



# READY STEADY TWO!

▪ **A Practical Guide to Supporting 2s in Early Learning and Childcare**



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# INTRODUCTION

This guidance has been developed to help practitioners feel more confident about getting it right for 2 year olds and inspire the ongoing conversation about how to best develop quality learning environments for children. We hope that by taking a closer look at practice in Aberdeen it will help get our 2s off to the very best start, in any setting they happen to attend. All information presented is evidence based, and will be familiar to many practitioners. Examples from across Aberdeen are highlighted in the 'A Local Look' sections, and there is opportunity to extend practitioner's learning through the 'A Closer Look/Find Out More' sections within the guide. Throughout the guide the term 'parent' will be used to describe anyone who is the main carer for a child.

## The 2 Year Olds are Here!

The Scottish Government's stated ambition is for Scotland to be "the best place in the world to grow up". They hope to do this by improving outcomes and reducing inequalities for all families across Scotland to ensure that all children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed. The Scottish Government's Early Years Framework (2008) is also aimed at promoting the best start in life; it's key message being the need to break negative cycles of inequality through early intervention.

There are more 2 year olds than ever going to nursery in Aberdeen, following the Scottish Government's decision to expand the provision of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) to eligible 2s. Eligible 2s are accessing ELC in a range of ways across Aberdeen through ME2 nurseries, partner provider nurseries, Aberdeen City Council (ACC) nurseries and ME2 approved childminders. Research\* shows the benefits for 2 year olds who access ELC; good nursery provision with well trained and skilled staff can help to level the playing field at such a critical period of a child's development.

The outcomes however, depend entirely on delivery of **high-quality provision**. As such the ACC ELC Delivery Plan recognises the need to look carefully at the question of how best to provide a service to 2 year olds, to reduce the poverty related attainment gap and improve long term outcomes for children and families. Some service providers are very established in their practice supporting 2s, however, for others it is a new adventure.

**'The Educational Psychology Service has spent considerable time consulting with key stakeholders to better understand how best to meet the needs of eligible 2s. The Service has also undertaken an extensive review of available research to inform the development of this guidance on how best to meet the needs of eligible 2s. I have no doubt that this guidance and associated professional learning will be of great value to practitioners as we work to expanding our provision of Early Learning and Childcare'**

**Eleanor Sheppard**  
Transformation and Improvement Manager

\* Mathers, Eisenstadt, Sylva, Soukakpu & Ereky-Stevens. (2014). *Sound Foundations: A Review of the Research Evidence on Quality of Early Childhood Education and Care for Children Under Three, Implications for Policy and Practice*. The Sutton Trust: Oxford.



# INTRODUCTION

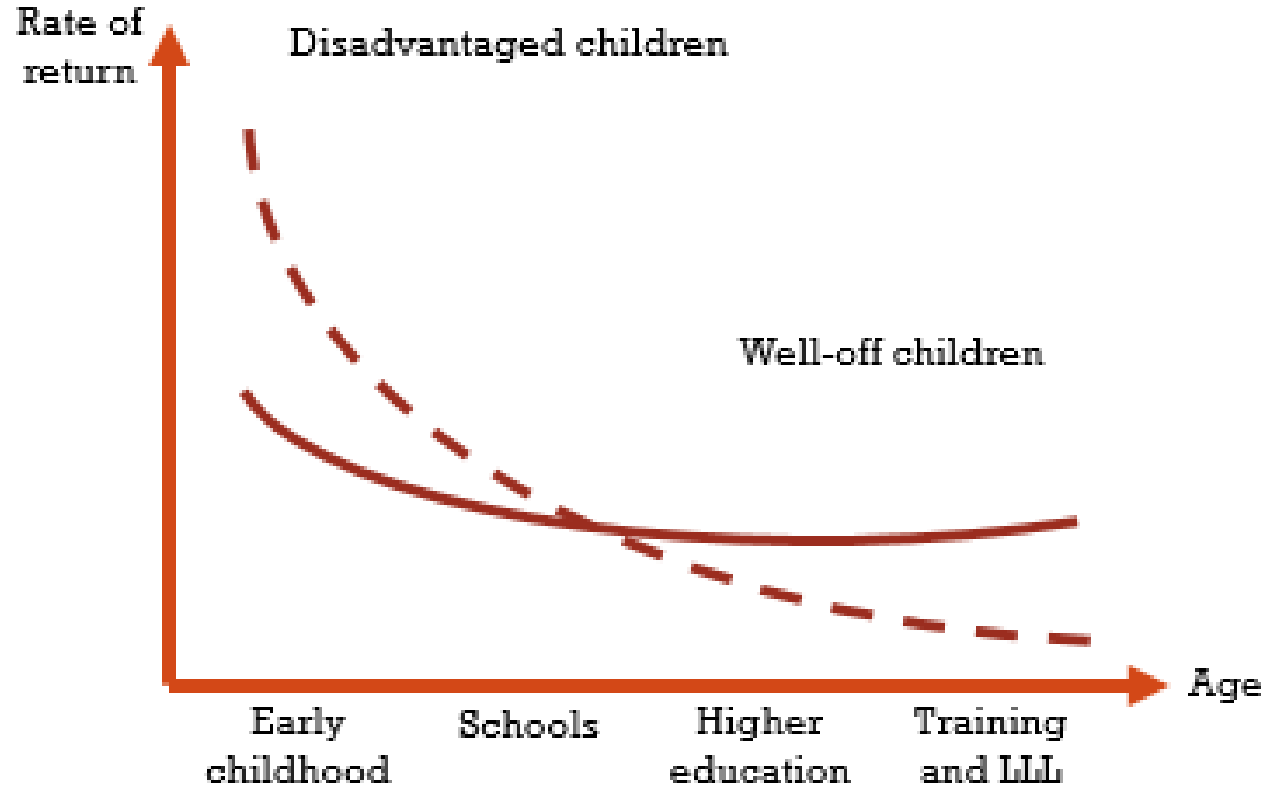
## Why Start ELC at 2 Years of Age?

- It is widely accepted from worldwide longitudinal studies conducted that children's care and learning experiences during the early years are related to their later developmental outcomes. By the age of 5 there is already a 19-month gap in school readiness between the most and least advantaged children, a gap which extends through school\*.

- Research has demonstrated that access to ELC provision has the potential to impact positively on all children's social, emotional and cognitive outcomes, with greatest impact for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. In a recently completed study\*\* involving children between the ages of 2 and 3 years, early cognitive and socio-emotional developmental benefits (as measured at age 3 years) were associated with use of ELC. Furthermore, the benefits of ELC were seen regardless of the level of family disadvantage, and regardless of the quality of the home learning environment. Moreover, research also suggests that accessing ELC at 2 can also have positive effects on parenting capacity.\*\*\*

The graph opposite, extracted from a recent Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report, illustrates how investing in intervention during this critical period of early childhood, has the greatest potential to 'close the gap' as spending is associated with better outcomes.

Rates of return on investments in educational interventions for disadvantaged and well-off children at different stages of the life cycle (2017)\*\*\*\*\*



\* Bradshaw P, Lewis G and Hughes T. (2014). *Growing Up in Scotland: Characteristics of pre-school provision and their association with child outcomes*. Scottish Government: Edinburgh.

\*\* Melhuish E, Gardiner J and Morris S. (2017). *Study of Early Education and Development (SEED): Impact Study on Early Education Use and Child Outcomes up to Age Three*: Research brief.

\*\*\* Scottish Government. (2008). *Evaluation of extended preschool provision for vulnerable twos*. Scottish Government: Edinburgh

\*\*\*\*\* Wossmann (2008) cited in Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2017). *Starting Strong: Key OECD Indicators on Early Childhood Education and Care*. OECD: Paris.



# INTRODUCTION

## Aspects of quality

Research highlights that gains are entirely dependent on high-quality provision. Scotland's longitudinal research study, Growing Up in Scotland (2014)(GUS)\*, found that children who attend centres which have a higher care and support rating had better vocabulary outcomes at age 5. Concerningly, reviews of provisions regularly find that the nature of the early years environment shows wide variation in terms of overall quality, children's experiences, caregivers' practices, and type of setting. A recent evidence review\*\* took an in-depth look at aspects of quality and characteristics for children under 3 years. Four key dimensions of good-quality pedagogy were identified:

1. **Stable relationships and interactions with sensitive and responsive adults.**
2. **A focus on play-based activities and routines which allow children to take the lead in their own learning.**
3. **Support for communication and language.**
4. **Opportunities to move and be physically active.**



\* Bradshaw P, Lewis G and Hughes T. (2014). *Growing Up in Scotland: Characteristics of pre-school provision and their association with child outcomes*. Scottish Government: Edinburgh

\*\* Scobie, G. & Scott, E. (2017). *Rapid evidence review: Childcare quality and children's outcomes*. NHS Health Scotland: Edinburgh.



# DRIVERS OF EARLY LEARNING

Building the Ambition (2014) (BtA) identifies five 'Essential Aspects' of Early Learning which underpin a child's desire to explore the world around them through active learning and play. When secure in their relationships, 2 year olds will explore, experiment, invent, test, imagine, create and build to make sense of their environment – every day a new adventure! Relevant, real life experiences, which mirror daily routines, build their awareness of the world around them. Moreover, these five aspects of learning have to be considered in turn at the level of; the adult, the environment, and the individual experience - See Appendix A for a summary of the BtA guidance on each aspect. There is no need to formalise the curriculum, or implement a list of experiences to reflect the early stages of primary school. If this happens it is likely to narrow the young child's experiences.



*“That’s why we have to encourage creativity in our children. It is the only way we can develop the problem-solving skills that work when you don’t know what it is specifically you have to do”*  
Dylan William (2018)\*\*

## The 4 R's – Principles for Best Starts and Outcomes

Pre Birth to Three (2010) stresses the dimensions which these experiences must encapsulate – through rights, relationships, responsive care and respect. 2 year olds have the same rights as all other children under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. They have the right to be respected, valued and have their views heard and acted upon. When supporting children all adults and agencies should ensure that the views of children are “given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child” (UN, 1989, Article 12). In Scotland recent legislation\* states that children's services must be designed on the principles of dignity, privacy, choice, safety, realising potential and equality and diversity.

\* Children (Scotland) Act 1995

\*\*Scottish Government. (2017). *The National Care Standards: early education and childcare up to the age of 16*. Scottish Government: Edinburgh.

\*\* Education Scotland (2018) Available at

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/Creativity%20-%20Dylan%20William>

## A Closer Look

The How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare Statements (HGIOELC) can be a helpful tool for practitioners as delivery of high quality provision is the best way to support children's rights.

## How Good is our ELC? Evaluation Statements

Is learning:

- based on strong nurturing attachments?
- well matched to the stages of development of 2 year olds?
- built on the prior and continuous learning of our children, within and beyond the setting?
- designed around wellbeing, communication, mathematics, curiosity, inquiry and creativity?
- built upon all practitioners taking responsibility for developing early literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum?
- effectively planning to take full account of each child's needs, dispositions, interests and stage of development?
- using approaches to planning that are flexible and highly responsive, ensuring that children are making sustained progress in their learning?



# GETTING TO KNOW 2 YEAR OLDS

'It is a testing time for the child and the adult as life is full of frustrations and contradictions, making things at times unpredictable. 2s will often become frustrated where they have problems vocalising their feelings and this may lead to difficult phases. Caring for children at this stage requires a great sensitivity to the child's conflicting needs for the balance of independence, risk, reassurance and support' \*



I might like to nap during the day

We are struggling to become independent

I can push and pull large wheelie objects

We like to have fun, but can also be purposeful and serious



I can be possessive of toys and other people

I know my name



I can be shy and clingy

We enjoy familiar routines and experiences – it gives us confidence!

Turn taking, sharing and waiting might be hard for me

We're becoming more interested in others around us

I need to know about my rights and have my views respected

I want to trust you

\* The Scottish Government. (2014). Building the Ambition. The Scottish Government: Edinburgh.

# GETTING TO KNOW 2 YEAR OLDS: STRIKING THE BALANCE

## 2 year olds:

- strive for independence but still rely on a familiar person nearby who gives them support, encouragement and care.
- love to have fun but can also be purposeful and serious.
- want to do things for themselves but also love to explore with adults.
- enjoy familiar routines and experiences but they also need spontaneity and surprise.
- are learning through their actions but also through language.
- like to play alone but are becoming more interested in others around them.
- may revert to baby like behaviour at times but can respond and concentrate on experiences which are personal and meaningful.
- appear random in their play but will in fact engage in distinct patterns of behaviour.

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\*Lindon, J. (2012). What does it mean to be two? Practical Preschool Books: London.

**“Young twos are not just smaller, wetter, less articulate threes” (Jenny Lindon, 2012)**

Jenny Lindon asked teams who had lowered their minimum age from 3 to 2 to think about key differences between these ages. Key differences areas are highlighted below:

**Transition** – settling in could be much harder for 2s. They need more time and introductory visits to feel safe and secure. In mixed age settings some 2s benefitted from a home corner specifically for 2 year olds to help them gradually transition to play with 3-5s.

