its desired outcomes have been determined by them. When teachers are following learning, their role is more varied and unpredictable. When following the child's lead, the teacher may step back and observe, or join in and interact.

Knowing when to step back and when to join in takes a great deal of skill. In order to achieve the best outcomes for every child, school leaders must ensure that Reception and KS1 teachers understand developmentally-informed practice. This also means that senior leaders must be confident in monitoring and assessing play-based pedagogy.



Play is a vital way in which children in Reception and KS1 continue to learn skills, strategies and attitudes that adult-led learning alone cannot teach.

At a developmentally appropriate point, adult-led experiences teaching specific knowledge and skills do have a role in children's learning. These experiences alone, however, do not provide the scope of learning that occurs through high quality play. When children rely too heavily on adult-led and directed experiences then they can become passive and unable to lead their own learning. Opportunities to learn through play empower children to develop resilience, flexibility, critical thinking and initiative. These are the skills they need not only in their early years, but in order to manage the uncertain, unpredictable world of the future.

England is currently an outlier in the UK as the only nation with no statutory expectation that play should continue beyond the Early Years. Scotland and Wales are leading the way with frameworks that embed and protect play throughout the primary years. Where school leaders have a strong grounding in early childhood pedagogy and the confidence to pursue evidence-informed practice, play is more likely to be protected and extended beyond Reception and schools are more likely to see happy, healthy children who love learning and are thriving in Reception and beyond.



Holistic development and learning

“Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning.” says the EYFS principle, emphasising that each everyday experience is an occasion for holistic development and learning, as seen in this example of a toddler enjoying his snack.



Holistic development and learning

Enabling environments foster holistic approaches to early development and learning, recognising that different aspects are constantly connected in a child's experiences. In the EYFS, areas are described separately in order to break down the complexity of development and learning, but it is important to keep the whole child in mind. As a child encounters objects, events and other people, all spheres of development and learning are in action at the same time, as in the example below of two children who are experimenting with water and a construction using tubing and plastic sheets.



Overview – Characteristics of Effective Learning, and Areas of Learning and Development

The Characteristics of Effective Learning and the Prime and Specific Areas of Learning and Development are all inter-connected. Different elements of learning are identified in the EYFS, to make the complex picture of learning clearer. But children's learning is not compartmentalised and many or all of these elements are in action at the same time as children interact with people and things.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning describe behaviours children use in order to learn. To learn well, children must approach opportunities with curiosity, energy and enthusiasm. Effective learning must be meaningful to a child, so that they are able to use what they have learned and apply it in new situations. These abilities and attitudes of strong learners will support them to learn well and make good progress in all the Areas of Learning and Development.

The Areas of Learning and Development affect each other. For example, developing communication and language will support children to understand and

explain mathematical ideas. Developing physical skills will allow children to be more active explorers and so enhance their progress in Understanding the World. The more concepts they develop within Understanding the World, the more they will be able to relate to what they find in books and so support their development in Literacy. Experiences and activities that relate to Areas of Learning and Development, when they offer children opportunities to have autonomy and develop their own ideas, can also provide the contexts for children to practise their learning behaviours, and so reinforce the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Playing and Exploring

ENGAGEMENT

Finding out and exploring
Playing with what they know
Being willing to "have a go"

Active Learning

MOTIVATION

Being involved and concentrating
Keep trying
Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Thinking Creatively and Critically

THINKING

Having their own ideas
Making links
Working with ideas

Areas of Learning and Development

Birth to 5 Matters Aspects

Prime Areas

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Making Relationships
Sense of Self
Understanding Feelings

Physical Development

Moving and handling
Health and Self-care

Communication and Language

Listening and Attention
Understanding
Speaking

Specific Areas

Literacy

Reading
Writing

Mathematics

Mathematics

Understanding the World

People and Communities
The World
Technology

Expressive Arts and Design

Creating with Materials
Being Imaginative and Expressive



Prime areas of development and learning lay vital foundations in the early years.

The three Prime areas, **Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)**, **Communication and Language (CL)**, and **Physical Development (PD)**, describe universal core aspects of early child development. They are time-sensitive because developmental neuroscience shows that the early years are a period of heightened neuroplasticity with the brain forming and pruning new neural connections at an accelerated rate, particularly in the first three years of life but continuing throughout early childhood. Developmental steps missed at this early crucial stage are much harder to address later on, so it is crucial that children's interactions and experiences in the first few years support development in these fundamental areas.



All three Prime areas are always in action for a young child. In every activity, the child is experiencing feelings and developing a sense of self and others, is physically engaged through their senses and movements, and is learning to understand and communicate with others. It is through these aspects that a child accesses the world around them and relationships with other people, which in turn opens the door to learning in all areas.

The three Prime areas are interconnected, operating not as isolated domains but as an integrated system. Development in each of the Prime areas affects the others. As babies and children develop their sensory abilities and movement, they can perceive and engage with others and so develop in PSED. Engaging with others spurs more physical activity, and is the beginning of communication and language, which in turn helps build relationships, understanding of feelings and learning about health and physical wellbeing. When early years environments intentionally support all three prime areas, children develop the **holistic readiness** required for learning across the Specific areas of learning and development.

While the Prime areas are especially crucial to early years provision during the first three years, they remain centrally important for children's development and learning throughout the EYFS and beyond and should receive priority attention to ensure strong foundations in development and learning.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Who we are (personal), how we get along with others (social) and how we feel (emotional) are foundations that form the bedrock of our lives. As we move through life, we are continually developing our sense of self as we weave a web of relationships with self, others and with the world.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development is fundamental to all other aspects of lifelong development and learning, and is key to children's wellbeing and resilience. For babies and young children to flourish, we need to pay attention to how they understand and feel about themselves, and how secure they feel in close relationships: in so doing they develop their capacities to make sense of how they and other people experience the world. Children's self-image, their emotional understanding and the quality of their relationships affect their self-confidence, their potential to experience joy, to be curious, to wonder, and to face problems, and their ability to think and learn.

A holistic, relational approach creates an environment that enables trusting relationships, so that children can do things independently and with others, forming friendships. Early years educators meet the emotional needs of children by drawing on their own emotional insight, and by working in partnership with families to form mutually respectful, warm, accepting relationships with each of their key children.



Physical Development

Physical development, interwoven with the other prime areas, underpins all other areas of a child's learning and development. Extensive physical experience in early childhood puts in place the neurological, sensory and motor foundations necessary for feeling good in your body and comfortable in the world. The intricate connection between brain, body and mind must be understood – when they are viewed as one system, the impacts of active physical play, health and self-care are observed and the effects on a child's early brain development and mental health of adverse childhood experience, including malnutrition, illness or neglect, are recognised. Health, wellbeing and self-care are integral to physical development.

Each child's journey relies on whole-body physical experiences. Children know themselves and their world first through their sensing, moving bodies. While biologically programmed, the unfolding of this complex, interconnected system requires repeated movement experiences that are self-initiated and wide-ranging. Opportunities to build and explore a strong felt sense of self through touch, movement and their own internal sensations shape their capacity to feel safe, connect with others, engage with learning and make sense of experience.

Children need movement-rich lives indoors and outdoors from birth. This includes the role of the adult's body as an enabling environment itself, embedding movement into everything, and encouraging each child's own motivations for being active and interactive with others. Early opportunities for experience and repeated practice to build physical mastery enable children to develop the movement foundations, muscle tone, stamina, and flexibility needed to support ongoing engagement in physical activity, and a strong body-mind connection essential for confident, active participation.



Communication and Language

Experiences in the womb lay the foundation for communication, and a baby's voice is evident from the beginning. Babies use their bodies, facial expressions, gestures, sounds and movements to seek connections and respond to those around them. Young children depend on back-and-forth interactions with responsive others to develop confidence as effective communicators and language users. Communication and language development are closely intertwined with physical, social and emotional experiences. Communication and language build a foundation for learning and development, guiding and supporting children's thinking while underpinning emerging knowledge and skills, including literacy and mathematical understanding.



Language is more than words. As children grow, they begin to be aware of and explore different sounds, symbols and words in their everyday worlds; a language-rich environment is crucial. A child's first language provides the roots to learn additional languages, and parents should be encouraged to continue to use their home languages to strengthen and support their children's language proficiency as they join new environments.

Children's skills develop through a series of identifiable stages which can be looked at in three aspects – Listening and Attention, Understanding, and Speaking. While not all children will follow the exact same sequence or progress at the same rate, it is important to identify children at risk of language delay or disorder as these can have an ongoing impact on wellbeing and learning across the curriculum.

Specific areas of learning and development provide children with knowledge and skills to flourish in society.

The Specific areas, **Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World**, and **Expressive Arts and Design**, are not time-sensitive in terms of the brain's biological responsiveness to experiences. The roots of learning in the Specific areas, however, reach back to earliest experiences and it is important to support learning in these important areas from birth. The Specific areas represent crucial shared cultural tools and knowledge, which babies and children engage in as members of the society in which they live.

Many aspects of these areas arise naturally for babies and young children as they make sense of their experiences, such as an awareness of quantity, enjoyment of telling and hearing stories, finding out

how things work, rhythm, and movement. Children often begin to represent what they understand with their own actions, marks or words. There are also ways of representing understanding with more formal symbol systems such as numbers, writing and other cultural tools and methods for sharing and recording ideas, as well as large bodies of knowledge to be shared with children.

As adults gradually support children to know about and use these Specific areas, either informally as part of daily life or in planned activities, they give children access to the wide scope of shared cultural and intellectual life in modern society, and skills and knowledge to support them in their future learning.

Understanding the World



Understanding the World provides a powerful, meaningful context for learning across the curriculum. It supports children to make sense of their expanding world and their place within it through nurturing their wonder, curiosity, agency and exploratory drive. Threading the Characteristics of Effective Learning through this area of learning will help to prepare children to manage the future threats and opportunities presented to them in the real and virtual worlds.

This development requires regular and direct contact with the natural, built and virtual environments around the child and engaging children in collaborative activities which promote inquiry, problem-solving, shared decision making and scientific approaches to understanding the real and virtual worlds. Active involvement in local community life helps children to develop a sense of civic responsibility, a duty to care, a respect for diversity and the need to work for peaceful co-existence.

In addition, first-hand involvement in caring for wildlife and the natural world provides children with an appreciation of ecological balance, environmental care and the need to live sustainable lives. Rich play, virtual and real-world experiences support learning about our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world and how to stay safe within it. They also cultivate shared meanings and lay the foundation for equitable understandings of our interconnectedness and interdependence.

Expressive Arts and Design



Children and adults have the right to participate in arts and culture. Expression conveys both thinking (ideas) and feeling (emotions). Children use a variety of ways to express and communicate, through a wide range of materials, music and movement. Creative thinking involves original responses, not just copying or imitating existing artworks.

Expressive Arts and Design fosters imagination, curiosity, creativity, cognition, critical thinking and experimentation. It provides opportunities to improvise, collaborate, interact and engage in sustained shared thinking, and requires time, space and opportunities to re-visit and reflect on experiences. Multi-sensory, first-hand experiences help children to connect and enquire about the world. Appreciating diversity and multiple perspectives enriches ways of thinking, being and understanding. Skills are learned in the process of meaning-making, not in isolation.

Aspects of Expressive Arts and Design include:

- Movement and dance
- Visual art – drawing, painting/colour work and 3D (line, colour, form)
- Music – listening, vocalising, movement, making
- Drama and stories

Children may need time to explore or revisit different media or tools, which will allow them to gain a deeper understanding of how to use them to express their ideas or thinking.

Mathematics



Mathematics for young children involves developing their own understanding of number, pattern, shape and space. Babies and young children have a natural interest in quantities and spatial relations – they are problem-solvers, pattern-spotters and sense-makers from birth.

This curiosity and enjoyment should be nurtured through their interactions with people and the world around them, drawing on their personal and cultural knowledge. Every young child is entitled to a strong mathematical foundation which is built through playful exploration, apprenticeship and meaning-making. Children should freely explore how they represent their mathematical thinking through gesture, talk, manipulation of objects and their graphical signs and representations, supported by access to graphic tools in their pretend play.

Effective early mathematics experiences involve seeking patterns, creating and solving mathematical problems and engaging with stories, songs, games, practical activities and imaginative play. Educators need to understand children's individual starting points, considering factors such as prematurity and previous experience. Plenty of time is required for children to revisit, develop and make sense for themselves. This is supported by sensitive interactions with adults who observe, listen to and value children's mathematical ideas and build upon children's interests, including those developed with their families. It is crucial to maintain children's enthusiasm so they develop positive self-esteem as learners of mathematics and feel confident to express their ideas.



Literacy



Literacy is about understanding and being understood. Literacy learning (reading and writing, growing out of communication, speaking and listening) is rooted in children's enjoyable experiences from birth of gesture, talk, singing, listening and playing. Children find out about, create and communicate meaning through rhymes, songs, stories, picture books, environmental print and images. Learning about literacy requires all educators to be aware of the literacy possibilities in the everyday play worlds of very young children.

Supporting children on their individual literacy journeys requires high-quality interactions and meaningful literacy experiences that connect to their everyday lives. Adults who listen carefully to children and value the choices they make are able to build on a child's interests and create enjoyable activities that encourage participation in literacy activities in the school or setting, at home, and in the wider community. Children should have chances to create and share a variety of texts and use different media and materials with their friends, family and other adults. Through play, both indoor and outdoor, children can experiment with signs and symbols, explore rhyme and rhythm, and develop alphabetic and phonetic skills.

Observation, assessment and planning

Observation, assessment and planning is an integral part of teaching young children which is woven into everyday practice. Children's development and learning is best supported by starting from the child, and then matching interactions and experiences to meet the child's needs. The observation, assessment and planning (OAP) cycle describes what is frequently called assessment for learning, or formative assessment. It is at the heart of effective early years practice. It begins with observation of children as a part of all activity, which is usually held in the mind of the educator but may sometimes be documented. Using this rich information to seek to understand how a child is developing, learning and growing leads to planning the next steps for the adults in supporting and extending the learning. This cycle frequently happens in the moment as adults are engaging with children.

The Observation, Assessment and Planning wheel explains how adults can see the unique child in the broader context of their lives surrounded by their family, culture and community. Putting this alongside their professional knowledge of key aspects of early years pedagogy and practice, educators can shape an informed curriculum which supports children's progress.

Planning

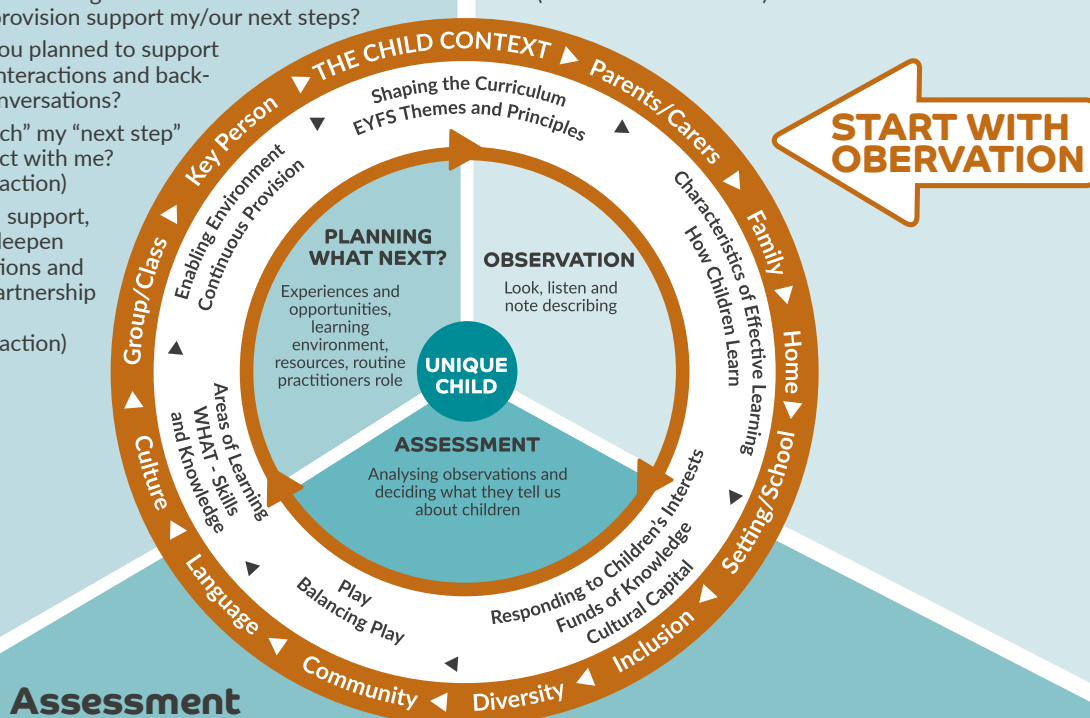
Decide how best to support, extend and teach children. Based on your observations and assessments, consider the following questions:

- Have you engaged with me/us to co-construct our next steps together?
- Have you considered my/our interests in the planning? (child-led)
- Have you planned a specific experience or activity to teach a skill or knowledge? (adult-led)?
- How does the enabling environment and continuous provision support my/our next steps?
- What have you planned to support meaningful interactions and back-and-forth conversations?
- Can you "teach" my "next step" as you interact with me? (Planning-in-action)
- How will you support, extend and deepen play, interactions and learning in partnership with me/us? (Planning-in-action)

Observation

Observe children as they act and interact in their play, everyday activities and planned activities, and learn from parents about what the child does at home.

- How do you see me?
- Are you observing carefully when I am on my own and when I am with others?
- Am I involved in continuous provision?
- Have you observed while engaging with me/us? (Observation-in-action)



Assessment

Reflect on what you have noticed to help you understand the child/children.

Consider the following questions:

- How do you understand me?
- Do you understand: how I feel? what am I interested in? what question may be in my mind?
- How am I approaching my learning? (Characteristics of Effective Learning)
- What have I learned and understood? (Areas of learning and development)
- Do you think I need support while I am playing? (Assessment-in-action)
- What do you think is happening as you listen and engage with me/us? (Assessment-in-action)

Practice starts with the child and grows in partnership. Effective practice begins with observation, tuning into the child and then building a relationship. Professionally informed knowledge of child development then supports understanding children's interests, development and learning, and planning for next steps. This process should involve the child, parents and carers, and other professionals.

- From their earliest age children should be involved in choices about their own learning. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 12 states the right of the child to express their views and have their views taken seriously.
- Parents are essential partners, sharing their views and observations about the child's development and being involved in planning what opportunities and experiences to offer the child next.
- Working in partnership with other professionals, community and support groups connects everyone who is involved with the child and family, bringing a clearer picture of the child's needs and rights.

Each child's own unique pathway of development and learning involves many elements woven together in a holistic form. Observation, assessment and planning (OAP) makes this holistic development visible, so children's thinking and understanding can be shared with parents and carers, other professionals, and with children themselves.

Responsive pedagogy is needed to recognise what children know, understand, and can do. In a supportive and challenging enabling environment children demonstrate their learning and understanding in a wide range of contexts that have meaning to them. Responsive adults tune into their play, interactions and thinking, identifying how best to support their ideas, interests and priorities. Sensitive interactions involve listening, guiding, explaining, asking appropriate questions and helping children to reflect on their learning in a playful, co-constructive partnership. The process of OAP is central to being attuned to children and to understanding what they can do with support, as well as what they know and can do without adult direction. When children apply the skills and concepts they have mastered in a variety of different ways in their independent play and activities, their understanding is clearly embedded.

Children and adults construct the curriculum together. Keeping the OAP cycle at the heart of our practice enables educators to build on children's motivations and interests to support and extend their development and learning. The curriculum is co-constructed between children, educators and families through this process. Children bring funds of knowledge-based interests to the setting, and they are motivated to learn through connecting new experiences to what they already know and can do. Educators can support these interests while also keeping in mind that they need to introduce children to new ideas and knowledge and sensitively support and guide their learning in all areas, including the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

The curriculum will include attention to the Areas of Learning and Development which summarise some of **what** children learn. The curriculum must, however, be more than a list of skills and knowledge to be achieved. The EYFS principle says every unique child is "constantly learning". Children learn from all their experiences, not just those that have been planned or intended. The curriculum needs to take account of children's learning not just in the Areas of Learning and Development, but also in how they see themselves as learners and how they are building the strong foundations for lifelong learning described in the Characteristics of Effective Learning. **How** children learn, and how they learn about their own learning, should also be an integral part of the curriculum. Often seen within the contexts of play and continuous provision, observing **how** children learn helps educators to see **what** children understand.

Observation, assessment and planning is part of professional practice. Throughout the OAP cycle and summative assessment, informed decisions about the child's development, learning and progress need to be as objective as possible, calling on the variety of information about the child to make a "best-fit" decision. The OAP cycle is a reflective and ongoing process which enables consideration of children's development and how to support individual children through effective practice and professional dialogues. It supports quality improvement as educators use their knowledge, skills and evidence gathered from OAP to reflect on the quality of education and care the children receive, and to think about how to improve practice.

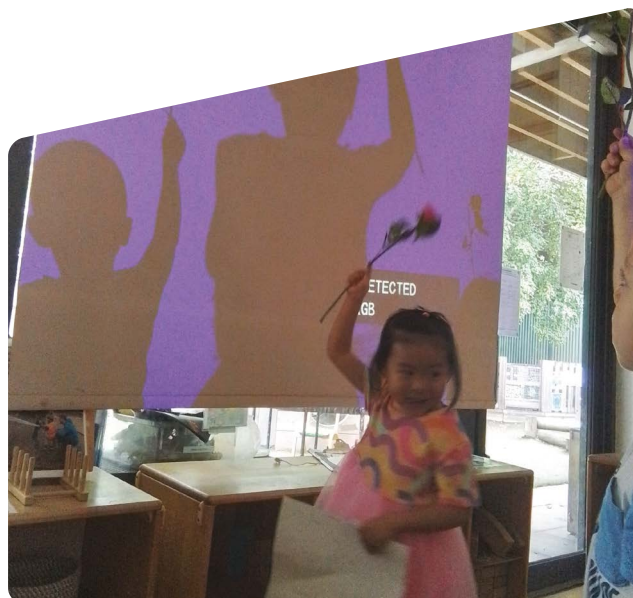


Summative assessment involves stepping back to gain an overview of children's development and progress. When daily interactions involve observing, reflecting and deciding how best to support a child, educators hold in their mind many details of each child's development and learning. At certain times it is important to step back, to pause and reflect, and create a summative assessment which takes a holistic overview of the child's development, learning and progress. This bigger picture serves as recognition and celebration of a child's learning journey and progress. It also supports identification of where an individual child may benefit from extra support, and when combined in a cohort the resulting picture can show where a setting might usefully improve their provision and practice.

Summative assessments are made to provide a summary of a child's development and learning across all areas. There are two statutory summative assessment points in the EYFS – the 2-year-old progress check, and the EYFS Profile at the end of the EYFS. Settings can decide on further summative assessment points.

Reliable summative assessment grows out of formative assessment. Summative assessment should not be a time-consuming process. It should be a straightforward summary, pulling together insights from formative assessment and then making a professionally informed decision about the child's development and learning. It requires a pause to think about what is known about the child, together with reviewing any notes, photographs or other records that may be held, alongside what is known from the child, parents, colleagues and other professionals. This process is an excellent opportunity for professional reflection and discussions with colleagues to moderate decisions about progress and build a stronger understanding of children's development in all aspects of learning.

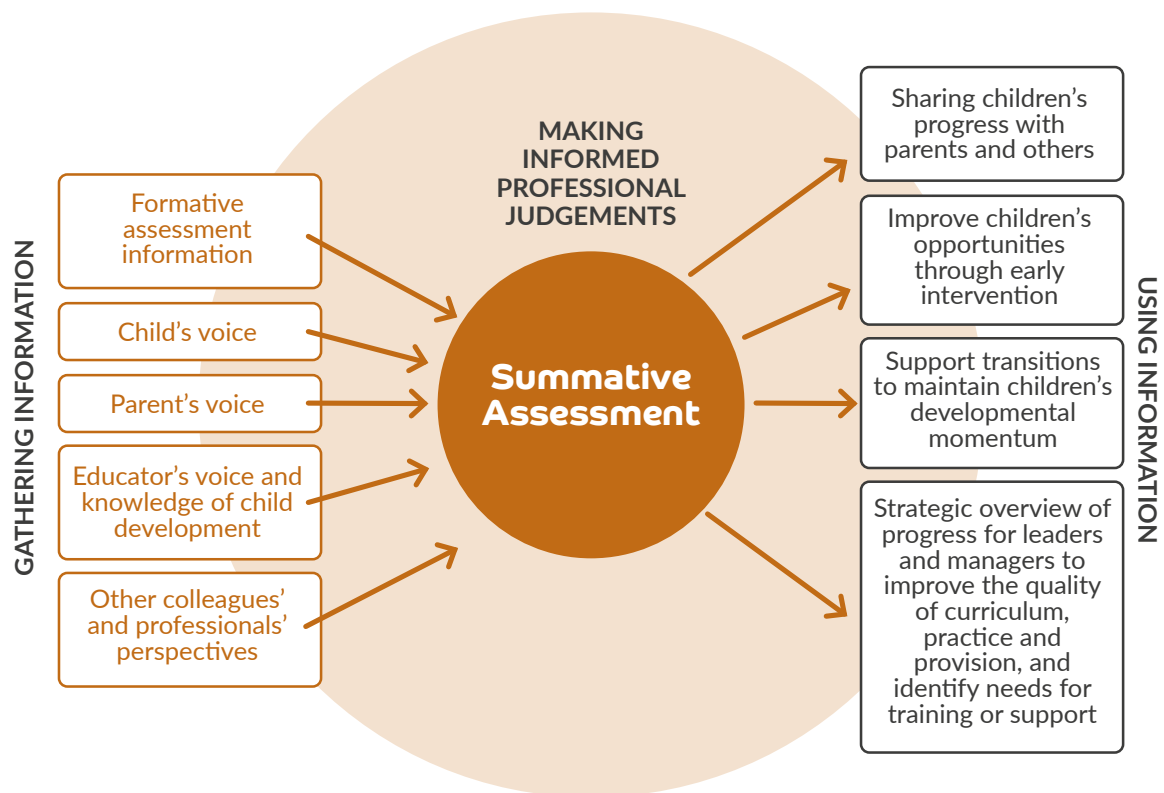
An informed professional decision is based on a holistic view of a child's development and learning. Young children's development does not follow a predictable step-by-step sequence, and each child will have their own unique pathway, progression and momentum. There are, however, some aspects of development which enable you to describe the child's progress in terms of whether it is typical for their age, for example learning to talk. Educators need to consider overall development within these aspects and not rely on matching every element in



a list of statements to judge children's progress. It is important to take a holistic, professionally informed view to determine whether a child is roughly on track or developing more slowly or more quickly in particular areas. A holistic summary will give attention not just to areas of knowledge and skills, but also to the child's emotional wellbeing and connections, and development of attitudes and dispositions for learning (Characteristics of Effective Learning).

Summative assessment informs improvements to provision and practice, to enhance children's development and learning.

- Leaders and managers can use the information strategically to improve provision and practice. For example:
 - Are some children not as far along or significantly ahead in their development and learning compared to most children? How are we further supporting these children?
 - Should opportunities, resources or support within some areas of the curriculum be improved?
 - Is there a professional development need for individual staff members, or the setting as a whole?
- Information can be communicated clearly in a summary form to inform discussions with parents, other agencies, or professionals involved with the child and family.
- Transitions can be supported so that children's journeys of development and learning continue smoothly.



Key points

- Observation, assessment and planning is an integral part of teaching young children which is woven into everyday practice.
- Practice starts with the child and grows in partnership.
- Responsive pedagogy is needed to recognise what children know, understand, and can do.
- Children and adults construct the curriculum together.
- Observation, assessment and planning is part of professional practice.
- Summative assessment involves stepping back to gain an overview of children's development and progress.
- Reliable summative assessment grows out of formative assessment.
- An informed professional decision is based on a holistic view of a child's development and learning.
- Summative assessment serves several purposes that can enhance development and learning opportunities for children, including by informing improvements to provision and practice in the setting.

