

Best Practice and Activity Ideas for the EYFS Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The suggestions for this area of learning should be read alongside the following:

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE 2014)
- Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Early Education 2012)
- Teaching and Play in the Early Years - a balancing act? (Ofsted 2015)

The ideas are intended to support learning and development for children in receipt of funding for the Early Years Free Entitlement for three and four year olds.

How children learn: the Characteristics of Effective Learning

Teaching and learning in the EYFS must be informed by these characteristics:

playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'

active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements

creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

The suggested ideas should be integrated into a cycle of observation, assessment and planning where children's needs and interests are central to planning and provision.

Please note that the Early Learning Goals define the level of progress expected for children at the end of the EYFS, at the end of the Reception year.

Personal, Social and Emotional development (PSED) is one of the prime areas of the EYFS. The prime areas begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in all other areas. The prime areas continue to be fundamental throughout the EYFS.

Personal, social and emotional development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups and to have confidence in their own abilities.

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012

Successful Personal, Social and Emotional development is crucial for young children in all aspects of their lives, and gives them the best opportunity for learning.

The Key Person Role

Underpinning all aspects of PSED is the key person role, which is central to creating an emotionally enabling environment. The organisation of a setting such as shift

patterns, room layout and deployment of staff, are all crucial in ensuring a child's emotional security.

This area of learning is divided into three aspects:

1. Self confidence and self awareness
 2. Making relationships
 3. Managing feelings and behaviour
- Self confidence and self awareness is related to **personal** development.
 - Making relationships and understanding others is about **social** development
 - Managing feelings and behaviour is a major part of **emotional** development, learning to understand and express feelings and understand and empathise with others

Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Daily Routines

Practitioners should ensure that:

- children and parents are welcomed personally on arrival at the setting, with sensitivity to individual needs
- children are clear about the structure of the day, such as through the use of a visual timetable
- meal or snack times cater for individual needs, reflect cultural diversity, encourage social interaction and concern for others, encourage children's independence and participation where appropriate, and promote good habits of personal hygiene
- there are clear signals for 'closure' at the end of activities
- the end of the session and goodbyes are clearly planned, safe, calm and positive

1. Early Learning Goals for Self Confidence and Self Awareness

Children are

- confident to try new activities, and say why they like some activities more than others
- confident to speak in a familiar group
- talk about their ideas, and choose the resources they need for their chosen activities
- say when they do or don't need help



Children need

- *supportive and close relationships with their key person and other practitioners in the setting*
- *an enjoyable and inclusive experience in the setting, free from stress*
- *to know that they are valued, respected and cared about*

Vicky Hutchin, *The EYFS: A Practical Guide for Students and Professionals*, (2012)

Positive relationships: The role of the adult

- to act as a role model through showing respect for all children and other adults in the setting
- to promote equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice, for example, in language used
- to value the contribution of each child including their ideas and ways of doing things
- to give specific praise to individuals and groups so they are clear what they are being praised for
- to encourage children to talk about what they are doing and how they are doing it
- to offer extra support to children in new situations
- to be a play partner and encourage children to see adults as a resource in their learning
- to offer help when required
- to support children to feel good about their own achievements
- to show genuine interest and enthusiasm in what a child says or does
- to support children to develop confidence to try out new things
- to listen carefully, for example, looking at the child, crouching down to give them your full attention, not interrupting or completing their sentences
- to use open-ended questions, for example, 'how...?', 'why...?', 'what would happen if...' , encouraging children to problem solve and develop independence
- to observe children, reflecting on their learning needs and continually evaluating provision
- to observe children's wellbeing and put in measures to support those whose wellbeing is consistently low
- to reassure children and encourage a safe atmosphere for risk-taking



Possible activities

- turn taking games that help children to take turns and share
- circle times: play a name game, for example, say own name before rolling a ball across the circle – children may consider positive aspects of each person in the circle
- chatter boxes i.e. decorated boxes, such as shoe boxes from home filled with a small number of child's "special items" e.g. photos, collections, memorabilia etc. which child shares with the others at small group times. Personal items encourage those children who may have difficulty participating, feel part of the group and raise self confidence e.g. EAL, shy children etc.
- share photos of their activities with children, talking with them about what they did and how they felt

The Learning Environment

The learning environment includes indoor and outdoor provision. Child initiated play will be enhanced by adult support **when appropriate** to support and extend children's learning.