**Self –Care Skills** – 2s need more adult support with self care skills and routines. Toileting, dressing and feeding are more challenging due to their stage of development. Some 2s will be determined and want to do it themselves, however others may be used to parents taking charge and expect adults to do all the work.

**Communication skills** – reflective practitioners found that they needed more ‘tuning in’ time to understand 2 year olds’ communication skills and needed to adjust the way that they talked to 2 year olds.

**Environment** – settings which are full of movement and sound can be overwhelming for some 2s. Quieter corners can help development of their attention and listening skills. Height, eye level and reach are also necessary to consider when thinking about furniture and resources.\*



# BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Recent advances in technology and neuroscience have given valuable insight into how the human brain operates at different stages of development. We now know that children are born with an adaptable brain that can be shaped by experiences and relationships. The brain has many different areas, each of which has responsibility for different jobs. The key to thriving lies in the ways these areas work together – how they are integrated. We are born with one hundred billion neurons, which have an average of ten thousand connections to other neurons. Brains do not develop by growing more neurons, but by creating stronger connections between the neurons available. Forming and reinforcing these connections are one of the key tasks in early brain development, and this lays the foundations for lifelong learning skills\*.

## What happens in a 2 year olds brain?

This time in brain development is a period of unending ‘WOW!’ moments, as everything experienced is new and interesting. The brain is figuring out how things in the world work. At 2 years of age there are certain brain developments that occur in most children:

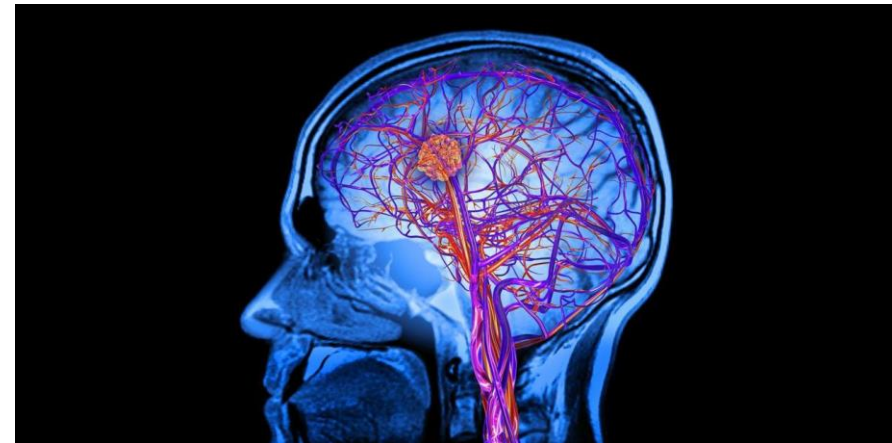
- The brain has a high capacity for change and plasticity, in response to what is going on around it. Research has shown that the brain is particularly sensitive to experiences such as sensory and motor practices, stress, relationships, diet and injury at this age\*\*.
- Increased growth in the frontal lobe of the brain occurs; the area responsible for thought, movement, attention and emotions.
- Rapid development of communication and language skills take place.
- Attachment patterns become established as to how a child responds to adults around them. These later impact on their ability to manage stress and anxiety, and regulate themselves.
- The brain develops working models of behavioural responses from the emotive cues given by key adults. This is known as social referencing.

\*Learning and Teaching Scotland. (2010). *Pre-birth to three: Positive outcomes for Scotland's children and families*. Scottish Government: Edinburgh

\*\*Kolb, B., Mychasiuk, R., Muhammed, A., and Gibb, R. (2013). Brain plasticity in the developing brain. *Progressive Brain Research*, 207, 35 – 64.

## Did You Know

- By 2 years old, the brain structure has the overall appearance of that of an adult.
- At certain points of a 2 year olds life, the brain is making up to one million connections a second.
- Times for the brain to rest are important in healthy development.
- It can take 2 year old brains between 10 – 15 times longer for information to be processed, compared to adult brains.



## Find Out More

<http://www.urbanchildinstitute.org/why-0-3/baby-and-brain> provides more detailed information on brain development and neuroscience within the first three years of life.

# ATTACHMENT

“Aberdeen City Council’s embrace of the Early Years Movement should be celebrated. There is a comprehensive vision. Once we have a better cultural understanding of attachment, we will realise it is not just about children. It is about us: it is about what it means to be human, to live, to lose and to love.”

Dr Suzanne Zeedyk (2013)



As mentioned previously, we now know how critical relationships are to the developing brain. Babies are born with an innate interest and sensitivity to others; seeking relationships where they experience security and comfort. Key caregivers in the first few years of life act as attachment figures for children; providing a base for a child who feels threatened, and a platform from which learning and exploration can take place (Golding, 2007). Research highlights that staff in early years settings can be significant attachment figures for children. Bowlby (1988) suggested it is these early experiences of relationships that go on to form internal working models in the brain. These go on to act as a blueprint for future relationships throughout life.

Neuroscience has supported this theory by showing ways in which brains are shaped by relationships, and highlighting the increased sensitivity period of birth to three years. When children repeatedly have less than optimal interactions with their caregivers, the impact of this can be widespread. Research has shown links between the early attachment experiences of children and future feelings of well-being, self-esteem, self-regulation and coping with the stresses in life (Prior and Glaser, 2006).

## A Local Look – Ashgrove ME2 Nursery

Staff at Ashgrove ME2 nursery use outdoor learning approaches to nurture development of social skills, confidence and early learning concepts with their 2s. Michelle Aitken EYP, who is trained in the Forest School Approach (Level 3) explains “Cooking and sharing food with others in the outdoors helps to create a shared experience and supports their awareness of social opportunities. We are learning how to use the fire to cook our food, keep us warm, as well as learn to manage risk and keep ourselves safe. People are always amazed to hear that 2s are able to sit safely around an open fire!”

### A Closer Look– Attachment and Stress

The developing brain is especially vulnerable to the impact of stress. Humans automatically initiate biological responses to perceived threats; responses which have foundations in our early attachment experiences. Cortisol is a chemical that is produced when we feel stressed. It prepares our body for an impending threat by slowing down processes involved in language, impulse control and digestion. The blood supply usually sent to these areas is redirected to areas which may need it more. Repeated exposure to cortisol can have considerable impact on the developing structure of a child’s brain. Studies have shown that severe stress exposure can impact on –

- Decreased brain volume
- Dysregulation of the stress response system
- Dysfunction in brain areas responsible for memory and emotions.

(Chen & Baram, 2016)

\*Golding, K. S. (2007). *Attachment theory into practice*. Leicester: The British Psychological Society.

\*\*Bowlby, J. (1988). *A secure base. Clinical applications of attachment theory*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) London: Routledge.

\*\*\*Prior, V., and Glaser, D. (2006). *Understanding attachment and attachment disorders: Theory, evidence and practice*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

\*\*\*\*Chen, Y. and Baram, T. Z. (2016). Toward Understanding How Early-Life Stress Reprograms Cognitive and Emotional Brain Networks. *Neuropsychopharmacology*, 41, 197–206.



# ATTACHMENT

By the age of 2 children have begun to develop a sense of their self as an individual, from the way others have interacted with them. They can pick themselves out from a picture, recognise their image in a mirror, and will begin to assert themselves through temper tantrums\*. Although they are striving for independence, our 2s still need a caring steer from the adults around them. This is where the role of a key person in childcare settings becomes essential.

A common stressor for young children is separation from their primary care givers which can cause uncertainty around their feelings of security. Wariness of strangers at this age is also common and is seen as an adaptive evolutionary response to help keep a child safe. It is important to develop positive relationships with the children in our care for them to view us as secondary attachment figures. So how can we do this? We need to consider the role of experiences, adults and the environment -



## Find Out More

NHS online learning materials around positive attachments and mental health.

[http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/3552795/final\\_imh\\_interactive\\_pdf\\_3\\_.pdf](http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/3552795/final_imh_interactive_pdf_3_.pdf)

Experiences Which	An Adult Who	An Environment Which
Provide flexible settling in policies at transition points, and routines which allow for greetings and departures.	Spends time to build relationships with the child and family	Uses an effective key person system to meet the needs of individuals
Encourage children to move between dependence, interdependence and independence	Is available at key points to provide soothing, comfort and check ins. Proximity to key adults is important at age 2.	Is safe with lots of opportunities for exploration and a 'safe base' when needed
Use care times to strengthen bonds. Provide opportunities for talking and listening around areas of interest.	Demonstrates responsiveness, empathy and protection towards children	Has clear safeguarding protocols which manage risks and ensure safety

\*Sharma, A., and Cockerill, H. (2008). From birth to five years: Children's developmental progress (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). Routledge: Oxon.

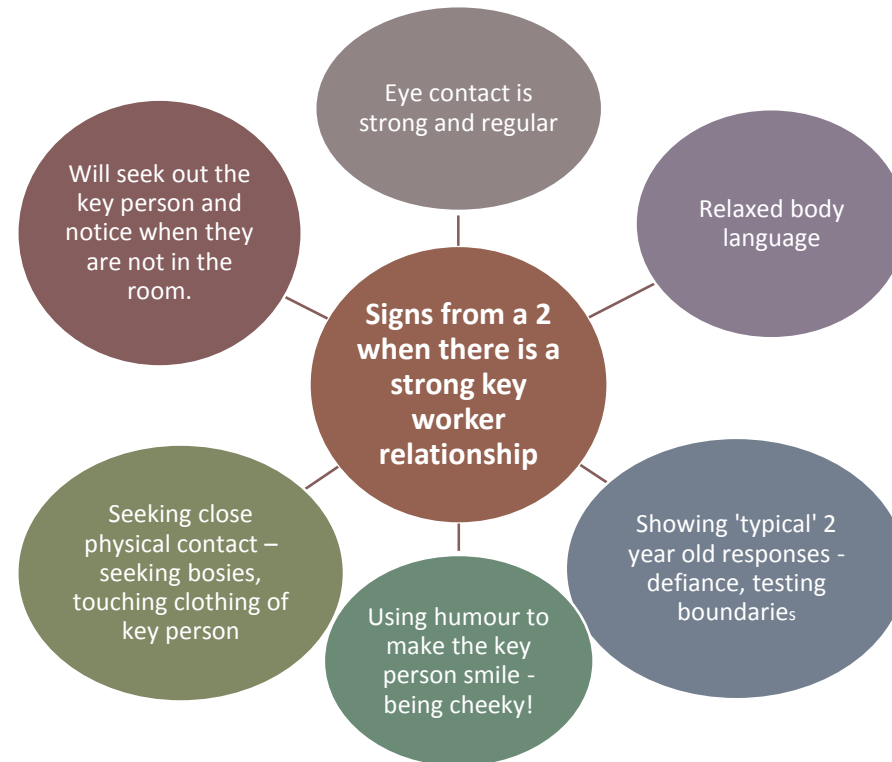


# THE ROLE OF THE KEY WORKER AND ATTACHMENT

The role of the key worker supports children to develop new attachments and settle in. Tassioni (2014) advises that 2 year olds need their key worker to be warm and fun, but also sensitive to their mood and needs. Clear boundaries and expectations are essential, so children understand that the adult is in charge and they can relax and be children. When these relationships do not work well, it is likely that children will become distressed and miss out on key opportunities for learning and communication. Key worker qualities which can promote secure attachments and relationships include:

## Key Worker Qualities Include:

- Attuned – How do we interpret and understand the behavioural responses of 2s, to different people and things?
- Available – How do we make opportunities to connect with our children during the day? How will children know they are kept in mind, even when we are not in the same room?
- Empathise – How are 2s supported to understand and manage their emotions and feelings?
- Protective – Will key people in group settings be responsible for personal care of their identified children?
- Reliable – How can we let children know, in a way that makes sense to them, if their key person will not be available on a given day?
- Responsive - Is information about the child's emotional expression included in Learning Journeys, Individual Profiles? What do I do when I'm excited? What makes me laugh?