Using Birth to 5 Matters to support development and learning

The guidance on the following pages can support understanding of development and learning and the adult's contribution to the process, but this should be seen as a set of possibilities and not a prescription for either children or adults.

For children:

Overall, children will work their individual way from the development and learning typical of babies onward to what older children know, can do, and understand. **The grids illustrate samples of what children may do along that journey. While these present some examples, children will do countless things that do not appear in the grids but are equally valuable for their learning. And as each child winds their individual path through the different areas, they will not necessarily show signs of each of the descriptors, nor in the order presented.**

Learning does not move forward in a straight, predictable and linear way. It can stall or even backtrack in one area, while strides and bursts are made in another area. Development should not be expected to be even across all areas, and the balance is likely to shift from one time to another.

The guidance should not be used as a checklist to steer each unique child through a prescribed path with required "next steps". Rather, it should be a support to help adults to recognise and interpret what a child is showing at the present moment, give the child time to rehearse those skills, and be ready to help enrich their experience and deepen and extend their learning. It is important to recognise that some children have divergent development pathways which will not follow this typical progression.

For adults:

Examples of what adults might do or provide should be seen as suggestions or prompts for thinking, suggesting "next steps" adults might take to support children's development and learning. Adults should use their informed knowledge of children, alongside their own creative and critical thinking, to develop their own ideas, decide what to try, and evaluate its effectiveness. Whether using the grids to reflect on suggestions for moment-to-moment interactions, resourcing and organising the environment, offering opportunities or planning specific activities, educators who know children well will adapt and invent the most appropriate ways to support and extend their learning.

Many examples of how adults might support children in earlier ranges are equally applicable to later ranges, and educators are encouraged to keep incorporating these in their practice.

What do you like about your early years setting?
"Play outside and friends and Beth."

Owen, 3



Teaching should not be taken to imply a "top down" or formal way of working. It is a broad term that covers the many different ways in which adults help young children learn. It includes their interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities: communicating and modelling language; showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas; encouraging, questioning, recalling; providing a narrative for what they are doing; facilitating and setting challenges. It takes account of the equipment adults provide and the attention given to the physical environment, as well as the structure and routines of the day that establish expectations. Integral to teaching is how educators assess what children know, understand and can do, as well as taking account of their interests and dispositions to learn (characteristics of effective learning), and how educators use this information to plan children's next steps in learning and monitor their progress.

Ofsted Early Years Inspection Handbook

A unique child

When referring to the guidance for the Areas of Learning and Development, it is important to start with what is observed and understood about the individual child.

A typical progression in development and learning has been grouped into broad Ranges in the column for A Unique Child. This is intended to support educators' knowledge of a general pattern of child development. The Ranges illustrate examples of what children may do along their journey of development and learning. Children develop and learn at their own rates and in their own ways. While progressing well, they will do countless things that do not appear in the grids, and are not likely to show signs of each statement nor to demonstrate them in the given order.

On-going planning: Educators can

- think about what they have observed which demonstrates a child's development and learning in a particular area

- compare their observations to the statements in the Ranges to make a decision about which Range most closely describes what the child is doing

- consider the suggestions for adults within that range (or earlier ranges) to plan to support continued progress.

Best-fit summative judgements should be based on everything that has been observed and understood about the child's development and learning through ongoing formative assessment. This knowledge of the child will inform the decision about which Range overall best describes the child's current development and learning.

Children's progress over time can be seen as a continuum, both within a Range and between Ranges. Understanding progress is not a matter of turning the complexity of a child's individual journey into a data point. Between summative assessments, a child may move from one Range

to another or instead may be progressing within a Range by expanding and deepening their learning. In dialogue with other professionals and with parents, a child's progress relative to the Ranges can be identified.

Comparing best-fit summative judgements of Ranges with typical age links can help identify whether children are roughly on track or are progressing more slowly or quickly. When compiled for groups of children, this cohort information can be useful for leaders and managers in planning for the continual improvement of practice and provision in the setting.

The guidance can help to identify when children may need additional support, by referring to the key provided here which links the Ranges to typical age links. **The age links overlap Ranges because these are not fixed age boundaries but suggest a typical range of development.**



Characteristics of Effective Learning

Children are powerful learners from birth. They can develop strong habits of mind and behaviours that will continue to support them to discover, think, create, solve problems, and self-regulate their learning. Children need consistent lived experiences of autonomy and collaboration alongside support for their growing awareness and control of the processes of thinking and learning. Children demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning in culturally diverse ways, making it important to recognise and value the cultural practices, languages, and community knowledge that shape how children explore, stay motivated and solve problems. Play, time, space and freedom to follow their intentions, sustained shared thinking, and experiencing the satisfaction of meeting their own challenges and goals all contribute to development as curious, creative, resourceful and resilient learners.

Playing and Exploring: Engagement

A Unique Child: how a child is learning	Positive Relationships: what adults might do	Enabling Environments: what adults might provide
Finding out and exploring • Showing curiosity about objects, events and people • Using senses to explore the world around them • Engaging in open-ended activity • Showing particular interests	• Play with babies and children. Encourage them to explore and show your own interest in discovering new things. • Help children as needed to do what they are trying to do, without taking over or directing. • Encourage children to make decisions and choose their activities – what they want to do and how they will do it. • Join in play sensitively, fitting in with children's ideas. • Model pretending an object is something else. Help develop roles and stories. • Encourage children to try new activities and to judge risks for themselves. Be sure to support children's confidence with words and body language. Introduce tools so that children can think about how to use them safely. • Pay attention to how babies and children engage in activities – the challenges faced, the effort, thought, learning and enjoyment. Talk more about the process than products. • Model responding positively when things go wrong, and talk about learning from failure. • Always respect children's efforts and ideas, so they feel safe to take a risk with a new idea and feel comfortable with mistakes. • Encourage laughter and have fun. Happiness deepens learning.	• Provide stimulating resources which are accessible and open-ended so they can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways. • Make sure resources are relevant to children's interests, cultures and abilities. • Arrange flexible indoor and outdoor space and resources where children can explore, transform, build, move and role play. • Help children concentrate by considering levels of noise, and visual distraction. • Plan first-hand experiences and challenges appropriate to the development of the children. • Ensure children have uninterrupted time to play and explore. • As setting leaders, give staff time to reflect on how they support children to play and explore through their interactions, and planning of the environment.
Playing with what they know • Pretending objects are things from their experience • Representing their experiences in play • Taking on a role in their play • Acting out experiences with other people		
Being willing to “have a go” • Initiating activities • Seeking challenge • Showing a “can do” attitude • Taking a risk, engaging in new experiences, and learning by trial and error		

Statutory ELG: Managing Self

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Active Learning: Motivation

A Unique Child: how a child is learning

Being involved and concentrating

- Showing a deep drive to know more about people and their world
- Maintaining focus on their activity for a period of time
- Showing high levels of involvement, energy, fascination
- Not easily distracted
- Paying attention to details

Keeping on trying

- Persisting with an activity or toward their goal when challenges occur
- Showing a belief that more effort or a different approach will pay off, and that their skills can grow and develop (growth mindset)
- Bouncing back after difficulties

Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

- Showing satisfaction in meeting their own goals (*I can!*)
- Being proud of how they accomplished something
 - not just the end result
- Enjoying meeting challenges for their own sake rather than external rewards or praise (intrinsic motivation)

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Support babies and children to look into what they are curious about and what fascinates them.
- Encourage children to express interests, cultures, identities and histories that are meaningful to them through their activities.
- Make time for quality interactions. Watch and listen carefully to try to understand what the child wants to know or achieve.
- Help focus a baby or young child's interest through shared attention. At times sensitively introduce a new element if young children's interest is waning.
- Help children to notice details.
- Model a growth mindset. Help children to see mistakes or failures as stepping stones for learning. Help children see there is more than one answer to a problem. Demonstrate openly how adults do not get everything right.
- Be specific when giving praise, especially noting effort such as how the child concentrates, tries different approaches, persists, solves problems, and has new ideas.
- Support emotional resilience in the face of challenge, eg "That must have been frustrating after you worked so hard. I wonder how else you could try it."
- Children bring their own motivations to their play. Play alongside and narrate what children are doing, talking about what's happening rather than directing.
- Step back and watch what children are doing. Be sensitive to when to join in sensitively following children's lead, and when to leave them to it. Be careful not to disrupt their play and train of thought.
- Be aware that babies and children may want to watch before, or rather than, taking part in some activities.
- Look out for signs that young children show satisfaction in something they have done.
- Provide opportunities for children to celebrate with their peers what they are doing and learning – not just focus on the end result.

Statutory ELG: Managing Self

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- A familiar environment and predictable routine give children confidence to take charge of their own activities.
- Teach children how to use the areas of provision and tools within them appropriate to their age and stage, so they can use them independently for their own goals.
- Children will become more deeply involved when you provide something that is new and unusual for them to explore, especially when it is linked to their interests, culture or identity.
- Notice what arouses children's curiosity, looking for signs of deep involvement to identify learning that is intrinsically motivated.
- Ensure children have time and freedom to become deeply involved in activities.
- Provide calm and reduce stimuli if children become over-stimulated.
- Children can maintain focus on things that interest them over a period of time. Help them to keep ideas in mind by talking over photographs of their previous activities.
- Keep projects current and accessible, rather than tidying away.
- Make space and time for all children to contribute.
- Setting leaders should provide opportunities for staff to actively engage in their own learning to better support children's activity.

Statutory ELG: Self Regulation

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Thinking Creatively and Critically: Thinking

A Unique Child: how a child is learning

Having their own ideas (creative thinking)

- Thinking of ideas that are new and meaningful to the child
- Playing with possibilities (what if? what else?)
- Visualising and imagining options
- Finding new ways to do things

Making links (building theories)

- Making links and noticing patterns in their experience
- Making predictions
- Testing their ideas
- Developing ideas of grouping, sequences, cause and effect

Working with ideas (critical thinking)

- Planning, making decisions about how to approach a task, solve a problem and reach a goal
- Checking how well their activities are going
- Flexibly changing strategy as needed
- Reviewing how well the approach worked

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Use the language of thinking and learning: think, know, remember, forget, idea, makes sense, plan, learn, find out, confused, figure out, trying to do.
- Model being a thinker, showing that you don't always know, are curious and sometimes puzzled, and can think and find out. I wonder?
- Give children time to talk and think. Make time to actively listen to children's ideas.
- Encourage open-ended thinking, generating more alternative ideas or solutions, by not settling on the first suggestions: What else is possible?
- Always respect children's efforts and ideas, so they feel safe to take a risk with a new idea and feel comfortable with mistakes.
- Encourage children to question and challenge assumptions.
- Help children to make links to what they already know.
- Support children's interests over time, reminding them of previous approaches and encouraging them to make connections between their experiences.
- Help children to become aware of their own goals, make plans, and to review their own progress and successes. Describe what you see them trying to do, and encourage children to talk about what they are doing, how they plan to do it, what worked well and what they would change next time.
- Talking aloud helps children to think and control what they do. Model self-talk, describing your actions in play.
- Value questions, talk, and many possible responses, without rushing toward answers too quickly.
- Sustained shared thinking helps children to explore ideas and make links. Follow children's lead in conversation, and think about things together.
- Encourage children to listen to each other's ideas as they play, have fun and think and learn together.
- Encourage children to choose personally meaningful ways to represent and clarify their thinking, eg through graphics, materials, sound, movements.
- Take an interest in the children's representations. Talk with them about their meanings and value what they do and say.
- Encourage children to describe problems they encounter, and to suggest ways to solve the problem.
- Show and talk about strategies – how to do things – including problem-solving, thinking and learning.
- Encourage children to listen to each other's ideas as they play, have fun and think and learn together.
- Encourage children to reflect and evaluate their work and review their own progress and learning.
- Model the plan-do-review process yourself.

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- In planning activities, ask yourself: Is this an opportunity for children to find their own ways to represent and develop their own ideas? Avoid children just reproducing someone else's ideas.
- Build in opportunities for children to play with materials before using them in planned tasks.
- Play is a key opportunity for children to think creatively and flexibly, solve problems and link ideas. Establish the enabling conditions for rich play: space, time, flexible resources, choice, control, warm and supportive relationships.
- Recognisable and predictable routines help children to predict and make connections in their experiences.
- Routines can be flexible, while still basically orderly.
- Provide extended periods of uninterrupted time so that children can develop their activities.
- Keep significant activities out instead of routinely tidying them away, so that there are opportunities to revisit what they have been doing to explore possible further lines of enquiry.
- Plan linked experiences that follow the ideas children are really thinking about.
- Provide resources and opportunities for children to represent their thinking, encouraging children to think about what they know and want to know, eg floor books, recording devices.
- Develop a learning community which focuses on how and not just what we are learning.
- Setting leaders should give staff time to think about children's needs, to make links between their knowledge and practice.

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing		Positive Relationships: what adults might do	Enabling Environments: what adults might provide
 1 RANGE	• Enjoys the company of others and seeks contact with others from birth • Shows their readiness to be social through using their sensory abilities: following movement and gazing at faces intently • Moves body, arms and legs and changes facial expression in response to others, eg opening mouth and widening eyes • Responds to what carer is paying attention to, eg following their gaze • Distinguishes between people, recognising the look, sound and smell of their close carer • Will usually calm, smile or reduce crying when they hear their carers'/parent's voice, or smell their clothing, for example • Holds up arms to be picked up and cuddled and is soothed by physical touch such as being held, cuddled and stroked • Begins to display attachment behaviours such as wanting to stay near their close carer and becoming upset when left with an unfamiliar person	• Offer warm, loving and consistent care in your interactions with babies and young children, making good eye contact and handling children gently and respectfully. • Respond sensitively and quickly to babies and young children's needs, co-regulating by holding and comforting each child as they need. • Learn from parents regarding caring practices at home so you can establish predictable and familiar patterns within your own interactions allowing the child to feel safe with you. • Tune in to the meaning of communications such as crying, babbling, pointing or pulling and respond with interest, watching and understanding the cues they offer so they feel acknowledged and known by you. • Notice and respect babies' and young children's signals that indicate they no longer want to play or engage: pause and be quiet when they turn away. • Spend plenty of time with your key children playing interactive games, finger plays and singing familiar songs that engage you both in mirroring movement and sounds, following the child's lead. • Take primary responsibility for your key children's physical care whenever you are both are present. • Use care events to build a close relationship through respectful interactions and taking it slowly. Always explain what is going to happen and invite their participation. • Be physically and emotionally available to babies and young children to provide a secure base for them to feel secure and supported in their play and independent explorations. • Accept babies' and young children's need for security, allowing them to stay close by when feeling insecure or anxious. Caregivers may have to focus on regaining trust by remaining available to them constantly until they feel secure again. • Get to know each baby's and young child's separation rituals and support them by being available when they are separating from and reuniting with their parents/carers. • Let your key children know where you are going, what you are doing and who they will be with, when leaving the group during the day or planning leave.	• Offer a welcoming, calm, caring environment that is inviting and will make babies feel they want to come and play. • Implement a Key Person Approach, so that each child and their family have a special person to relate to, share information with and rely on. • Provide professional development and supervision to support attachment relationships between key persons and children in the setting. • Develop close partnerships with parents/carers, learning from their knowledge and expertise about their baby. • Transitions and admissions are phased so that only one new child starts at a time to allow them to settle in gradually. • Ensure the Key Person Approach underpins all provision for babies including personal care events, play and daily interactions with parents/carers. • Arrange for staff absence to be covered by educators who are already familiar to the children. • Allocate a secondary key person who takes responsibility for the care of babies when their key person is absent. • The number of changes children make between groups and key person is reduced to as few as possible during their time in the setting. • Organise working patterns and activities to allow the key person or secondary key person to be available to support babies and toddlers and their parents separating and reuniting at the beginning and end of the day. • The day is predictable enough to give babies a sense of security but is flexible enough to respond to individual children's patterns.
	 2 RANGE	• Draws others into social interaction through calling, crying and babbling, smiling, laughing and moving their bodies and limbs • Shares interest and attention by looking to where the adult is looking, pointing and using their gaze to direct the adult's attention to something • Engages another person to help achieve a goal, eg to get an object out of reach. • Cooperates with caregiving experiences, such as dressing • Builds relationships with special people.	

In some cases, suggestions for similar support for children's development and learning apply across two ranges. In these cases the Positive Relationships and Enabling Environments columns are shown in the colour of the first range, but apply to both adjacent ranges.

what a child might be doing

- Displays attachment behaviours such as wanting to stay near to their close carers, checking where they are and protesting when separated
- Is wary of unfamiliar people
- Explores confidently when they feel secure in the presence of a familiar adult and is more likely to engage in new or challenging situations
- Closely watches others' body language to begin to understand their intentions and meaning
- Is fascinated by other children, watching them and interacting with them through offering toys, food etc, and by reaching for objects that another has

what adults might do

- Support a child's need to hold on to their special comfort object while playing or getting changed.
- Key persons should adopt a process of inviting, suggesting and then engaging with a child in interactions and care events to enable a cooperative relationship to develop.

what adults might provide

- Offer continuity and consistency for babies so the key person undertaking all their key children's care needs; moving through each part of the bathroom, lunch and sleep routine together, rather than children moving from one adult to the next. Design the environment to limit the number of times the key person has to leave the room. It helps for example, if the bathroom and feed preparation areas are en-suite.
- Group rooms are as home-like as possible and are decorated with photographs of the children's families and other significant people, animals and places.
- There are low adult chairs that support educators when they are bottle-feeding babies and which also allow children to climb up onto their laps.
- Develop play opportunities centred on objects babies bring from home, as these help them to make transitions and experience continuity.
- Plan to have one-to-one time to interact with young babies when they are in an alert and responsive state and willing to engage.
- Create opportunities to sing to and with babies and young children.

- Explores the environment, interacts with others and plays confidently while their parent/carer or key person is close by, using them as a secure base to return to for reassurance if anxious or in unfamiliar situations
- Shows empathy by offering comfort that they themselves would find soothing, eg their comfort object
- Enjoys playing alone and alongside others and is also interested in being together and playing with other children
- Will often watch, follow and imitate each other in their play and will experiment with influencing others, co-operating together and also resisting coercion in their interactions
- Asserts their own ideas and preferences and takes notice of other people's responses
- Will sometimes experience long periods of social engagement as overwhelming and may withdraw or collapse with frustration

- Enable children to explore by being a secure base for them: sitting close by and at their level to show that you are physically and emotionally available.
- Support a child's explorations by drawing their attention to interesting things and smiling and nodding as they explore.
- Support children who are new to a group by working closely with parents/carers to gradually settle them in over time, and allowing the child to stay close to you as much as they need.
- Give your full attention when young children look to you for a response.
- Be on hand to support social interactions between children.
- Model gentleness and kindness in your interactions with children and each other.
- Help toddlers to understand each other's thoughts and needs by suggesting useful phrases, commenting on what might be going on in their minds and modelling respectful and considerate responses during play.
- Cultivate a sense of belonging by involving all children in welcoming and caring for one another and in the shared organisational tasks of the group.

- Display photographs of educators, so that when children arrive, their parents can show them who will be there to take care of them.
- Support children who are new to a group by gradually settling them in over time so they can get to know the people, the environment and the routines.
- Plan times for children to be with their key person, individually and in their key group.
- Plan routine care events to support the development of close relationships between the key person and child and to support children's friendships.
- Ensure that group times for toddlers are small, short and active and are in a familiar space with a familiar adult.



Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Making relationships

Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Making relationships	
A Unique Child: what a child might be doing	Positive Relationships: what adults might do
 4 RANGE • May show anxiety in the presence of strangers • Is becoming more able to separate from their close carers and explore new situations with support and encouragement from another familiar adult • Shows some understanding that other people have perspectives, ideas and needs that are different to theirs, eg may turn a book to face you so you can see it • Shows empathy and concern for people who are special to them by partially matching others' feelings with their own, eg may offer a child a toy they know they like • Is beginning to be able to cooperate in favourable situations, such as with familiar people and environments and when free from anxiety • Seeks out others to share experiences with and may choose to play with a familiar friend or a child who has similar interest	Enabling Environments: what adults might provide • Provide opportunities to collaborate, with the physical space, open-ended resources and activities planned carefully for children to interact, talk and work together. Cultivate a sense of belonging, where children contribute, take responsibility and watch others giving and receiving help. • Provide duplicates of favourite items to reduce competition and conflict. • Provide matching items for children and adults to mirror each other in play, eg two identical musical instruments. • Provide resources that promote cooperative play between two children such as a double-sided easel or a truck two children can ride. • Ensure outdoor provision provides opportunities for children to play and explore together; to ask questions, solve problems and engage in collaborative play.
 5 RANGE • Seeks out companionship with adults and other children, sharing experiences and play ideas • Uses their experiences of adult behaviours to guide their social relationships and interactions • Shows increasing consideration of other people's needs and gradually more impulse control in favourable conditions, eg giving up a toy to another who wants it • Practises skills of assertion, negotiation and compromise and looks to a supportive adult for help in resolving conflict with peers • Enjoys playing alone, alongside and with others, inviting others to play and attempting to join others' play	• Continue to provide children with a secure base for them to return to and to explore from by being available if needed. • Offer a warm and consistent presence, spending time playing and being with children in 1:1 and small groups as well as in the whole group. • Show that you keep children "in mind" by referring to things you have noticed in their play or something that reminded you of them in some way. • Model key skills of empathy, negotiation, compromise and positive assertion when playing with children and in your everyday interactions. • Provide positive feedback during play, noticing and acknowledging children's thoughtfulness towards each other. • Provide stability in staffing, key person relationships and in grouping of the children. • Plan opportunities for children to spend time with their key person, individually and in small groups. • Encourage children to notice and include others in their play. • Plan the environment to create spaces for children to play alone, alongside or with others as they choose. • Provide time, space and open-ended materials for children to collaborate with one another in different ways, for example, in block play.

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Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Making Relationships

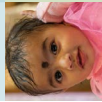
A Unique Child: what a child might be doing		Positive Relationships: what adults could do	Enabling Environments: what adults could provide
	6	RANGE	RANGE 5 & 6 (cont)
• Represents and recreates what they have learnt about social interactions from their relationships with close adults, in their play and relationships with others • Develops particular friendships with other children, which help them to understand different points of view and to challenge their own and others' thinking • Is increasingly flexible and cooperative as they are more able to understand other people's needs, wants and behaviours • Is increasingly socially skilled and will take steps to resolve conflicts with other children by negotiating and finding a compromise; sometimes by themselves, sometimes with support. • Returns to the secure base of a familiar adult to recharge and gain emotional support and practical help in difficult situations • Is proactive in seeking adult support and able to articulate their wants and needs • Some children may have had to make many different relationships in their life. This may have impacted on their understanding of what makes a consistent and stable relationship		• Support young children's efforts to join in with others' play and invite others into their play. • Act as mediator or coach, prompting children to recall and follow the rules of social communication appropriate for different contexts and types of interaction. • Use different resources such as social stories and persona dolls to help children to develop strategies for building and maintaining relationships. • Offer calm and considered support for children as they experience conflict with their peers. Use a problem-solving approach, eg <i>You are fighting because you both want the blue bike, what can we do about this?</i> • Pause before intervening in children's arguments to allow children time resolve issues if they can. • Recognise and respect children's particular friendships. • Model how to listen and show respect to others by acting on reasonable requests. • Support shy children or some with social and emotional difficulties who may be anxious when interacting with peers, eg encouraging one-to-one or smaller group encounters in a familiar, cosy space to help a child build confidence.	• Provide play activities that encourage cooperation and collaboration, such as parachute activities and ring games. • Choose books, puppets, dolls and small world play that help children explore their ideas about friends and friendship and to talk about feelings, eg someone saying 'You can't play'. • For young children who are finding it hard to make relationships in the group, develop other situations such as a forest school activity or a creative arts project that may be more encouraging • Scaffold appropriate identification of when and how to ask others for help. Use resources, visual support, signs, and gestures to motivate and support the child to do this.

Statutory ELG: Building Relationships

- Children at the expected level of development will:
- Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others;
 - Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers;
 - Show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs.

Statutory ELG: Managing Self

- Children at the expected level of development will:
- Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing		Positive Relationships: what adults could do	Enabling Environments: what adults could provide
 1 RANGE	- Learns about their physical self through exploratory play with their hands and feet and movement - Is becoming aware of self as they imitate sounds and expressions that are mirrored back to them by close adults: Laughing and gurgling during physical interactions - Shows awareness of being a separate individual through initiating contact with others using voice, gesture, eye contact and facial expression and through secure-base behaviours - Expresses awareness of their physical self through their own movements, gestures and expressions and by touching their own and other's faces, eyes, and mouth in play and care events - Shows growing confidence that their needs will be met by freely expressing their need for comfort, nourishment or company	- Engage in attentive, uninterrupted play with babies when they are alert and ready. - Provide many opportunities for babies to explore how their bodies move by giving them free play time on the firm surface of the floor. - To support their sense of agency and autonomy, only put babies into positions that they can get into and out of themselves. For example, do not put them on their tummies until they can roll over independently. - Listen, respond to and build on babies' expressions, actions, and gestures, engaging in conversation with them. - Play interactive games that help babies recognise themselves, such as finger plays and action rhymes. - Spend one-to-one time playing, talking and looking at books that are of personal relevance together. - Talk with babies about people and things that are special to them, such as their family members or pets. - Offer commentary about what is happening around them and what they are doing. - Notice and acknowledge babies' and children's independently chosen activities and tasks, valuing their efforts as well as celebrating their achievements. - Use care events to support a positive sense of self through respectful interactions. - Support confidence by being close by as they explore. - Use a choice of objects alongside simple language to offer choices. Encourage children to express a preference. Use familiar greetings, in relevant languages, with children, parents and each other. - Learn from parents the child's usual experience of feeding, changing, sleeping and comforting before taking on these tasks yourself. - Ensure the child feels safe and secure whilst preparing their food, preparing to change their nappy or to go out for a walk by talking to them and providing suitable toys and/or comforters for them while they wait.	- Allow for flexibility within practice so that the routines you follow offer continuity between home and setting. - Learn from parents/carers about each baby's family culture, traditions and languages. - Share knowledge about each child's language(s) by making a poster or book of greetings and key phrases to use. - Provide comfortable areas where parents, educators and young babies can be together. - Create time at the beginning and end of each day to talk and reflect with parents about their baby's daily needs, progress and development, with communication support for different language speakers and users. - If appropriate, plan to have times when babies and older siblings or friends can be together. - Place mirrors where babies can see their own reflection. Talk with them about what they see. - Create sufficient safe space for babies to move, roll, stretch and explore. - Provide objects and images that reflect the baby and their home. - Provide types of food and styles of serving and eating that are familiar to each child. - Display photos of family and other special people. - Provide toys and open-ended play experiences that match the play interests and styles of individual babies. - Provide play resources that reflect each baby's home culture and that help them to make links with the smells and sounds of home.
	 2 RANGE	- Responds to their own name and enjoys finding own nose, eyes or tummy as part of interactive games - Shows an interest in their reflection in a mirror, although may not yet realise that the reflection is them - Shows separation anxiety as they become more aware of themselves as separate individuals - Shows an emerging autonomy through asserting choices and preferences such as different tastes and rejects things they don't want, for example by pushing them away - Understands that their own voice and actions cause an effect on others, eg clapping hands starts a game - Shows growing self-confidence through playing freely and with involvement	

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Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Sense of self

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing



3
RANGE

- Is aware of and interested in their own and others' physical characteristics, pointing to and naming features such as noses, hair and eyes
- Experiments with what their bodies can do through setting themselves physical challenges, eg pulling a large truck upstairs
- Begins to use *me*, *you* and *I* in their talk and to show awareness of their social identity of gender, ethnicity and ability
- Shows their growing sense of self through asserting their likes and dislikes, choices, decisions, and ideas. These may be different to those of the adult or their peers; often saying *no*, *me do it or mine*



4
RANGE

- Knows their own name, their preferences and interests and is becoming aware of their unique abilities
- Is developing an understanding of and interest in differences of gender, ethnicity and ability
- Shows a sense of autonomy through asserting their ideas and preferences and making choices and decisions
- Experiments with their own and other people's views of who they are through their play, through trying out different behaviours, and the way they talk about themselves
- Is gradually learning that actions have consequences but not always the consequences the child hopes for

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Use play and stories to positively support toddlers' understanding of their physical selves and social identities.
- Share a child's pleasure when they do something for themselves and celebrate by sharing with others such as parents, other children or educators.
- Recognise a child's growing sense of agency and respect their attempts to gain independence by giving time for doing things for themselves in routines.
- Making choices is important for all children. Consider, with parents/ carers and other professionals, ways in which you provide for children with disabilities to make choices.
- Provide opportunities to practise making choices and decisions such as when serving themselves from dishes on the lunch table.
- Support autonomy by involving them in the daily organisation of the home or group by setting the table, for example.
- Be close by and available to provide encouragement and support when a toddler needs it but show trust in their capabilities.
- Be aware of and alert to possible dangers, while recognising the importance of encouraging young children's sense of exploration and risk-taking.
- Offer extra support to children in new situations where they may not understand the expectations or have confidence in their abilities.
- Recognise and value toddlers' unique interests and abilities by following and building on what they show you about their play interests and preferences.
- Be sensitive to differences in attitudes and expectations amongst families and maintain a two-way communication about their values and approach.
- Recognise each child's social and cultural context by talking about the places children go to, celebrations they enjoy and the people they love.
- Notice your interactions with children of different genders, ethnicities or abilities; are you conveying any unconscious bias? Are you actively challenging stereotypes and assumptions?

