Unit 16 Professional practice portfolio

Competency-based learning outcomes

LO1 Be able to facilitate the development of cognition in children

AC 1.1 The role of the EYP when facilitating the development of cognition

See Unit 1 AC 4.1.

AC 1.2 Analyse the use of technology in supporting the development of cognition

Learning about information and communications technology (ICT) starts from birth because technology is now a fundamental part of every young child's environment. Children are surrounded by ICT, in the same way as they are surrounded by language, print and numbers. In the home, technology encompasses remote controls for television, DVDs and sound systems, toys which have buttons, dials and buzzers, mobile phones, washing machines, microwave ovens and other machines that require programming – and of course, computers.

Outside the home, children are also surrounded by technology: they see automatic doors, cash machines, barcode scanners, digital tills and security cameras. Technology is something children are going to grow up with, learn about and master, and use as a tool to increase their understanding in all areas of learning.

Many activities in the early years revolve around children developing an understanding of their environment. Settings encourage children to explore, observe, solve problems, predict, discuss and consider. ICT resources can provide tools for using these skills as well as being examined in their own right, with computers not being the only ICT

resources. ICT equipment added to role play reflects the real world, builds on children's experiences and allows them opportunities to understand how, why, when and where different forms of technology are used in everyday life.

The early learning goals in the EYFS state:

Technology: Children recognise that a range of technology is used in places such as homes and schools. They select and use technology for particular purposes.

According to a report by DATEC (Developmentally Appropriate Technology in Early Childhood), seven general principles have been identified for determining the effectiveness of ICT use in the early years. These principles aim to help practitioners provide the best possible experiences. They are:

1 Ensure an educational purpose.
2 Encourage collaboration.
3 Integrate with other aspects of learning.
4 Ensure the child is in control.
5 Avoid applications containing violence or stereotyping.
6 Be aware of health and safety issues.

Parental involvement is also important in this area.

Ensure an educational purpose

This could be something as simple as providing a pretend mobile telephone to encourage imaginative role play, which children from a very early age will do quite naturally. Children need a variety of computer applications which encourage a range of development, including creativity, self-expression and language. Ideally, apps should be used only after a thorough discussion with staff and parents about the educational benefits and limitations of the particular application.

Encourage collaboration

Children can access programmes individually, but the best applications provide a valuable means of encouraging collaboration. Activities requiring 'joint attention' and which involve 'children learning to share' provide a better cognitive challenge for young children than activities where they work alone.

Integrate with other aspects of curriculum

ICT applications should be integrated as far as possible with other play and project work, and all should work together to help make the curriculum relevant to children. Many settings use computer programs which manage information as part of their project work so that, for instance, children might collect information on a topic about the body (hair colour or height, perhaps) and make simple graphs on the computer using these data. Computers should only be used as a means to fulfil a function which cannot be achieved better through other means. Questions to ask relating to this are: what does this program enable the children to do that they could not do otherwise? Is it helping towards particular skills and understanding?

Ensure the child is in control

Generally, the child should control the application; the application should not control the child's interaction through programmed learning or any other behaviourist device. Such an approach is contrary to current ideas of what constitutes good educational practice. Many early years practitioners feel that programmed learning operates against the principles of developing children's awareness and positive outlook towards literacy and numeracy.

Choose applications that are transparent

As far as possible, ICT applications should be 'transparent'; their functions should be clearly defined and intuitive. In practice, this means that the application can complete each clearly defined task in a single operation. A good example of this is the 'drag and drop' facility on the computer, which allows the user to pick an item up with a click, drag it to somewhere else and then drop it in that place with another click. It is a perfect simulation of what happens in real life when something is moved.

Do not use applications containing violence or stereotyping

Computers can empower all young children to be more independent, but research shows that issues of equality are very important. A number of studies have shown that:

- girls use computers less often than boys
- the presence of computers in a setting does not always ensure access
- teachers, while concerned about equality issues, often hold attitudes which hinder access, for example use of the computer may be granted as a reward, or its use may be restricted to drill-and-practice tasks for less able children
- children from low-income families often have less access and/or lower-quality access to computers in the home.

When selecting applications for use in early years settings it is important to ensure that they do not include stereotypical or patronising images or actions related to social class, ethnicity and gender.