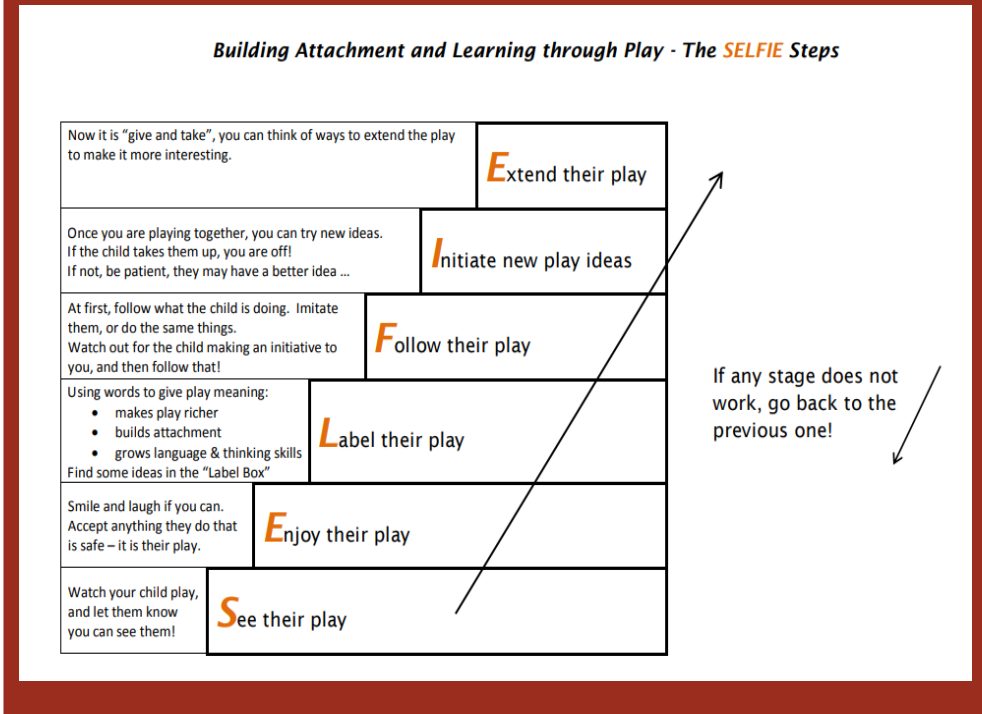
# THE ROLE OF THE KEY WORKER AND ATTACHMENT

## **A Closer Look**

Some 2s will arrive with the ability to form immediate relationships with their key workers, ready for play! For others they will require practitioners to draw upon interpersonal approaches, dependant on individual needs. A range of strategies exist to guide interactions e.g. mediation, intensive interaction, floor time. Strategies common to many of these approaches are listed below:

- **show you are paying attention** - Approach children at their level... be open, relaxed, fascinated and smiling. Observe a 2s body language to assess if they are ready and receptive.
- **encourage initiatives** - Watch and wait and wait...and...wait for an initiative to be given. This may be as subtle as a shift in eye gaze or change in body positioning. Being quiet and waiting seems to be very difficult for a lot of practitioners but it is key when working with the youngest children.
- **receiving initiatives** - Stay close to the child and look for opportunities to support and scaffold their learning. A simple way of 'noticing' a child's initiative is to copy or mirror their action. This helps their developing brains to strengthen and reinforce developing neural pathways.
- **attuned interactions** - This is the 'dance' between practitioner and child, where turn taking and reciprocal responses occur, be they verbal and non-verbal. The best practitioner will be answering questions rather than asking them.
- **guide learning** - Guide learning through supporting and scaffolding inquiry, creativity and curiosity. You can reflect on the impact you have had "What would have happened if I wasn't there?" "How did I develop the child's experience?"

Play is one of the most effective ways we can develop strong relationships in the early years. This tool (Highland Educational Psychology Service, 2015) shows how play can be extended as relationships develop. See Appendix B for larger copy.



\* The approaches detailed above have been adapted from principles which underpin the Video Interaction Guidance approach.



# ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACEs)

As Scotland strives to become the world's first ACE aware nation, it is important that practitioners understand the impact of childhood distress on later outcomes in life. Causes of ACEs can include: emotional, physical, or sexual abuse; physical or emotional neglect; substance misuse and incarceration of a relative. The Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) National Practice Model is a helpful framework for practitioners to support assessment and intervention (see Appendix C for an overview of ACEs).

## **Protective Factors**

The presence of the following can often mitigate the consequences of ACEs:

- support for families in times of need
- safe, stable, nurturing relationships
- parental resilience
- child's social and emotional skills
- use of positive parenting skills
- ACE aware communities and systems

## **What practices help children who have experienced ACEs:**

- build a routine around transitions so that children know what the transition is going to look like, what they're supposed to be doing, and what's next.
- understand emotional outbursts as a form of communication and a need for adult support.
- provide emotional holding/containing when needed.
- be aware of specific trigger times in the day.
- being consistent, predictable and repetitive.
- modelling and teaching appropriate social behaviours.
- listening to and talking with the children\*



## **Find Out More**

NHS Health Scotland (2017). Tackling the attainment gap by preventing and responding to adverse childhood experiences. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.healthscotland.scot/media/1517/tackling-the-attainment-gap-by-preventing-and-responding-to-adverse-childhood-experiences.pdf>  
<https://beta.gov.scot/publications/adverse-childhood-experiences/>





# SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Differences in a child's social and emotional abilities at 2 can result from a variety of factors; cultural influences, temperaments, attachment patterns, and social opportunities. From around the age of 18 months old, children display a greater awareness of others and will respond in increasingly sophisticated ways. While 2s may initially keep to themselves, they will increasingly enjoy playing alongside other children. They can modify their behaviour in the context of peer interactions\*. When conflicts arise, adults need to step in to prevent aggression and teach appropriate behaviours. Children at this age are beginning to label feelings that they recognise in themselves and others. Controlling emotion is difficult, so frustration may trigger emotional meltdowns. At this stage the ability to regulate their emotions and behaviour is very challenging - for some this might never be a skill they fully master. Adults play a key role here in providing comfort and supporting the development of regulation skills.

Tantrums are an inevitable feature in the behaviour of many 2 years olds due to the difficulties of this age group in managing their emotional regulation. The good news is that by age 3, the frequency of tantrums rapidly decreases\*\* There are many schools of thought on how tantrums are best managed. Successful approaches involve a calm and measured reaction by adults, and consistent responses between the key adults in the child's life.

## Find Out More

The following is a useful website for parents and practitioners on why tantrums occur, and how they can be managed effectively -

<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/parentsandyoungpeople/parents/carers/dealingwithtantrums.aspx>

## Social Development at 2

- ❖ Children enjoy playing alongside others, but may not interact a great deal with peers.
- ❖ They may start to have favourite playmates and build warm bonds with others.
- ❖ Many 2s show awareness of others' feelings. They may try to give basic help (e.g. pat or bosie a child who is sad).
- ❖ They will look to adults for comfort when conflict happens, often around sharing items. Children at this age can defend their possessions with fierce determination "At's Mine!!". With much adult support, they can begin to develop some strategies for resolving conflicts constructively.

## Emotional Development at 2

- ❖ 2s can extend trusting relationships to other adults and children with whom they play frequently. They will show observable preferences for these adults and children (e.g. running to them when they arrive at a setting).
- ❖ They can show a strong sense of self as an individual (e.g., will say, "No!" to an adult's request, simply to assert themselves.).
- ❖ Most 2s will recognise feelings when emotions are labelled by an adult. There will be an increase in the understanding and use of language related to emotions. 2s are starting to expand their understanding of others' feelings by reading facial cues and body language.
- ❖ They continue to find the regulation of emotions difficult. As a result, frustration may often trigger tantrums. They require adult support to manage these times.

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• \*Sheridan, M. (2008). *From birth to five years (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.)* Oxon: Routledge.  
• \*\*Tassioni, P. (2014). *Getting it right for two year olds*. London: Hodder Education



# SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## A local look

Emotion Coaching is an approach developed by Dr John Gottman whereby adults help children understand emotions and how to regulate them. This strategy helps the child to feel valued and learn the skills to recognise, understand and regulate their emotions. The ability to self-regulate positively affects the ways children respond to stress, focus their attention, strengthen relationships between adult and child, and inhibit actions\*. Research using MRI shows the important structural changes this approach can have on brain structure and integration.



The approach uses 4 steps to support children through emotions as they are experiencing them:

1. Recognise the child's feelings and empathise with them.
2. Validate the feelings and provide a label for them.
3. Set limits on behaviour (if needed).
4. Problem solve with the child.

Further information about this approach can be sought from Aberdeen City Educational Psychology Service.

\* Gottman, J. (1997). Raising an emotionally intelligent child. Simon and Schuster paperbacks: New York.

\*\* Siegel, D. J., and Bryson, T. P. (2012). The whole-brain child. Robinson: London.

## Considerations for 2 year olds

Although some aspects of an emotion coaching approach require children to have a degree of communication skills, there are still many techniques we can adapt to suit the developmental stage of a young child.

**Naming emotions** – Provide a label for the emotion a child is experiencing as you observe it from their facial expressions and behaviour, such as happy, excited, confused, frustrated.

This will help to build the emotional literacy of a child, enabling them to be better able to identify their own feelings as they grow. Many children under 5 only know 2.5 'feeling' words (sad, angry and happy). Children who are better able to understand their own feelings are more likely to develop the ability to empathise with others from a younger age\*\*.

**Connect and redirect** – Mirror emotions and use non-verbal gestures to show you understand what a 2 may be feeling. Once you've connected like this, simple language can be used to move on to something new i.e. 'You're worried aren't you? (Give a cuddle). It's hard when we can't find our special toy. Let's ask some of the others to help us look for it.'





# COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE

By the age of 2 children can be seen to be skilled communicators and listeners, when given stimulating experiences, opportunities and interactions. Many 2s love to blather. They relish opportunities for adults to enter their world to listen and talk with them. Like all areas of brain development, the language and communication abilities of children in the first 3 years of life follow an accelerating growth curve. Children are born pre-programmed for communication. Spoken language begins to emerge around 12 months of age and by 24 months the average child can use 300 words – this works out to their learning a new word every day from 17 – 24 months! This stage of language development is known as a **vocabulary spurt** \*.

Early 2 year olds understand many more words than they can say or sign. Most will be able to follow two- or three-part instructions “Please take the teddy to the toy box”. They can understand some questions “What?” “Is?”, and use ‘p b t d m n w h’ with vowels in words, as well as learning other sounds. 2s can enjoy chatting with toys and should be able to stop to listen while you are talking (if it’s something that is interesting to them!). As 2 year olds develop, their conversation skills mature, and they can show signs of adapting their tone, language and intonation depending on who they talk to. As they reach their third birthday, most children will be able to put words together to create simple, complete sentences\*\*.



**Communication board to support development of core vocabulary.**

\* Brooks, P. J., and Kempe, V. (2012). *Language Development*. The British Psychological Society and John Wiley & Sons: West Sussex.

\*\* NHS Health Scotland. (2015). *Ready, Steady Toddler!* NHS Health Scotland: Edinburgh.

## A Local Look

*Approximately 7% of children have difficulties developing language. Recent statistical data from Aberdeen’s population mirrors this percentage.*

## Staged Intervention

It is realistic to expect that most 2 year olds will use some form of speech that can be understood, although it can take time for them to feel comfortable talking and listening to new people. The following staged procedure can be helpful if you have concerns.

**Stage 1.** Talking to parents about their child’s communication is the first step in gathering assessment information. Health Visitors may also have key information to contribute. Share advice with families on how they can support the development of early language skills (Appendices D and E).

**Stage 2.** Communication and language checklists (Appendices F and G ) can be helpful in identifying where the main challenges lie. At a universal level, put in place identified strategies to meet these difficulties, and monitor progress.

**Stage 3.** If concerns continue, seek involvement from specialist agencies out with your service. The Speech and Language Therapy Service have an open referral system, and can discuss concerns you may have before deciding if their involvement is required. They can be contacted on 01224 310582 or [nhsq.saltnewreferral@nhs.net](mailto:nhsq.saltnewreferral@nhs.net). The Educational Psychology Service may also have a role in support, and requests for assistance can be made through a child’s Health Visitor.



# COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE

Parents and practitioners have a key role in nurturing the development of young children's communication skills, having a big impact on the future of those they support. Skilled communicators are more likely to develop positive outcomes and better life chances in relation to mental health and educational achievement\*. Many simple practices can make the biggest differences.

- **Build environments where talking and playing with language is valued.** Igniting curiosity will lead to enthusiasm for communication.
- **Play and talk together.** Have fun while talking about what you are doing. Use simple words and children will begin to pick these up.
- **Face to Face interactions.** Get down to the level of the child and use eye contact when communicating. Use single words when giving choices "milk" or "water".
- **Copy and add words.** Repeat back the word/s a child uses clearly. Add in additional words to build their vocabulary "big bouncy ball".
- **Pause and wait.** Give children the chance to talk about whatever they would like, count to 10 while waiting for them to communicate to ensure they do not feel rushed.

To help develop the language skills of our young children, the role of the supportive adult is paramount. We have to actively think about how we are engaging, encouraging and promoting communication skills through modelling and scaffolding.

Justine Roberts, Speech and Language Therapist, Airyhall Practice

## A Closer Look

An approach which the Speech and Language Therapy team use to support practitioners in ELC is called SSCAN. It is developed from the Hanen Centre.



### Find out more

Support for high quality observation and assessment of communication can be found through resources such as Every Child a Talker and Talking Point.

To get more ideas on activities to promote language in your setting visit The Hanen Centre <http://www.hanen.org/Home.aspx> and ICAN <https://www.ican.org.uk/>

\* Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2010. *Pre-Birth to Three: Positive Outcomes for Scotland's Children and Families*. Learning and Teaching Scotland: Edinburgh.



# ENVIRONMENT – ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS

*“The motivation to interact with the environment exists in all children as an intrinsic property of life, but the quality of the interactions is dependent upon the possibilities for engagement that the environment provides” Anita Olds\**

The expansion of ELC hours means that children will be spending longer hours in ELC settings so a high quality environment is more necessary than ever. In order to achieve quality outcomes the nursery environment must be set up to engage and excite the interests of 2 year olds. Given the leaps 2s make in relation to motor development, space and access routes must be carefully considered to promote 2s to become confident navigators of their new nursery environment. Regular access to the outdoors and sensory learning opportunities are crucial at this stage of their development. For 2s their environment may need to have room for personal items from home which may help them feel kept in mind while they are away from their families. Resources which are at eye level and accessible will help develop their ability to make choices and develop their decision making skills. For more ideas see our key questions box and Appendix A for the BtA ‘A Focus on Toddlers – What Do They Need?’.