Provide

- a well-organised, safe environment
- materials that enhance children's emotional security in the setting, for example, a visual timetable, children's names displayed and used as labels, photos of children from home
- a personal space for each child, for example, coat peg, own drawer
- resources that reflect significant experiences in children's lives, for example, in photos, books, role play
- resources that reflect a diversity of cultures and beliefs (not just at times of festivals and celebrations)
- resources that reflect positive images of groups represented at the setting



2. Early Learning Goals for Making Relationships

Children

- play co-operatively, taking turns with each other
- take account of one another's ideas about how to organise their activity
- show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings
- form positive relationships with adults and other children



Children need adults who will

- help them develop relationships with others
- provide them with the vocabulary they need to help them play with others
- get involved in play alongside them, not taking over
- provide activities that require them to work together in pairs or small groups of children

Positive relationships - The role of the adult

- to ensure they are aware of the importance of attachment in relationships
- to make sure all the children have their own special person in the setting who knows them well and understands their wants and needs
- to observe children's relationships in play and support those who are finding this difficult
- to provide children with the vocabulary needed to ask if he or she can join in with others play. (Be sensitive of the needs of children with EAL who may need specific support with this)
- to provide experiences which require children to work together e.g. wheeled toys for two or other equipment which requires co operation
- to support children in developing positive relationships by challenging negative comments and actions towards either adults or peers
- to model appropriate play and positive relationships

- to talk about how different situations can make others feel so children learn empathy

Possible activities

The following examples give some ideas for experiences and activities.

- circle times: play collaborative games, e.g. big ball to roll or throw to each other, parachute games, ring games
- books, stories and poems: read and discuss texts exploring friendships
- use persona dolls, puppets, books etc to talk about feelings and the impact of actions on others
- initiate role play ideas which require children to work together and empathise e.g. hospital, baby clinic, vets

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- display photos of family and other special people
- share knowledge about languages with staff and parents and make a poster or book of greetings in all languages used within the setting and the community
- ensure there are opportunities and spaces for the children to play alongside others and play co operative games with a familiar adult
- ensure there are "communication friendly spaces" where children can sit and chat with friends e.g. den, cosy book area, bench
- ensure role play resources are inclusive and reflect the children's family lives and communities.
- provide activities that involve turn taking and sharing in small groups



3. Early Learning Goals for Managing Feelings and Behaviour

Children

- talk about how they and others show feelings
- talk about their own and others' behaviour and its consequences and know that some behaviour is unacceptable
- work as part of a group or class and understand and follow the rules
- adjust their behaviour to different situations and take changes of routine in their stride

Children need adults who

- are aware of the messages their own behaviour might be giving
- will help them to express their feelings, to understand the feelings of others and to know what is unacceptable behaviour
- will ensure routines are flexible to meet their changing needs
- will provide support to resolve conflicts or disagreements between peers when necessary

Positive relationships - The role of the adult

- to model appropriate behaviour with colleagues and children
- to establish routines with predictable sequences and events and to prepare children for any changes that may occur in the routine
- to maintain some flexibility within the routines to enable children to pursue their interests and reduce incidents of frustration
- to establish clear boundaries and expectations with the children and be consistent in applying these
- to share the rationale of boundaries with parents to maintain a shared approach
- to regularly evaluate the routines of the setting e.g. group times, tidy up times and meal times and consider whether they support children to manage their feelings and behaviour or are they problematic in their content and/or organisation
- to help children to recognise when their actions hurt others
- to name and talk about a wide range of feelings
- to monitor children's emotional wellbeing and develop experiences which will support this
- to provide appropriate support to prepare children through transition, both within the setting as well as to other settings and school
- to allow children to make choices and decisions and to take risks within safe boundaries
- to inform key children if the key person is going to be absent at the start or end of the session providing a sense of belonging and emotional security

Possible activities

- involve children in devising 'rules' or 'please remember' points for the setting – children may record and illustrate these
- 'Going home bear': children care for a toy overnight – involve children in considering how this may be done and what the bear will need
- circle time: consider the need for caring and gentleness through passing round a fragile or delicate object
- books, stories and poems: discuss fictional situations where behaviour has not been consistent with the expectations of the setting – what could they have done?
- use Persona Dolls to help children consider feelings, ways to help others feel better about themselves, empathise and deal with conflicting opinions



The Emotional and Physical Learning Environment

The learning environment includes indoor and outdoor provision which incorporates physical resources as well as the adults and how they interact with the children. Child initiated play will be enhanced by adult support **when appropriate** to support and extend children's learning.

- quiet cosy corners, where children can feel both physically safe and free to explore at their own pace
- displays of children's families and any other significant people
- organisation that supports behavioural expectations, for example, sand timer available near popular activities to support turn taking
- opportunities to care for living things, e.g. plants, pets
- clearly labelled pegs/spaces with names/pictures/photos where children can hang up coats or place special personal items
- clearly labelled and easily accessible resources
- toilet and changing areas which don't feel clinical but are bright, interactive and interesting to children
- a learning environment that encourages children to take care, for example, well organised resources, dustpan and brush available near the sand tray

Useful links

<http://www.persona-doll-training.org>

<http://www.netmums.com>

www.fatherhoodinstitute.org

<http://www.foundationyears.org.uk> - information for all families in England with children under the age of 5