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- Create displays and albums of photographs of the children and the activities they have participated in.
- Encourage children to take their own photographs within the setting.
- Ensure displays, equipment and resources are reflective of the children's linguistic social and cultural backgrounds and those of the wider community, so there are items that are familiar to each child.
- Use dual language books, number rhymes and songs to encourage participation and switching between languages.
- Share observations and consult with parents on each child's interests, dispositions, wellbeing and achievements, whatever they may be.
- Adapt the environment to support the needs of children with mobility, visual or hearing impairment.
- Plan the environment so that storage for coats, nappies, shoes and comforters are labelled with individual children's photographs and names so children can access them independently.
- Provide an environment that is stable and familiar so children can find what they need, feel secure and be autonomous in their play.
- Plan personalised play that follows each child's interests and possible lines of development.
- Ensure materials are easily accessible so all children have access to them and can make choices in their play.
- Provide mark making and collage materials that allow children to accurately represent their skin colour and hair type.
- Offer play experiences that are equally attractive to girls and boys and can be accessed by children with a disability in the best way they can.

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing		Positive Relationships: what adults might do		Enabling Environments: what adults might provide	
 RANGE 5	• Is becoming more aware of the similarities and differences between themselves and others in more detailed ways and identifies their relation to social groups and to their peers • Is sensitive to others' messages of appreciation or criticism • Enjoys a sense of belonging through being involved in daily tasks • Is aware of being evaluated by others and begin to develop ideas about themselves according to the messages they hear from others • Shows their confidence and self-esteem through being outgoing towards people, taking risks and trying new things or new social situations and being able to express their needs and ask adults for help	• Celebrate each child's uniqueness by talking openly and positively with them about their individual characteristics, and similarities and differences in relation to others. • Value difference through showing genuine interest in and valuing all children's contributions through listening carefully and providing opportunities for children to be fully themselves. • Offer extra support to children in new situations or when they are feeling anxious or insecure. • Talk to children about choices they make and help them understand that this may mean that they cannot do something else. • Show trust in young children's abilities by showing them how to use and care for materials, letting them try and noticing when they need help; offering but not taking over. • Be aware of and respond to the particular needs of children who are learning English as an additional language. • Engage with children in exploring and talking about what they are doing, valuing their ideas and ways of doing things. • Offer help with activities when asked but not before and see struggle and mistakes as important parts of learning. • Intervene when children need help and validation of their feelings in difficult situations, such as prejudice or unkindness. • Use resources such as books or puppets to engage children in thinking about difference, unfairness, prejudice and discrimination. • Notice and appreciate young children's efforts not just their achievements, encouraging their inner motivation rather than working just for your approval or a sticker. • Listen carefully to young children. Take their ideas and opinions into account and involve them in making decisions about daily events. Be aware that young children with disabilities or learning difficulties may need additional support in making choices and decisions and being autonomous.	• Learn about each child's home culture from parents and invite two-way conversations about their child's learning at home and in the setting. • Plan regular opportunities for children to talk to their small group about something they are interested in or have done. • Include mirrors and photographs of the children and their families and friends in the environment. • Reflect children's socio-cultural and ethnic backgrounds and those of the wider community in the environment; play opportunities and resources. • Give time for children to pursue their play and learning without interruption, to complete activities such as role play, construction, building dens and painting to their satisfaction, and to return to their activities if they wish. • Provide experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable. • Provide a role-play area resourced with materials reflecting children's family lives and communities. Consider including resources reflecting lives that are unfamiliar, to broaden children's knowledge and reflect an inclusive ethos. • Involve children in drawing or taking photographs of favourite activities or places, to help them describe their individual preferences and opinions. • Provide books, stories, songs, music and other cultural artefacts that are drawn from a wide range of traditions and styles. • Provide and engage with CPD to extend educators' awareness of anti-bias practice.	 RANGE 6	• Recognises that they belong to different communities and social groups and communicates freely about own home and community • Is more aware of their relationships to particular social groups and demonstrates acceptance of children who may be different to themselves (gender, colour, disability etc.) • Shows confidence in speaking to others about their own needs, wants, interests and opinions in familiar group • Can describe their competencies, what they can do well and are getting better at; describing themselves in positive but realistic terms • Has a clear idea about what they want to do in their play and how they want to go about it • Shows confidence in choosing resources and perseverance in carrying out a chosen activity

Statutory ELG: Managing Self

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge

In some cases, suggestions for similar support for children's development and learning apply across two ranges. In these cases the Positive Relationships and Enabling Environments columns are shown in the colour of the first range, but apply to both adjacent ranges.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Understanding emotions

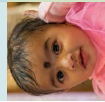
A Unique Child:

what a child might be doing



- Communicates a range of emotions (eg pleasure, interest, fear, surprise, anger and excitement) through making sounds, facial expressions, and moving their bodies.
- Expresses feelings strongly through crying in order to make sure that their needs will be met
- May whimper, scream and cry if hurt or neglected. If their needs are not responded to, they may become withdrawn and passive
- Seeks physical and emotional comfort by snuggling in to trusted adults
- Is affirmed and comforted by familiar carers through voice, physical presence and touch, for example singing, cuddles, smiles or rocking
- Reacts emotionally to other people's emotions; smiling when smiled at and becoming distressed if they hear another child crying or see a blank unresponsive face

1
RANGE



- Shows a wider variety of feelings, using crying, gestures and vocalisations freely to express their needs
- Begins to become aware of their emotions as the connections in the brain that make feelings conscious grow and develop
- Uses familiar adult to share feelings such as excitement and for "emotional refuelling" when feeling tired or anxious
- Uses a comfort object, familiar others, routines or spaces to soothe themselves, particularly when separated from their close carer
- Becomes more able to adapt their behaviour and increase their participation and co-operation as they become familiar with and anticipate routine
- Explores the boundaries of behaviours that are accepted by adults and become aware of basic rules as they use their emerging agency and autonomy

2
RANGE

Positive Relationships:

what adults might do

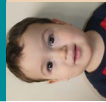
- Learn from parents about how their child expresses their emotions and what they do to soothe them.
- Support children who are distressed on separating from their parents by acknowledging their feelings and reassuring them.
- Be responsive to all communication such as crying, babbling and physical movements to acknowledge a baby's emotional expressions.
- Be emotionally and physically available, providing a secure presence and a refuge at times when a baby may be feeling anxious.
- "Tune in" to emotions and respond calmly, gently and sensitively in a way that follows their needs.
- Use calming processes such as rocking or calmly singing in response to emotional expression and note what helps to sooth and support the baby.
- Learn lullabies and other songs that babies know from home and sing them to offer comfort.
- Make sure they have access to their comfort object whenever they need it.
- Show babies and children they are safe and loved by comforting them when experiencing frustration and anxiety.
- Share in happy and joyful experiences, joining in with their excitement without overwhelming them with your responses.
- Be consistent in your responses so children start to notice links between their actions and your responses.
- Support babies and young children in their play with others modelling caring and respectful behaviours and affirming their pro-social behaviours.
- Be alert to unexplained changes in behaviour or unusual injuries a child has and take action within safeguarding guidelines.
- Show that you empathise by gesture, facial expression and tone of voice, and name the child's feelings.

Enabling Environments:

what adults might provide

- Observe babies' emotional responses and plan the routines, the environment and play experiences to support them.
- Encourage parents to bring their baby's comforter/transitional object to ease the change from home to setting.
- Create a cosy, quiet place for babies to be calm.
- Provide comfortable seating such as a sofa or cushions for baby and key person to be together.
- Create spaces and experiences in which babies feel secure enough to explore and play.
- Provide resources including picture books and stories that focus on a range of emotions.
- Store babies' toys and comforters where they can find and reach them.
- Communicate with parents/carers daily to ensure continuity of care between home and setting.
- Communicate with sensitivity when interacting with parents who do not speak or understand English and draw on the language skills available where possible
- Develop good two-way relationships with parents where boundaries of behaviour can be shared and agreed.
- Maintain an awareness and understanding that children who have had adverse experiences may require additional all-round support.
- Ensure educators have regular opportunities to reflect on their emotional responses to the children and to their work as well as thinking about the children's progress and planning play experiences.

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing



3
RANGE

- Expresses positive feelings such as joy and affection and negative feelings such as anger, frustration and distress, through actions, behaviours and a few words
- Experiences a wide range of feelings with great intensity, such as anger and frustration, which can be overwhelming and result in losing control of feelings, body and thinking
- Is aware of others' feelings and is beginning to show empathy by offering a comfort object to another child or sharing in another child's excitement
- Asserts their own agenda strongly and may display frustration with having to comply with others' agendas and with change and boundaries



4
RANGE

- Expresses a range of feelings through actions and a few words
- Experiences a wide range of feelings with great intensity, such as anger and frustration, which can be overwhelming and result in losing control of feelings, body and thinking
- Is aware of others' feelings and is beginning to show empathy by offering a comfort object to another child or sharing in another child's excitement
- Asserts their own agenda strongly and may display frustration with having to comply with others' agendas and with change and boundaries
- Expresses the self-aware emotions of pride and embarrassment as well as a wide range of other feeling
- Can feel overwhelmed by intense emotions, resulting in an emotional collapse when frightened, frustrated, angry, anxious or over-stimulated
- Begins to make connections between what they are seeing and doing with how they are feeling
- Seeks comfort from familiar adults when needed and distracts themselves with a comfort object when upset

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Be a secure base for toddlers to return to for 'emotional refuelling' when encountering novel situations or social conflict and challenges.
- Create regular opportunities to be in very small groups or one-to-one times with the key person.
- Reduce frustration and conflict by keeping routines flexible so that young children can pursue their interests.
- Understand that 'emotional storms' are a sign of a child being overwhelmed by strong emotions such as anger, frustration, fear, anxiety and sadness.
- Show empathy and stay close by to offer support and reassurance as the child calms after an emotional collapse.
- Use real life experiences to help children to understand a wide range of emotions in others and themselves by talking about different emotions as they occur during play.
- Model empathy and talk about the child's and others' feelings. For example, *Amaya is feeling sad today because she is missing her mummy.*
- Understand that young children communicate their feelings through their behaviours and respond by showing empathy for their underlying feelings.
- Demonstrate clear and consistent boundaries without being rigid and unreasonable.
- Take children seriously and understand their motivations and underlying reasons for their actions.
- Show you are supportive by empathising when a child's attempts at assertion and negotiation go wrong, and help them to find more effective ways.
- Show fairness; apply rules consistently but reasonably and flexibly when necessary.
- Support young children's rights to be kept safe by others by helping them to assert themselves positively and by respecting their personal space and their bodily integrity.

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- Maintain consistency of key person relationships in the organisation of staffing.
- Keep changes in group and routine to a minimum
- Ensure that observation and planning for children's emotional needs is a central focus.
- Provide books, stories and puppets that can be used to model responding to others' feelings and being helpful and supportive.
- Provide sufficient materials and duplicates of popular items to reduce conflict, eg ride on toys, construction toys, and several copies of the same book.
- Create enough space and organise resources so that toddlers can play without becoming frustrated.
- Create calm spaces inside and out, for retreat and relaxation.
- Offer play opportunities with open-ended materials.
- Provide for vigorous physical play.

In some cases, suggestions for similar support for children's development and learning apply across two ranges. In these cases the Positive Relationships and Enabling Environments columns are shown in the colour of the first range, but apply to both adjacent ranges.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Understanding emotions

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing

- Responds to the feelings of others, showing concern and offering comfort
- May recognise that some actions can hurt or harm others and begins to stop themselves from doing something they should not do, in favourable conditions
- Participates more in collective cooperation as their experience of routines and understanding of some boundaries grows

RANGE
4 (cont.)



- Expresses a wide range of feelings in their interactions with others and through their behaviour and play, including excitement and anxiety, guilt and self-doubt
- May exhibit increased fearfulness of things like the dark or monsters etc and possibly have nightmares
- Talks about how others might be feeling and responds according to their understanding of the other person's needs and wants
- Is more able to recognise the impact of their choices and behaviours/actions on others and knows that some actions and words can hurt others' feelings
- Understands that expectations vary depending on different events, social situations and changes in routine, and becomes more able to adapt their behaviour in favourable conditions

RANGE
5



- Understands their own and other people's feelings, offering empathy and comfort
- Talks about their own and others' feelings and behaviour and its consequences
- Attempts to repair a relationship or situation where they have caused upset and understands how their actions impact other people
- Is more able to manage their feelings and tolerate situations in which their wishes cannot be met

RANGE
6

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Create a listening culture and atmosphere which is calm and caring, where young children feel able to express their emotions. Create a listening culture and atmosphere which is calm and caring, where young children feel able to express their emotions.
- Model caring responses and comforting or helping behaviours in your interactions with all children.
- Name and talk about a wide range of feelings and make it clear that all feelings are understandable and acceptable. Put children's feelings into words for them: *It looks like you're cross about that.*
- Co-regulate by modelling and talking about how you and others are feeling and what strategies might change that feeling.
- Help children to recognise when their actions hurt others. Do not expect children to say sorry before they have a real understanding of what this means. Instead help them to suggest solutions to a conflict when they are emotionally ready.
- Be emotionally available to young children when they need to "emotionally refuel" to help them to cope with difficult situations, conflict and difficult emotions.
- Ask children for their ideas on what might make people feel better when they are sad or cross.
- Children with developmental differences may need additional support in developing empathy. Using role play opportunities, social stories and providing feedback can help a child to recognise their feelings of empathy.
- Provide clear boundaries without being inflexible.
- Discuss rules and fairness with young children and show positive appreciation of young children's pro-social behaviours of kindness and helpfulness for example.

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- Create familiar, predictable routines, including opportunities to help in appropriate tasks, eg setting the table or putting away toys.
- Display a sequence of photographs to show the routines in the setting to support younger or new children and children with additional needs.
- Provide photographs and books where emotions are being expressed to look at and talk about with children.
- Plan activities which include children exploring ways to express emotion, be fair, be kind and help each other. Provide a range of music, stories, open ended materials and play opportunities, play props and resources to support young children in exploring and making sense of feelings such as fear, anxiety and anger.
- Offer environments that include stimulating and challenging spaces but also calm and comfortable spaces.
- Set, explain and maintain clear, reasonable and consistent boundaries so that children can feel safe and secure in their play and other activities.
- Use pictures, shared gestures or sign language to show young children and those with additional needs the expected behaviours.
- Involve children in agreeing codes of behaviour and taking responsibility for implementing them.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Understanding emotions

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing	• Seeks support, “emotional refuelling” and practical help in new or challenging situations • Is aware of behavioural expectations and sensitive to ideas of justice and fairness • Seeks ways to manage conflict, for example through holding back, sharing, negotiation and compromise
Positive Relationships: what adults might do	• Support children in recognising the consequences of behaviours and responses that make other children or adults feel upset and help them to repair this by finding new responses or behaviours. • Actively listen to children’s talk, play, body language and behaviours and think about what the child is telling you. • Make opportunities for children and adults to listen to each other and explain their thinking, feelings and actions as far as they are able. • Collaborate with children in creating rules and expectations within a group such as mutual respect, compromise, caring behaviours towards themselves, others and the environment. • Use in-depth knowledge of the child and context to inform responses to children’s heightened emotions and feelings. The child is encouraged to recall key vocabulary and reflect on events that evoke an emotion with support and sensitive prompting, providing a commentary or questioning from the adult. • Adopt a partnership approach with parents when discussing boundaries and expectations to maintain continuity for children.
Enabling Environments: what adults might provide	• Provide books with stories about characters that follow or break rules, and the effects of their behaviour on others. • Carefully prepare all children for any changes to their routine, provide strategies to help sequence events and support transitions. Have agreed procedures outlining how to respond to unexpected or unusual changes in children’s behaviour. • Share policies and practice on safeguarding procedure with parents/carers from the outset. • Provide and engage in CPD that supports educators understanding and response to children’s emotional difficulties and safeguarding concerns.

Statutory ELG: Self-Regulation

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly

Statutory ELG: Managing Self

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly

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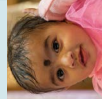
Communication and Language: Listening and attention

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing



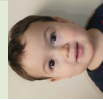
1 RANGE

- Turns toward a familiar sound then locates range of sounds with accuracy
- Listens to, distinguishes and responds to intonations and sounds of voices
- Reacts in interaction with others by smiling, looking and moving
- Quietens or alerts to the sound of speech
- Looks intently at a person talking, but stops responding if speaker turns away
- Listens to familiar sounds, words, or finger plays
- Fleeting attention – not under child's control, new stimuli takes whole attention



2 RANGE

- Moves whole body to sounds they enjoy, such as music or a regular beat
- Concentrates intently on an object or activity of own choosing for short periods
- Pays attention to dominant stimulus – easily distracted by noises or other people talking.
- Enjoys laughing and being playful with others



3 RANGE

- Listens to and enjoys rhythmic patterns in rhymes and stories, trying to join in with actions or vocalisations
- Enjoys rhymes and demonstrates listening by trying to join in with actions or vocalisations
- Pays attention to own choice of activity, may move quickly from activity to activity

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Get physically close making sure the baby or child can see your face. Are they looking at you and do they seem to want to interact? This will help the child to observe faces and notice communications.
- Show that you are present and tuned in by using eye contact and touch to create shared moments of interaction.
- Be attentive and leave space for the baby to start a turn-taking interaction ('serve-and-return'), where you copy the baby's sounds or gestures.
- Use a range of animated facial expressions to show babies you are interested in them.
- Use a lively voice with ups and downs to help babies tune in.
- Say the baby's name to draw their attention.
- Imitate the baby's responses to show you notice and value their contributions.
- Encourage playfulness, laughter, turn-taking and responses, using "peek-a-boo" and action rhymes.
- Sing songs and rhymes during everyday routines.
- Use repeated sounds, and words and phrases so babies can begin to recognise particular sounds.
- Pay attention to babies' teasing and emergence of humour. They may use inanimate objects to tease and provoke your reaction.
- Follow the baby's focus and pay joint attention to what they are interested in.

- Use natural gestures and/or signing, eg waving "bye-bye".
- Let the child choose the activity and follow their interest.
- Take turns using musical instruments.
- Sing songs and encourage repetitive action rhymes.
- Play alongside the child and talk together.
- Encourage young children to explore and imitate sound.
- Talk about the different sounds they hear, such as a tractor's *chug chug* while sharing a book.

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- Share stories, songs and rhymes from all cultures and in babies' home languages and other languages common in communities.
- Share favourite stories, songs, rhymes or music as babies are settling to sleep, or at other quiet times.
- Sing frequently with young babies, encouraging them to join in.
- Create an environment which invites responses from babies and adults, for example, touching, smiling, smelling, feeling, listening, exploring, describing and sharing.
- Establish a familiar pattern by spending prolonged moments of time each day interacting with the baby, or a small group of babies.
- Consider what it feels like to use your voice in your environment – what kinds of sound environments do children experience? Is the invitation to "join in" with this environment, using voices, bodies and objects to make noise, irresistible?
- Collect resources that children can listen to and learn to distinguish between. These may include games that involve guessing which object makes a particular sound
- Encourage listening in its widest sense; this could include opportunities to listen to human noises, non-human noises, objects that make interesting noise, weather and other outdoor sounds.
- Provide opportunities to listen to the sounds of the local area, the home and the natural world.
- Listen to sounds that are easily identifiable and mysterious noises that are not. Model and encourage playful imaginative responses.

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing



4
RANGE

- Listens with interest to the noises adults make when they read stories
- Recognises and responds to many familiar sounds, eg turning to a knock on the door, looking at or going to the door
- Shows interest in play with sounds, songs and rhymes
- Single channelled attention; can shift to a different task if attention fully obtained – using child's name helps focus

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Model being a listener by listening to children and taking account of what they say in your responses to them.
- Have conversations with children as part of everyday activities.
- Be aware of the child's body language and be receptive to opportunities to join in playful encounters.
- Model and encourage language for thinking by using phrase such as *I wonder... What if... I have an idea.*
- Encourage repetition, rhythm and rhyme by using tone and intonation as you tell, recite or sing stories, poems and rhymes from books.
- Be aware of and actively support the needs of children learning English as an additional language from a variety of cultures and ask parents to share their favourite stories, rhymes and songs in their home languages.

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- Use puppets and other props to encourage listening and responding when singing a familiar song or reading from a story book.
- Encourage children to learn one another's names and to pronounce them correctly.
- Ensure all practitioners can pronounce the names of children, parents and other practitioners.
- Find out parents' preferred names for themselves and their children.
- Monitor background noise to ensure that the child can hear what you and peers are saying. Ensure spaces are separated enough for children to listen to each other.
- Encourage talk in all spaces, both indoors and outdoors.



5
RANGE

- Listens to others in one-to-one or small groups, when conversation interests them
- Listens to familiar stories with increasing attention and recall
- Joins in with repeated refrains and anticipates key events and phrases in rhymes and stories
- Focusing attention – can still listen **or** do, but can change their own focus of attention
- Is able to follow directions (if not intently focused)

- Engage in role play and imaginary play scenarios and model listening behaviours.
- Encourage children to listen to their friends and take turns in play and activities.
- Make mistakes when telling stories/singing songs so the children correct you.

- When making up alliterative jingles, draw attention to the similarities in sounds at the beginning of words and emphasise the initial sound, eg *mmmummy, shshshadow, K-K-K-Katy.*
- Plan activities listening carefully to different speech sounds, eg a sound chain copying the voice sound around the circle, or identifying other children's voices on tape.



6
RANGE

- Shows variability in listening behaviour; may move around and fiddle but still be listening or sit still but not absorbed by activity
- May indicate two-channelled attention, eg paying attention to something of interest for short or long periods; can both listen and do for short span

- Cue children, particularly those with communication difficulties, to listen by first using their name, and signal a change of conversation, eg *Now we are going to talk about...*
- Share rhymes, books and stories from many cultures, sometimes using languages other than English, particularly where children are learning English as an additional language.
- Invite parents and members of wider communities to share stories in a variety of languages, so children can use the languages they are learning. Children then hear a range of languages, and the value of home languages as well as English.
- Introduce "rhyme time" bags containing books that are relevant to the communities of your setting. Encourage taking these home and involve parents in rhymes and singing games.
- Ask parents to record and share songs and rhymes that have meaning to them, their family and community.
- Choose stories with repeated refrains, dances and action songs involving looking and pointing, and songs that require replies and turn-taking.

- When singing or saying rhymes, talk about the similarities in the rhyming words. Make up alternative endings and encourage children to supply the last word of the second line, eg Hickory Dickory bee, The mouse ran down the...
- Set up a listening area or other opportunities where children can enjoy rhymes and stories, either independently or with an adult.
- Provide instruments for musical play.
- Provide opportunities to listen in different kinds of environments eg outdoor spaces, dens, large and small rooms and buildings
- Explore different kinds of surfaces and how noise bounces off them,
- Talk with children about how we listen differently to different things, for example animals and types of music.

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Communication and Language: Listening and attention

A Unique Child:
what a child might be doing

Positive Relationships:
what adults might do

Enabling Environments:
what adults might provide

RANGE 5 and 6 (cont)

- Plan regular short periods when individuals listen to others, such as singing a short song, sharing an experience or describing something they have seen or done.
- Play games which involve listening for a signal, such as *Simon Says*, and use *Ready, steady...go!*
- Use opportunities to stop and listen carefully for environmental sounds, and talk about sounds you can hear using words such as *long, short, high, low*.
- Play with sand timers to help extend concentration for children who find it difficult to focus their attention on a task.
- Explain why it is important to pay attention by looking and listening when others are speaking.
- Give children opportunities both to speak and to listen, ensuring that the needs of children learning English as an additional language are met, so that they can participate fully starting with simple actions and gestures, progressing to single words and phrases, and then to using more complex sentences.

Statutory ELG: Listening, Attention and Understanding

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions;
- Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding;
- Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.

Statutory ELG: Self-Regulation

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.

Communication and Language: Understanding

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing		Positive Relationships: what adults might do	Enabling Environments: what adults might provide
 1 RANGE	• Turns when hears own name • Starts to understand contextual clues, eg familiar gestures, words and sounds	• Look at the baby and say their name. Make eye contact and wait for them to react. • Interpret and give meaning to the things young babies show interest in, eg when babies point to an object tell them what it is. • Use an animated, enthusiastic face when interacting with children. • Look out for strategies babies use to attract your attention, such as seeking eye contact, gestures such as pointing, facial expressions and intentional physical movement. • Talk to babies about what you are doing and what is happening, so they will link words with actions, eg preparing lunch. • Use actions including hands and finger plays to support your words, eg waving when you say <i>bye bye</i>. • Speak clearly. Babies respond well to a higher pitched, sing-song voice. • Use and repeat single words while you share attention to an object or event, so the baby can gradually link the word to its meaning.	• Let babies see and hear the sequence of actions you go through as you carry out familiar routines. • Provide resources and spaces that stimulate babies' interests such as a shiny bell, a book or a mirror on the floor or on your lap. • Find out from parents how babies make themselves understood at home. • Confirm which is their home language. • Display lists of words from different home languages, and invite parents and other adults to contribute. Include all languages in the community since seeing their languages reflected in the setting will encourage all parents to feel involved and valued. • When singing rhymes and songs use actions to support children's understanding of words and their relation to wider life.
	• Is developing the ability to follow others' body language, including pointing and gesture • Responds to simple questions when in a familiar context with a special person (eg <i>Where's Mummy?</i>, <i>Where's your nose?</i>) • Understanding of single words in context is developing, eg <i>cup, milk, daddy</i> 2 RANGE		
 3 RANGE	• Understands different situations - able to follow routine events and activities using nonverbal cues • Selects familiar objects by name and will go and find objects when asked, or identify objects from a group • Understands simple sentences (eg <i>Throw the ball</i>)	• Use gestures and facial expression to help show your meaning. • Be aware that young children's understanding is much greater than their ability to express their thoughts and ideas. For example, a child may be able to go and hang their coat up when asked but say only <i>coat up</i> to explain what they did. • Recognise young children's competence and appreciate their efforts when they show their understanding of new words and phrases (<i>Yes, that is a little flower</i>). • Use language appropriate to the child's level of understanding. • Stay with the child while they play, taking time to watch their movements and react to their initiations and adding words to describe what the child is doing.	• Plan play activities and provide resources which encourage young children to engage in symbolic play, eg putting a "baby" to bed and talking to it appropriately. • Plan real world shared experiences such as visits, everyday tasks, or preparing activities in the setting. • Use pictures, books, real objects, and signs alongside your words.

In some cases, suggestions for similar support for children's development and learning apply across two ranges. In these cases the Positive Relationships and Enabling Environments columns are shown in the colour of the first range, but apply to both adjacent ranges.