## Find out more



*Space to Grow* (2017) has been produced by the Scottish Government in order to guide provisions on how to use space in order to develop positive learning environments. Case studies, including Aberdeen’s International School Nursery, illustrate the use of space to best meet the needs of children.

Research confirms that the environment is important both to parents and providers. In a recent survey conducted by the Care Inspectorate, 69% of parents reported that the environment was the most important factor to consider when choosing a service for their child.\*\*

## Tassioni’s (2014) Key Questions When Thinking About 2s

**Do we feel that we understand their age and stage of development? Will our environment support their developmental needs?**

- **Do we need to further risk assess our setting to ensure we provide a safe environment?**
- **Can our environment support their care needs? – 2 year olds will need space to nap and they may need a separate home corner to help transitions.**
- **Do we understand how 2-year olds play? Do we have the correct resources? Are there a broad enough range of opportunities in our environment to support development of their skills?**
- **Do we have realistic expectations of behaviours that some 2s may show e.g. biting, tantrums, sharing? How can our environment support 2s to develop?**
- **How do we best use adults to deliver an emotionally supportive environment? Do we have a key person system to prevent separation anxiety? If you are a child minder how does taking on 2s affect the balance of your groups?**

\*Olds, A.R. (1979). Designing developmentally optimal classrooms for children with special needs. In S.J. Meisels. (Ed). *Special education and development*. Baltimore University Park press.

\*\*Of 1757 from 2748 parents in the survey sample. This survey data was part of the Scottish Government, Care Inspectorate and Scottish Futures Trust Design Principles consultation exercise. March 2017





# ENVIRONMENT – ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS



## A Local Look – Great Western Preschool Nursery Kingswells

Jaclyn Philip, Nursery Manager, Kingswells, speaks about their use of learning bays, both outdoors and indoors, to support children’s development.

“We consider each learning bay in detail to ensure that the environment is prepared for our children. We increasingly use schemas in our design and planning to ensure that bays can support a range of play patterns. We are always looking for opportunities to give literacy and numeracy context through play – our outdoor mud kitchen is a real favourite! We regularly monitor children’s levels engagement at learning bays to ensure that they are stimulating and fun for our children”.

There is a real link between children’s fine motor movements, including their hand eye coordination, and their confidence. These movements enable children to tackle tasks, including feeding and some level of dressing, that allow them to become independent adults (Tassoni, 2014).

**ACCESS:** Many 2 year olds love to tip out resources and quickly move on to the next full box! This leaves adults cleaning in their wake instead of being available for play. Consider quantity when supporting 2 year olds – for example, several boxes with three to four items in each can be a solution to the 2 year old’s desire to tip.

**ROTATION:** This is necessary to keep resources fresh and interesting. A system for rotating resources and monitoring their use can help inform planning. A simple observational tally chart can be used to monitor engagement and play over a week in nursery.

**PATTERNS OF PLAY:** 2 year olds have different play patterns compared to threes which must be considered when planning an enabling environment. See our section on schemas for more.

**MOTOR DEVELOPMENT:** An environment must support opportunities for motor skill development – use Appendix H to audit your environment’s capacity to support development of motor skills. Building movement into the daily routine is especially important for 2 year olds given the strides that they make in their development at this age. The environment must likewise provide opportunities for development of fine motor skills. These are best supported through a range of daily activities such as tidying, cleaning and washing, in addition to play opportunities.

**OUTDOOR ACCESS:** Research has highlighted that being outdoors supports children’s language development and their ability to manage their feelings and behaviour. Some children will benefit from additional opportunities for outdoor play.





# ENVIRONMENT – MODELS OF PROVISION

One of the main dilemmas faced in group care settings is how best to deliver a service to 2 year olds. Some nurseries in Aberdeen have recently decided to change to a mixed age free flow model of provision. However, our consultations revealed that practitioners had considerations as summarised opposite when thinking about requirements. These questions will have to be looked at in each particular setting as to how the environment will be best utilised.

## A local look: Fersands Community Nursery

Lorna Cobb, Senior EYP describes her recent experience of moving to a mixed age model of provision at Fersands.



“I had initially been completely against the idea of having 2s in with 3-5s. I was worried that it would not have worked as the children have such different needs and we are such a small nursery. Carol Main, Development Officer, came in and helped us to think about the pros and the cons and helped us to look at how we could best use our space. Our outdoor music wall is made from all natural objects which appeal to 2s and they love watering our hanging garden which we created on our fence. Since working with 2s I am amazed at how much they can do for themselves. We now include our 2s in the weekly ‘Wee Green Spaces’ trip. I completely changed my thinking and would recommend any setting to consider this model of provision”.

## Advantages of mixed age provision

- Peer support can be readily available from older children who love to help the younger ones in nursery which helps socialisation for 2s.
- 2 year olds can access resources usually reserved for others and can benefit from space made available to them
- 2 year olds see others as role models and can be highly motivated to copy their older peers
- Siblings can learn alongside each other

## Considerations of mixed age provision

- 2s need different play experiences from 3-5s
- 2s do not have attention and concentration skills for routine group time
- Resources may not be suitable for 2 year olds who may require more support and supervision.
- Older children may ‘jump in’ and take over play
- Behaviours such as sharing, turn taking and waiting can differ between 2s and 3-5s. This can cause conflict and distress for 2s.
- 2 year olds may struggle in large groups as they can be overwhelmed by noise and groups.



# PLAY

*The is a strong correlation between children's learning through play in the earliest years and the impact in later life. Therefore, the importance of play cannot be overstated\**

2s love to play! It is a fundamental right of all children which is at the centre of the UNCRC. In June 2013, the Scottish Government published its first national Play Strategy for Scotland. The strategy outlines the benefits of play in children's development and links the Government's plans with National Outcomes, GIRFEC and other national policy frameworks. Children need freedom to explore the world around them, to practice skills and build their understanding of the world at their own pace. 2s can also be playful in their interactions with adults as they learn to gain reactions from adults through play.

Play enables children to;

- Make important connections so that they can make sense of their world
- Consolidate and celebrate what they know and can do
- Act out and process day to day experiences
- Thrive, develop self-confidence and social skills
- Experiment with and manage feelings\*



“Play is not trivial, it is highly serious and of deep significance. To the calm, keen vision of one who truly knows, the spontaneous play of the child discloses the inner man. Froebel (1826).\*\*

\*Learning and Teaching Scotland. (2010). *Pre-birth to three: Positive outcomes for Scotland's children and families*. Scottish Government: Edinburgh

\*\* Froebel, F. (1826). *Education of Man*. Dover Publication Inc: New York.





# PLAY - SCHEMAS

## Play patterns of 2s

The environment must be able to support and develop 2 year old's movements, both large and small. Most of children's large motor activity comes through their play – 2 year olds like to push, pull, kick, climb and move things. See opposite for more favourite actions 2 year olds enjoy performing.

Although a current topic **schemas** have been around in thinking for some time and have a solid theoretical base.

**Jean Piaget** (1896 - 1980) was amongst the first to recognise patterns of behaviours in young children (schemas)

**Lev Vygotsky** (1896 - 1934) discussed the symbolic functions of language in more detail

**Chris Athey** (1924 - 2011) followed Piaget's theories and used observations of children to support links to speech, comprehension and prominent schemas

Professor **Tina Bruce** worked with Chris Athey and further developed the research

### Find out more

Education Scotland have developed a Schemas training resource which can be found at at:

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/schematic-play>



- Opening
- Dropping (links to the trajectory schema)
- Climbing/Jumping
- Mixing and stirring (rotational schema)
- Connecting
- Transporting – collecting items and carrying them around in bags/buggies etc.
- Hitting and pounding
- In and out( links to the 'enclosed' schema)
- Finding
- Sorting
- Throwing
- Posting –(linked to the 'enclosing' schema)
- Rolling
- Cooking

See Appendix I for information on different types of schemas

It is important for a practitioner to understand that a child is not being disruptive when engaged in schematic play but be able to recognise this as early learning and help to support the child by offering opportunities to test out their thinking. A child's schema will be evident across a range of contexts and environments (BtA)



## Adult-guided activities

2 year olds enjoy being near 'their' adult. Even while engaged in play they will often check to see if their adult is near. Whilst promoting environments that enable free play, adults in ELC settings are integral to the depth of learning that children can achieve with the materials around them. The best adult guided activities are enjoyable for both adults and children - some are very simple, such as checking items for snack together. Tassoni (2014) points out that adults need to be flexible when supporting 2s as they can switch their focus quickly. They also play at a different pace than 3-5 s - 2 year olds may need a second look, or they may lose interest altogether and move on. 2s will often copy their key adult so modelling can be helpful. One way of starting an adult guided activity is initiating the type of play yourself - without saying anything - 2 year olds will often come alongside you and copy. As their language skills are in early stages of development, help them label and name their play - draw children's attention to early learning concepts such as shape, colour, and size through commenting on their play.

\*Scottish Government (2013) *National Play Strategy*. Scottish Government: Edinburgh.

## A local look – Williamson ME2 Nursery

Kathryn Ritchie and Linda Murray, EYPs, at Williamson ME2 enjoy creating 'junk models' alongside their 2s. "The children really need support from an adult to get going on their models. Often the best way is just to start playing with the boxes or kitchen rolls and children will come over and begin to create a model alongside you. Some children can visualise and describe what they are creating - such as a rocket or spaceship - however others enjoy collecting and transporting their pieces. More than anything they all love making the glue and using as much as they can to stick and paste their creations together!"



See how creative we  
have been with the  
junk from our box.

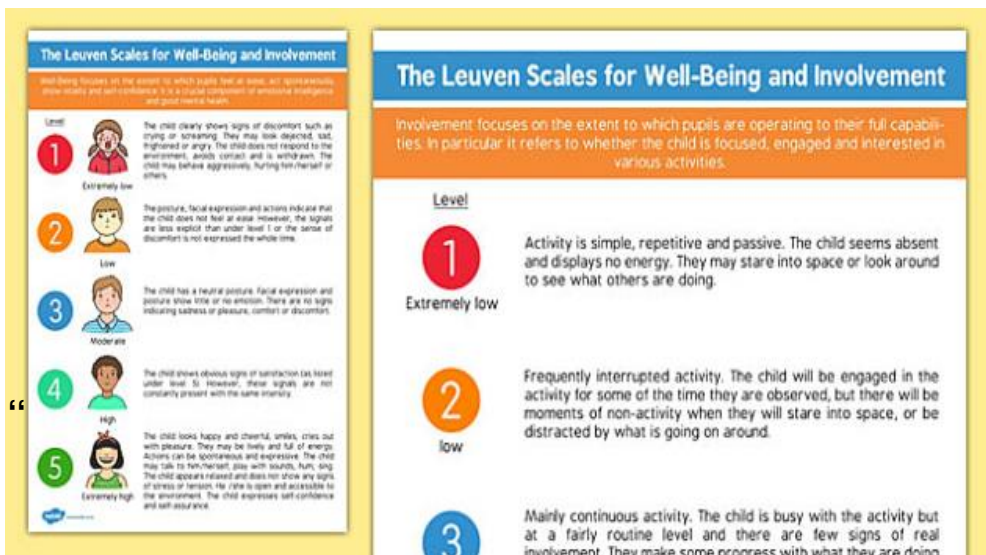




# ASSESSMENT

The continuous cycle of assessment and planning is central to supporting development and learning. Observing children is a fundamental aspect of day-to-day assessment practice and is the cornerstone of high quality early years provision\*.

The Leuven Wellbeing and Involvement Scales are observation tools that are increasingly used across ELC provisions in Aberdeen to support practice. They focus on two central quality indicators of early years provision: children's wellbeing and involvement. Practitioners assess children against the descriptors in order to measure progress. In Aberdeen an engaged and happy 2 will look 'chuffed' while learning! If there are consistent low levels of wellbeing and/or involvement, it is likely that a child's development will be threatened.

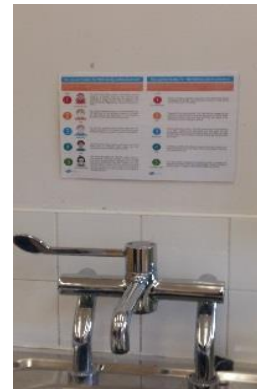


## A Local Look: Hanover Nursery

Gillian Forbes, Depute Headteacher Hanover Street Nursery, on the recent introduction of the Leuven Scales to support assessment of children's engagement with learning.

“The team at Hanover have been working hard to improve our assessment practice. With training and support from our Education Officer, Fiona Thomson, we have seen that disengaged children usually point back to the environment.

We have transformed our environment and use the constant reminders of the Leuven scales on our walls to constantly re-evaluate our environment relative to children's needs. Next steps are for us to consider moderation of scoring across the team.”



\* Learning and Teaching Scotland. (2010). *Pre-birth to three: Positive outcomes for Scotland's children and families*. Scottish Government: Edinburgh



# ASSESSMENT

Regular tracking and monitoring of emerging skills can help practitioners to identify competencies and areas for development. In order to support this process a tool has recently been developed by Aberdeen City's Early Years Team which looks at the following domains: motor skills: sensory and thinking skills; and language and social skills. (see Appendix J).