Be aware of health and safety issues

Serious concerns have been voiced about the consequences of encouraging extended use of

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Guidelines: introducing ICT to children in an early years setting

- Encourage children to observe and talk about the uses of ICT in their environment. On local walks, for example, talk with children about traffic lights, telephones, street lights or the barcode scanners which identify prices in shops.
- Encourage play with improvised pretend or real technological objects to support their imaginative role play.
- Join in with children's play in order to observe children at play and to identify more clearly how they are making sense of ICT in their worlds and their learning needs.

- Involve parents in their children's use of ICT:
  - use digital, still and video pictures on a television or computer in the reception area, recording outings, the day's activities, curriculum presentations, and any special events
  - use digital pictures in the records
  - ask parents to trial new software
  - give parents digital images of their own children at play
  - loan recording equipment to take home
  - make CDs of children singing
  - develop a website.

desktop computers by young children. It is therefore advisable that a typical use of any desktop computer application by a child should be comparatively short, usually no more than ten to twenty minutes for three year olds, extending to no more than forty minutes by the age of eight. However, if a child or group of children is totally engaged in an activity and the completion of this requires a longer period at the computer this should be allowed, but it is not recommended that children do this regularly.

AC 1.3 Create an environment which facilitates cognitive development of children in own setting

See Unit 1 AC 5.1 and Unit 5 LO6.

AC 1.4 Evaluate the provision for supporting cognitive development in own setting

When evaluating the effectiveness of our provision and practice, we need to be able to identify and record ways of continually improving our practice.

Assessing the effectiveness of planned provision

The main way of evaluating our practice is by observing children's participation and assessing whether their needs have been met. The following points should be considered:

Observing and assessing children

Select one child (or a group of children) and carry out a structured observation over a number of sessions or a few weeks. Your aims are to find out how their cognitive development has been supported – in particular their progression in thinking and problem-solving.

Obtaining feedback

- **From the child or children**: you can obtain direct feedback from the child or children by listening to them and noting their comments or by asking them questions. It is usually easy to see whether children have enjoyed a certain activity, as they will often be eager to do it again.
- **From colleagues and parents**: parents know their own child best and they are often able to provide valuable insight into the effectiveness of activities. Colleagues are often well placed to give feedback as they may be able to observe children during an activity. Feedback can also be obtained by filming the children during the activity and observing the children's reactions and comments.

Identifying and recording areas for improvement

Having obtained feedback, you now need to identify areas for future development. This can be recorded as an action plan. You should draw up a plan that identifies:

- areas for improvement
- reason for action
- detail of action to be taken
- equipment and resources needed
- date for implementation.

LO2 Be able to implement a learning experience which supports the development of sustained shared thinking in children from birth to five years

AC 2.1 Plan and lead a learning experience

See Unit 1 AC 5.1, Unit 5 AC 8.1. and Unit 9 AC 4.5, Unit 10 AC 3.3.

Activity

Using the ideas in Unit 1 and suggestions from your colleagues, lead a learning activity to support the development of sustained shared thinking for *each* of the following age groups: children aged:

- birth to one year 11 months
- two to two years 11 months
- three to five years.

LO3 Be able to create a language-rich environment to develop the speech, language and communication of children in own setting

AC 3.1 Create a language-rich environment

See Unit 1 AC 5.1.

LO4 Be able to implement opportunities which support the development of speech, language and communication of children from birth to five years

See Unit 1 AC 5.1, Guidelines for promoting children's communication skills.

AC 4.1 Plan and lead an activity

Young children need to be encouraged to learn through play and to focus on an activity rather than on practising a specific language skill. They need to:

- enjoy themselves
- pretend
- to feel comfortable when communicating with others.

Role play

Children use a rich variety of language to communicate during role play. They enjoy being someone else and acting out a situation, for example: at the shop, at the post office, or driving a car. Children naturally use role play in their own language situations; e.g. 'I'll be Mummy and you be Daddy.'

Reading aloud

Reading aloud to children is a natural way to encourage two-way communication. Talking and listening to young children develops their literacy skills and the social skills of sharing and taking turns. Reading books aloud has many benefits:

- It is an important source of new vocabulary with words for characters and objects.

- It introduces children to the exciting world of stories and helps them learn how to express their own thoughts and emotions.
- It provides topics for discussion, with many opportunities for learning the context of language.
- It provides parents and practitioners with a structure to help them talk aloud to children and listen to their responses.
- It combines the benefits of talking, listening and storytelling within a single activity and helps to build the foundation for language development.

Choose stories with repetition like 'The Three Little Pigs', or *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.