Communication and Language: Understanding

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing



4
RANGE

- Identifies action words by following simple instructions, eg *Show me jumping*
- Beginning to understand more complex sentences, eg *Put your toys away and then sit on the carpet*
- Understands *who, what, where* in simple questions (eg *Who's that? Who can? What's that? Where is?*)
- Developing understanding of simple concepts (eg *fast/slow, good/bad*)

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Be attentive and respond to children's talk in an appropriate and positive way.
- Use talk to describe what children are doing by providing a running commentary, eg *Oh, I can see what you are doing. You have to put the milk in the cup first.*
- Provide opportunities for children to talk with other children and adults about what they see, hear, think and feel.
- Don't rush when you talk – speak at a pace that the child can process and understand.
- Provide words by labelling objects, actions and abstract things like feelings.
- Stay with the child while they play, play alongside the child and show attentive companionship as you share conversations.



5
RANGE

- Understands use of objects (eg *Which one do we cut with?*)
- Shows understanding of prepositions such as *under, on top, behind* by carrying out an action or selecting correct picture
- Responds to instructions with more elements, eg *Give the big ball to me; collect up all the blocks and put them in the box*
- Beginning to understand *why* and *how* questions

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- Include things which excite young children's curiosity, such as hats, bubbles, shells, story books, seeds and snails, which reflect both living and non-living things in their wider communities.
- Provide activities, such as cooking, where talk is used to anticipate or initiate what children will be doing, eg *We need some eggs. Let's see if we can find some in here.* There may be opportunities for sequencing language, such as *first, next, last*.
- Set up shared experiences that children can reflect upon, eg visits, cooking, or stories that can be re-enacted.
- Help children to predict and order events coherently, by providing props and materials that encourage children to re-enact, using talk and action
- Find out from parents how children make themselves understood at home; confirm their preferred language and/or other modes of communication.
- Tune into children's preferred modes of communication – perhaps direct questions feel confronting but shared making or an exchange of funny expressions or gestures creates a connection more effectively.
- Provide practical experiences that encourage children to ask and respond to questions, eg explaining pulleys or wet and dry sand.
- Alongside books, introduce story props, such as pictures, puppets and objects, to encourage children to retell stories and to think about how the characters feel.
- Displays can connect experiences across places or provide reminders of previous trips, events or seasons, for example.

Communication and Language: Understanding		
A Unique Child: what a child might be doing	Positive Relationships: what adults might do	Enabling Environments: what adults might provide
 RANGE 6 • Understands a range of complex sentence structures including negatives, plurals and tense markers • Beginning to understand humour, eg nonsense rhymes, jokes • Able to follow a story without pictures or props • Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others in conversation or discussion • Understands questions such as <i>who</i>; <i>why</i>; <i>when</i>; <i>where</i> and <i>how</i>	• Ask children to think in advance and predict how they will accomplish a task. Talk through and sequence the stages together. • Enjoy sharing stories with individual children and small groups. Engage in sustained shared thinking with them to extend their thinking and use of vocabulary. • Use appropriate vocabulary during play with children to encourage them to think about stories and cultural narratives. • Use stories from books to focus children's attention on predictions and explanations, eg <i>Why did the boat tip over?</i> • Help children to - identify patterns, eg what generally happens to good and wicked characters at the end of stories - draw conclusions: <i>The sky has gone dark. It must be going to rain</i> - explain effect: <i>It fell over because it was too tall.</i> - predict: <i>It might not grow in there if it is too dark.</i> - speculate: <i>What if the bridge falls down?</i>	• Set up displays that are interactive so children can touch, pick up etc and talk about/reflect on their experiences • Provide for, initiate and join in imaginative play and role-play or real life storytelling encouraging children to talk about what is happening and to act out the scenarios in character.
Statutory ELG: Listening, Attention and Understanding Children at the expected level of development will: - Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding; - Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.	Statutory ELG: Comprehension (Literacy) Children at the expected level of development will: - Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary; - Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories; - Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.	

Communication and Language: Speaking

A Unique Child:

what a child might be doing



- Communicates needs and feelings in a variety of ways including crying, gurgling, babbling and squealing
- Makes own sounds in response when talked to by familiar adults
- Lifts arms in anticipation of being picked up
- Practises and gradually develops speech sounds (babbling) to communicate with adults; says sounds like *baba*, *nono*, *gogo*
- Points and looks to make requests and to share an interest

1
RANGE

Positive Relationships:

what adults might do

- Find out from parents what languages babies hear at home and in the wider community, noting especially languages parents prefer to communicate with their baby.
- Ensure parents understand the importance of talking with babies in their home language.
- Pay attention to babies' communications including facial expression, gesture, etc., and respond promptly so they know they have been heard.
- Encourage babies' sounds and babbling by copying their sounds in a turn-taking or "serve and return" interaction.
- Find out from parents how their baby attracts their attention at home. For example, calling or banging from highchair, verbalising if left alone, seeking eye gaze.
- Recognise the importance of all sounds and babbling babies share – this is their way of sharing their voice with you.

Enabling Environments:

what adults might provide

- Learn and use key words in the home languages of babies in the setting.
- Value and learn from families about their communities, languages and cultures. Including influences from other contexts of the baby's life supports wellbeing.
- Encourage parents to record familiar, comforting sounds, such as lullabies in home languages. Use these to help babies settle if they are tired or distressed.



2
RANGE

- Uses sounds in play, eg *brrrrm* for toy car
- Uses single words
- Frequently imitates words and sounds
- Enjoys babbling and increasingly experiments with using sounds
- Uses words to communicate for a range of purposes (eg *teddy*, *more*, *no*, *bye-bye*)
- Uses pointing with eye gaze, and then fingers or hands, to make requests and to share an interest
- Creates personal words as they begin to develop language

- Try to "tune in" to the different messages young babies are attempting to convey, and respond.
- Look out for patterns of communications they use to invite you into encounters. This might include being playful or physical movements and utterances. Bringing you toys, or holding out objects to you may indicate that they want to "talk".
- Share the fun of discovery and value babies' attempts at words, eg, by picking up a doll in response to *baba*.
- When babies try to say a word, repeat it back so they can hear the name of the object clearly.
- Find out from parents the greetings, phrases and key words they use in English and in languages other than English, and use them in the setting.
- Recognise and equally value all languages spoken and written by parents, practitioners and children.

- Find out from parents the words that children use for things which are important to them, such as *blankie* for their comfort blanket, remembering to extend this question to home languages.
- Explain that strong foundations in a home language support the development of English.
- Tune into what different children enjoy and create environments where babbling and talking feels easy and comfortable and where children can experiment freely with the sounds they can make.
- Provide appropriate sensory experiences as well as opportunities for movement and private conversations and sound experiments – possibly in dens and cosy corners.

A Unique Child:

what a child might be doing



3
RANGE

- Copies familiar expressions, eg *Oh dear, All gone*.
- Uses different types of everyday words (nouns, verbs and adjectives, eg *banana, go, sleep, hot*)
- Beginning to put two words together (eg *Want ball, More juice*)
- Beginning to ask simple questions
- Beginning to talk about people and things that are not present
- Uses gestures, sometimes with limited talk, eg reaches toward toy, saying *Want it*

Positive Relationships:

what adults might do

- Build vocabulary by giving choices, eg *apple or satsuma?*
- Model building sentences by repeating what the child says and adding another word, eg child says *car*, say *mummy's car* or *blue car*.
- Give the child enough time to talk with silences to allow the child to respond or pauses to indicate turn talking.
- Show children how to pronounce or use words by responding and repeating what they say in the correct way, rather than saying they are wrong.
- Capitalise on the link between movement and the urge to make sounds to encourage children to "find their voice", eg when swinging/swaying/jumping/sliding etc.
- Accept and respond to words and phrases in home languages.
- Encourage parents whose children are learning English as an additional language to continue to encourage use of the first language at home. This helps children learn English as well as being important for cultural and family reasons.
- Support children in using a variety of communication strategies, including signing such as with Makaton.
- Play with sounds and words children use, such as nonsense language, repeating made-up words or repetitive sounds, linking them to gestures or movement.

Enabling Environments:

what adults might provide

- Allow time to follow young children's lead and have fun together while developing vocabulary, eg saying *We're jumping up, going down*.
- Where appropriate make opportunities to talk through and comment on some activities to highlight specific vocabulary or language structures, eg *You've caught the ball. I've caught the ball. Eva's caught the ball*.
- Provide stories with repetitive phrases and structures to read aloud to children to support specific vocabulary and language structures.
- Consider how inclusive books, displays and other resources represent different languages and different forms of communication (for example, sign language and augmentative or alternative communication).



4
RANGE

- Uses language to share feelings, experiences and thoughts
- Holds a conversation, jumping from topic to topic
- Learns new words very rapidly and is able to use them in communicating
- Uses a variety of questions (eg *what, where, who*)
- Uses longer sentences (eg *Mummy gonna work*)
- Beginning to use word endings (eg *going, cats*)

- Wait and allow the child time to start the conversation.
- Follow the child's lead to talk about what they are interested in.
- Give children thinking time. Wait for them to think about what they want to say and put their thoughts into words, without jumping in too soon to say something yourself.
- In conversations and playful encounters with children, model language a step beyond the child's language use.
- Use the child's voicing/speech attempts to lead play and encounters.
- For children learning English as an additional language, value non-verbal communications and those offered in home languages.
- Without comment, observe and then mirror a child's interesting movement or series of movements. This might lead to a nonverbal "serve and return" movement dialogue, with the child leading the "conversation". This can be very powerful with reluctant speakers or children not yet ready to use English.

- Display pictures and photographs showing engaging, familiar or fantastical events, objects and activities and talk about them with the children.
- Provide activities which help children to learn to distinguish differences in sounds, word patterns and rhythms.
- Plan to encourage correct use of language by telling repetitive stories, and playing games which involve repetition of words or phrases.
- Provide opportunities for children to communicate in their home language.
- Help children to build their vocabulary, motivations and opportunities to experiment with talk by extending the range of their experiences. Understand that often when an experience is unfamiliar, children might fall silent at first but choose to talk about it later.
- Foster children's enjoyment of spoken and written language by providing interesting and stimulating play opportunities in which there is little pressure to talk but words, songs and rhymes are welcome.

In some cases, suggestions for similar support for children's development and learning apply across two ranges. In these cases the Positive Relationships and Enabling Environments columns are shown in the colour of the first range, but apply to both adjacent ranges.

Communication and Language: Speaking

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing		Positive Relationships: what adults might do		Enabling Environments: what adults might provide	
RANGE 4 (cont.) 	- Beginning to use more complex sentences to link thoughts (eg using <i>and</i>, <i>because</i>) - Able to use language in recalling past experiences - Can retell a simple past event in correct order (eg <i>went down slide</i>, <i>hurt finger</i>) - Uses talk to explain what is happening and anticipate what might happen next - Questions why things happen and gives explanations. Asks eg <i>who</i>, <i>what</i>, <i>when</i>, <i>how</i> - Beginning to use a range of tenses (eg <i>play</i>, <i>playing</i>, <i>will play</i>, <i>played</i>) - Continues to make some errors in language (eg “<i>runned</i>”) and will absorb and use language they hear around them in their community and culture - Uses intonation, rhythm and phrasing to make the meaning clear to others - Talks more extensively about things that are of particular importance to them - Builds up vocabulary that reflects the breadth of their experiences - Uses talk in pretending that objects stand for something else in play, eg <i>This box is my castle</i>	- Add words to what children say, eg child says <i>Brush dolly hair</i>, you say <i>Yes, Lucy is brushing dolly’s hair</i>. - Talk with children to make links between their body language and words, eg <i>Your face does look cross. Has something upset you?</i> - Introduce new words in the context of play and activities. - Use a lot of statements and comments and fewer questions to build natural conversation. When you do ask a question, use an open question with many possible answers. - Show interest in the words children use to communicate and describe their experiences. - Expand on what children say by repeating it and adding a few more words, helping children use more complex sentences. - Use lively intonation and animated expression when speaking with children and reading texts. - Talk to the child about family life, stories from home. Involve families in this.		- Continue to encourage movement activity to stimulate sound and verbal utterances as well as the opportunity to explore expressive sounds and words to match movement, particularly outdoors. - Stimulating the vestibular system through age-appropriate swinging, spinning, sliding, swaying etc. may help reluctant speakers to use voice. - Plan regular opportunities for children to speak, eg take turns having a toy animal at home, and then telling about the visit. - Set up collaborative tasks, eg construction, food activities or story-making through role-play. - Provide small world toys or puppets for children to act out familiar stories in their play.	
	RANGE 5				

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing



- Extends vocabulary, especially by grouping and naming, exploring the meaning and sounds of new words
- Uses language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences in play situations
- Links statements and sticks to a main theme or intention
- Uses talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas, feelings and events
- Introduces a storyline or narrative into their play

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Support children's growing ability to express a wide range of feelings orally, and to talk about their own experiences.
- Introduce and repeat new words in a range of contexts and encourage children to use them in their own talk
- Encourage conversation with others and demonstrate appropriate conventions: turn-taking, waiting until someone else has finished, listening to others and using expressions such as *please*, *thank you* and *can I...?* At the same time, respond sensitively to social conventions used at home.
- Show children how to use language for negotiating, by saying *May I...? Would it be all right...? I think that... and Will you...?* in your interactions with them.
- Model language appropriate for different audiences, for example, a visitor.
- Encourage children to predict possible endings to stories and events.
- Encourage children to experiment with words and sounds, eg in nonsense rhymes.
- Encourage children to develop narratives in their play, using words such as *first*, *last*, *next*, *before*, *after*, *all*, *most*, *some*, *each*, *every*.
- Value children's contributions and use them to inform and shape the direction of discussions.
- Encourage opportunities for conversations between small groups of children. Support these moments and act as a facilitator when appropriate.
- Listen to language and conversation that emerge through play, particularly play that is led by the child.

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- Give time and make spaces for children to initiate discussions from shared experiences and have conversations with peers and adults.
- Give thinking time for children to decide what they want to say and how they will say it.
- Encourage language play, eg through stories such as Goldilocks and the Three Bears and action songs that require intonation.
- Decide on the key vocabulary linked to activities and ensure that all practitioners make opportunities to use the words in a range of contexts such as songs, stories, games, activities and natural conversations.
- Plan collaborative activities. Help children to think and talk about how they will begin, what parts each will play and what materials they will need. Review activities with children and encourage them to think about and discuss the strategies they used.
- Provide opportunities for talking for a wide range of purposes, eg to present ideas to others as descriptions, explanations, instructions or justifications, and to discuss and plan individual or shared activities.
- Provide opportunities for children to participate in meaningful speaking and listening activities. For example, children can take models that they have made to show children in another group or class and explain how they were made.

RANGE
6

Statutory ELG: Speaking

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary;
- Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate;
- Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.

Statutory ELG: Listening, Attention and Understanding

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.

Physical Development: Moving and handling

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing



- Starts to build a sense of their own body through self-directed movement play on the floor - on back, side and tummy - kicking, waving, reaching, grasping, rolling
- Gradually develops ability to hold up own head
- Makes involuntary movements with arms and legs which gradually become more controlled
- Follows and tracks a sound or moving object, moving head and eyes
- When lying on back, plays with hands and grasps feet, alternating mouthing hands/feet with focusing gaze on them, and vocalising
- Reaches for, touches and begins to hold objects, developing later into being able to release grasp (proprioception)
- Rolls over from back to side, gradually spending longer on side waving upper leg before returning to back
- Develops roll from back right through to front, gradually becoming happy to spend longer on tummy as able to lift head for longer
- Explores objects with mouth, often picking up an object and holding it to the mouth for lips and tongue to explore (mouthing)
- When lying on tummy becomes able to lift first head and then chest, supporting self with forearms and then straight arms
- Starts to creep (belly crawl commando-style) from prone (on tummy) position on the floor, often moving backwards before going forwards (proprioceptive and vestibular)
- Becomes increasingly able to communicate, both expressing and responding through body movements, gesture, facial expression and vocalisations

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Ensure that from birth onwards babies have frequent unrestricted opportunities for moving and being active throughout the time that they are awake.
- Take babies outdoors as much as possible, paying attention to their responses to sensory stimulations such as smells, changing light and moving air.
- Give babies lots of time being touched and held, moving around the environment as well as being still.
- Very young babies may enjoy resting on your shoulder or lying on your front looking into your face.
- Before babies are able to roll themselves onto their tummy, put them onto their back for floor time and allow rolling to slowly develop.
- Share with parents the developmental value of ample time spent on the tummy and back, and the ways this can be supported to gradually develop, so that it is always pleasurable for the baby.
- Help babies to become aware of their own bodies through touch and movement.
- Whilst ensuring that babies are warm enough, give them plenty of floor time with non-restricting clothing and bare feet.
- Make the most of each stage of development and support the baby to get all of its developmental benefits: for example, time on the side is an important step in neurological development and needs lots of practice.
- Talk and sing to babies while they are on the floor or ground: they will benefit more from action around them in the room and garden than from a baby gym.
- Tune into how individual babies communicate through movement and body language.
- Play games, such as offering a small toy and taking it again to rattle, or sail through the air.
- Encourage young babies in their efforts to gradually share control of the bottle with you.
- Copy babies' movements and encourage taking turns.

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- The caregiver's body is the first and foremost enabling environment, and babies need lots of time in contact with attentive and responsive adults.
- From birth onwards, babies need to experience movement in space through being held. Rocking, side-to-side and up-and-down movements are soothing, enjoyable and very developmentally beneficial, benefitting the vestibular system.
- Provide comfortable seating both indoors and outdoors, so that adults can spend time with babies lying on their laps and upper body. Rocking chairs are especially useful.
- Make the most of the outdoors for providing the tactile and visual stimulation that babies need in their first year.
- Limit the time young babies spend in seats and other 'containers' such as car seats or buggies, as this prevents physical development through movement and touch.
- Provide a safe space on a warm firm surface, such as blanket on the floor or grass, so that young babies can lie on their backs to move, kick, stretch, find their hands and feet and look into the distance.
- Give plenty of time for babies to discover and play with their hands and feet before offering them things to hold.
- Gradually encourage babies to explore the space near them by putting interesting things beside them so they can reach, stretch, turn and roll towards them.
- Have well-planned areas that allow babies maximum space to move, roll, stretch and explore in safety indoors and outdoors.
- When babies begin to be able to move on their belly, provide a safe smooth and firm surface, such as a wooden floor or carpet.
- Provide objects to be sucked, pulled, squeezed and held, to encourage sensory development along with hand use.

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing



- Eager to create and explore movement that creates lots of physical sensation in order to build their sense of body - kicking, waving, wafting, bouncing, balancing, sliding, leaning, rolling.
- Moves from belly-crawling into crawling up on hands and knees
- Becomes adept at changing position from crawling to sitting in order to stop, pick up, handle and investigate objects
- Sits unsupported on the floor, leaving hands free to manipulate objects with both hands
- Picks up objects in palmar grip and shakes, waves, bangs, pulls and tugs them, transferring an object between hands with focus
- Enjoys finger and toe rhymes and games
- Pulls to standing from crawling, holding on to furniture or person for support
- Walks around furniture lifting one foot and stepping sideways (cruising)
- Starts walking independently on firm surfaces and later on uneven surfaces (vestibular)
- Points with first finger, sharing attention with adult
- Starts to throw and release objects overarm
- Enjoys the sensory experience of making marks in food, damp sand, water, mud, paste or paint (interoceptive)
- Pushes, pulls, lifts and carries objects, moving them around and placing with intent (proprioception)
- Climbs inside, underneath, into corners and between objects and shows an interest in climbing upstairs (vestibular and proprioceptive)
- Manipulates objects using hands singly and together, such as squeezing water out of a sponge (proprioceptive)
- Can track and pop bubbles

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Enable older babies to have at least three hours a day moving and being active, taken in short periods, across the day and according to the child's interest.
- Develop a shared approach to managing risk that enables babies to explore and develop their abilities.
- Ensure that clothing supports babies' mobility for crawling and is not hindering or restrictive.
- As much as possible, allow babies to put themselves into a sitting position rather than doing this for them.
- Engage babies in varied active physical experiences, such as bouncing, rolling, rocking, swooping and splashing, both indoors and outdoors.
- Encourage babies to use resources they can grasp, squeeze, tug and throw.
- Be aware that babies may have limited awareness of things that might be dangerous for them.
- Show babies different ways to make marks in dough or paint by swirling, poking or patting it.
- Whilst supporting babies' drive to stand and walk, continue to encourage plenty of floor play and crawling.
- Help parents understand the value of waiting until babies are ready to take steps by themselves, rather than providing assistance to speed things along, so as to develop their own balance and control.
- Provide plenty of time for babies to have bare feet during floor play and crawling, so that their feet can develop well.
- Offer a variety of tactile surfaces on varying levels for babies to explore.
- Introduce babies to a range of percussion instruments to shake, tap, drum, ding and blow.

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- Alongside the continuing role of adult bodies, the floor is the best enabling environment for babies at this stage.
- Limit the time older babies spend in seats, highchairs, bouncers and other 'containers' as this prevents the critical physical development that takes place through crawling.
- Plan space to encourage free movement, while being kept safe by attentive adults.
- Maintain a familiar and nurturing environment that allows babies to feel secure, curious and adventurous, both indoors and outdoors.
- Provide large cushions, tunnels, slopes and low-level steps or platforms to stimulate and challenge toddlers.
- Offer continuous low-level surfaces outdoors as well as indoors, so that babies can pull up to a standing position, cruise sideways and take first steps.
- Provide sturdy push-along carts, wheeled toys and pull-along toys indoors and out for pushing and pulling.
- Use music to encourage and enjoy movements.
- Make play resources easily and simply accessible on shelves and open containers for children to reach and fetch for themselves.
- Provide resources that stimulate babies to handle and manipulate things, eg metal and wooden objects or board books.
- Use gloop (cornflour and water) and other sensory materials in small trays for babies to explore with their fingers and toes.

Physical Development: Moving and handling

A Unique Child:

what a child might be doing



- Explores movement both on the floor and upright to deepen their sense of body – rolling, wriggling, spinning, toppling, climbing
- Develops security in walking upright using feet alternately and can also run short distances (vestibular)
- Begins to walk upstairs facing forwards holding rail or hand of adult, with both feet onto a single step at a time
- Changes position from standing to squatting and sitting with little effort
- Participates in finger and action rhymes, songs and games, imitating the movements and anticipating actions
- Hands start to operate independently during a task that uses both, with each hand doing something different at the same time (eg holding a block in one hand and steadying the other block with the other hand)
- Shows interest, dances and sings to music rhymes and songs, imitating movements of others (interoceptive)
- Can walk for increasing distances with purpose, stopping, starting and changing direction (vestibular and proprioceptive)
- Looks closely at small items and creatures, and can also see items at substantial distance, comfortably changing focus from one to the other
- When holding crayons, chalks etc, makes connections between their movement and the marks they make
- Uses gesture and body language to convey needs and interests and to support emerging verbal language use
- Can track and catch scarves and balloons

Positive Relationships:

what adults might do

- Enable toddlers to have at least three hours a day moving and being active, both indoors and outdoors, across the day and according to the child's interest.
- Develop a shared team culture of managing risk positively so as to enable toddlers to explore and stretch their abilities.
- Continue to provide a visible, attentive presence so that toddlers have the confidence for exploratory movement and self-driven physical activity.
- Encourage independence as young children explore particular patterns of movement, often referred to as schemas.
- Use words and simple phrases to describe the movements the child is making, especially in response to their gestures and body language.
- Play active games with toddlers that involve big movements through space, such as spinning, swooping and swinging.
- Play simple interactive finger games frequently so that the child can begin to anticipate hand movements.
- Treat mealtimes as an opportunity to help children to use fingers, spoon and cup to feed themselves.
- Involve toddlers in the routines for taking care of their environment both indoors and outdoors, such as washing windows and sweeping leaves.
- Find and create opportunities for toddlers to make things happen through their own actions such as splashing in puddles.
- Make the most of water play to safely provide a different medium for babies and young children to experience their body and movements, where possible without shoes.
- Promote transfer of hands – passing objects between hands.
- Observe emergence of dominant hand usage.

Enabling Environments:

what adults might provide

- Anticipate young children's exuberance and ensure the space is clear and suitable for their rapid and sometimes unpredictable movements.
- Provide opportunities to swing, spin and bounce.
- Provide different arrangements of toys and soft play materials to encourage crawling, tumbling, rolling and climbing.
- Use music to stimulate exploration with rhythmic movements with and without stimuli.
- Ensure that toddlers spend lots of time outdoors experiencing uneven ground and changing gradients.
- Provide a daily walk (out of pushchairs) in the immediate locality: the same walk every day is most valuable at this age.
- Provide a range of wheeled toys indoors and outdoors, such as trundle trikes, buggies for dolls, push carts and wheelbarrows.
- Offer heuristic (exploratory) play with sets of simple natural and household objects for toddlers to manipulate and explore.
- Provide items for filling, emptying and carrying, and a variety of materials to put into them.
- Provide materials that enable children to help with care-taking tasks such as sweeping, washing, pouring and digging.
- Provide sticks, rollers and moulds for young children to use in dough, clay, mud or sand.

A Unique Child:

what a child might be doing



- Creates lots of self-directed movement play in order to develop further understanding of the feel of their body – spinning, swaying, swooping, collapsing, stretching, bouncing, swinging, tumbling, hanging, tilting, sliding
- Sits up from lying down, stands up from sitting and squats with steadiness to rest or play with object on the ground, and rises to feet without using hands
- Runs safely on whole foot (not toes)
- Moves in response to music, or rhythms played on instruments such as drums or shakers
- Jumps up into the air with both feet leaving the floor and can jump forward a small distance
- Begins to walk, run and climb on different levels and surfaces (vestibular)
- Begins to understand and choose different ways of moving
- Kicks a stationary ball with either foot, throws a ball with increasing force and accuracy and starts to catch a large ball by using two hands and their chest to trap it
- Climbs up and down stairs by placing both feet on each step while holding a handrail for support
- Uses wheeled toys with increasing skill such as pedalling, balancing, holding handlebars and sitting astride (proprioceptive)
- May be beginning to show preference for dominant hand and/or leg/foot
- Turns pages in a book, sometimes several at once
- Shows increasing control in holding, using and manipulating a range of tools and objects such as tambourines, jugs, hammers, and mark making tools (proprioceptive)
- Holds mark-making tools with thumb and all fingers
- Shows accuracy and skill in more precise movements such as balancing, climbing through, over and between

Positive Relationships:

what adults might do

- Value and provide space for the ways children choose to move.
- Give as much opportunity as possible for children to move freely between indoors and outdoors.
- Talk to children about their movements and help them to explore new ways of moving, such as slithering and twisting along the ground like a snake, and moving quickly, slowly or on tiptoe.
- Encourage body tension activities such as stretching, reaching, curling, twisting and turning.
- Be aware that children need to practise walking, climbing and jumping on a range of different surfaces
- Provide a range of wheeled toys to encourage children's balance such as toys to pedal, scooters, toys to sit astride.
- Provide safe spaces where children can explore, challenge themselves and solve problems like how to balance on beams, climb ladders and use a swing.
- Agree acceptable levels of risk and challenge to enable children to explore and acquire new skills and abilities.
- Encourage children in their efforts, such as to pour a drink from an appropriately sized jug and to manipulate objects in their play: Can you put the dolly's arm in the coat?
- Provide an easily accessible range of tools, loose parts and construction equipment to encourage children's emerging manipulative skills.
- Encourage stages of movement related to sides of the body: one-sided (wave, draw, kick), both sides (jump, clap), sideways (crawl, climb), crossing one side to the other (dancing, sports).

Enabling Environments:

what adults might provide

- Offer opportunities throughout the day for high energy movements.
- Plan opportunities for children to tackle a range of levels and surfaces including flat and hilly ground, grass, pebbles, asphalt, smooth floors and carpets.
- Provide a range of large play equipment that can be used in different ways, such as boxes, ladders, tunnels, A-frames and barrels.
- Plan time for children to experiment with equipment and to practise movements they choose.
- Provide opportunities for children to hang upside down, balance, swing backwards and forwards, roll down slopes, and spin round and round, allowing children to help understand their sense of space and self.
- Explain the importance of being outdoors and providing challenge in a safe environment to parents. Provide real and role-play opportunities for children to create pathways, eg road layouts, den building or going on a picnic.
- Use whole body action rhymes, songs and games like 'follow my leader' to encourage all children to be active
- Provide a variety of recorded music, scarves, streamers and musical instruments so that children can respond spontaneously to music.
- Plan activities that involve moving and stopping, such as musical bumps and statues.
- Provide 'toolboxes' containing things that make marks, so that children can explore their use both indoors and outdoors.