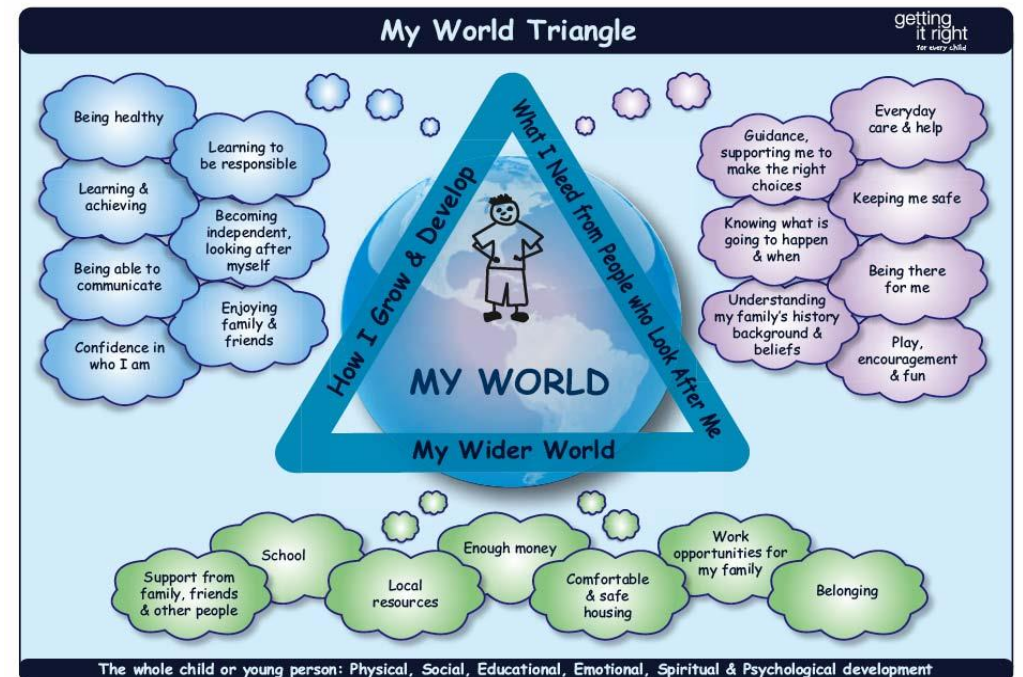


*“When working with children or young people the My World Triangle can be used at every stage to think about the whole world of the child or young person.”*

Scottish Government (2008),\*

Unfortunately, some 2s will have more complex situations than others. Tools available from the National Practice Model including ‘the’ *Getting it right ‘My World Triangle’* can be helpful to identify concerns and gather relevant information. To inform a holistic assessment of a child’s world, information from parents, family members and relevant services is necessary. *Getting it right* also provides guidance when staff and/or parents may consider that additional intervention is required to support a child’s wellbeing, health and development.

\*\*Scottish Government (2008a) A Guide to Getting it Right for Every Child [online] [www.Scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/09/22091734/0](http://www.Scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/09/22091734/0)



# PLANNING

Quality planning is critical to children's success. Planning learning experiences is only effective when staff take account of children's needs, dispositions, interests and stages of development. Effective staff within early years settings ensure that learning experiences, routines and activities build on information provided by parents and start with children's needs and interests. \*

Planning for 2s is led by the intentional promotion of experiences and interactions, as described by BtA guidance available in Appendix A. These intentions must be supported by the environment, the experiences and the interactions which are developed. Taking meaningful account of the 4 R's (rights, relationships, responsive care and respect) should ensure that staff help families to achieve the best possible start for all children.



Stephanie Drew, Depute Manager at the Kindergarten Nursery, describes how they work in partnership with parents to plan children's learning.

"Partnership with parents is a key element in completing children's learning journeys within our setting. By sharing information between home and nursery we gain a more holistic view of each child. We get a better idea of what they are achieving as well as areas which are being developed. In doing this we can successfully plan meaningful activities, tailored to suit individual children."

\* Learning and Teaching Scotland. (2010). *Pre-birth to three: Positive outcomes for Scotland's children and families*. Scottish Government: Edinburgh



# PLANNING

Every time an adult looks and listens to a child they are assessing and “planning” how to respond. As you watch and wait you can decide how or if to respond. This is planning!  
(Ephgrave, 2018)\*

Flexible planning that assists staff to be responsive ensures that potentially rich and meaningful learning opportunities, which have not been planned, are also recognised, maximised and recorded.\*\* Practitioners in early years have approximately 1000 interactions per day. In the best settings each of these interactions is a cycle of which the adult observes something, assesses in a matter of moments and teaches in a matter of moments. This has become known as “planning in the moment”. (Ephgrave, 2018). In Scotland this is known as “responsive planning”. This is nothing new... this is just good practice. The practitioner role is to observe the play, tailor their response to the unique child and spot the unique teachable moment. Taking time to use these opportunities will “teach” the children the self-regulation skills that will support their future independence. Planning needs to be meaningful and relevant to the 2 year old’s world and experience.



## A Local Look: Kittybrewster Nursery

**Lara Macrae, Senior Early Years Practitioner** on responsive planning that is relevant and meaningful to the children.

“While outside with a group of children on a very blustery day, one child commented on a carrier bag that was being buffeted around in the air – “I want it, I want it!”. As he was unable to catch the bag due to the strong winds, staff responded by collecting some basic materials in order for ‘carrier bag kites’ to be made. We did try to do this outside, but the winds were so strong that the materials were blowing away! A number of children joined in the activity and were delighted with their kite and the way it felt in their hands while blowing in the wind. This unplanned activity gave opportunities for learning about measurement, design, weather...and importantly it was easy and fun to set up.”

\* Ephgrave, A. (2018). Planning in the moment with young children. Oxon: Routledge.

\*\*Learning and Teaching Scotland. (2010). *Pre-birth to three: Positive outcomes for Scotland’s children and families*. Scottish Government: Edinburgh





# PLANNING – PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

## Curiosity

- \*Children will only respond with curiosity to relevant and enjoyable learning opportunities – use the keyworker system to gather information to build on individual areas of curiosity. Be ready to plan in the moment to build on magic moments.
- \*Enabling environments are designed to provoke curiosity in children.

## Creativity

- \*Personalise a child's learning experiences in order to ignite their creativity!
- \*Use heuristic and loose parts play support the development of problem solving skills.
- \*Use creative approaches to enhance communication with 2s – even the smallest spaces can be transformed into a wonderland for 2s.

## Inquiry

- \*Inquiry is led through enjoyment and engagement with learning. Use of the Leuven scales can support practitioners to observe and ensure children remain engaged with their learning.
- \*Use of schemas when planning can support inquiry along the lines of the child's individual play patterns.
- \*Plan for breath of experience - the opportunity to practice skills across different contexts offers the chance to generalise skills and secure competencies.

## Wellbeing

- \* Use the GIRFEC National Practice Model to support holistic assessment. It can also be an effective tool to identify any 2 who may be experiencing an ACE.
- \*Use the ACC Child Development Tool 2-5 years to support assessment of competencies across development. .
- \*The 4Rs – the key worker system is extremely valuable in ensuring that plans, discussions and decisions about needs and next steps are relevant
- \*The 4 Rs - 2s are individuals just like everyone else. To feel good they need to have their voices heard!

## Communication

- \*Good communication and attunement underpins responsive care and positive attachments with 2s.
- \* Use the observation, planning, assessment and implementation cycle to drive coherent planning and communication.
- \*Emotion Coaching is an approach which helps to develop the emotional literacy of 2s. –
- \*The 4 Rs\_ Partnership working can help build strong relationships and quality transitions



# ME2 CHILDMINDING PROVISIONS

## ME2 Childminding Service

At present there are 18 childminders registered in Aberdeen City to provide places for eligible 2s. A ME2 Childminder has undertaken additional training and qualifications to offer the service. A placement with a ME2 childminder can offer benefits for children who may not be ready for a larger group setting. Others, for example, may have need for an attachment figure or a more adaptable environment.

“The Community Childminding service, as well as the childminders who offer the ME2 service, has been an invaluable service to the families for whom I have referred. It has enabled the children to have routines, care opportunities, socialisation and stimulating learning which enhances their development. At the same time, it has enabled the parents, many of whom may be experiencing difficult times or circumstances, to have support for parenting, respite and time to address their own needs, such as health issues. This in turn benefits the children as their parents are better equipped to parent when they are supported” Jackie Allen, Health Visitor.

## FIND OUT MORE

**My Childminding Experience** is the Care Inspectorate resource published in 2017 which shares and celebrates examples of how children of all ages are benefiting from being cared for by childminders across Scotland. Aberdeen City case studies have been included as examples of good GIRFEC practice in relation to the Achievement indicator.



“The ME2 Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) programme offers families the use of a childminder instead of a family centre for ELC provision. The programme offers a variety of possibilities when it comes to hours and days, including up to 16 hours a week as part of funded ELC. Through the programme, childminders can offer flexibility and a ‘home from home’ service that fits in with the child and their family, which some families prefer due to the low ratio of children that are looked after at one time. Childminders can give children a range of activities and take them out to groups. Childminders also collect valuable information on the child and their family by observations, wellbeing indicators, checklists, questionnaires, All About Me, and transition passports. Childminders have the option to build their training and skills through additional qualifications. A recent exciting development is that Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) are offering an Open Badge award which invites practitioners to demonstrate how they will apply BtA principles in practice. Practitioners will have had to have attended a BtA workshop or completed the Building the Ambition eLearning Programme to earn this”

**Loraine Duncan, Childminding  
Development Officer, Aberdeen City**



# PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

## Partnership with Parents

*“Parents are children’s first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on children’s learning and development” (Sylvia, 2004)\**

Research shows that working in partnership with parents can improve outcomes for children in early years settings\*. There are more intellectual gains for children in settings that encourage high levels of parent engagement in their children’s learning and share educational aims with them. Parents have a crucial role in supporting 2s to transition and settle into a new ELC setting. It is important to understand what is of interest to the child within their family context. Early relationship building with parents shows how you want to understand their child’s personal preferences and care routines. Friendly, open, non-judgemental conversation is key.

\* Sylvia, K., Melhuish, E.C., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I. and Taggart, B., (2004), The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project: Technical Paper 12 – The Final Report: Effective Pre-School Education. London: DfES/Institute of Education, University of London.

## “Thoughts for Settling in 2’s”

The “settling in” period is critical and must be carefully planned. It should take as long as is needed for the child to feel secure and relaxed. It is important to feel confident to invest this time in this settling in period. They can struggle to find words to explain how they are thinking or feeling. This affects their ability to feel secure.

### Transition considerations

- Think about how you invite and welcome parents and their child into the setting.
- Share settling in procedures with families before the child starts. Be mindful to individual sensitivities and experience of separation for the child and parent. Gradually agree to build up periods of time apart.
- Consider how to best meet with parents to gather personal family information which may be sensitive e.g. home visit/parent’s room.
- Continue to talk with parents about how their child is settling. If in spite of a well-managed settling in period, the child has not settled, there may be a wellbeing or other underlying issue that needs to be explored.





# PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

## EVALUATION OF THE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE DELIVERY TRIALS

This project trialled a new and innovative approach to providing ELC for eligible 2s. It was based on the existing model of Stay & Play delivered by Early Years Scotland which is built on parental engagement being pivotal to achieving positive outcomes for children, especially for children and families experiencing disadvantages. Unlike existing services for eligible 2s, where a general settling period is planned the model offered parents the opportunity to stay and play.

A Local look – Kirkhill Nursery



# Kirkhill School

***“ Stay, Play and Learn sessions provided the parents and staff with the opportunity to meet and work together prior to their child attending nursery. As a result transition into nursery was smoother as the children and parents were already familiar with both the building and staff.” (Shona Milne, Head Teacher Kirkhill School, Stay Play and Learn)***

## Continuing partnerships with parents

- Share edited highlights of what children have done and give parents the opportunities to share their thoughts and experiences.
- Continue to involve and inform parents about their child’s learning and development.
- Be sensitive to communities’ diversity and how this is reflected in planning and communication.
- Establish ways to bring together children, families and staff for shared learning and the building of relationships e.g. outing, eating, cooking together, celebrations of progress.

### Find out more

Tests of change in ELC settings have been taking place in a range of local authorities in Scotland. See <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00535593.pdf> for a national picture of the different trials that have taken place.



# WHAT'S GOING ON IN ABERDEEN

## Excellence and Equity Practitioners

6 Excellence and Equity roles have been created in Aberdeen City Council, in order to provide high levels of expertise to young children and families who face the greatest disadvantage. These practitioners will assist in closing the attainment gap for some of the most in need families through:

- Identifying 'baselines' with the children and families
- Generating plans to support based on evidence based practice
- Tracking and reporting progress for families to inform future work
- Collaborating with a range of stakeholders

## Outdoor Nursery

Proposals for an outdoor nursery for children from 2 to 5 years old are currently being developed by Aberdeen City Council. The project would use Duthie Park, one of the city's much loved parks, as its base and the East Gate Lodge as its hub. As the first of its kind in the city the project will enable us to monitor progress in children's physical, emotional, social and cognitive development during their time at nursery and help inform the expansion of early learning and childcare. Further research could include self-regulation through physical play, the use of the Leuven scale levels of involvement and wellbeing and the impact of physical movement on language.