Puppets and props

Children often use puppets or dolls to express themselves verbally, and props like masks or dressing-up clothes help them to act out roles in their own pretend play. Playing with hand puppets offer great opportunities to develop listening and talking skills. Children usually find it easy to talk to their own and other people's puppets, and this gives them confidence to express their ideas and feelings.

Games and puzzles

Children quickly learn to use the language necessary to take part in simple games, such as I Spy, Spot the difference, etc. As they get older, children enjoy board games such as Ludo and Junior Scrabble.

Songs and rhymes

These help children to learn new words in an enjoyable way. Songs and rhymes are also a good way to help children's talking and listening skills. When singing rhymes and songs:

- **Make them fun**: change the sound of your voice, make up some actions or add the children's names. Or make up alternative endings and encourage the children to supply the last word of the nursery rhyme.
- **Encourage them to join in**: when child joins in, show that you have noticed by giving lots of encouragement.
- **Link language with physical movement**: use action songs and rhymes, such as 'The wheels on the bus' or 'We're going on a bear hunt', etc.

- **Talk about similarities** in rhyming words, and draw attention to the similarities in sounds at the beginning of words, emphasising initial sounds

Speaking and listening activities in group settings

These range from individual conversations between adult and child to whole-class or group 'news' times. In addition there are many games and activities that provide ideal opportunities for children to use and practise their speaking and listening skills. For very young children, sharing rhymes (traditional nursery, finger and action), songs and books with an adult are both valuable and enjoyable.

As language and listening skills develop, older children will be able to play games which involve **active listening** such as:

- **'What (or who) am I?'** This involves the adult (or a child – perhaps with help) giving clues until the animal/person/object is identified. 'I have sharp teeth. I have a long tail. I have a striped coat. I eat meat.' *Answer*: 'I'm a tiger or a tabby cat.'
- **Taped sounds**: these can be environmental (a kettle boiling, a doorbell, someone eating crisps) or related to a particular topic (farm animals, pet animals, and machines) or of familiar people's voices.
- **Taped voices**: Reception or Year 1 children tape their own voices giving clues about themselves but without saying who they are. 'I have brown eyes. I have two brothers. I have a Lion King lunchbox. I have short, dark hair. Who am I?' This activity is best done with a small group so they are not guessing from among the whole class! They find it difficult not to say their own names but love hearing themselves and their friends. The enjoyment factor makes it valuable and ensures concentrated listening once the excitement has died down.
- **Feely box**: use varied objects for children to feel (without being able to see) and encourage them to describe the shape, size, texture, surface, etc. This can be topic-related, e.g. fruit or solid shapes, and is a very good activity for extending children's vocabulary.

- **'Snowball'** games that involve active listening and memory – 'I went to market and I bought …'. There are many versions of this. It can be used for number – one cabbage, two bananas, three flannels, etc.; or to reinforce the alphabet – an apple, a budgie, a crane, etc.; or it could be topic-related – food items, transport items, clothing, etc.
- **Chinese whispers**: this is appropriate for older children who are more able to wait patiently for their turn.
- **Circle activities** in which children and the practitioner/s sit in a circle and the person who is speaking holds a 'special' object. Rules are that only the person holding the object is allowed to speak – the object is passed around in turn or to whoever wants to say something – adult supervision needed! Alternatively a large ball can be rolled across the circle and the person rolling the ball makes her contribution (this can be on a theme – favourite foods/colours/games, etc.) and the person who receives the ball makes the next contribution.

These group activities encourage children to:

- take turns
- use language to express their thoughts, feelings and ideas, and
- gain confidence as communicators.

The circle activities are particularly good for encouraging shy or withdrawn children who may not otherwise get a word in – literally!

Guidelines: your role in promoting children's communication skills

- Know how to 'tune in to' the different messages babies and young children are attempting to convey.
- Model the correct use of key words, rather than correcting what children say.
- Talk about things that interest young children, both indoors and outdoors.
- Support children in using a variety of communication strategies including gestures and signing, where appropriate.
- Take time to listen to children and respond with interest to what they say.
- Help children to expand on what they say, introducing and reinforcing their vocabulary.