Physical Development: Moving and handling

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing



- Explores increasingly complex and challenging movement to refine their sense of body, climbing higher, balancing longer, spinning faster, jumping further, testing edges and limits
- Climbs stairs, steps and moves across climbing equipment using alternate feet (vestibular)
- Walks down steps or slopes whilst carrying a small object, maintaining balance and stability
- Runs with spatial awareness and negotiates space successfully, adjusting speed or direction to avoid obstacles (vestibular and proprioception)
- Can balance on one foot or in a squat momentarily, shifting body weight to improve stability
- Can grasp and release with two hands to throw and catch a large ball, beanbag or an object
- Creates lines and circles pivoting from the shoulder and elbow
- Manipulates a range of tools and equipment in one hand, tools include paintbrushes, scissors, hairbrushes, toothbrush, scarves or ribbons
- Shows focus and stamina when trying new physical skills
- Can converse while engaging in complex motor skills

5
RANGE

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Encourage children to move with controlled effort, and model use of vocabulary in context such as strong, firm, gentle, heavy, stretch, reach, tense and floppy.
- Use music of different tempo, styles and cultures to create moods and talk about how people move when they are sad, happy or cross.
- Motivate children to be active through group games, action songs and singing.
- Talk about why children should take care when moving freely. Notice children who frequently bump into obstacles or fall over and talk with parents/carers about how they move at home.
- Teach children the skills they need to use equipment safely, eg cutting with scissors or using tools. Be aware of children who may not have had these experiences at home and talk with parents/carers about increasing opportunities at home.
- Encourage children to use the vocabulary of movement, eg *gallop, slither*; of instruction eg *follow, lead and copy* by modelling and using the vocabulary in context.
- Pose challenging questions, eg *Can you get all the way round the climbing frame without your knees touching it?*
- Talk with children about the need to match their actions to the space they are in.
- Support children who are showing left-sided dominance, being particularly conscious during mealtimes and when they are writing or drawing.
- Show children how to collaborate in throwing, rolling, fetching and receiving games, encouraging children to play with one another once their skills are sufficient.
- Introduce and encourage children to use the vocabulary of manipulation, eg *squeeze, poke, pull and prod*
- Explain why safety is an important factor in handling tools, equipment and materials, and have sensible rules for everybody to follow.

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- Provide time and space to enjoy energetic play outdoors daily.
- Provide large portable equipment that children can move about safely and cooperatively to create their own structures, such as milk crates, tyres, large cardboard tubes.
- Practise movement skills through games with beanbags, cones, balls and hoops.
- Plan activities where children can practise moving in different ways and at different speeds, balancing, target throwing, rolling, kicking and catching
- Provide sufficient equipment for children to share, so that waiting to take turns does not spoil enjoyment.
- Mark out boundaries for some activities, such as games involving wheeled toys or balls, so that children can more easily regulate their own activities.
- Provide activities that give children the opportunity and motivation to practise manipulative skills, eg cooking, painting, clay and playing instruments.
- Reduce chairs to sit less and move more.
- Provide play resources including small-world toys, construction sets, threading and posting toys, dolls' clothes and material for collage.
- Teach children skills of how to use tools and materials effectively and safely and give them opportunities to practise them.
- Provide a range of left-handed tools, especially left-handed scissors, as needed.
- Support children with physical difficulties with nonslip mats, small trays for equipment, and triangular or thicker writing tools.
- Provide a range of large loose parts, construction toys of different sizes, made of wood, rubber or plastic.
- Provide access to waterproofs, wellington boots and a changing area where children can dress/undress independently.



6
RANGE

- Builds their sense of body in chase games, tussling and creating collaborative physical challenges as well as in self-directed movement play
- Chooses to move in a range of ways, moving freely and with confidence making changes to body shape, position and pace of movement such as slithering, shuffling, rolling, crawling, walking, running, jumping, skipping, sliding and hopping
- Experiments with different ways of moving, alone and with others, testing out ideas and adapting movements to reduce risk
- Jumps off an object and lands appropriately using hands, arms and body to stabilise and balance

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing	Positive Relationships: what adults might do	Enabling Environments: what adults might provide
6 (cont.) RANGE • Navigates space successfully when playing racing and chasing games with other children, adjusting speed or changing direction to avoid obstacles • Travels with confidence and skill around, under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment • Shows increasing control over an object in pushing, patting, throwing, catching or kicking it • Uses simple tools to effect changes to materials • Handles tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control and intention • Shows a preference for a dominant hand and foot • Most children will present early on with a preference - right or left - eye, hand and foot although this may remain fluid until aged 5-6 years. • Begins to use anticlockwise movement and retrace vertical lines • Begins to form recognisable letters independently • Uses a pencil and holds it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed	• Value and support children's own judgements of risk, encouraging them to think about what to be aware of and how they can stay safe. • Explain benefits of outdoor learning to parents/carers so that children come dressed appropriately for different weathers and seasons. • Notice a child who moves repetitively in a particular way eg spinning around, flapping hands or using a throwing action. Talk to parents/carers about schemas and find constructive ways for the child to move safely. These kinds of movements may require investigation in the future if they continue. • Notice a child who lacks strength in limbs to push, pull or move safely over climbing equipment. Find out what opportunities the child has at home for outdoor adventure and risk and adapt routines to increase outdoor physical play. • Introduce families to the recommended physical activity guidance for young children. • Know when and when not to step in, respecting play experiences. • Ensure children are accessing quality high energy activities.	• Provide equipment that supports different kinds of schemas, so that children have an opportunity to build on natural patterns of movement. • Agree acceptable levels of risk and challenge, identify hazards and actions needed to maximise opportunities indoors and outdoors. • Adapt or create spaces to ensure that children with limited physical mobility can move safely and with confidence. • Teach children how to access, use and store resources safely to build independence and autonomy. • Provide materials to create enclosed spaces and dens such as fabric, poles and pegs. • Reduce tabled seating to encourage more movement.
Statutory ELG: Gross Motor Skills Children at the expected level of development will: - Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others; - Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing; - Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.	Statutory ELG: Fine Motor Skills Children at the expected level of development will: - Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases; - Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery; - Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.	

In some cases, suggestions for similar support for children's development and learning apply across two ranges. In these cases the Positive Relationships and Enabling Environments columns are shown in the colour of the first range, but apply to both adjacent ranges.

Physical Development: Health and self-care

A Unique Child:

what a child might be doing



- Responds to and thrives on warm, sensitive physical contact and care
- Makes needs known through crying and body movements
- Responds to being rocked as a means of soothing
- Sleeps for 14-16 hours a day, with several short naps. Substantial sleeping is vital for processing sensory information taken in while awake
- Responds and turns to sounds, especially voices
- Expresses discomfort, hunger or thirst, distress and need for holding or moving
- Alert for periods of increasing length, interspersed with naps
- Anticipates food routines with interest
- Starts to move to solid feeding (current recommendations are at around 6 months) as well as milk
- Communicates discomfort or distress with wet or soiled nappy
- First teeth usually appear – first two lower incisors and then two upper incisors
- Chews on baby toothbrush
- Opens mouth for spoon
- Moves limbs in the air when on back
- Starts to make sounds with mouth using tongue
- Begins to track objects and reach for their limbs

Positive Relationships:

what adults might do

- Be alert and responsive when babies have moved from exploratory mode and enjoying floor play to needing holding, cuddling or meeting care needs.
- Talk to young babies as you stroke their cheeks, or pat their backs, reminding them that you are there and they are safe.
- Discuss with parents the critical role of sleep in infancy and refer to Health Visitor or NHS guidance on daytime sleeping in infancy.
- Find out from parents about the feeding patterns of young babies.
- Encourage babies gradually to share control of food and drink, remaining tuned-in and available throughout feeding.
- Give bodily care times prominence in your role with babies, making feeding, nappy changing, bathing, infant massage and dressing times slow and attentive.
- Notice individual baby cues when spending special one-to-one time with them to ensure they are ready to engage.
- Discuss the cultural needs and expectations for skin and hair care with parents prior to entry to the setting, ensuring that the needs of all children are met appropriately and that parents' wishes are respected.
- Be aware of specific health difficulties among the babies in the group.
- Share with parents the value of tummy time for developing awareness for later continence and appetite control.
- Look after baby teeth as soon as they begin to appear.
- Share with parents guidance on digital screen use and its impact on children.
- Discuss with parents the importance of free time on backs and tummies.

Enabling Environments:

what adults might provide

- Provide a dedicated place for daytime sleeping outdoors as well as indoors to suit the needs of individual babies.
- Enable and allow babies to sleep when they need to and to wake up from naps naturally.
- Provide ample seating both indoors and outside so that adults can sit comfortably with distressed, resting and alert babies. Swing seats outdoors work especially well.
- Keep the environment quiet and calm, so that babies can attend to the voices and natural sounds around them.
- Plan to take account of the individual cultural and feeding needs of young babies in your group.
- There may be considerable variation in the way parents feed their children at home. Remember that some parents may need interpreter support.
- Plan for feeding times to be slow and pleasurable. A gentle rhythm to feeding times allows babies to anticipate what is coming next and feel relaxed.
- Make the nappy changing and dressing area pleasant to be in for both babies and adults, so that changing becomes a time for one-to-one relationship building.
- Trained staff can introduce baby massage sessions that make young babies feel nurtured and promote a sense of wellbeing. Involving parents helps them to use this approach at home.
- Offer suitable sensory areas to stimulate infants to engage through sound, visuals, and tactile experiences.
- Always offer tummy time on soft surfaces.

A Unique Child:

what a child might be doing



- Sleeps for 11-15 hours a day with at least 2 naps
- Self-soothes and is able to drop off to sleep when conditions are right for them
- Expresses feelings and communicates through gesture, facial expression, movements, body language and vocalisations (such as joy, distress, frustration and fear)
- Shows rapid changes in energy levels, from highly active to a sudden need for adult support in order to restore equilibrium
- Grasps finger foods and brings them to mouth and shares control of spoon and bottle or cup, moving towards independence with support
- Attentive to sounds in the environment, even at distance and overhead, often pointing, vocalising and sharing attention with adults
- Interested in making and exploring sounds with objects
- Generally has up to 12 teeth - willing to allow baby toothbrush to be used on teeth
- Can actively cooperate with nappy changing, dressing/undressing
- Starts to communicate regarding urination and bowel movement

2
RANGE

Positive Relationships:

what adults might do

- Find out from parents how their baby communicates needs. Ensure that parents and carers who speak languages other than English are able to share their views.
- Be ready to support babies when they experience changes in exploration energy and suddenly need adult attention: this response enables the physiological basis for later self-regulation.
- Use feeding, changing and bathing times to share finger and toe plays such as 'Round and Round the Garden'.
- Allow enough time for respectful care, ensuring that babies know what is going to happen next, watching for their cues and allowing them the opportunity to participate in age-appropriate ways.
- Make sure that clothing enables mobility and does not present any hazards, for example, jeans and dresses can prevent crawling and cause trips.
- Help babies use their feet in crawling and standing by removing footwear whenever possible.
- Explain to parents how supporting self-directed movement provides the basis for motor planning, self-regulation and lifelong wellbeing.
- Share toddler's interest in noises in the environment when outside, helping them to locate and understand the sound they have picked out.
- Discuss with parents about jointly taking care of teeth as they appear, introducing a cleaning routine that is enjoyable and links with nutrition.
- If infants are not crawling, help to prepare them by putting them into an all-fours position.



3
RANGE

- Sleeps for 12-14 hours a day with one/two naps
 - daytime sleeping continues to be important for healthy development
- Highly active in short bursts, with frequent and sudden need for rest or withdrawal
- Enjoys hugs and cuddles and seeks comfort from attachment figure when they feel the need

Enabling Environments:

what adults might provide

- Provide a comfortable, accessible place where babies can rest or sleep when they want to.
- Continue to provide supported sleeping, resting and withdrawal opportunities outdoors as well as inside, to best fit the conditions that individual babies need.
- Plan alternative activities for babies who do not need sleep at the same time as others do.
- Ensure mealtime seating allows young children to have feet firmly on the floor or footrest. This aids stability and upper trunk control supporting hand-to-mouth co-ordination.
- Help children to enjoy their food and appreciate healthier choices by combining favourites with new tastes and textures.
- Provide safe surroundings in which young children have freedom to move as they want, while being kept safe by watchful adults.
- Ensure that the environment is calm and not filled with noise or music, so that babies can attune to sounds and notice where they are and what they relate to. An outdoor environment with natural elements such as logs, mud sand and water and open-ended resources is very good for this.
- Avoid introducing hard shoes too early in walking development and limit the time that they are worn each day.
- Provide opportunities for infants to continue to explore rolling and crawling.
- Set up places, outdoors as well as indoors, for toddlers to take naps during the day: daytime sleep can be much more refreshing and successful when provided outside.
- Provide opportunities to move in a variety of ways in the natural environment.

Physical Development: Health and self-care

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing

- Uses physical expression of feelings to release stress
- Generally has up to 16 teeth – helps adult with brushing teeth
- Intentionally makes sounds with objects and actively responds to music and singing with whole-body dancing
- Develops own likes and dislikes in food and drink, willing to try new food textures and tastes
- Shows interest in indoor and outdoor clothing and shoes/wellingtons
- Clearly communicates wet or soiled nappy or pants, showing increasing awareness of bladder and bowel urges
- Helps with dressing/undressing and care routines, enjoying the rituals established for hand washing and teeth cleaning
- Feeds self with increasing need to be in control and holds cup with both hands, drinking without much spilling

RANGE
3 (cont.)

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Be responsive to and encourage each child's drive to become independent in self-care situations.
- Be aware of and learn about differences in cultural attitudes to children's developing independence.
- Value children's choices and encourage them to try something new and healthy.
- Create rituals and rhythms around dressing and hygiene routines, so that they are anticipated, enjoyable and effective.
- Help toddlers to select clothing for going outside and make sure there is ample time for changing for going out and coming back inside, so that this becomes a pleasurable part of the overall experience.
- Encourage efforts such as when a young child offers their arm to put in a coat sleeve.
- Discuss family expectations for toileting, since in some families and cultures young boys may be used to sitting rather than standing at the toilet.

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- Ensure that there are plenty of different places and ways, indoors and outdoors, that toddlers can find withdrawal, softness and calm in the moment that they need it.
- Provide ample seating (such as a sofa inside or swing-seat outside) so that toddlers can snuggle with adults and other children.
- Ensure that there is time for young children to complete a self-chosen task, such as putting on their own shoes.
- Establish routines that enable children to look after themselves, providing ample time for this.
- Create time for discussing options so that young children have choices between healthy options, such as whether they will drink water or milk.
- Place water containers where children can find them easily and get a drink when they need one.
- Consider providing a sturdy ladder so that toddlers can choose to climb up onto the changing and dressing table by themselves: this will encourage their involvement in care routines
- Provide opportunities for children to play outdoors in all types of safe weather wearing the correct clothes, to develop internal body awareness.



RANGE
4

- Very energetic in short bursts and needs time for rest and calm with at least three hours of a day of exercise including moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity, spread throughout the day
- Needs to sleep for 10–13 hours in a 24-hour period which may include a nap, with regular sleep and wake-up times
- Feeds self competently
- Can hold a cup with two hands and drink well without spilling
- Develops some independence in self-care and shows an awareness of routines such as handwashing or teeth cleaning but still often needs adult support

- Provide quiet spaces for children to rest or nap and regular access to the outdoors or other spaces where children can be energetic
- Respond to how child communicates need for food, drinks, toileting and when uncomfortable.
- Support parents' routines with young children's self-care including toileting by having flexible routines and by encouraging children's efforts at independence.
- Support children's growing independence as they do things for themselves, such as pulling up their pants after toileting, handwashing, recognising differing parental expectations.
- Involve young children in preparing food.
- Give children the chance to talk about what they like to eat, while reinforcing messages about healthier choices.

- Allow children to pour their own drinks, serve their own food, choose a story, hold a puppet or water a plant.
- Provide support and advice for parents on healthy eating, oral hygiene and sleep expectations for their children
- Offer choices for children in terms of potties, trainer seats or steps.
- Create opportunities for moving towards independence, for example by using visual clues for the sequence of routines such as hand-washing.
- Provide pictures or objects representing options to support children in making and expressing choices.

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing

- Develops increasing understanding of and control of the bowel and bladder urges and starts to communicate their need for the preferred choice of potty or toilet
- Able to help with and increasingly independently put on and take off simple clothing items such as hats, unzipped jackets, wellington boots
- Begins to recognise danger and seeks the support and comfort of significant adults
- Can increasingly express their thoughts and emotions through words as well as continuing to use facial expressions

RANGE
4 (cont.)

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Remember that children who have limited opportunity to play outdoors may lack a sense of danger.
- Provide clothing or access to clothing and footwear to enable children to be outdoors in all weathers.

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- Choose some stories that highlight the consequences of choices.
- Ensure children's safety, while not unduly inhibiting their risk-taking.
- Talk to children about simple rules for their safety such as holding on to handrails when walking downstairs
- Display a colourful daily menu showing healthy meals and snacks and discuss choices with the children, reminding them, eg that they tried something previously and might like to try it again or encouraging them to try something new.
- Be aware of eating habits at home and of the different ways people eat their food, eg that eating with clean fingers is as skilled and equally valued as using cutlery.
- Encourage children to select and attempt to put on suitable clothing for outdoor play.



RANGE
5

- Can tell adults when hungry, full up or tired or when they want to rest, sleep or play
 - Observes and can describe in words or actions the effects of physical activity on their bodies.
 - Can name and identify different parts of the body
 - Takes practical action to reduce risk, showing their understanding that equipment and tools can be used safely
 - Can wash and can dry hands effectively and understands why this is important
 - Willing to try a range of different textures and tastes and expresses a preference. Can name and identify different parts of the body
 - Observes and controls breath, able to take deep breaths, holding and releasing the breath
 - Can mirror the playful actions or movements of another adult or child
 - Working towards a consistent, daily pattern in relation to eating, toileting and sleeping routines and understands why this is important
- Talk with children about why you encourage them to rest when they are tired or why they need to wear wellingtons when it is muddy outdoors.
 - Encourage children to notice the changes in their bodies after exercise, such as their heart beating faster.
 - Talk with children about the importance of hand-washing and infection control.
 - Help children who are struggling with self-care by leaving a last small step for them to complete, eg pulling up their trousers from just below the waist.
 - Do up zips on coats etc from behind and over child's shoulder so they can view the process from their perspective.
 - Use social stories to support a child who is struggling to understand a new routine.
 - Notice when a child is always hungry, takes food from others or needs more food than their peers. This may be an indicator of dietary imbalance, an emotional or safeguarding need. Talk with parents/carers to find out eating patterns at home.
 - Notice when a child is often tired or sleepy during the day and find out from parents/carers how they are sleeping at night.

- Provide a cosy place with a cushion and a soft light where a child can rest quietly if they need to.
- Plan so that children can be active in a range of ways, including while using a wheelchair.
- Encourage children to be active and energetic by organising lively games, since physical activity is important in maintaining good health and may help to prevent children becoming overweight or obese in later life.
- Remove obstacles and furniture that could restrict mobility. Ensure accessibility especially for children with a physical disability.
- Use visual support to sequence routines such as toileting, handwashing and dressing.
- Establish regular routines for eating, drinking, washing and toileting so that children become familiar with the rhythm of the day
- Consider accessibility of resources and make sure all children are able to make choices about what they can use and what they want to do.

Physical Development: Health and self-care

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing

- Gains more bowel and bladder control and can attend to toileting needs most of the time themselves
- Dresses with help, eg puts arms into open-fronted coat or shirt when held up, pulls up own trousers, and pulls up zipper once it is fastened at the bottom
- Shows independence in movement opportunities

RANGE
5 (cont.)



- Eats a healthy range of foodstuffs and understands need for variety in food
- Describes a range of different food textures and tastes when cooking and notices changes when they are combined or exposed to hot and cold temperatures
- Describes physical changes to the body that can occur when feeling unwell, anxious, tired, angry or sad
- Can initiate and describe playful actions or movements for other children to mirror and follow
- Has established a consistent, daily pattern in relation to eating, toileting and sleeping routines and can explain why this is important
- Usually dry and clean during the day
- Shows some understanding that good practices with regard to exercise, eating, drinking water, sleeping and hygiene can contribute to good health
- Shows understanding of the need for safety when tackling new challenges, and considers and manages some risks by taking independent action or by giving a verbal warning to others
- Shows understanding of how to transport and store equipment safely
- Practises some appropriate safety measures without direct supervision, considering both benefits and risk of a physical experience
- Can multi-task, carrying objects while moving

RANGE
6

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Notice when a child holds their breath to control the reactions of others. Talk with the child and parents/carers to encourage the child to express emotion in other ways.
- Notice children who are unable to mirror the actions of others. Consider whether they may need additional support.
- Maintain an open dialogue with parents/carers about a child's bowel and bladder control. Offer advice, support and reassurance. Make a referral to health and family support if needed.
- Notice children who struggle with mobility and stamina and seek guidance where appropriate.

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- Use a visual timetable to support children's understanding of routines during the day.
- Consider opportunities to move up, down and through spaces and equipment.
- Use mirrors, reflective materials and a range of multi-sensory materials to stimulate curiosity and active investigation.
- Ensure indoor/outdoor areas are fully accessible to all children, making reasonable adjustments to layout, organisation and resources to meet individual needs safely.
- Plan opportunities, particularly after exercise, for children to talk about how their bodies feel.
- Review enabling environments for adventure and challenge, identifying areas where children are encouraged to take physical risks.
- Develop and make use of a variety of natural landscapes including slopes, woodland and natural dens in the undergrowth.
- Provide outdoor resources which complement indoor provision, with an opportunity for children to play and explore on a larger scale.
- Find ways to involve children so that they are all able to be active inside and outside in ways that interest them and match their stage of development, health and ability.
- Use mobility aids, adapted equipment and clothing to ensure the outdoor area is fully accessible to all children; use portable fencing and zoned areas to change the size of the space to meet children's needs.

- Be aware that some children may have sensory issues around food texture, taste, smell, or colour. Talk with parents and monitor. Find out what steps might be appropriate to build the child's confidence and broaden their food repertoire, supporting their sensory integration.
- Acknowledge and encourage children's efforts to manage their personal needs, and to use and return resources appropriately.
- Promote health awareness by talking with children about exercise, its effect on their bodies and the positive contribution it can make to their health.
- Be sensitive to varying family expectations and life patterns when encouraging thinking about health.
- Highlight the importance of physical activity and active play within the home setting, and the mutual fun, pleasure and benefits for both adults and children from shared physical games and activities.
- Discuss with children why they get hot and encourage them to think about the effects of the environment, such as whether opening a window helps everybody to be cooler.
- Understand that regression in self-care can occur as children consolidate development or in response to anxiety or traumatic event. Find ways of supporting the child to return to previous level of development without judgement or disapproval.

Statutory ELG: Managing Self

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.

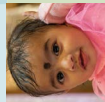
A Unique Child:

what a child might be doing



1
RANGE

- Notices, responds and interacts with sounds and images in the environment
- Interacts with books through sensory exploration, for example by feeling the texture with their hands and mouths
- Enjoys looking at books and images with familiar people, and being read to



2
RANGE

- Handles books, printed and digital reading material with interest
- Responds to sounds in the environment such as cars, sirens and birds
- Is interested in and explores the sounds made by banging and tapping familiar objects and simple instruments
- Waves and taps arms, bounces or stamps to simple rhythms in songs and rhymes
- Notices pictures and symbols and beginning to recognise what they stand for in their familiar experiences



3
RANGE

- Is interested in and anticipates books and rhymes and may have favourites
- Begins to join in with actions and sounds in familiar song and book sharing experience

Positive Relationships:

what adults might do

- Use finger play, rhymes and familiar songs to support young babies' enjoyment.
- Provide enjoyable shared experiences with stories and books. Plan shared story and book time as a key source of nurture and attachment which will continue throughout the EYFS and beyond.

- Notice and support babies' developing responses, gestures and movements as they learn to anticipate and join in with finger and word play.
- Make voice sounds and say words as babies explore print and digital books with adults - leave pauses after words and sounds to encourage babies to begin to repeat them if they choose to.
- Sing simple songs and nursery rhymes with children, encouraging them to join in.

- Encourage and support children's responses to picture books and stories you read with them. Point to words and pictures as you talk about them.
- Use different voices to tell stories and encourage young children to join in wherever possible.

Enabling Environments:

what adults might provide

- Provide mobiles, inviting displays and pictures of familiar characters in the environment, including in physical care areas, to prompt babies' focused gaze, pointing and shared attention.
- Collect a range of board books, cloth books, picture books and stories that represent a diverse range of people and communities to share with young babies and their families. Offer books that provide sensory experiences.
- Include babies in telephone and video calls with family and close friends.

- Let children handle books and draw their attention to pictures.
- Tell and read stories, looking at and interacting with young babies, and using voice, intonation and gesture to prompt babies' interactions.
- Draw on children's home cultures to create meaningful reading experiences.
- Make family stories using small photo albums or story apps with photos of family members, significant people in the child's life and familiar everyday objects.
- Expand these to include the stories, songs, rhymes and lives of those in local communities and wider histories and cultures.
- Provide opportunities for children to explore sound with drums, other instruments, kitchen pans and wooden spoons or upcycled resources.
- Create a simple nursery rhyme prop box to support children to request their favourite nursery rhymes (felt star, bus, spider etc).

- Share favourite rhymes, songs and stories and repeat these regularly.
- Provide picture books, books with flaps or hidden words, and books with accompanying story apps.
- Provide story sacks for children to take home, for parents to read books with their children and talk about stories.
- Suggest to parents they might encourage children to take part during telephone and video calls, through smiling, making sounds and words.
- Provide cosy reading spaces outdoors.

Literacy: Reading

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing



- Has some favourite stories, rhymes, songs, poems or jingles
- Repeats and uses actions, words or phrases from familiar stories
- Joins in with stamping and clapping, rhythm and rhyme, raps, body percussion.
- Enjoys rhythmic and musical activity with percussion instruments, actions, rhymes and songs, clapping along with the beat and joining in with words of familiar songs and nursery rhymes

4
RANGE

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Encourage children to use and extend the stories they hear in their play, using props and dressing up clothes as they relive and reinvent stories.
- Tune into words from stories that individual children particularly enjoy, eg children's favourite words and words that are emotionally important to them. Revisit these words in meaningful interactions.
- Read stories that children already know, tracking the words with your finger, pausing at intervals to encourage them to "read" the next word.
- Encourage children to notice signs and symbols in everyday life, such as familiar logos and icons for apps.
- Encourage children to identify the sounds they hear in the environment and to explore making rhythms with musical instruments and upcycled resources.

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- Find quality time every day to tell and read stories to children, using puppets, soft toys, or real objects as props.
- Provide stories, pictures and puppets which allow children to experience and talk about how characters feel.
- Include familiar environmental print in the role play area.
- Encourage reading directionality (left to right, top to bottom) through visual timelines, visual routines, number lines, etc.
- Create frequent opportunities for singing, rhymes and music sessions.
- Provide a range of simple musical and percussion instruments, such as tambourines, shakers or xylophones.
- Provide lots of opportunities for exploring rhythm, rhyme, dance, stamping, clapping and steady beat.