## Training Events to Support ELC

Core training around the following areas will be mandatory for all settings – **First Aid** **Child Protection/GIRFEC**  
**Infection Control** **Food Hygiene**

Seminars from renowned speakers will be taking place across the 2018/2019 session

- Anna Ephgrave: Play, Planning and Purposeful Involvement in the Early Years (Nov 2018)
- Pete Moorhouse: Creativity and Learning in the Early Years (Term 2 2019) and Woodwork in the Early Years (Term 2 2019)
- Jan White: Effective Outdoor Provision for Children Under Three: Responding to the Needs of 2 Year-Olds (Term 3 2019)
- Elizabeth Henderson: Children as Active Learners (3 day course, date TBC)

Other continuous professional learning (CPL) opportunities across a broad range of areas will be available across the session. See the ELC Academy for further details and links to booking forms.



# TROUBLE SHOOTING

Thematic analysis of stakeholder consultations informed the following questions. Thanks to Carol Main, Development Officer, Cheryl Elrick ELC Manager and Loraine Duncan, Childminding Development Officer for your help in generating responses.

## Will the eligible 2's population mean more time is needed for GIRFEC related procedures in my setting?

Potentially, as the eligibility criteria does include LAC children, there may be more multi-agency working/meetings for these children. However, the majority of eligible children, are entitled due to low income/benefits and this of course, does not necessarily mean that there are any more issues, meetings, procedures or planning required.

Individualised planning and recording (completed for all children) should generally be as sufficient for eligible 2 year olds as it is for any other children. Good practice for supporting, planning and recording children's early learning, care and wellbeing, working with families, supporting home links, working with other professionals etc. will be ample in most cases as this should be personalised and thorough for all children.

## How should we change our environment to suit the 2's group?

The good news is that there shouldn't need to be any major adaptations to our environments in order for 2s to be well provided for. In Scotland a free flow environment is promoted as best practice., and would be actively encouraged for 2s - they don't like to be restricted! Many settings will have small numbers of eligible 2s joining them, and it would not make sense for this age group to be segregated from the other children.

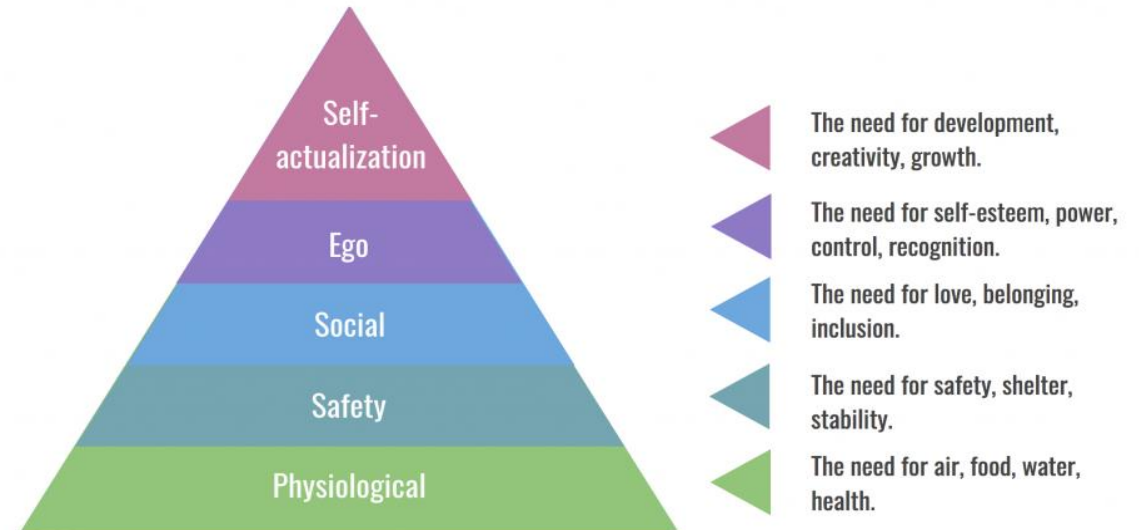
When appropriate risk-benefit assessments are in place, the needs of a 2 will be well met alongside those of the threes and fours. Materials in the environment should be open ended, allowing children to use them in a variety of ways dependant on their

developmental stage. Learning and development will always be observed when we cater for wellbeing, communication, curiosity, creativity and inquiry! Consideration around quiet spaces that can be used as rest areas would be beneficial for all children in ELC settings, as the increase of hours and funding takes place.

## Should we be more focused on the wellbeing of 2s than their education?

Focusing on the wellbeing of all children in our care should underpin our practice, without being seen as separate to education. Meaningful learning can not be achieved if a child does not feel safe and secure in their environment. It is essential that these basic needs are catered for in children of all ages. Maslow's hierarchy can be a helpful tool to illustrate this point. The needs at the lower levels must be met before children can attend to the needs further up the hierarchy.

### Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs





# TROUBLE SHOOTING

2s are well known for taking tantrums. How should we best support children who are having a stooshie?

It is really hard to work with children who have reached the tantrum stage. Piaget explains this behaviour as 'ego-centric thinking', which is a stage that most will go through. It is really hard for them to see things from the perspective of others, and their needs are paramount. The key to all successful approaches when supporting tantrums involves remaining calm and working with parents. When dealing with an age/stage related tantrum, try the following:

1. Use distraction techniques at the first potential sign of a tantrum.
2. If this fails, stay calm and be very quiet. This allows the child to go through the stages of the tantrum. Make sure to reassure any others nearby that all is well.
3. After the tantrum has finished, or while it nears the final stages, do something that may distract the child and move the situation on (i.e. start reading a book, playing a game).
4. Physically reassure the child and give them comfort if needed. Carry on with the remainder of the session as if nothing has happened.

Some things to think about in relation to the frequency and intensity of tantrums are: communication and language skills, tiredness, hunger, emotional security, and adult response (Tassioni, 2014)

How do we best communicate and collaborate with Health Visitors; the named person for our 2s?

We use the same approach as for our three and four year olds. Staff have a professional responsibility to protect and care for all children in their care. They should use the same professional approaches to information sharing, monitoring and recording children's learning, health and well-being as with any child.

The Me2 Service will send a letter to the Health Visitor advising that a child has started there, and request any relevant information to be shared with them. Health Visitors

can find it helpful when ELC settings initiate contact, as they can not always easily track this information down. Each GP Practice and individual Health Visitor may prefer different approaches to communication, but meaningful and open communication has been found to be well received and reciprocated.

How do I support my colleagues to feel confident to work with 2's when they think they need a much higher level of support and supervision?

2 year olds are 'children' first and foremost. The children you and your colleagues already work with will be developmentally variable, from a range of family cultures, and require varying degrees of support and understanding. 2 year olds are no different. The support we provide can depend upon their interests, their personality, their personal experiences and their developmental needs, not just their age.

2 year olds, like three and four years olds, are thirsty for discovery and are learning and developing at such a rate that they are busy and active much of the time. To support them in optimum growth and learning, each of these ages require high levels of flexibility, skill and understanding. If the environment, ethos and attitude is appropriate, those who find it a privilege to be involved in the 'metamorphic' personality, language and independence growth of pre-school children now are likely to find that 2 year olds need no 'higher' levels of support than most other children.



# TROUBLE SHOOTING

We work in a really busy setting and it is hard to chat to parents during handover times. How can we make time for this?

Opening up our environments to welcome and include parents is a key priority for all. Challenge the ways your setting currently does this by stepping into the shoes of the parents. What opportunities are there for relationship building and informal discussions? Altering the days to have extended drop off and pick up times can help. Having activities that children are engaged in, which a parent can easily join in with, can make it more welcoming for parents. It also provides opportunities for relaxed conversations to occur. Staffing ratios to include 2s will also be slightly higher (1:6) which should help to facilitate such practices.

There are many standards that we must adhere to in ELC settings linked to food preparation and health and safety. This takes away from the direct time we have to spend with the children.

It can be frustrating when it feels that many tasks take us away from direct interactions with the children; however it is inevitable that some time across the day will be spent in this way. It can help to try to think of ways to include the children meaningfully in as many of these tasks as possible: can they help set up some of the resources for the day? what aspects of snack can they prepare? can children observe/ask questions/take pictures as you work?

Thinking about the schema that a child may be utilising can also help to plan ways for involvement in routines. For example if a child is working through a transforming schema, having them involved in mixing powder paint, or creating playdough at a self service station are tremendous learning opportunities.

Childminders don't have the same level of training as nursery staff. Is it fair that we should be expected to deliver similar levels of quality?

Any registered childminder that is chosen for delivering ELC will be qualified or working towards a qualification. They will have up to date training and attend regular continuing professional learning (CPL) sessions. ACC also have stipulated criteria levels for childminders at this level (grade 4 upwards, SCMA member, attend core training workshops). Childminders will be supported fully when delivering ELC to eligible 2s, and will continue to be inspected by the care inspectorate to maintain standards in the home from home setting they offer.





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Lynn Murphy, Ann Kelly and Jayne MacDonald The Educational Psychology Service Aberdeen City Council.





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## Texts

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# RESOURCES

## Web Links

- Aberdeen City Family Information Service : [https://live.cloud.servelec-synergy.com/Aberdeen/PublicEnquiry\\_CE/SynergyEnglishHome.aspx#](https://live.cloud.servelec-synergy.com/Aberdeen/PublicEnquiry_CE/SynergyEnglishHome.aspx#)
- Building the Ambition: <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00458455.pdf>
- Highland Council : <https://bumps2bairns.com/>
- ICAN, helping children communicate: <https://www.ican.org.uk/>
- Pacey, spotlight on schemas: <https://www.pacey.org.uk/working-in-childcare/spotlight-on/schemas/>
- Pre-birth to Three, Positive Outcomes for Scotland's Children: [https://education.gov.scot/improvement/documents/elc/elc2\\_prebirthtothree/elc2\\_prebirthtothreebooklet.pdf](https://education.gov.scot/improvement/documents/elc/elc2_prebirthtothree/elc2_prebirthtothreebooklet.pdf)
- Schemas - <http://www.dorsetnexus.org.uk/Page/9009>
- Schemas and loose parts - [http://mthornhill.weebly.com/uploads/6/3/4/0/63404993/loose\\_parts\\_by\\_schema\\_2017.pdf](http://mthornhill.weebly.com/uploads/6/3/4/0/63404993/loose_parts_by_schema_2017.pdf)
- Talking Point: <http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk/>
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: <https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/what-we-do/childrens-rights/united-nations-convention-of-the-rights-of-the-child>



# APPENDICES

- Appendix A – Building the Ambition, a focus on toddlers – what do they need?
- Appendix B – Building attachment and learning through play: The SELFIE steps
- Appendix C – ACEs overview
- Appendix D – Supporting early language skills, guidance for families (A)
- Appendix E - Supporting early language skills, guidance for families (B)
- Appendix F – Communication and language checklist for 2s
- Appendix G - Communication checklist for Speech and Language Therapy referral
- Appendix H - Fine and gross motor skills development ideas
- Appendix I – Types of schemas
- Appendix J - Aberdeen City Council Child Development Tool 2-5 years





# APPENDIX A – BUILDING THE AMBITION, A FOCUS ON TODDLERS – WHAT DO THEY NEED?

## 7.4.1 Wellbeing - Essential aspects which drive early learning

<b>Experiences which:</b>	<b>Adults who:</b>	<b>An environment which is:</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Give daily access to the outside to look at and investigate the immediate environment which helps the toddler to feel settled, happy and promotes a response from the toddler to show others how they feel.</li> <li>2. Encourage the toddler to wait their turn with their friends in short games, for example, being outside and having the patience to wait for a turn on a bike, or dig in the garden.</li> <li>3. Encourage the toddler to walk, jump and run with support if necessary.</li> <li>4. Support the toddler to understand their emotions of feeling happy, sad, frustrated, calmly and reasonably.</li> <li>5. Encourage toddlers to be socially comfortable with others by “reading” the messages a friend may give, for example, being unhappy, sad or upset and trying to resolve this perhaps by sharing a special toy or book or giving a hug.</li> <li>6. Develop physical skills by building with blocks, strengthening muscles by moving in and around objects inside and outside.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand the toddler’s own needs and preferences; for example, when the toddler is in a bigger group and how they may react, or when there are too many people around or it is too noisy.</li> <li>2. Know what helps the toddler feel secure and settled or when they need to be on their own for a short time.</li> <li>3. Help the toddler’s growing awareness of their emotions. Give confidence and encouragement to the toddler at snack time or lunchtime by sitting with them at the toddler’s level and not standing apart.</li> <li>4. Understand the toddler’s emotional outbursts and don’t get annoyed or angry.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clean, comfortable and has floorcoverings which do not get in the way of the toddler standing up and walking. Suitable for quiet restful times and sleep, ensures privacy and dignity for personal care.</li> <li>2. Spacious and a layout with clear pathways and not cluttered with tables, to encourage the toddler to move from area to area safely.</li> <li>3. Set up with care so toddlers can play together in different areas but has the security of the familiar and favourite places to be, such as the home corner.</li> <li>4. Aware of providing materials and toys for toddlers to use to find out how they move or what they are used for.</li> <li>5. Helpful for the toddler to understand the needs of other toddlers in their group and encourages a growing awareness of playing alongside and together with friends</li> </ol>



# APPENDIX A – BUILDING THE AMBITION, A FOCUS ON TODDLERS – WHAT DO THEY NEED?

## 7.4.2 Communication - Essential aspects which drive early learning

<b>Experiences which:</b>	<b>Adults who:</b>	<b>An environment which:</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide interesting objects to touch which encourage questions and language.</li> <li>2. Encourage verbal games, learning rhymes and an abundance of stories.</li> <li>3. Provide a well-resourced home corner and/or other role play areas which combine familiar items with new objects to widen experiences for the toddler for example, pictorial stories or cards.</li> <li>4. Give opportunities for the toddler to listen both to adults and other children using gestures, visual clues and active involvement to encourage the toddler to participate and explore language.</li> <li>5. Introduce a widening range of items to make marks, draw, paint, and dress up.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage the toddler in conversations with interesting things to say and do.</li> <li>2. Take account of a child's home language and who make every effort to incorporate this into daily conversations.</li> <li>3. Encourage toddlers to initiate conversations and who extend these by asking well thought out questions.</li> <li>4. Appreciate that toddlers have a limited capacity to sit in formal groups for prolonged periods of time.</li> <li>5. Explain and model new words with the correct level of challenge to extend the toddler's grasp of language.</li> <li>6. Share writing for everyday purposes, explaining why and pointing out signs and symbols and what they mean.</li> <li>7. Talk about and show interest in what is happening at the child's home and in their life out with the setting.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourages and values conversations through play and real life contexts inside and out of doors.</li> <li>2. Gives opportunities to talk and to listen in a calm and unhurried way.</li> <li>3. Provides resources which are interesting and stimulate questions and encourage children to communicate with each other.</li> <li>4. Gives space to play together, a layout which encourages children to move around with attractive book areas, opportunities to draw and mark make.</li> <li>5. Is rich in environmental print.</li> <li>6. Provides a range of good quality storybooks, both fiction and nonfiction, magazines and cards.</li> <li>7. Offers a range of play and real life experiences which encourages children to describe, explain and ask</li> </ol>



# APPENDIX A – BUILDING THE AMBITION, A FOCUS ON TODDLERS – WHAT DO THEY NEED?

## 7.4.3 Promoting curiosity, inquiry and creativity - Essential aspects which drive early learning

<b>Experiences which:</b>	<b>Adults who:</b>	<b>An environment which:</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Help the toddler to see how things work, how objects can be moved and transported around; how similar things can be grouped together; how things balance.</li> <li>2. Give the toddler time and space to be involved in their own schematic play and adults who support this.</li> <li>3. Provide resources that toddlers enjoy, such as bags, boxes and containers to put smaller items in, to move, empty out, and scatter about.</li> <li>4. Give opportunities to mix and combine messy materials.</li> <li>5. Provide appropriate resources for the toddler to make clear marks with the correct tools and equipment, paint and appropriate sizes of brush; and a selection of paper which is neatly arranged and used appropriately with care and attention which value the child's efforts.</li> <li>6. Give the toddler experience of everyday activities, splashing in puddles, being blown by the wind, digging holes, making collections of stones or natural objects or items that a child may feel are special.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage the toddler's curiosity and ensure the environment is interesting enough and safe.</li> <li>2. Are aware that the simplest of activities to an adult are often full of potential for a toddler.</li> <li>3. Observe sensitively and intervene when necessary to extend the toddler's thinking without over-direction and who do not interrupt moments of intense concentration.</li> <li>4. Use techniques such as wondering aloud, explaining what is happening but all the time allowing the toddler to find out for them what will happen next.</li> <li>5. Know when to stand back and allow the toddler to try things out, and the moment when a toddler will be receptive to support.</li> <li>6. Use their skills by reminding, sharing and keeping previous accomplishments of the toddler as a basis for new learning.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is interesting and filled with opportunities which help the toddler to explore and inquire; for example, the properties of sand and water, clay, paint.</li> <li>2. Has furniture which is sensitively organised to give space for the toddler to move around safely. Objects placed within the reach of the toddler.</li> <li>3. Gives frequent access to resources with which a toddler shows interest until they come to a self-satisfying conclusion for themselves.</li> <li>4. Allows access to outside areas, walks and visits to extend the toddler's curiosity and interest in their immediate world.</li> <li>5. Gives space to build, construct and take things apart and time to practise these skills over and over again.</li> </ol>





# APPENDIX B – BUILDING ATTACHMENT AND LEARNING THROUGH PLAY: THE SELFIE STEPS

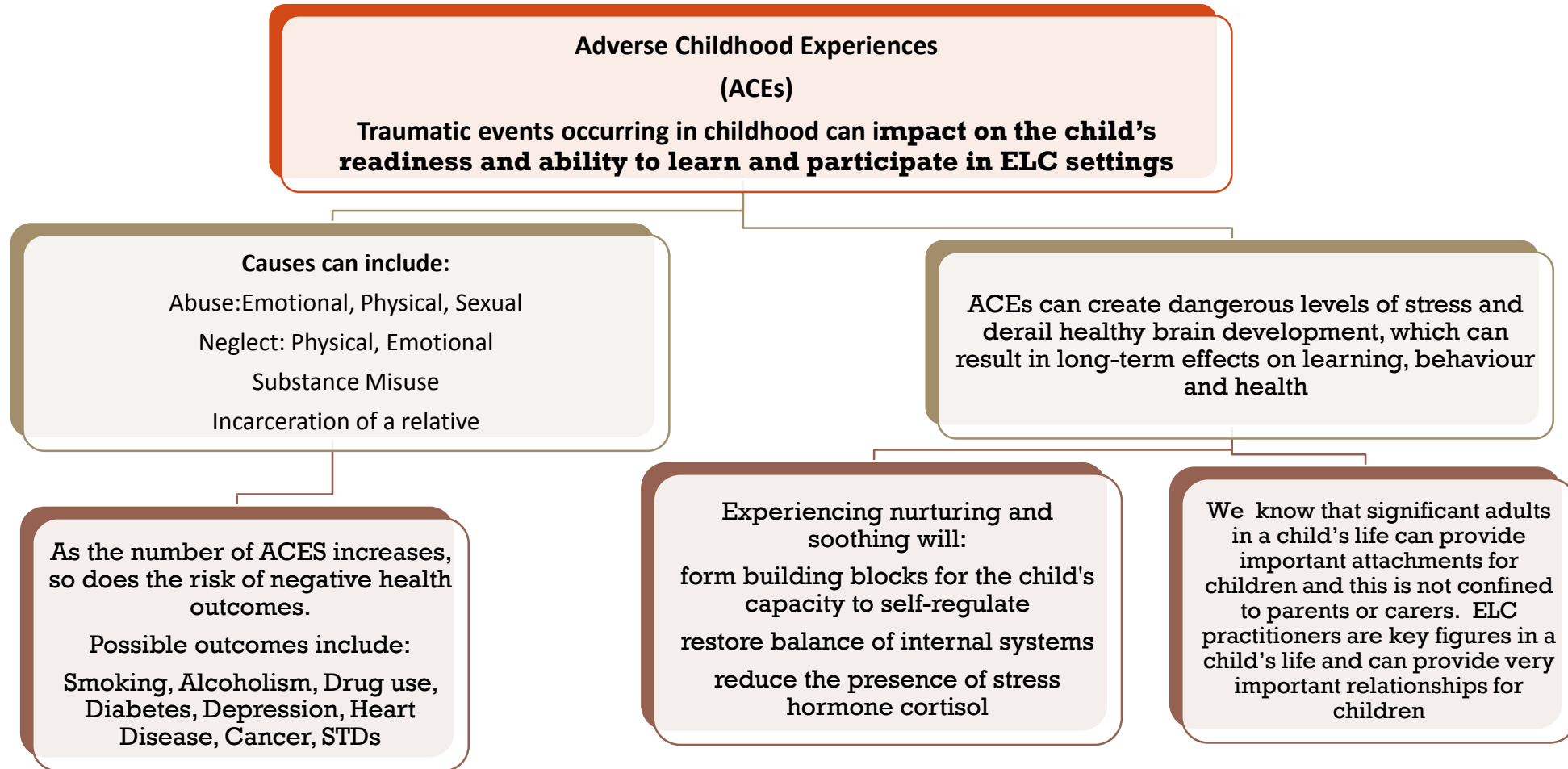
## *Building Attachment and Learning through Play - The **SELFIE** Steps*

Now it is “give and take”, you can think of ways to extend the play to make it more interesting.	<b>E</b> xtend their play
Once you are playing together, you can try new ideas. If the child takes them up, you are off! If not, be patient, they may have a better idea ...	<b>I</b> nitiate new play ideas
At first, follow what the child is doing. Imitate them, or do the same things. Watch out for the child making an initiative to you, and then follow that!	<b>F</b> ollow their play
Using words to give play meaning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• makes play richer</li> <li>• builds attachment</li> <li>• grows language &amp; thinking skills</li> </ul> Find some ideas in the “Label Box”	<b>L</b> abel their play
Smile and laugh if you can. Accept anything they do that is safe – it is their play.	<b>E</b> njoy their play
Watch your child play, and let them know you can see them!	<b>S</b> ee their play

If any stage does not work, go back to the previous one!



# APPENDIX C – ACES OVERVIEW



# APPENDIX D – SUPPORTING EARLY LANGUAGE SKILLS, GUIDANCE FOR FAMILIES

## (A)

**Words together**  
- let's keep talking

Your child may...



- Understand longer requests without help. (e.g. Show me Mummy's hair)
- Understand some words like 'big' and 'in' and what objects are used for. (e.g. Which do you eat?)
- Understand some questions. (e.g. What...?, Is...?)
- Use 2 to 4 word sentences and may ask 'what's that?'
- Keep learning new words.
- Use 'p b t d m n w h' with vowels in words; and be learning other sounds.
- Have a conversation with her toys.
- Listen to a simple picture story.
- Stop what he is doing to listen to you.

Developed by Speech and Language Therapy, Care and Learning

The Highland Council  
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

words up

**Words together - let's keep talking**  
**Try...**

**Play and talk together**



- Have fun playing together.
- Talk about what you are doing.
- Keep it simple.
- Your child will then learn the words.

**Face to face**



- Sit or bend down so you are face to face when you talk with your child.
- Say the words when giving choices (e.g. Do you want an apple or a pear?).

**Pause and wait**



- Wait... Count to 10 in your head.
- Give your child a chance to talk.
- Let him talk about whatever he wants to.

**Copy and add words**



- Show you understand by repeating back your child's words clearly.
- Add new words instead of asking 'What's that?' This will help her learn.

Developed by Speech and Language Therapy, Care and Learning

The Highland Council  
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Further resources can be accessed at -  
<https://bumps2bairns.com/what-to-expect-language/>





# APPENDIX E - SUPPORTING EARLY LANGUAGE SKILLS, GUIDANCE FOR FAMILIES

## (B)

### Be at the same level as your child

A

When you are face to face it will mean that:

- you can make eye contact.
- you can see what your child is choosing to play with.
- you can also see if your child is enjoying the play.
- you can talk about what you are looking at together.
- you can see if your child points or uses a gesture.
- you can SHARE the play.



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Original concept: Christina McKean 1997 - Design by Nottingham NHS Media Design Service 2007

Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust  
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### Copy and add to your child's sentences

M

This means:

- Your child hears the correct way of saying the word.
- Your child feels pleased because you've shown you understand them.
- They hear how to make their own sentence longer without feeling they have got it wrong.
- They hear a longer sentence that they might try to say.
- You are giving them praise this way.



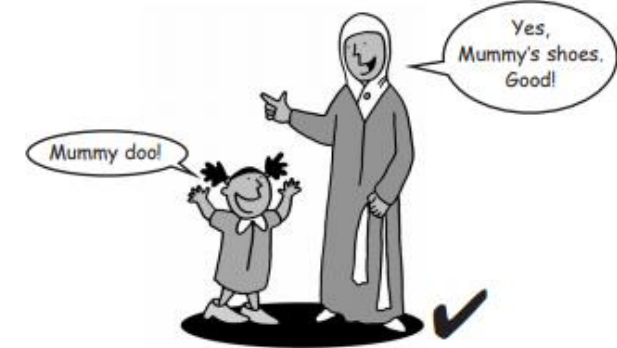
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### When your child says the wrong sound

O

Repeat what they have said and stress the correct sound



Don't tell them they are wrong or make them copy you

This is because:

- They may not be able to say the right sound yet.
- They may not be able to hear that they have not said it right.
- It might put them off trying again.



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Healthcare Communication Services

Further resources can be accessed at -

<https://www.nottinghamshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/childrens-slt-resources>



# APPENDIX F – COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE CHECKLIST FOR 2S

If not all boxes are ticked for a child's age range this indicates that a referral to Speech and Language Therapy may be required.