5
RANGE

- Listens to and joins in with stories and poems, when reading one-to-one and in small groups
- Joins in with the repeated language in stories, anticipates familiar phrases and has fun with rhymes and rhythm. Begins to be aware of the way stories are structured, and to tell own stories
- Talks about events and principal characters in stories and suggests how the story might end
- Shows interest in illustrations and words in print and digital books and words in the environment
- Recognises familiar words and signs such as own name, advertising logos and screen icons
- Looks at and enjoys print and digital books independently
- Knows that print carries meaning and, in English, is read from left to right and top to bottom
- Knows information can be relayed through signs and symbols in various forms (eg printed materials, digital screens and environmental print)

- Discuss with children the characters and events in books being read to them.
- Encourage children to predict outcomes, to think of alternative endings and to compare story plots and the feelings of characters with their own experiences.
- Focus on meaningful print (such as a child's name, words on a cereal packet or a book title, icons on a weather app) in order to discuss similarities and differences between symbols.
- Help children to understand what a word is by using names and labels and by pointing out words in the environment and in print and digital books.
- Remember not all languages have written forms and not all families speak English at home, or are literate in their home language.

- Provide some simple poetry, song, fiction and non-fiction books, both paper copies and digital.
- Provide fact and fiction books and possibly eBooks that children can access independently in all areas, eg construction area as well as the book area.
- Provide books containing photographs that children can share with adults, peers and read on their own.
- Add child-made books and adult-scribed children's stories to the book area and share these stories with others.
- Provide multimodal texts (that blend alphabetic print, images and symbols) that reflect the literacy practices that children encounter in their home and community spaces, enabling children to connect and draw on different aspects of their emerging literacy experiences.
- Provide a range of reading materials that both enable children to draw on their home and community experiences and introduce children to a new and diverse range of texts, genre and media.

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing

- Handles books and touch screen technology carefully and the correct way up with growing competence
- Begins to navigate apps and websites on digital media using drop down menu to select websites and icons to select apps
- Begins to develop phonological and phonemic awareness
- Shows awareness of rhyme and alliteration
- Recognises rhythm in spoken words, songs, poems and rhymes
- Claps or taps the syllables in words during sound play
- Hears and says the initial sound in words

RANGE 5
(cont.)

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Include home language and bilingual story sessions by involving qualified bilingual adults, as well as enlisting the help of parents.
- Read dual language books (English and another language) with all children, to raise awareness of different scripts. Try to match dual language books to languages spoken by families in the setting.
- Find out about literacy practices at home (which may differ from the setting) and ask families to share their songs, stories and books with you.

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- Ensure children can see written text, eg use big books, and model the language of print, such as *letter, word, page, beginning, end, first, last, middle*.
- Provide a range of resources in play areas, such as empty cereal packets, labels and signs that children become familiar with and include in their play.
- Introduce children to books and other materials that provide information or instructions. Carry out activities using instructions, such as reading a recipe to make a cake or following safety procedures.
- Furnish the setting with diverse resources that reflect children's home cultures and the diversity of cultures in the local community, including dual language books, as well as artefacts that children are attached to, such as special objects, sounds, images, as well as animals and insects.
- Take storytelling into local communities as a way to build connections between the setting and children's homes and wider lives in the local community.



RANGE 6

- Enjoys an increasing range of print and digital books, both fiction and non-fiction
- Uses vocabulary and forms of speech that are increasingly influenced by their experiences of reading
- Describes main story settings, events and principal characters in increasing detail
- Re-enacts and reinvents stories they have heard in their play
- Knows that information can be retrieved from books, computers and mobile digital devices
- Is able to recall and discuss stories or information that has been read to them, or they have read themselves
- Begins to recognise some written names of peers, siblings or "Mummy"/"Daddy" for example

- Read aloud to children every day, introducing children to a wide variety of literature, and talking about the print and digital books you share.
- Encourage children to tell their own stories in their own way, to take the lead in storytelling so you can listen and learn from children about what they know and are interested in.
- Discuss and model ways of finding out information from non-fiction texts in print books, digital resources and online.
- Encourage children to add to their first-hand experience of the world by seeking information using print and digital sources of information.
- Encourage children to recall words they see frequently, such as their own and friends' names.
- Model oral blending of sounds to make words in everyday contexts, eg 'Can you get your *h-a-t hat*'
- Play games to help children make links between letters (graphemes) and speech sounds (phonemes), such as letter bingo and linking actions with sounds.

- Provide a rich range of quality children's literature and dialogic shared reading experiences to involve children in critical engagement with narratives, characters and plots.
- Provide a range of everyday signs and written texts in play areas (labels, lists, recipes, instructions, etc.) so children can include these in their play.
- Make story books with children in print and/or digital formats to make personalised and meaningful books and ebooks to read with children, and that children can read themselves.
- Make a classroom book of children's own stories, scribed by an adult and/or drawn by children.
- Ensure children have access to a wide range of literature that represents diversity in the local and global community, ensuring every child has the opportunity to find a character they can relate to.

Literacy: Reading

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing		Positive Relationships: what adults might do	Enabling Environments: what adults might provide
	RANGE 6 (cont.)	• Begins to develop phonological and phonemic awareness • Continues a rhyming string and identifies alliteration • Hears and says the initial sound in words • Begins to segment the sounds in simple words and blend them together and knows which letters represent some of them • Starts to link sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet • Begins to link sounds to some frequently used digraphs, eg <i>sh, th, ee</i> • Begins to read some high frequency words, and to use developing knowledge of letters and sounds to read simple phonically decodable words and simple sentences • Engages with books and other reading materials at an increasingly deeper level, sometimes drawing on their phonic knowledge to decode words, and their knowledge of language structure, subject knowledge and illustrations to interpret the text • Includes everyday literacy artefacts in play, such as labels, instructions, signs, envelopes, etc.	• Introduce children to new words, and explore their meaning together, eg by acting out words and playing games with words. • Provide story sacks and boxes and make them with the children for use in the setting and at home. • Help children to identify the main events in a story and to enact stories, for example in their imaginative play. • Provide story boards and props which support children to talk about a story's characters and sequences of events. • Include playful, multisensory and creative experiences and games that promote children's interest in reading and in developing phonics skills and knowledge. • Demonstrate using phonics as a strategy to decode words while children can see the text, eg using big books or an interactive whiteboard. • Provide varied texts, including decodable texts, and encourage children to use all their skills including their phonic knowledge to practise reading with the skills and knowledge they have, so they experience success. • Begin to introduce playful systematic phonics sessions in fun ways that capture children's interest, sustain motivation and reinforce learning and success.
		• Model how simple words can be segmented into sounds and blended together to make words • Consider teaching Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) such as British Sign Language. • Support and scaffold individual children's reading as opportunities arise with print and digital texts.	

Statutory ELG: Word Reading

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs;
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending;
- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing



1 - 2 RANGES

Writing systems are complicated ways to symbolise meaning, and children need to learn many skills and develop a lot of knowledge as they begin to write. (See the roots of Writing in Communication and language.)

Writing skills and understanding start to develop in babies and toddlers. Firstly, children begin to understand that written texts are symbolic and carry meaning. Later they begin to produce and read written marks purposefully.

What is often referred to as 'early mark-making' is the beginning of writing. It is a sensory, physical, and cognitive experience for babies and toddlers, which enables them to see the connection between their actions and the resulting marks, recognising their own agency. (See roots of mark-making and handwriting in Playing and exploring and Physical Development.)



3 RANGE

As toddlers develop, they increase their understanding of how their marks are symbolic and convey meaning. Their marks may not yet resemble letters and words but nonetheless may carry meaning for the child.

- Begins to understand the cause and effect of their actions in mark making
- Knows that the marks they make are of value
- Enjoys the sensory experience of making marks



4 RANGE

- Distinguishes between the different marks they make
- Enjoys drawing and writing on paper, on screen and on different textures, such as in sand or playdough and through using touch-screen technology.
- Building strength and control of the hand and fingers by using writing tools as an extension

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Encourage children to use their fingers and implements to explore and trace marks on a surface, eg using a spoon in their food, or a finger in the sand.
- Make marks together with babies and toddlers using a range of appropriate materials and tools.

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- Provide a range of materials: playdough, sand, paint, natural materials outdoors, etc. for babies and toddlers to make marks with their bodies, hands, feet and fingers.
- Provide a wide range of materials such as large sheets of paper, trays of gloop, paint, soil, sticks in mud etc. to make marks collaboratively indoors and outdoors.

- Encourage different mark-making movements – big, small, hard, soft, quick and slow, and different shapes, circles, lines and dots.
- Tell children about the marks you are making and encourage them to talk to you about theirs.
- Value these early mark making activities by sharing them with others including parents and carers.
- Write down (scribe) children's words, and read them back to children.

- Introduce a range of appropriate implements including large brushes, chalk and crayons, sticks and sponges for children to trace patterns and shapes.
- Offer children a range of different surfaces to make marks on, both inside and outside, eg chalkboards, light boxes, sand, clay and mud.
- Provide a broad range of both indoor and outdoor physical opportunities for early writing experiences through dance, movement, sensory and symbolic play.

- Listen and support what children tell you about their drawings and early writing.
- Write down (scribe) the words that children use and display these words, for example, with photos
- Co-create stories orally with individual children and in small groups. Scribe the stories and display them for children to look at independently or with a parent or friend.
- Encourage children to make recordings of their own stories (eg on a digital tablet) and create opportunities for children to perform their stories to each other.

- Draw attention to marks, signs, and symbols in the environment that represent different languages and sign systems, such as Makaton.
- Provide materials which reflect cultural diversity, so children see symbols and marks with which they are familiar, and learn that there are many different script systems eg Arabic, Chinese, Greek and Braille.
- Try to have a notepad to hand (eg A5 size) in which you can scribe children's stories and special words and share these stories and words with children.
- Ensure children see you writing for a purpose, eg a shopping list, message for parents, labels in children's play areas or reminders for ourselves.
- Share your writing process with the children as you write, eg where to start your writing, the direction you are writing, how you decide when to start a new line.

Literacy: Writing

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing



- Makes up stories, play scenarios, and drawings in response to experiences, such as outings
- Sometimes gives meaning to their drawings and paintings
- Ascribes meanings to signs, symbols and words that they see in different places, including those they make themselves
- Includes mark making and early writing in their play
- Imitates adults' writing by making continuous lines of shapes and symbols (early writing) from left to right
- Attempts to write their own name, or other names and words, using combinations of lines, circles and curves, or letter-type shapes
- Shows interest in letters on a keyboard, identifying the initial letter of their own name and other familiar words
- Begins to make letter-type shapes to represent the initial sound of their name and other familiar words

5
RANGE

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Notice and encourage children's drawing, painting and early writing and the meanings that they give to them, such as when a child covers a whole piece of paper and says, "I'm writing."
- Celebrate and value children's early attempts at graphic representation – focusing on the meaning and content rather than letter formation.
- Model and include children in using signs and writing to expand playful experiences such as making signs for a shop or car wash, instructions for a ball game, a list of names for a taking turns.
- Support children in recognising and writing their own names.
- Make paper and digital books with children of activities they have been doing, using photographs of them as illustrations.

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- Write down things that children say to support their developing understanding that what they say can be written down, and then read and understood by someone else. Encourage parents to do this as well.
- Set up environments of offices, dens in the garden, library, shop, home corner with greetings cards, etc., so that children engage in literacy events in which they spontaneously participate.
- Provide a range of accessible materials and tools for writing as part of everyday play activity, including role play, both indoors and outdoors.
- Write poems and short stories together with the children, writing down ideas they suggest.
- Scribe children's stories and re-read and enact their stories in small group activities.
- Involve children when you make lists or write notes and messages.
- Think out loud and talk through what you are doing when writing on typing on screen.
- Break down your flow of speech into individual words, exemplifying the correspondence between the spoken and written word.
- Provide activities during which children can experiment with writing, for example, leaving a message.
- Encourage children to use their phonic knowledge when writing, and model this in your own writing.



6
RANGE

- Enjoys creating texts to communicate meaning for an increasingly wide range of purposes, such as making greetings cards, tickets, lists, invitations and creating their own stories and books with images and sometimes with words, in print and digital formats
- Gives meaning to the marks they make as they draw, write, paint and type using a keyboard or touch-screen technology

- Find out about, show interest in and legitimise children's out-of-school writing practices and interests. Remember that not all writing formats go from left to right.
- Talk to children about things they might write to support their play inside and outside, eg they might make a map for a journey, a job list for a builder, or spells for potion making.
- Write stories, poems, jokes, lists, plans, maps etc. together with children on paper and using digital technology so that children they can see authorship and spelling in action.

- Provide word banks, notebooks, clipboards, posters and other writing resources for both indoor and outdoor play.
- Ensure resources enable children to draw on their out-of-school practices and personal interests, such as children's popular culture or sports teams.
- Include oral stories and explore ways for both adults and children to develop oral storytelling skills.

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing

- Begins to break the flow of speech into words, to hear and say the initial sound in words and may start to segment the sounds in words and blend them together
- Starts to develop phonic knowledge by linking sounds to letters, naming and sounding some of the letters of the alphabet, identifying letters and writing recognisable letters in sequence, such as in their own name
- Uses their developing phonic knowledge to write things such as labels and captions, later progressing to simple sentences

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Talk to children about the letters that represent the sounds they hear at the beginning of their own names and other familiar words.
- Model how to segment the sounds (phonemes) in simple words and how the sounds are represented by letters (graphemes).
- Encourage children to apply their own grapheme/phoneme knowledge to what they write in meaningful contexts.
- Support and scaffold individual children's writing as opportunities arise.

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- Provide a range of opportunities to write for different purposes about things that interest children.
- Resource role-play areas with listening and writing equipment, and ensure that role-play areas encourage writing of signs with a real purpose, eg a pet shop.
- Plan enjoyable activities and games that help children create rhyming strings of real and imaginary words, eg *Maddie, daddy, baddie, laddie*.
- Support children to understand that the letter shapes they write (graphemes) link to units of sound (phonemes).
- Provide regular playful multisensory systematic phonics activities that help children to represent phonemes in their writing.
- When reading stories, talk with children about the author and illustrator, to help children identify with these roles. For example, ask children why they think the author wrote the story, if the author knew the people in the story, or why the illustrator chose to draw a particular moment in the story. Ask children if they would like to be an author and/or illustrator.

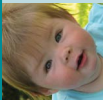
Statutory ELG: Writing

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters;
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

A Unique Child:

what a child might be doing



Number

- Reacts to obvious changes of amount when those amounts are significant (more than double)

Spatial Reasoning

- Explores space when they are free to move, roll and stretch
- Developing an awareness of their own bodies, that their body has different parts and where these are in relation to each other

Shape

- Explores differently sized and shaped objects
- Beginning to put objects *inside others and take them out again*

Pattern

- Shows interest in patterned songs, rhymes and movements
- Experiences patterned objects and images
- Begins to predict what happens next in predictable situations

Measures

- Responds to size, reacting to very big or very small items that they see or try to pick up

Positive Relationships:

what adults might do

- Notice and mirror children's reactions to changes in amount.
- Add to objects & draw attention to the change in amount, using words like more.
- Introduce the word 'more', eg when the baby licks legs, waves arms or vocalises when an adult pauses a familiar song or game: 'Oh, you would like more singing.'
- Use feeding, changing and bathing times for finger-play with young babies.

- Support babies' developing awareness of their own bodies, eg through baby massage and singing songs.
- During floor play sometimes place objects that are just in or just out of reach, including small objects on cloths that babies can pull towards themselves.

- Encourage babies' explorations of the characteristics of objects, eg by rolling a ball or sliding a block.
- Demonstrate putting items inside others of similar shape, eg nesting cups.

- Sing patterned songs and rhymes with predictable movements or actions, eg *Row your boat* (including those from home).
- Move with babies to the rhythm patterns in familiar songs, Encourage older babies to join in tapping and clapping along to simple rhythms.
- Use repeated noises, movements and activities.
- Play simple "to and fro" games, passing and rolling between the adult and child so they begin to predict which comes next.

- Comment on the size and weight of objects when babies grasp things that are *big* or *heavy*.
- During water play and bathing routines, show filling and emptying containers.
- At the end of mealtimes show and comment on the empty bowl, cup or bottle: *All gone!*

Enabling Environments:

what adults might provide

- Provide small groups of the same objects in treasure baskets, as well as single items.
- Provide and share books and rhymes that support finger play, eg *Ten Little Fingers* and give children opportunities to hear numbers in order, eg *Round and round the garden*.

- Provide space, time and opportunities for babies to move freely on carpets, grass etc. Observe and sensitively support babies' play and give them long stretches of uninterrupted time to explore.
- Provide mirrors at floor level to support babies to develop a body awareness.

- Provide interestingly shaped objects to explore.
- Make towers for babies to knock down using objects that stack.
- Provide containers of different sizes and shapes to explore.

- Plan for adults to have uninterrupted time to enjoy repetitive activities with babies.
- Provide resources with high-contrast patterns, eg black and white books or fabrics.

- Provide a range of objects of various sizes and weights in treasure baskets to excite and encourage babies' interests including larger and smaller items, eg a collection of different brushes.

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing



Number

- May be aware of number names through their enjoyment of action rhymes and songs that relate to numbers
- Looks for things which have moved out of sight

Spatial Reasoning

- Explores space around them and engages with position and direction, such as pointing to where they would like to go

Shape

- Attempts to stack objects on flat surfaces
- Responds to changes of shape
- Attempts, sometimes successfully, to match shapes with spaces on inset puzzles

Pattern

- Joins in with repeated actions in songs and stories
- Initiates and continues repeated actions

Measures

- Shows an interest in objects of contrasting sizes in meaningful contexts
- Gets to know and enjoys daily routine
- Shows an interest in emptying containers

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Take opportunities during play to sing number rhymes.
- During personal care routines make a point of using numbers, eg *one, two socks*.
- Play "peek-a-boo" hiding games with toys and people.

- Use spatial words during everyday play and routines, or one-word comments eg as you get children *in* and *out* of a highchair.
- Take opportunities to play hide and reveal games with objects in boxes and under cups.
- Support babies' physical experience of positions and direction, eg commenting when the child is *lifted up* and *down*.

- When playing with malleable materials draw attention to shapes as they are created and changed, eg *it's like a ball*.

- Talk about patterns in the environment eg spots and stripes on clothing or bumps in the pavement.
- Spot opportunities to play "back and forth" and repetitive "again" games.

- During play and everyday contexts, comment on the sizes and weights of objects using a range of language such as *big, huge, enormous, long, tall, heavy*.
- Talk about what is going to happen and what has happened during the day using *first, next* and *then*.

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- Plan to sing number rhymes with actions, eg **5 Little Ducks**. Involve families in sharing number rhymes from home cultures.

- Play games or sing songs that involve curling and stretching, popping *up* and bobbing *down*.
- Provide boxes, cloths and bags for children to store, hide and transport items.
- Provide nested boxes, cups and toys of different sizes that fit inside each other.
- Share books that provide opportunities to use spatial language and describe movement.

- Provide blocks and boxes to stack, build and solve problems with.
- Provide a range of inset puzzles and support children as they explore matching shapes with spaces.

- Sing familiar songs with repeated actions, jig to and tap out simple beats, encouraging children to join in.
- Provide items for children to make repetitive sounds.

- Provide big and little versions of objects for children to play with and compare.
- Share picture books showing objects of contrasting sizes, eg big and small animals.

Mathematics

A Unique Child:
what a child might be doing**Comparison**

- Responds to words like *lots* or *more*

Counting

- Says some counting words
- May engage in **counting-like behaviour**, making sounds and pointing or saying some numbers in sequence

Cardinality

- Uses number words, like *one* or *two* and sometimes responds accurately **when asked to give one or two things**

Spatial Reasoning

- Enjoys filling and emptying containers
- Investigates fitting themselves inside and moving through spaces

Shape

- Pushes objects through different shaped holes, and attempts to fit shapes into spaces on inset boards or puzzles
- Beginning to **select a shape for a specific space**
- Enjoys using blocks to create their own simple structures and arrangements, eg towers and lines.

Pattern

- Becoming familiar with patterns in daily routines
- Joins in with and predicts what comes next in a familiar story or rhyme
- Beginning to arrange items in their own patterns, eg lining up toys

Positive Relationships:
what adults might do

- Talk with young children about *lots*, *more*, *not many* and *not enough* as they play.
- Draw attention to contrasting differences and changes in amounts, eg adding more bricks to a tower or eating things up.
- Model counting things in everyday situations and routines.
- Take opportunities to say number words in order with children as they play, eg *1,2,3 go!*
- Use number words in meaningful contexts, eg *Here is your other mitten. Now we have two.*

Enabling Environments:
what adults might provide

- Play hiding games so children notice that something has '*gone*'.
- Provide varied sets of objects for playful opportunities for children to independently explore '*lots*', '*more*', '*not many*' and '*not enough*'.
- Count while engaging in everyday tasks and while moving around.
- Sing songs with counting strings, eg *1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Once I caught a fish alive.*
- Designate specific places or spaces for items to be kept and fitted into for tidying.
- Respect children's urge to explore spaces, to get inside and move between.
- Build towers *up* for the child to knock down.
- Provide shape sorters and packaging where children can hide, enclose or post items through holes.

- Model thinking during tidy-up routines to promote logic and reasoning about where things fit in or are kept, eg *Will all of these dinosaurs fit in this box?*
- Support children's interest in body-sized spaces and provide commentary on the child going *inside*, *under*, *over*, *between* and *squeezing through*.
- Look for opportunities to use spatial language during play activities, eg *My train is under the bridge.*

- Model thinking about the properties of shapes when selecting them to fit into spaces, eg *Oh look, we need a round one.*
- When playing alongside children who are building, provide commentary about the shapes you are using.

- Provide a range of inset board and puzzles with large pieces.
- Provide a range of construction materials for independent play, eg wooden blocks or shoe boxes.
- Organise storage by shape, with photos or silhouettes to show where things are kept.

- Plan to share stories and songs that contain repeated elements, eg *Brown Bear*, *Brown Bear* and which help children to anticipate what might come next, eg *Heads, shoulders, knees and toes*.

- Highlight different times of the day and talk about what comes next within the pattern of the day.
- Leave a space for children to do the next action or word in familiar songs and stories with repeating elements.
- Comment on what is *the same* and what is *over and over again* in patterns found in the environment.

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing

Measures

- Shows an interest in size and weight
- Explores capacity by selecting, filling and emptying containers, eg fitting toys in a pram
- Beginning to understand that things might happen now or at another time, in routines

RANGE 3
(cont.)



Comparison

- Beginning to compare and recognise changes in numbers of things, using words like more, lots or same

Counting

- Begins to say numbers in order, some of which are in the right order (ordinality)

Cardinality (How many?)

- In everyday situations, **takes or gives two or three objects from a group**
- Beginning to notice numerals (number symbols)
- Beginning to count on their fingers.

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Use the language of size and weight as children are involved in everyday play and routines.
- Use the language of capacity as children explore water or sand to encourage them to think about when something is full, empty or holds more.
- Emphasise the sequence within familiar activities or routines eg pointing to photographs when talking about routines.

- Include the number sequence in everyday contexts and songs so children experience the order of the numbers (ordinality)
- Encourage children to explore the collections they make, comparing amounts and counting some of the items, emphasising the last number, eg **1, 2. There are 2 leaves.**
- Use opportunities to model and encourage counting on fingers.
- When singing number rhymes with props, draw attention to contrasting differences and changes in numbers, checking together *How many now?*
- Point out the number of things whenever possible, eg rather than just *chairs*, say *four chairs*.
- Help children to give or get two or three items, eg during snack time help children to take two pieces of fruit.

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- Provide a range of objects, including big, heavy and awkward ones that can be transported, both indoors and outdoors.
- Provide different sizes and shapes of bags, boxes and containers so that children can experiment with filling, experiencing weight and size.
- Plan to share images and books which show the order of daily routines.

- Provide buckets and bags for children to create collections of objects which they can count.
- Provide opportunities for children to explore cardinality in the environment using self-correcting resources, eg jigsaw with two ducks and the number two, or displays showing the numeral and the number of items.
- Sing counting songs and rhymes which help to develop children's understanding of number.
- Say the counting sequence going to higher numbers, in a variety of contexts, indoors and out, and sometimes counting backwards, eg **3,2,1 blast off!**

Spatial Reasoning

- Moves their body and toys around objects and explores fitting into spaces
- Begins to remember their way around familiar environments
- Responds to some spatial and positional language
- Explores how things look from different viewpoints including things that are near or far away

- Encourage children to predict what they will see next on a familiar route.
- Take everyday opportunities to use words for position and direction accompanied by gesture (eg *in, on, inside, under, over*) using equivalent terms for these in home languages through liaison with families where possible.
- Enjoy games involving jumping, running and hiding and make very simple obstacle courses, eg going *up* and *down*.
- Model your thinking when arranging things, using some position words, eg *I wonder if this basket will fit on the shelf?*
- Help children to create simple roads, rail tracks and ramps and talk about position (eg *up, down*)
- Value children's explorations of spaces and viewpoints and their interest in how things look different.

- Design outdoor spaces where children can learn through a variety of spatial experiences (going *under, over, around, on top, through*) and hear spatial language in context.
- Plan stimulating indoor and outdoor spaces where children make choices about where to go and create their own routes. Provide materials to create trails.
- Provide resources for transporting.

RANGE 4

A Unique Child:
what a child might be doing



- Shape**
- Chooses puzzle pieces and tries to fit them in
 - Recognises that two objects have the same shape
 - Makes simple constructions

- Pattern**
- Joins in and anticipates repeated sound and action patterns
 - Is interested in what happens next using the pattern of everyday routines

RANGE 4
(cont.)

- Measures**
- Explores differences in size, length, weight and capacity
 - Beginning to understand some talk about immediate past and future
 - Beginning to anticipate times of the day such as mealtimes or home time

Positive Relationships:
what adults might do

- Using everyday language, chat about the shape of the pieces and the holes when fitting pieces into inset puzzles.
- Model comparing two objects to see if they have the same shape in purposeful contexts.
- Suggest choosing a particular shaped item for a purpose.
- Model your thinking when building, eg *I need another flat shape.*
- Talk with children about the patterns you notice around you.
- Comment on and help children to recognise the patterns they make in their mark making, loose parts and construction, eg *You have made a line of cars, a line of trains, a line of ...*
- Draw children's attention to the patterns in their routines by asking what comes next.

- Use everyday opportunities to describe everyday items and contexts using informal language of size (*giant, teeny, big, little, huge, small*), length (*long, tall, short*), weight (*heavy, light*) and capacity (*full, empty*).
- Observe children's problem-solving when ordering things by size, eg stacking cups, sensitively supporting by offering one if they are really struggling.
- Look out for opportunities to compare things purposefully such as finding out whether a teddy will fit in a bed.
- When children talk about their experiences at home and in the setting, use some language of time (*before, later, soon, next, after, morning, afternoon, evening, night-time*).
- In everyday activities, make a commentary about the sequence of events.
- When sharing stories and books, draw attention to routines and time sequences within them.

Enabling Environments:
what adults might provide

- Provide a range of inset and jigsaw puzzles of increasing complexity for children to choose.
- Provide a variety of construction materials including some with identical pieces so that children freely explore same and *different*.
- Provide a range of natural and everyday materials, as well as blocks and shapes, with which to make patterns.
- Plan opportunities for children to experience pattern such as percussion, music and action games that involve repeated sounds or actions.
- Provide similar items of contrasting sizes so that children have many opportunities to encounter the language of size.
- Provide resources with clearly different weights to support direct comparison, and something to carry them in.
- Provide equipment with varied capacities and shapes in the sand, water, mud kitchen and role play areas.