By 2 Years of Age	Y	N
Concentrate on activities for longer, like playing with a particular toy.		
Sit and listen to simple stories with pictures.		
Understand between 200 – 500 words.		
Understand more simple questions and instruction, for example “where is your shoe?” and “show me your nose?”		
Use 50 or more single words. These will also become more recognisable to others.		
Start to put short sentences together with 2-3 words such as “more juice” or “bye nan”.		
Enjoy pretend play with their toys, such as feeding a doll.		



# APPENDIX G – COMMUNICATION CHECKLIST FOR SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY REFERRAL

Ticks mainly on this side indicate age appropriate development		Ticks mainly on this side indicate a referral to SLT should be considered	
Able to concentrate for short amounts of time and not flit from one activity to another.		Short attention span even on activities chosen by the child.	
Pretend play developing and becoming more imaginative.		Does not initiate communication, lack of social interest, not interested in what you are doing.	
Enjoys playing with other people.		Little or no pretend play.	
Plays with a wide range of toys/activities.		Reluctant to let others join their play.	
Likes routines but can be flexible if things change.		Plays with toys in a repetitive way (e.g. spinning wheels on a car, lining toys up)	
Responds to familiar instructions e.g. get your coat.		Unusually distressed if there are changes to routine.	
Uses 50 plus words and is beginning to join words together e.g. bye bye daddy, more juice (does not include learned phrases such as 'thank you' or 'what's that?')		Does not understand names of familiar objects, actions and instructions.	
Speech is intelligible to family members.		Has less than 25 words.	
Parents are regularly noticing new words.		Few or no words understood by close family members.	
Uses the sounds 'm', 'p', 'b' and 'w'		Limited progress in the last 6 months.	
		In using mostly vowel sounds. E.g. 'aa', 'ee', Etc.	
		Does not make eye contact.	
		Very restricted diet (e.g. fussy about particular textures).	





# APPENDIX H – FINE AND GROSS MOTOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IDEAS

Movement	Resource/Opportunity	Available?
Pincer grasp	Threading Finding and picking out small objects Picking up small items with tweezers Peg boards	Y/N
Strengthening hands	Sponges in water Playdough Gloop (mixture of cornflour and water) Rolling pins Twisting lids off bottles	Y/N
Finger isolation (using individual fingers)	Finger painting Finger rhymes Keypads and gadgets Making shapes in gloop	Y/N
Hand arches (helps the hand curl, freeing the thumb and index finger to be more precise)	Scooping movements, e.g. in sand, water Twisting caps on and off Tongs, tweezers and spinning tops	Y/N
Strengthening hand preference (each hand working but involved in different tasks)	Dustpan and brush Beating a drum with two sticks Using a spoon and fork Threading heads or pasta Tearing strips of paper Doing up buttons Pouring from one container into another	Y/N
Hand-eye coordination	Any movement Painting Small word play Jigsaw puzzles Building towers of bricks or using construction toys Threading Simple sewing cards for older 2 year olds	Y/N



# APPENDIX H – FINE AND GROSS MOTOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IDEAS

Activity	Resources	Available?
Balancing	Seesaws, swings, climbing frames, low walls, beams, scooters	Y/N
Climbing	Wooden logs, climbing frames, tyres	Y/N
Throwing and catching	Bean bags, soft balls, cuddly toys	Y/N
Kicking	Plastic footballs	Y/N
Walking and running	Reasons to do so, e.g. catching bubbles	Y/N
Pushing, pulling and steering	Wheelbarrows, pushchairs, sit-and-ride toys	Y/N
Pedalling	Tricycles	Y/N



# APPENDIX I – TYPES OF SCHEMAS



## Trajectory

A child that has a trajectory schema is interested in how things and themselves move. It is a very common schema and one that young babies will often display, explaining why they love to drop things from their highchairs.

**A child with a trajectory schema may:**

- always seem to be running around
- like throwing things;
- like to play with running water or;
- like pushing things in a straight line.

**If your child has a trajectory schema you might like to:**

- provide soft balls to throw and roll;
- blow bubbles to be caught;
- allow them to play on slide and bike or;
- give opportunities to pour water.

## Connecting

A child with a connection schema is interested in joining things together.



**This child may:**

- tie your chair legs (even your legs) together!
- love joining train carriages together or taking them apart;
- enjoy all sorts of construction toys or;
- once they are drawing, enjoy joining dots or lines together.

**You could provide:**

- tow trucks and cars, train sets;
- beads for jewelry making ;
- string, wool, lengths of fabric;
- construction blocks or;
- masking tapes and boxes

## Rotation

A child who has a rotation schema is interested in things that are circular or rotate.



**This child may:**

- love to play with wheels on toys;
- like spinning around;
- may enjoy playing with water wheels in sand or water;
- enjoy playing with toys that spin or;
- love watching the washing machine.

**You could provide:**

- bikes, cars and toys with wheels;
- mixing and stirring activities;
- pens, paints, chalks for drawing circles;
- windmills;

## Transporting

A child with a transporting schema moves everything from one place to another. If you have a transporter nothing will ever be in its place.

**A child who transports may:**

- put sand in a bucket and move it to another area;
- take things from one place to another in prams, trolleys and bags or;
- go back and forth bringing you items from around the room.



**You could provide:**

- a collection of bags and boxes;
- pushchairs and trucks or;
- pasta and other items to transport.

## Envelopment

A child who has an envelopment schema is interested in enveloping itself and objects or a space. It is very closely related to enclosure.

**You could provide:**

- blankets to wrap dolls and themselves in;
- dressing up clothes;
- paper and newspaper to make parcels or;
- to be allowed to paint themselves.

**A child with an envelopment schema may:**

- like to wrap themselves in material;
- make parcels containing everyday objects;
- cover their hands and body in paint or;
- paint a picture and then cover it with a solid layer of paint.



## Enclosure

A child who enjoys creating enclosed spaces in which they may or may not put objects and themselves into.

**This child may:**

- like putting things in bags and pots;
- enjoy shape sorting toys;
- climb into boxes;
- love filling up boxes and bags with sand or;
- draw or paint pictures then put boxes or circles around them.

**You could provide:**

- pots with things they can fill them with;
- containers to fill in the bath or sink;
- dry play, such as pasta and pots to fill or;
- boxes or tents to go in.





# APPENDIX I – ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL CHILD DEVELOPMENT TOOL 2-5 YEARS



## Aberdeen City Council Child Development 2 - 5 years



Child's Name -

Dob -

Name of setting -



Credits – Scottish Social Services Council  
Building the Ambition

These skills should be observed as part of your daily routine and not through planned activities. Most children should be competent in the skills described within their age range. This tool should be used to help identify those children who may require support.

Any areas for development identified should be recorded and discussed with the support structure within your setting and shared with parents, carers and the link health visitor.

Shared with:		Date
Shared with: Parent/ Carer		Date
Shared with: Health Visitor		Date
Shared by:		Date

In addition, other sources of information and help can be accessed through the following links.

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/Building%20the%20Ambition>

<https://highlandliteracy.com/>



Key – Early stages – E - initial observation - date

Competent - C - date



Child's Name -

Dob -

Name of setting -

By 2 years of age a child may be able to:

Motor skills	E	C	Sensory and thinking skills	E	C	Language and social skill	E	C
Drink from a straw			Like to take things apart			Have a vocabulary of several hundred words		
Feed him/herself from a spoon			Explore surroundings			Use two to three-word sentences		
Help in washing hands			Point to five or six parts of a doll when asked			Say the names of toys		
Put arm in sleeve with help			Is generally happy when not tired or hungry			Ask information about an object (ask for a car while pointing to the car box)		
Build a tower of 3-4 blocks			Able to move to a new activity or environment			Hum or try to sing		
Toss or roll a ball			Enjoys playing near peers			Listen to short rhymes		
Open cabinets, drawers, boxes			Able to enjoy a variety of touch, noises and smells			Like to imitate parents		
Operate a mechanical toy			Enjoys various textures such as grass or sand after multiple exposures			Get frustrated at times		
Bend over to pick up an object and not fall			Is able to be away from parent/s with support from familiar people			Act shy around strangers		
Walk up steps						Comfort distressed friend or parent		
Take steps backwards						Take turns in playing with other children		
						Treat a doll or soft toy animal as though it were alive		
						Apply pretend actions to others (as in pretending to feed a doll)		
						Show awareness of parental approval/disapproval for his/her actions		
						Refer to him/herself by name and use me and mine		
						Verbalise his/her desires and feelings (I want)		
						Laugh at silly labelling of objects		
						Enjoy looking at one book over and over		
						Point to eyes ears and mouth when asked		

Key – Early stages – E - initial observation - date

Competent - C - date





Child's Name -

Dob -

Name of setting -

By 3 years of age a child may be able to:

Motor skills	E	C	Sensory and thinking skills	E	C	Language and social skill	E	C
Feed him/herself (with some spilling)			Recognise sound in the environment			Use a 3-5-word sentences		
Open doors			Pay attention for 3 minutes			Ask short questions		
Hold a beaker in one hand			Remember what happened yesterday			Use plurals (cats, dogs, hats)		
Hold a crayon well			Know what food is and what is not food			Name at least 10 familiar objects		
Wash and dry hands by him/herself			Know numbers (but not always in the correct order)			Repeat simple nursery rhymes		
Fold paper if shown			Knows where things usually belong			Name at least one colour correctly		
Build a tower of blocks			Understands what one is			Imitate simple tasks		
Try to catch a ball			Substitutes one object for another in pretend play (as in pretending a block is a car)			Ask to use the toilet almost every time		
Put on shoes (but not tie laces)			Laughs at silly ideas			Enjoys being read to		
Dress him/herself with help			Looks through a book alone			Talks about feelings (e.g. Remembering)		
Use toilet with some help			Match an object to a picture of that object			Try to make others laugh		
Walk up steps alternating feet			Match objects with the same function (cup and plate together)			Play spontaneously with two or three children in a group		
Walk on tiptoes if shown			Count two or three objects			Assign roles in pretend social play (you be mummy, I be daddy)		
Walk in a straight line			Be aware of some dangers (like a cooker is hot)			Know his/her first and last name		
Kick a ball forward			Follow simple one step commands			Understands I, you, he and she		
Jump with both feet						Believes that everything centre around them (if I hid my eyes no one will see me) say if they are a boy or a girl		
Pedal a tricycle								

Key – Early stages – E - initial observation - date

Competent - C - date



Child's Name -

Dob -

Name of setting -

**By the age of 4 a child may be able to:**

<b>Motor skills</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>Sensory and thinking skills</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>Language and social skill</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>C</b>
Feed him/her/herself (with little spilling)			Recognise primary colours			Have a large vocabulary and use good grammar often		
Try to use a fork			Understand taking turns and can do so without always needing reminded			Often talk about action in conversation (go, do, make)		
Try to write name			Understands big, little, tall, short			Use regular past tense of verbs (pulled, walked)		
Draw a circle			Want to know what will happen next			Use a, an and the when speaking		
Draw a face			Sort by shape or colour			Ask direct questions		
Try to cut paper with scissors			Count to five objects			Want explanation of why and how		
Sometimes unbuttons buttons, try to buckle, button, lace even though probably needs help			Follow three instructions given at one time			Relate simple experience she/he has had recently		
Completely undress him/herself if wearing clothes with simple fasteners			Distinguish between the real world and imaginary or pretend world			Help tidy up toys when asked		
Brush teeth with help			Identify situations that would lead to happiness, sadness or anger			Likes to dress up		
Put together simple puzzle 4-12 pieces						Pretend to play with imaginary objects		
Pour from a small jug						Act out elaborate events which tell a story (as in serving out an imaginary dinner or going on a bear hunt)		
Use a toilet alone						Sometimes co-operates with other children		
Try to skip						Often prefers playing with other children to playing alone, unless deeply involved in a solitary task		
Catch a bouncing ball						Change the rules of a game as she / he goes along		

Key – Early stages – E - initial observation - date

Competent - C - date



By the age of 4 a child may be able to:

Walk downstairs using handrail and alternate feet					Try to bargain (I'll give you this if you give me that one)		
Swing starting by him/herself and keep him/herself going					Share when asked		





Child's Name -

Dob -

Name of setting -

By 5 years of age a child may be able to:

Motor skills	E	C	Sensory and thinking skills	E	C	Language and social skill	E	C
Stand on one foot for 10 seconds or longer			Recall part of a story			Count to 10 or more		
Hop, somersault, swing, climb, skip			Speak in sentences of more than 5 words			Correctly name at least 4 colours		
Copy triangles and other geometric patterns			Use future tense			Better understand the concept of time		
Draw a person with a body			Tell longer stories			Know about things used in the home (money, food, appliances)		
Print some letters of the alphabet			Say name and address			Please friends		
Dress and undress without assistance			Be aware of their own sexuality			Be like his/her friends		
Use a fork, spoon and sometimes a table knife			Distinguish fantasy from reality			Agree to rules		
Usually care for own toilet needs			Eagerly co-operate or be demanding			Sing dance and act		
						Show independence		

Key – Early stages – E - initial observation - date

Competent - C - date