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing



Comparison

- Compares two small groups of up to five objects, saying when there are the same number of objects in each group, eg *You've got two, I've got two. Same!*
- Starting to order numbers, eg placing '3' on an empty line from 0 to 5 (ordinality)

Counting

- May enjoy counting verbally as far as they can go
- Points or touches (tags) each item, saying one number for each item, using the stable order of 1,2,3,4,5.
- Uses some number names and number language within play, and may show fascination with large numbers
- Begin to recognise numerals 0 to 10

Cardinality

- **Subitises** one, two and three objects (without counting)
- Counts up to five items, recognising that the last number said represents the total counted so far (cardinal principle)
- Links numerals with amounts up to 5 and maybe beyond
- Explores using a range of their own marks and signs to which they ascribe mathematical meanings

Composition

- Through play and exploration, beginning to learn that **numbers are made up (composed) of smaller numbers**
- Beginning to use understanding of number to solve practical problems in play and meaningful activities
- Beginning to recognise that each counting number is one more than the one before
- Separates a group of three or four objects in different ways, beginning to recognise that the total is still the same

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Encourage children to share items between two people or toys.
- Capitalise on children's fascination with counting by joining in when they count in games.
- Enjoy counting forwards and back (sometimes to much higher numbers). Use different voices, eg high or growly.
- Use opportunities within daily routines to support children's developing sense of number.
- Model and encourage counting and representing numbers within role play, eg making a telephone call using a list of numbers.
- Value children's own mathematical representations within their pretend play.
- When counting with children, playfully make deliberate mistakes for fun, expecting children to correct them.
- Model writing numerals, eg on badges, birthday cards and banners.
- When counting objects with children emphasise the cardinal principle: 1, 2, 3, *there are **three** cups*.
- Invite children to count out a small number of things from a larger group, eg *Can you get five crackers?*
- Encourage children to use their fingers to show an amount, eg when asking another child to share resources, to show on their fingers how many they need.
- Emphasise the *one more, one less pattern* in rhymes and traditional tales, asking children to predict the next number.
- Model wondering and talking about how you might solve a number problem.
- Value and support children to use their own graphics when problem solving.
- Encourage children to freely communicate their mathematical thinking through gesture, talk and graphical signs.

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- Provide a numeral rich environment, eg in role-play areas, mud-kitchen recipes, numbers on trikes and toilet doors.
- Provide numerals that children can pick up and use within all aspects of their play.
- Provide collections of things to count indoors and outside for children to explore and talk about higher numbers.
- Model using objects to illustrate counting songs, rhymes and number stories, sometimes using pictures and numerals, to enable children to use those resources independently.
- Play games with either dot or numeral dice. Discuss that six on the dice is worth more than four.
- Provide a variety of mathematical picture books and share them frequently in informal opportunities with children.
- Explore different arrangements of the same number, eg partitioning five in different ways; hiding one group and "guessing" the hidden number.
- Model counting items rhythmically, including objects into a container, claps or drumbeats.
- Support children to choose how to arrange collections of two, three and four objects in different ways.
- Provide spaces to display children's ongoing mathematical thinking, eg their own ways of representing their thinking, and scribing children's words.

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing



Spatial Reasoning

- Responds to and uses language of position and direction
- Predicts, moves and rotates objects to fit the space or create the shape they would like

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- When children are exploring, use the language of position and direction in context (*in, on, inside, under, over*; progressing to *between, beside, next to through, along* – including relative terms which depend on where you are, eg *behind, in front of, forwards, backwards*) using equivalent terms for these in home languages through liaison with families where possible.
- On walks, in pictures or while playing, point out how things or people that are farther away look smaller.
- Support children in their problem solving when they are creating rail tracks and road layouts, eg by flipping over pieces.
- In block play, sensitively support and challenge experienced builders to make ramps, bridges and enclosures.
- Encourage children to persevere with jigsaws, perhaps demonstrating “hovering” jigsaw pieces to check if they will fit.

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- Provide spaces to display children's ongoing mathematical thinking, eg their own ways of representing their thinking and scribing children's words.
- Provide opportunities for children to explore position themselves *inside, behind, on top* and so on.
- Provide picture books to stimulate discussion about position and direction.
- Create trails and treasure hunts with the children.
- Organise the indoor and outdoor environment with outlines for objects or specific places for children to tidy up items by fitting them into the designated space.

RANGE 5 (cont.)

Shape

- Chooses items based on their shape which are appropriate for the child's purpose
- Responds to both informal language and common shape names
- Shows [awareness of shape similarities and differences](#) between objects
- Enjoys partitioning and combining shapes to make new shapes with 2D and 3D shapes
- Attempts to create arches and enclosures when building, using trial and improvement to select blocks

- Help children to choose shapes for a purpose, eg a triangular block for a roof and the wedge-shaped block for a ramp.
- Offer an appropriate or inappropriate shape for what you think the child's purpose might be to investigate their thinking.
- As children experience shapes, use informal language (eg *slanty, pointy, twisty, wiggly, bumpy*), common shape names (eg *cylinder, cone, circle, square*) and “nearly” shapes (eg *This is almost a square but it's got curvy corners*). Find out and use equivalent terms for shapes in home languages.
- Discuss how shapes can be partitioned in everyday contexts, eg cutting food in different ways.
- Value children's constructions and solutions to problems they have set themselves and talk about how the shapes have combined to make new shapes.

- Provide differently shaped resources to handle, carry, move and explore.
- Provide large and small blocks and boxes for construction both indoors and outdoors.
- Provide small shapes that fit together to explore and make pictures.

A Unique Child:

what a child might be doing

Pattern

- Creates their own spatial patterns showing some organisation or regularity
- Explores and adds to simple linear patterns of two or three repeating items, eg stick, leaf (AB) or stick, leaf, stone (ABC)
- Joins in with simple patterns in sounds, objects, games and stories dance and movement, predicting what comes next

Positive Relationships:

what adults might do

- Whilst playing alongside children, model simple repeating patterns of two or three items and encourage children to create and continue patterns.
- Demonstrate arranging objects in spatial patterns when building, collaging or playing with loose parts.
- Draw children's attention to patterns around them including from a range of cultures.
- When making patterns, help children to solve problems.

Enabling Environments:

what adults might provide

- Provide a range of items for free exploration of patterning indoors and outdoors including natural materials, pattern blocks, loose parts, with plain mats, trays and strips on which to arrange items.
- Encourage children to join in with body patterns or repeating sections of songs.
- Pause to encourage prediction when enjoying stories and rhymes with repeating elements, sometimes using props.
- Emphasise the repeating pattern when turn taking.
- Provide patterned resources including those representing a range of cultures, such as clothing, fabrics or wrapping paper.

Measures

- In meaningful contexts, finds the longer or shorter, heavier or lighter and more/less full of two items
- Recalls a sequence of events in everyday life and stories

- During play, model comparing lengths and distances.

- Look out for meaningful opportunities for children to compare by length, weight, capacity and time using comparative language (*longer/shorter, heavier/lighter, holds more/holds less, longer time/shorter time*).

- Encourage children to participate in seesaw and balance scale play.
- Encourage children to respond to and use words such as *before, after, soon or later* when talking about routines, recent events and events in a story or rhyme.

- Provide problem-solving opportunities indoors and outdoors for comparing length, weight and capacity, eg *Which is the best bottle so we'll have enough drink for everyone at the picnic?*

- Ask children to predict *What happens next?* using visual timetables, books and stories.

- Provide items that can be ordered by size, such as plates and clothes in role play.

A Unique Child:

what a child might be doing



Comparison

- Uses number names and symbols when comparing numbers, showing interest in large numbers
- **Estimates a numbers of things**, showing understanding of relative size
- Increasingly able to put numbers in their approximate positions on an empty number line, eg places '4' and '9' approximately on a line from 0-10 (ordinality)

Counting

- Enjoys reciting numbers from 0 to 10 (**and beyond**) and back from 10 to 0
- Increasingly confident at putting numerals in order 0 to 10 (ordinality)

Cardinality

- Engages in **subitising numbers to four and maybe five**
- Counts out up to 10 objects from a larger group.
- Matches the numeral with a group of items to show how many there are (up to 10)

Composition

- Shows awareness that numbers are made up (composed) of smaller numbers, exploring partitioning in different ways with a wide range of objects
- Begins to conceptually subitise larger numbers by subitising smaller groups within the number, eg sees six raisins on a plate as three and three
- In practical activities, **adds one and subtracts one with numbers to 10**
- Begins to explore and work out mathematical problems, using signs and strategies of their own choice, including (when appropriate) standard numerals, tallies and "+" or "-"

Positive Relationships:

what adults might do

- Model comparing numbers in problems about fair shares.
- Play games such as hide and seek that involve counting, forwards and backwards.
- Talk with children about the strategies they have used to solve a problem. Spot opportunities to playfully pose composition problems for children to explore.
- Discuss the order of numbers in context, eg finding a page number.
- Enjoy subitising games and sustained shared thinking about number, indoors and outdoors.
- Encourage cardinal counting by saying how many there are after counting (...6, 7, 8. *There are 8 balls*).
- In everyday activities, ask children to count out a number of things from a group (*eg Could you get seven cups for snacktime?*)
- Encourage children to make predictions and visualise the outcome in stories, rhymes and songs if one (or two) is added or taken away.
- Talk to children about the marks and signs they use to represent and communicate their thinking. As appropriate, model and discuss informal and standard ways (eg using arrows, plus and minus signs).
- Begin to model calculations in mathematical stories and number rhymes and in real contexts, using a range of ways of representing (eg five-frames). Use both informal and standard ways to record these, including tallies and symbols. Discuss children's own graphical strategies to solve problems, using some vocabulary of addition and subtraction.

Enabling Environments:

what adults might provide

- Involve children in voting, eg for books to read at story time, using linking cubes with children's names on.
- Discuss examples and display large numbers including hundreds, thousands and a million.
- Jump with children along a number track, counting each jump or counting on.
- Plan opportunities to order mixed-up numerals, eg provide a washing line on which the numerals 0-10 can be pegged. A naughty creature could mess them up each night to be re-ordered by the children the next day.
- Sing counting songs and count together forwards and backwards, sometimes starting from different numbers and in different step sizes. Discuss numbers coming *before, after and between* and stress patterns.
- When counting groups as part of routines (eg self-registration with ten-frames, dinner chart etc.) record the final total as a label for children to see.
- Subitise with children, talking about how they see numbers of things made up in a variety of arrangements (eg recognising odd and even numbers).
- Pose everyday estimation problems and establish mental estimation benchmarks, eg *more or less than 10*.
- Set up an estimation station where everyone records guesses; later count and order the guesses.
- Build counting and ways of representing numbers into everyday routines.
- Play subitising games which involve quickly revealing and hiding numbers of objects, perhaps showing numeral cards and fingers.
- Drop marbles into a tin and ask the children to listen (without looking) to count how many there are.
- Provide opportunities for children to match a number of objects to the numeral, including zero, and display number lines to 100 at child height.
- Provide dice, board and card games, sometimes involving older children, families and members of the local community.
- Provide resources to make "staircase" patterns which show that the next counting number includes the previous number plus one.
- Display children's mathematical representations, including explanations of the children's meaning making.

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing

Spatial Reasoning

- Uses spatial language, including following and giving directions, using relative terms and describing what they see from different viewpoints
- Investigates turning and flipping objects in order to make shapes fit and create models, predicting and visualising how they will look
- **May enjoy making simple maps** of familiar and imaginative environments, with landmarks

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- Encourage the use of relative terms (*in front of, behind, before and after, in a line, next to and between*).
- Encourage children to explore what can be seen from different viewpoints.
- Encourage children to describe position and give directions in play and in everyday routines.
- Encourage children to create scaled-down models such as in small world play.
- When children are fitting shapes into an outline or making a model from a 2D picture, help them to select more spatially challenging activities.
- Encourage children to make maps of routes they have walked or travelled in some way.

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- Play barrier games (where players have an identical set of objects which are hidden from each other; one player makes an arrangement of objects and gives instructions to the other to try to make the same arrangement).
- Plan opportunities for children to describe and recall familiar routes.
- Engage families in taking photos of familiar things from different viewpoints.

RANGE 6 (cont.)

Shape

- Uses informal language and analogies, (eg heart-shaped and hand-shaped leaves), as well as mathematical terms to describe shapes
- Enjoys composing and decomposing shapes, learning which shapes combine to make other shapes
- Uses own ideas to make models of increasing complexity, selecting blocks needed, solving problems and visualising what they will build

- Encourage children to use the names of shapes and their properties (eg *straight, curved, edges*) and prompt them to say what shapes remind them of.
- Discuss different examples of the same shape (eg equilateral and right-angled triangles) in a variety of orientations.
- Take opportunities to discuss the shapes that children paint, draw and collage and shapes noticed in their local environment using regular shapes and shapes with no name.
- When constructing with pattern blocks or mosaic tiles, encourage children to explore which shapes can be put together to make other shapes (eg triangles making rectangles and hexagons).
- When constructing, challenge children to make more complex structures such as towers of arches, a window or a staircase.

- Provide resources for shape play including unit blocks, pattern blocks, mosaic tiles and jigsaw puzzles with different levels of challenge.
- Teach strategies for solving shape and jigsaw puzzles, describing shape properties and modelling the mathematical vocabulary such as *straight, corner, edges*.
- Play games focussing on the properties of shapes, such as hiding and partially revealing a shape, asking children to say what different shapes it could be or not, and why.

Pattern

- Spots patterns in the environment, beginning to identify the pattern "rule"
- Chooses familiar objects to create and recreate repeating patterns beyond AB patterns and begins to identify the unit of repeat

- Encourage children to notice and appreciate a range of patterns involving repetition and symmetry in the environment, including traditional patterns from a range of cultures.
- Model using symbols to represent a pattern in other ways (eg using a spot/cross/dash pattern of symbols and doing a twirl/jump/glide in response).
- Make deliberate mistakes when creating patterns alongside children and playfully challenge them to fix the problem.
- Make border patterns where the repeating pattern continues around an object or frame.

- Provide opportunities for creating patterns using a variety of objects.
- Using photos, challenge children to copy and continue patterns.
- Invite children to create a pattern with the same structure using different objects (eg instead of a red/blue/blue pattern, create a sheep/cow/cow pattern).

Mathematics

A Unique Child:

what a child might be doing



Measures

- Enjoys tackling problems involving prediction and discussion of comparisons of length, weight or capacity, paying attention to fairness and accuracy
- Becomes familiar with measuring tools in everyday experiences and play
- Is increasingly able to order and sequence events using everyday language related to time
- Beginning to experience measuring time with timers and calendars

RANGE 6
(cont.)

Positive Relationships: what adults might do

- When comparing the length, weight and capacity of things in play and everyday activities, encourage children to predict and give reasons.
- Discuss accuracy, for instance matching ends or starting points, balancing exactly or “fullness”.
- Support timed challenges by timing runs, trails, obstacle courses, etc. and teach children how to use the stopwatch.
- Discuss the order and sequence of events in routines and role play using the language of time (*first, then, after, before, next, sooner, later*).
- Draw children's attention to visual timetables and clock times, focusing on the hour hand.

Enabling Environments: what adults might provide

- Have areas where children can explore the properties of objects, compare lengths, weigh and measure.
- Provide objects in a range of contexts varying in length, capacity or weight, including tall thin, short fat, large light and small heavy things.
- Provide pictorial sequences for instructions.
- Model using measuring tools including height charts, rulers, tape-measures, scales and timers.
- Sing songs about the days of the week and months of the year, referring to a calendar. Countdown to events.

Statutory ELG: Number

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Have a deep understanding of number to 10, including the composition of each number;
- Subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5;
- Automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.

Statutory ELG: Numerical Patterns

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system;
- Compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity;
- Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally.

Statutory Educational Programme: Mathematics

In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing	Positive Relationships: what adults might do	Enabling Environments: what adults might provide
RANGES 1 - 2 • Focussing on familiar people, starts to realise they influence people, eg as they laugh and smile so do the people they are with • Develops a sense of belonging to their family and their key carer • Recognises key people in their own lives	• Liaise with families to draw on the wealth of experiences and knowledge the child has already acquired. • Help the child to make sense of their world through the relationships they are establishing	<i>See Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication and Language</i> • Provide opportunities, both indoors and out, for babies and toddlers to see people and things beyond the baby room, including the activities of older children.
RANGE 3 • Is curious about people, including their peers, and shows interest in stories about people, animals or objects that they are familiar with or which fascinate them • Is interested in photographs of themselves and other familiar people and objects • Enjoys stories about people and nature (birds, bees, snails, cats, dogs, etc) and is interested in photographs of themselves with these.	• Help children to learn each other's names, eg through songs and rhymes, and use them when addressing children. • Be positive about differences between people and support children's acceptance of difference. Be aware that negative attitudes towards difference are learned from examples the children witness. • Ensure that each child is recognised as a valuable contributor to the group. • Celebrate and value cultural, religious and community events and experiences.	• Collect stories for, and make books about, children in the group, showing things they like to do and things that are important to them, in languages that are relevant to them wherever possible. • Provide books and resources which represent children's diverse backgrounds and which avoid negative stereotypes, ensuring different cultures are represented but especially the backgrounds of the children in the room. • Make photographic books about the children in the setting and encourage parents to contribute to these. • Provide positive images of all children including those with diverse physical characteristics, including disabilities. • Support good ecological habits in daily life by providing first-hand experiences, eg waste disposal by putting papers in recycling bins, helping planting flowers and seeds, provisioning bird tables, leaf piles for hedgehogs and woodlice.

Understanding the world: People and communities

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing		Positive Relationships: what adults might do		Enabling Environments: what adults might provide	
	4 RANGE	- Has a sense of own immediate family and relations and pets - In pretend play, imitates everyday actions and events from own family and cultural background, eg making and drinking tea, going to the barbers, being a cat, dog or bird - Beginning to have their own friends - Learns that they have similarities and differences that connect them to, and distinguish them from, others	- Talk to children about their friends, their families, and why they are important. - Be sensitive to the possibility of children who may have lost special people or pets, either through death, separation, displacement or fostering/adoption.	- Share photographs of children's families, friends, pets or favourite people, both indoors and out. - Support children's understanding of difference and of empathy by using props such as puppets and dolls to tell stories about diverse experiences, ensuring that negative stereotyping is avoided. - Ensure children have resources so that they can imitate everyday actions and events from their lives and that represent their culture.	
		- Shows interest in the lives of people who are familiar to them - Enjoys joining in with family customs and routines - Remembers and talks about significant events in their own life and in the lives of those close to them - Recognises similarities and differences between themselves, friends and family - Begins to compare their own experiences with those of others - Shows interest in different occupations and ways of life indoors and outdoors			
	5 RANGE		- Encourage children to talk about their own home and community life, and to find out about other children's experiences. Be sensitive to the wide range of family experiences children may bring, and that talking about them may be difficult. - Ensure that children learning English as an additional language have opportunities to express themselves in their home language some of the time. - Encourage children to develop positive relationships with community members who visit the setting, such as shop keeper, librarian, post person, refuse collectors, delivery personnel, care home resident, artists. - Share stories about people from the past who have an influence on the present.	- Plan extra time for helping children in transition, such as when they move from one setting to another or between different groups in the same setting. - Provide activities and opportunities for children to share experiences and knowledge from different parts of their lives with each other. - Provide ways of preserving memories of special events, eg making a book, collecting photographs, sound or video recording, drawing and writing. - Invite children and families with experiences of living in other countries to bring in photographs and objects from their home cultures including those from family members living in different areas of the UK and abroad. - Ensure the use of up-to-date, appropriate photographs and artefacts of parts of the community and the world that are commonly stereotyped and misrepresented.	

A Unique Child:

what a child might be doing



- Beginning to understand the importance and significance of family customs and routines
- Talks about past and present events in their own life and in the lives of family members
- Knows that other children do not always enjoy the same things, and is sensitive to this
- Knows about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities, cultures and traditions

RANGE
6

Positive Relationships:

what adults might do

- Encourage children to share their feelings and talk about why they respond to experiences in particular ways.
- Explain carefully why some children may need extra help or support for some things, or why some children feel upset by a particular thing.
- Help children and parents to see the ways in which their cultures and beliefs are similar, sharing and discussing practices, resources, celebrations and experiences.
- Strengthen the positive impressions children have of their own cultures and faiths, and those of others in their community, by sharing and celebrating a range of practices and special events.

Enabling Environments:

what adults might provide

RANGE 5 (cont)

- Help children to learn positive attitudes and challenge negative attitudes and stereotypes, eg using puppets, persona dolls, stories and books showing black heroes or disabled kings or queens or families with same sex parents, having a visit from a male midwife or female fire fighter.
- Visit different parts of the local community, including areas where some children may be very knowledgeable, eg Chinese supermarket, local church, elders lunch club, Greek café.
- Provide role-play areas with a variety of resources reflecting diversity both indoors and outdoors.
- Share stories that reflect the diversity of children's experiences.
- Invite people from a range of cultural backgrounds to talk about aspects of their lives or the things they do in their work, such as a volunteer who helps people become familiar with the local area.

Statutory ELG: Past and Present

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society;
- Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.

Statutory ELG: People, Culture and Communities

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps;
- Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and – when appropriate – maps.

Understanding the world: The world

A Unique Child:

what a child might be doing



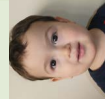
1
RANGE

- Moves eyes, then head, to follow moving objects
- Reacts with abrupt change when a face or object suddenly disappears from view
- Looks around with interest when in a room, garden, balcony or park, visually scanning the environment for novel, interesting objects and events
- Smiles with pleasure at recognisable playthings
- Repeats actions that have an effect, eg kicking or hitting a mobile or shaking a rattle



2
RANGE

- Closely observes what animals, people and vehicles do
- Watches toy being hidden and tries to find it, watches intently where a spider has scuttled away under leaves
- Looks for dropped objects
- Becomes absorbed in combining objects, eg banging two objects or placing objects into containers
- Knows things are used in different ways, eg a ball for rolling or throwing, a toy car for pushing



3
RANGE

- Is curious and interested to explore new and familiar experiences in nature: grass, mud, puddles, plants, animal life
- Explores objects by linking together different approaches: shaking, hitting, looking, feeling, tasting, mouthing, pulling, turning and poking
- Remembers where objects belong
- Matches parts of objects that fit together, eg puts lid on teapot

Positive Relationships:

what adults might do

- Encourage young babies' movements through your interactions, eg touching their fingers and toes and showing delight at their kicking and waving.
- Give careful consideration to influences on babies, eg where they are placed, gestures and body language used, their immediate surroundings.
- Provide the vocabulary for things that the babies and children see and sense around them.

See Characteristics of Effective Learning – Playing and Exploring, and Physical Development

- Play hiding and finding games inside and outdoors.
- Plan varied arrangements of equipment and materials that can be used with babies in a variety of ways to maintain interest and provide challenges.
- Draw attention to things in different areas that stimulate interest, such as patterned surfaces and textures.

Enabling Environments:

what adults might provide

- Provide a range of everyday and natural objects to explore such as in treasure baskets for sitting babies.
- Provide additional interest – make small changes in the predictable environment.
- Provide spaces that give young babies different views of their surroundings, such as under a tree, on a lap, looking at bushes and flowers in a garden or park.
- Give babies frequent opportunities to experience the natural world around them: the wind, the sun, the moon, the movement of the leaves in the trees and different sounds such as birdsong and insect sounds.
- Provide lift-the-flap books to show something hidden from view.
- Play hide-and-seek outside.
- Provide a variety of interesting things for babies to see when they are looking around them, looking up at the ceiling or peering into a corner.
- Display and talk about photographs of babies' favourite places.
- Take babies on regular outings to a range of local environments.

- Discuss with children and comment on their responses to sights, sounds and smells in the environment indoors, in playgrounds, with nature in gardens and parks and discover what they like about playing outdoors.
- Encourage young children to explore puddles, trees and surfaces such as grass, concrete or pebbles.
- Introduce principles of recycling, planting and care for our resources.
- Develop the use of the outdoors so that young children can investigate features, eg a mound, a path or a wall, and experience weather, large spaces and seasonal change.
- Provide a collection of sets of items for children to explore how objects can be combined together in heuristic play sessions.
- Establish routines and expectations that encourage children to care for their environment and resources.

A Unique Child:

what a child might be doing



4
RANGE

- Notices detailed features of objects in their environment
- Can talk about some of the things they have observed such as plants, animals, natural and found objects
- Enjoys playing with small world reconstructions, choosing what to investigate and building on first-hand experiences, eg visiting farms, garages, train tracks, walking by river or lake



5
RANGE

- Comments and asks questions about aspects of their familiar world such as the place where they live or the natural world
- Talks about why things happen and how things work
- Developing an understanding of growth, decay and changes over time
- Shows care and concern for living things and the environment
- Begin to notice the impact and understand the effect their behaviour can have on the environment

Positive Relationships:

what adults might do

- Tell stories about places and journeys.

Enabling Environments:

what adults might provide

- Make use of outdoor areas to give opportunities for investigations of the natural world, for example, provide chimes, streamers, windmills and bubbles to investigate the effects of wind.
- Provide story and information books about places, such as a zoo or the beach, to remind children of visits to real places.
- Use parents' knowledge to extend children's experiences of the world.
- Support children with sensory impairment by providing supplementary experience and information to enhance their learning about the world around them.
- Arouse awareness of features of the environment in the setting and immediate local area, eg make visits to shops or a park.
- Use conversation with children to extend their vocabulary to help them talk about their observations and to ask questions.
- Ensure adults know and use the widest vocabulary that they can, eg using the correct name for a plant or geographical feature.
- Use the local area for exploring both the built and the natural environment. Regularly take small groups of children on local walks, taking the time to observe what involves the children's interest.
- Provide opportunities to observe things closely through a variety of means, eg magnifiers and photographs, phone apps to listen to and recognise birds.
- Explore different habitats outdoors, eg scent, colour and shape of flowers attracting bees, making a wormery, planning bird feeding on the ground and higher level.
- Provide play maps and small world equipment for children to create their own environments as well as represent the familiar environment.
- Teach skills and knowledge in the context of practical activities, eg learning about the characteristics of liquids and solids by involving children in melting chocolate or cooking eggs, or observing ice outdoors.
- Share stories related to pollution, climate change, habitat erosion, etc.

Understanding the world: The world

A Unique Child:

what a child might be doing



- Looks closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change in nature
- Knows about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things
- Talks about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another
- Makes observations of animals and plants and explains why some things occur, and talks about changes
- Becoming familiar with a range of ways to record their findings as they share ideas and explanations with others

6
RANGE

Positive Relationships:

what adults might do

- Help children to notice and discuss patterns around them, eg tree bark, flower petal or leaf shapes, grates, covers, or bricks.
- Examine change over time, for example, growing plants, and change that may be reversed, eg melting ice.
- Use appropriate words, eg *town, village, path, house, flat, cinema, skyscraper, hydrant, cirrus, cumulonimbus, temple and synagogue*, to help children make distinctions in their observations.
- Help children to find out about the environment by talking to people, examining photographs and simple maps and visiting local places.
- Encourage children to express opinions on natural and built environments and give opportunities for them to hear different points of view on the quality of the environment.
- Encourage the use of words that help children to express opinions, eg *busy, quiet and pollution*.
- Use correct terms so that, eg children will enjoy naming a chrysalis if the practitioner uses its correct name.
- Pose carefully framed open-ended questions and prompts, such as *How can we...? What would happen if...? I wonder...*

Enabling Environments:

what adults might provide

- Give opportunities to record and creatively represent findings by, eg drawing, writing, making a model or photographing, through music, dancing or dressing up.
- Provide stories that help children to make sense of different environments.
- Provide first-hand experiences to support children in making sense of microenvironments, the specific conditions which enable each plant or animal to live and thrive.
- Provide stimuli and resources for children to create simple maps and plans, paintings, drawings and models of observations of known and imaginary landscapes.
- Give opportunities to design practical, attractive environments, for example, planting and taking care of flower and vegetable beds or organising equipment outdoors.
- Make connections with places and spaces locally, such as museums, galleries, open spaces, arts centres, sports centres. Encourage parents to join you on regular outings, which can result in family visits to the same places.

Statutory ELG: The Natural World

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants;
- Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing	Positive Relationships: what adults might do	Enabling Environments: what adults might provide
 1 - 2 RANGES • Explores objects and notices sounds, sights, and the impact of actions	• Enjoy sharing using simple technology which provides sensory experiences.	• Provide a rich variety of resources which offer sensory stimulus. • Introduce children to simple toys and mechanisms.
 3 RANGE • Anticipates repeated sounds, sights and actions, eg when an adult demonstrates an action toy several times • Explores toys with buttons, flaps and simple mechanisms and begins to learn to operate them	• Comment on the ways in which young children investigate how to push, pull, lift or press parts of toys and domestic equipment. • Talk about the effect of children's actions, as they investigate what things can do.	• Have available robust resources with knobs, flaps, keys or shutters. • Incorporate technology resources that children recognise into their play, such as a camera.
 4 RANGE • Seeks to acquire basic skills in turning on and operating some digital equipment • Operates mechanical toys, eg turns the knob on a wind-up toy or pulls back on a friction car • Plays with water to investigate "low technology" such as washing and cleaning • Selects and investigates different pipes, funnels and other tools to carry/transport water from one place to another • Talks with others about how something works or how to fix it	• Support children in exploring the control technology of toys, eg toy electronic keyboard. • Talk about digital and other electric equipment, what it does, what they can do with it and how to use it safely. • Talk to children about "low technologies" such as washing and drying, transporting water and using water to make things "work", making the link between technology and everyday life.	• Provide safe equipment to play with, such as torches, light boxes and walkie-talkies. • Let children use machines like the photocopier to copy their own pictures. • Provide a range of materials for children to "stain" and have a go at washing, rinsing and drying outside in the sunshine. • Provide a range of pipes, funnels, containers, water wheels and water for children to play with.

Understanding the world: Technology

A Unique Child:

what a child might be doing



5
RANGE

- Knows how to operate simple equipment, eg turns on music devices, uses a remote control, can navigate touch-capable technology with support
- Shows an interest in technological toys with knobs or pulleys, real objects such as photographic equipment, and touchscreen and voice control devices such as mobile phones and tablets
- Shows skill in making toys work by pressing parts or lifting flaps to achieve effects such as sound, movements or new images
- Knows that information can be retrieved from digital devices and the internet
- Selects from a range of materials to learn cause and effect, eg makes a string puppet using dowels and string to suspend the puppet, or makes and flies a range of simple kites



6
RANGE

- Completes a simple program on electronic devices
- Operates ICT hardware to interact with age-appropriate software
- Can create content such as a video recording, stories, and/or draw a picture on screen, explaining their intentions
- Develops digital literacy skills by being able to access, understand and interact with a range of technologies in a range of ways such as operating mechanisms, voice activation and touch etc.
- Can use the internet with adult supervision to find and retrieve information of interest to them
- Beginning to understand rules and routines around technology use
- Demonstrates growing awareness that people/ places/objects can be real, imaginary or generated by technology

Positive Relationships:

what adults might do

- Support and extend the skills children develop as they become familiar with simple equipment, such as twisting or turning a knob.
- Draw young children's attention to pieces of digital apparatus they see or that they use with adult supervision.
- Talk to children about their uses of technologies at home and in other environments to begin to understand what they already know about and can do with different technologies.
- Ask open-ended questions and have conversations about children's interest in technological toys to enable children to learn about different technologies.
- Support children to be curious in seeking to understand cause and effect, eg learning that pulling a string may make a puppet arm lift, or exploring the fulcrum effect on a seesaw.

- Encourage children to speculate on the reasons why things happen or how things work.
- In conversation highlight technology in aspects of nature, eg encouraging models of birds showing purposes and functions of wing feathers, body feathers, beaks, feet reflecting differences of different kinds of birds.
- Support children to coordinate actions to use technology, for example, call a telephone number or create a video recording.
- Teach and encourage children to click on different icons to cause things to happen in a computer program.
- Talk to children about their actions, and support children to understand different purposes of different technologies.
- Retrieve content and use to facilitate discussions, allowing children to recall trips/ past events to enable them to connect to their wider community.
- Discuss fiction and non-fiction, real and imaginary.
- Discuss people and places they encounter and whether they are real, pretending/acting or computer-generated.

Enabling Environments:

what adults might provide

- When out in the locality, ask children to help to press the button at the pelican crossing, or speak into an intercom to tell somebody you have come back.
- When in the community and on trips to places such as the park, encourage children to take photographs and use mobile apps of things that interest them, ready to revisit later.
- Provide a range of materials that enable children to explore cause and effect.
- Provide a range of materials and objects to play with that work in different ways for different purposes, for example, egg whisk, torch, other household implements, pulleys, construction kits.
- Provide a range of programmable toys for children to play with, as well as equipment involving ICT, such as computers, touchscreen devices and internet-connected toys.
- Ensure rich provision for small world and imaginary play so that children understand that worlds can be created and altered.

Statutory ELG: None

Birth to Five Matters: Children require access to a range of technologies, both digital and non-digital in their early lives. Exploring with different technologies through play provides opportunities to develop skills that children will go on to develop in their lifetimes. Investigations, scientific inquiry and exploration are essential components of learning about and with technology both digitally and in the natural world. Through technology children have additional opportunities to learn across all areas in both formal and informal ways. Technologies should be seen as tools to learn both from and with, in order to integrate technology effectively within early years practice.

Expressive arts and design: Creating with materials

A Unique Child:

what a child might be doing



- Experiments with a range of media – tools, materials, sound and whole-body movement – through multi-sensory exploration

RANGES 1 - 2

Positive Relationships:

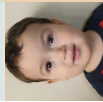
what adults might do

- Attend to how babies and children use their whole body in sensing, exploring and experimenting with space, texture, sounds, rhythms, materials, and tools.
- Welcome the ways in which babies and children arrange, combine, transform, group, and sequence materials that are both natural and manmade.

Enabling Environments:

what adults might provide

- Create a rich and well-ordered environment to enable babies and children to use all their senses.
- Choose and select with intention the materials and tools available to children.
- Create the time and space to ensure that children can engage in depth with a diverse range of materials.



RANGE 3

- Mirrors and improvises actions they have observed, eg clapping or waving
- Moves while singing/vocalising or responds physically whilst playing or listening to sounds
- Continues to explore and experiment with an increasing range of media and movement through multi-sensory exploration and expression
- Notices and becomes interested in the transformative effect of their action on materials and resources
- Sings/vocalises whilst listening to music or playing with instruments/sound makers
- Creates sounds by rubbing, shaking, tapping, striking or blowing

- Become familiar with the properties and characteristics of materials and tools.
- Understand that young children's creative and expressive processes are important in their own right, and part of their development of thinking and communicating.
- Listen to and enjoy with children a variety of sounds, rhymes and music from diverse cultures.
- Sensitively introduce children to language to describe contrasts, eg *loud and quiet, hard and soft, fast and slow*.
- Observe, analyse and document the processes involved in a child's creative and expressive processes, to support greater understanding, inform planning and share with families, carers, and other professionals.

- Create space and time for movement and dance both indoors and outdoors.
- Create opportunities to encounter and revisit key materials, resources and tools where children can further explore their properties including form, colour, texture, composition.
- Offer a variety of objects that make different sounds, such as wood, pans and plastic bottles filled with different materials.
- Offer a range of picture books that reflect a diverse society and experiences that children can relate to.



RANGE 4

- Experiments with ways to enclose a space, create shapes and represent actions, sounds and objects
- Explores and uses colour for its own sake, becoming engrossed in the possibilities of art media, eg powder paint and water
- Uses 3D and 2D structures to explore materials and/or to express ideas, eg uses their experience of joining wood to make unique constructions
- Joins in singing songs
- Shows an interest in the way sound makers and instruments sound, and experiments with ways of playing them, eg *loud/quiet, fast/slow*

- Watch others dancing together and reflect on how movement can develop from feelings and ideas.
- Observe children as they engage with media and tools, in order to understand when and how to interact appropriately with them.
- Understand sustained shared thinking as an important tool for supporting children's ideas and engagement with the visual arts.
- Recognise and document children's individual and group fascinations through patterns of actions, and/or interactions with media and tools.
- Celebrate the inventive ways in which children use media and tools, recording their gains in confidence over time.
- Listen attentively to music with children.

- Plan a varied and appropriate series of live performances for all young children, eg musicians, dancers, storytellers.
- Continue to provide opportunities to encounter and revisit key materials, resources and tools over extended periods of time, so that children can explore their properties, eg form, colour, texture and composition.
- Invite children to look at and touch unusual or interesting materials, artefacts and resources in their everyday environment, chosen for their design, beauty, pattern and ability to inspire exploration.
- Draw on a wide range of art works from a variety of cultural backgrounds to extend children's experiences and to reflect their cultural heritages, eg architecture, ceramics, theatre.

Expressive arts and design: Creating with materials

A Unique Child:

what a child might be doing



- Continues to explore moving in a range of ways, eg mirroring, creating own movement patterns
- Enjoys joining in with moving, dancing and ring games
- Uses tools for a purpose
- Continues to explore colour and how colours can be changed
- Develops an understanding of using lines to enclose a space, and begins to use drawing to represent actions and objects based on imagination, observation and experience
- Uses various construction materials, eg joining pieces, stacking vertically and horizontally, balancing, making enclosures and creating spaces
- Sings familiar songs, eg pop songs, songs from TV programmes, rhymes, songs from home
- Taps out simple repeated rhythms
- Develops an understanding of how to create and use sounds intentionally

RANGE
5

Positive Relationships:

what adults might do

- Support children's talk by sharing terms used by artists, potters, musicians, dancers, eg as children show interest in exploring colour mixing, support them in using terms such as *tint, shade, hue*.
- When children have a strong intention in mind, support them in thinking about what they want to create, the processes that may be involved and the materials and resources they might need.
- Encourage children to notice changes in the properties of media as they are transformed, eg through becoming wet, dry, flaky or fixed. Talk about what is happening, helping them to think about cause and effect.
- Continue to observe, analyse and document the steps involved in a child's creative processes, to support understanding, inform planning and share with families and other professionals.
- Encourage children to notice changes in movement and sound, eg *louder, quieter, smaller, bigger*. Talk about what is happening, helping them to think about why this might be.
- Introduce new skills and techniques based on observations and knowledge of children's interests and skills.

Enabling Environments:

what adults might provide

- Offer resources for mixing colours, joining things together and combining materials, supporting where appropriate.
- Offer children opportunities to use their skills and explore concepts and ideas through their representations.
- Share artists' and performers' work with children, to encourage them to make connections with their own ideas, interests and experiences.
- Provide a range of musical instruments that are used in different ways, for children to bang, pluck, blow, strum.
- Create a place where work in progress can be kept safely.
- Continue to offer a broad range of texts - information books and diverse stories to inspire children's thinking and imagination.

A Unique Child:

what a child might be doing



6
RANGE

- Uses increasing dexterity, knowledge and understanding of tools and techniques and growing expertise with key materials to explore their interests and enquiries and develop thinking
- Develops their own ideas through experimenting with and combining diverse materials, eg light, digital images, loose parts etc., to express and communicate discoveries and understanding
- Uses the visual elements of line, colour, shape and space etc. with intention and purpose, in order to make visible their own ideas and share these with others
- Begins to build a collection of songs
- Makes music in a range of ways, eg plays with sounds creatively, plays along to the beat of the song they are singing or music they are listening to

Positive Relationships:

what adults might do

- Recognise the importance of drawing in providing a bridge between imaginary play and writing, and that all are key forms of communication and tools for thinking.
- Draw attention to children's choice and use of materials, tools and techniques, and experimentation with colour, design, texture, form and function.
- Use individual, small group, and large group discussion to regularly engage children in explaining work in progress.

Enabling Environments:

what adults might provide

- Supply open-ended props and materials that can easily be transformed in play.
- Offer opportunities to encounter and revisit key materials, eg drawing media, paper, paint, cardboard and clay in order to continue to develop expertise as tools for expression and communication.
- Provide a range of joining materials (eg stapler, masking tape, glue, string, thread, split pins, treasury tags, card strips) to support children working in both 2D and 3D.
- Ensure artefacts and resources (including photographs, digital images and books), that refer to local and international artists, are available close to children's art-making areas. Use these to make connections to children's ongoing processes and products.

Statutory ELG: Creating with Materials

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function;
- Share their creations, explaining the process they have used;
- Make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.

Expressive arts and design: Being imaginative and expressive

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing		Positive Relationships: what adults might do	Enabling Environments: what adults might provide
 RANGES 1 - 2	Responds to and engages with the world around eg sounds, movement, people, objects, sensations, emotions (their own and others)	- Notice and acknowledge the ways in which babies react to other babies and adults and the world that surrounds them. - Tune into and sensitively respond to babies' and children's communications (expressions, gestures, movements etc). - Engage in back-and-forth interactions providing simple language and comments to name actions, media, materials and experiences.	- Create a rich environment that enables babies and children to use all their senses, eg treasure baskets and heuristic play, time outdoors. - Provide babies and children with a range of experiences to feed their imagination eg stories, rhymes, images, music, nature, social activities (mealtimes, outings, visitors). - Make sure materials and resources are flexible and adaptable to suit a range of needs and abilities.
	 RANGE 3	- Show genuine interest and be willing to play along with a young child who is beginning to pretend. - Model or join in with pretend play, such as pretending to drink from an empty toy cup. - Support children's ideas by sharing books, stories and rhymes.	- Provide a range of resources including familiar and non-specific items that can be used in different ways, such as magazines, kitchen items, fabric, hoops, sponges, rope etc. - Introduce simple props so that children can act out ideas or actions from favourite stories.
 RANGE 4	- Creates rhythmic sounds and movements - Uses everyday materials to explore and represent their world, ideas and fascinations - Begins to describe sounds and music imaginatively, eg <i>scary music</i> - Begins to make-believe by pretending, using sounds, movements, words, objects	- Observe and reflect on the children's own explorations and ideas. - Notice and encourage children's make-believe play, supporting language and communication and gaining greater understanding of their interests.	- Make time and space for children to develop their own ideas and creations, eg photographs, sounds, movement, constructions, stories, collages. - Offer a variety of open-ended resources that can be used creatively inside and out, eg boxes, sound makers, water, string bags and planks.
	 RANGE 5	- Ensure children have opportunities to experience the world outside the setting, eg through walks, visits, visitors, links with children's homes. - Support the development of children's imaginary worlds by encouraging inventiveness, empathy and new possibilities.	- Offer children a wide variety of materials and resources, both inside and out, to excite their imagination to build, become, represent and experiment in their imaginative play and thinking. - Ensure continuous and progressive provision for drawing, painting and 3D representation. - Create comfortable spaces for children (and adults) to enjoy and respond to stories and books.

Expressive arts and design: Being imaginative and expressive

A Unique Child: what a child might be doing		Positive Relationships: what adults might do	Enabling Environments: what adults might provide
5 RANGE	- Notifies and mirrors what other children and adults do, adding variations and then doing it spontaneously - Creates sounds, movements, drawings to accompany stories - Plays alongside other children who are engaged in similar themes - Engages in imaginative play based on their ideas or first-hand or peer experiences	- Introduce a diverse range of texts – picture, information and homemade books, and engage in interactive reading and storytelling. - Co-create stories with children based on their ideas, experiences and the people and places they know or imagine.	Tell stories based on children's experiences and the people and places they know, as well as stories that feed the imagination.
	6 RANGE  - Initiates new combinations of movements and gestures, to express and respond to feelings, ideas and experiences - Combines art forms, eg moving and singing, making and dramatic play, drawing and talking, constructing and mapping, stories and drama - Expresses and communicates ideas, feelings and understandings using a range of art forms, eg dance, drama, poetry, music and the visual arts - Responds imaginatively to art works and objects, eg <i>this music sounds like dinosaurs, that sculpture is squishy like this [child physically demonstrates], that peg looks like a mouth</i> - Creates representations of imaginary and real-life ideas, events, people and objects - Chooses particular movements, instruments, sounds, colours and materials for their own imaginative purposes - Introduces a storyline or narrative into their play - Plays cooperatively as part of a group to create, develop and act out an imaginary idea or narrative	- Support children in communicating through their bodies by responding to, and sometimes joining in with, their expressive movement linked to their imaginative ideas. - Recognise and promote children's agency in expressing their individual and unique viewpoints through the arts. - Be aware of the link between children's imaginative play and how they develop a narrative structure. - Introduce descriptive language to support and extend children's imaginative experiences. - Celebrate children's imaginative ideas and creations by sharing them, eg impromptu performances, learning journeys, displays, documentation, digital portfolios.	- Enrich the environment inside and out with materials, resources, natural objects, images, music and dance to inspire children's imagination. - Provide extended periods of time for children to deepen their knowledge and follow their enquiries and ideas. - Nurture children's imagination through visits to museums or local outings to provide new and novel experiences.

Statutory ELG: Being Imaginative and Expressive

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher;
- Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs;
- Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and – when appropriate – try to move in time with music.

Glossary

A guide to the meanings of terms as used in Birth to 5 Matters

2D (two-dimensional) shapes	flat shapes that have width and height but not depth, e.g. common regular shapes such as rectangle, oval, triangle and hexagon
3D (three-dimensional) shapes	solid shapes that have width, height and depth, e.g. common regular shapes such as sphere, pyramid and cube
ableism	a system of beliefs, practices, and structures that privilege non-disabled ways of being while marginalising, devaluing, or excluding disabled people (including neurodivergence)
adult-led	where adults plan and provide opportunities for children to be introduced to or further develop skills and knowledge
agency	ability to act and make decisions that influence events and affect one's world
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)	a set of negative childhood experiences, which might include experiencing abuse or neglect, having a close family member in prison, death of someone close or witnessing violence
anti-racism	recognising the existence of racism in its many forms and taking appropriate action to remove it
asylum seeker	a refugee engaged in the legal process to seek a right to remain
attuned	sensitive, positive and responsive to children's cues regarding their emotions, interests, and communications
autonomy	being in control of, or an active agent in, one's life
bias	leaning towards a way of thinking about people which influences engagement with them, based on assumptions or previous interactions with other people who have shared characteristics which may include, race, religion, sexuality or socio-economic status
bodily integrity	the principle that all people, including children, have the right to autonomy and self-determination when it comes to their own bodies
capacity (in mathematics)	how much a container can hold (linked to volume or the amount of space things take up)
cardinality	quantity (a number of things) or "how many-ness"
child-initiated	where a child determines the activity – what they will use, what they will do, who is involved
child-led	where the child takes the lead and the adult responds
children	all babies, toddlers and young children from birth to the end of the EYFS, up to 71 months
co-construction	working with others to develop concepts, skills and knowledge
cognitive	relating to the ability to think, have, gain and use knowledge through memory and reasoning
comparison (number in mathematics)	the relative size of numbers including finding which is larger or smaller
comparison (measure in mathematics)	comparing one object to another on the basis of one attribute (e.g. length, weight or capacity) is direct comparison; using a third object as the "measurer" is indirect comparison
composition (number in mathematics)	how a number is made up; includes all of the number combinations that make up a given number
composition (in expressive arts)	putting different elements together to give structure and convey intentions, such as sounds, or visual elements such as line, shape, colour, value, texture, form, and space
concept	a general idea formed in the mind about a thing or group of things, derived from specific instances or occurrences.
continuous provision	environment and resources provided for children to explore freely, which support learning with or without an adult and enable children to revisit and build on their learning
colour-avoidant	an approach that assumes that by ignoring or avoiding conversations about race, racism or the racial identity of a person the effects of racism will not have to be acknowledged

creative thinking	using imagination to generate new ideas; related to critical thinking in working with ideas and plans
critical thinking	analysing or synthesising information from which to make decisions or judgements, build theories or to reflect and evaluate
cultural capital	what children bring with them, and develop from their experiences and opportunities
culture	the ideas, customs, traditions and interests of groups of people
curriculum	a plan for children's development and learning experiences, both formal and informal
digital literacy	skills associated with finding, identifying, evaluating and using information, understanding the purposes of the technology being used and having the skills to create content
discrimination	unfair or less favourable treatment because of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, religion/belief or other characteristics
dispositions	enduring habits of mind and action
educator	all early years professionals who work directly with children in EYFS settings
ethnicity	being from a particular group of people or those who identify with each other due to shared language, nationality, culture or religion
expressive	to be communicative in conveying ideas, emotions, and thoughts; modes include dance, story, drawing, music, as well as in writing and talking
everyday activities	the structures and routines of the day, e.g. mealtimes, nap times, story time
faith	strong beliefs which might be linked to religious doctrine or tradition
flexible thinking	the ability to quickly change the direction of thinking, finding new ways to approach a situation or solve a problem
free flow	where children have the choice to move freely between areas and environments, indoors and outdoors, during their play
funds of knowledge	knowledge that is linked to cultural practice within families and communities
gender	a social construction describing attributes of masculinity and femininity
graphics (mathematics)	the visual marks and representations (graphics) young children choose to use to explore mathematical meanings and communicate their thinking, including markmaking and standard symbols
holistic	recognising all aspects of children's development and learning, including physical, personal, social, emotional, spiritual and cognitive
heuristic play	exploratory play with everyday items, often arranged for mobile babies and toddlers to freely explore groups of objects
homophobia	negative attitudes and behaviours towards those who are lesbian, gay and bisexual
identity	sense of self influenced by many factors such as social, cultural and political context, family background, gender, and faith
internet-connected toys	physical toys that are connected to the internet and respond based on interactions
intersectionality	the way in which various identity markers are layered or overlap within one person, which can increase the impact or the degree to which discrimination is experienced
interoceptive sense	responds to and monitors internal changes in the body, such as hunger, heart rate, toilet needs
intrinsic motivation	motivation that is driven by inherent satisfaction; the behaviour itself is its own reward
knowledge	facts, information, understanding about things

LGBTQIA+	a collective term representing people who identify as: lesbian ; gay (generally refers to gay men but can also be an umbrella term for gay men and women); bisexual (the attraction to multiple genders, often including one's own gender); transgender (when a person's gender does not line up with their assigned sex at birth); queer (catch-all term for anyone in the community, to be more inclusive to people who do not fit into the other categories; the "q" might include "questioning" people who are exploring their sexual or gender identities and may not want to commit to a certain label); intersex (someone born with biological sex characteristics that are not traditionally associated with male or female bodies); aromantic (someone who experiences little to no romantic attraction)/ asexual (someone who experiences little or no sexual attraction)/ agender (someone who identifies with no particular gender); plus (inclusive of all other identities)
loose parts	Items with no specific direction that can be used by themselves or with other materials in multiple ways
low technology	technologies that are non-mechanical, not advanced or "high technology" such as digital technology
mastery	embedded competence and confidence within an area of learning which can be recalled and transferred to different contexts
minoritised	the process by which certain groups have less power or representation compared to members of other groups in society
mirroring	responding to another's movements, gestures, sounds or expressions by doing something similar
motor functions	relating to muscle movement
multimodal languages	communication can be written, oral, visual, digital and non-verbal, all of which contribute to making meaning
neurodiversity	the inevitable and biological fact of human differences including how we think, play, learn, develop, move and sense
neurological functions	relating to the function of nerves and the nervous system
neuronormativity	a set of standards, expectations and norms that centre a particular way of functioning – including thinking, feeling, learning, behaving and communicating – as the "right" or "superior" way to function
numerals	the symbols which represent numbers e.g. 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7...
objective (for learning)	short, specific statements about the intended learning
open-ended	having no specific direction or purpose, and no pre-determined use, process or outcome, to be interpreted and directed by the children
ordinality	the position and order of the counting numbers, including the relative place of any number in the number sequence as being next to, before, after, near to, in between, etc any other number
orientation	the way round an object or image is turned or facing
palmar grip	using a fist grip to pick up objects
parents	used here to include all carers of children in the EYFS
pedagogy	the understanding of how children learn and develop and the practices through which adults can enhance that process, rooted in values and beliefs about what we want for children and supported by knowledge, theory and experience
phonemic awareness	the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate the individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words
phonological awareness	the understanding that spoken words are made up of sounds (phonemes) and recognising how they come together to form words
planned activities	experiences planned specifically to further develop skills and knowledge or introduce new ideas
prejudice	preconceived idea about a person or group that is not factual or based on experience; it can be positive or negative
problem solving	something you do not immediately know the answer to, so have to decide a way to find a solution
processes	the steps a child goes through as they create and express, including include thinking, exploring, experimenting, attempting, adapting, consulting, comparing; all inform and influence each other

professional dialogue	a discussion, often informal, between educators that enables reflection on children's development and learning, building a shared understanding to inform and improve pedagogy and practice
professional love	a concept explored by Dr Jools Page to describe the feelings of love, intimacy and care which practitioners experience in their reciprocal relationships with children
professional reflection	an ongoing process of self-evaluation reviewing pedagogy and practice to identify what worked well and what did not, and using this knowledge to improve teaching and learning; reflection is strengthened through discussion and collaboration with others
progress	moving forward
properties (shape in mathematics)	qualities, features or characteristics of a shape
proprioception	the body's ability to perceive its position, movement and relation to space
race	a social construct based on skin colour and facial features which has no inherent biological basis but affects social categories and relationships
racism	prejudice and discrimination from an individual, community or institution against a particular racial or ethnic group
refugee	a person who has fled their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster and sought safety in another country
repeating pattern	a repeating pattern is where the order of some items (or sounds, actions, ideas, etc.) is continually duplicated; the "unit of repeat" is the section that is repeated to generate the pattern
resilience	capacity to cope with, adapt to, and recover from setbacks or adversity
schema	pattern of repeated play and behaviours that helps children organise information related to the physical senses e.g. touch, smell, taste, hearing and sight, vestibular sense
sensory functions	
setting	all types of provision delivering the EYFS including childminders, private, voluntary and independent providers, nursery, infant and primary schools
self-regulation	ability to regulate emotions, thoughts and behaviour to enable positive action toward a goal
serve and return	interactions where the child "serves" by initiating contact, and the adult "returns" by responding appropriately with eye contact, gestures or words
sexual orientation	the sexual attraction that a person feels towards another person, e.g. being heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual or asexual
skills	abilities
spatial awareness	interpretation of how things, including own body, relates to one another and the spatial environment
stereotypes	generalisations which label people and make assumptions about them
strategic	long term/overall approach towards aims based on evidence
stimming	self-stimulatory repetitive movements, sounds, or sensory actions that support regulation, expression, processing, or comfort
subitising - conceptual	instantly recognising the total based on the parts
subitising - perceptual	immediate recognition of how many without needing to count, involving very small numbers and assisted by familiar arrangements such as dice patterns
sustained shared thinking	when two or more people "work together" in an intellectual way to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate an activity, extend a narrative, etc.; both must contribute to the thinking and it must develop and extend understanding
symmetry	shapes and patterns which flip over a line or axis, in a mirror fashion
systemic racism	form of racism that pervades institutions and organisations
trauma	an event or set of circumstances which causes physical or emotional harm which leads to lasting adverse effects on wellbeing
usualising	a framework for introducing diverse ways of being in society, understanding disability as usual and expected
vestibular sense	sense of balance and movement
working theories	the ways children think about, inquire into and make meaning about their worlds as they attempt to make connections between prior and new experiences and understandings

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Notes



Notes



Notes



A unique child

When referring to the guidance for the Areas of Learning and Development, it is important to start with what is observed and understood about the individual child.

A typical progression in development and learning has been grouped into broad Ranges in the column for A Unique Child. This is intended to support educators' knowledge of a general pattern of child development. The Ranges illustrate examples of what children may do along their journey of development and learning. Children develop and learn at their own rates and in their own ways. While progressing well, they will do countless things that do not appear in the grids, and are not likely to show signs of each statement nor to demonstrate them in the given order.

On-going planning: Educators can

- think about what they have observed which demonstrates a child's development and learning in a particular area

- compare their observations to the statements in the Ranges to make a decision about which Range most closely describes what the child is doing

- consider the suggestions for adults within that range (or earlier ranges) to plan to support continued progress.

Best-fit summative judgements should be based on everything that has been observed and understood about the child's development and learning through ongoing formative assessment. This knowledge of the child will inform the decision about which Range overall best describes the child's current development and learning.

Children's progress over time can be seen as a continuum, both within a Range and between Ranges. Understanding progress is not a matter of turning the complexity of a child's individual journey into a data point. Between summative assessments, a child may move from one Range

to another or instead may be progressing within a Range by expanding and deepening their learning. In dialogue with other professionals and with parents, a child's progress relative to the Ranges can be identified.

Comparing best-fit summative judgements of Ranges with typical age links can help identify whether children are roughly on track or are progressing more slowly or quickly. When compiled for groups of children, this cohort information can be useful for leaders and managers in planning for the continual improvement of practice and provision in the setting.

The guidance can help to identify when children may need additional support, by referring to the key provided here which links the Ranges to typical age links. **The age links overlap Ranges because these are not fixed age boundaries but suggest a typical range of development.**





Guidance by the sector, for the sector

An online version of this guidance with links to further resources and bibliography is available at: www.birthto5matters.org.uk

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