How to engage children's interest and attention

Children who have had a lack of social interaction or poor role modelling in the early years of their lives may present with listening and attention difficulties. It is important to build their confidence early on by providing activities that are relatively easy to start with, offering quick success and rewards. They can then be adapted and developed as the children's listening and attention skills improve. Suitable activities to engage children's interest and attention are:

- matching games, such as Lotto
- 'spot the difference' games that require the child to observe closely and to respond when a difference is noticed
- board games that require the child to take turns and to know what to do when it is her turn
- musical games where the child has to complete the song.

Every Child a Talker

Every Child a Talker (ECAT) is a developmentally appropriate approach that emphasises the importance of a supportive and stimulating environment in which children are encouraged to develop communication and language. It supports the work of the EYFS in England, in home learning environments (childminders) and in group settings of all kinds. It helps practitioners to:

- identify what helps communication and language to develop
- audit their language provision and plan appropriately
- work with children with English as an additional language (EAL)
- make the most of everyday activities and experiences that promote communication and language
- establish a good partnership with parents.

In practice activity

Observe a small group of three or four children with an adult. Note examples of turn-taking and any of the things you would expect to find in a conversation that have been identified in this chapter. Was there a difference in the number of times individual children spoke in the group? In what way? Evaluate the pros and cons of small groups and large groups.

Activity

Using the information in this section, plan an activity which supports the development of speech, language and communication of children aged:

- birth to one year 11 months
- two years to two years 11 months
- three to five years.

See also Unit 1 AC 5.1.

In practice activity

- Plan, implement and evaluate a language activity for a small group of children, such as news time, circle time, discussion, story time or phonics session.
- You could use your suggestions from the In practice activity on page 415 as the starting point for planning this activity.
- The activity should encourage the children's active participation, including attentive listening and communicating with others during the activity, as well as supervising and maintaining the children's interest throughout the activity.

Activity

Implement the *three* activities you have planned for AC E.2.

AC 4.2 Reflect on own role in relation to the provision in own setting

Quality early years provision for young children can only be delivered through caring, personal relationships between young children and early years practitioners. In group settings such as a crèche or day nursery, a key person system is essential to provide links between individual practitioners and individual children.

Training needs and opportunities

To provide effective support for a child's speech, language and communication, practitioners may need to access additional training opportunities. Early intervention is very important, and effective early assistance with communication difficulties can prevent more complex problems later on. It is important because:

- Language and communication skills are essential to the learning process.
- Language has a vital role in the understanding of concepts.
- The main foundations of language are constructed between the ages of 18 months and four-and-a-half years, during which time the majority of children fully integrate language as part of the thinking and learning process.
- It is easier to assist with language development and communication skills during this critical three-year period than to sort out problems once children have reached school age.
- Effective communication skills are essential to positive social interaction and emotional well-being.

There are a number of agencies which offer advice, support and/or training for children's speech, language and communication development; for example: health visitors, speech and language therapists, educational psychologists, portage workers, advisory teachers, charities such as Afasic, National Autism Society, Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), and Action on Hearing Loss previously known as The Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID).

Research activity

Find out about training relating to supporting children's speech, language and communication which is available in your setting and/or the local community.

Views of the child

You should provide a caring and responsive environment by:

- providing flexible routines to support children's well-being
- explaining any foreseeable changes to the child's environment clearly and honestly
- providing reassurance, explanations and comfort for any unforeseen changes
- being flexible and responsive to children's changing needs and circumstances.

You should allow children to take responsibility for themselves and others by providing opportunities which encourage them to become more independent according to their age, needs and abilities. This includes taking the child's views into account and providing opportunities for children to make choices or be involved in decision-making, for example choosing play activities and/or resources.

Appropriate involvement of parents/carers

Positive working relationships with parents/carers are essential to provide continuity of care for young children. Partnership between parents and practitioners depends on regular and open communication where contributions from both parties are acknowledged and valued. Friendly communication on a regular basis ensures continuity and consistency in providing shared routines and timing any necessary changes. Parents and practitioners can keep up to date with what a young child has learnt or is nearly ready to do through regular conversation when they can exchange information and share delight about the young child's discoveries and interests (Lindon, 2002).

Take the time each day to chat briefly with the parents when you hand the child back into their care. Keep it short so that the child can interact with the parents as soon as possible. Sort out how you will share more detailed information about the child with the parents, for example, keeping a diary or daily log of the child's day including food/drink intake, hours slept, play and early learning activities done, any developmental progress made. You could also make a brief note of any specific plans for the next day, for example, reminders about outings such as going swimming or to the library. The parents can also use the diary/daily log to share information with you, for example, if the child did not sleep well the night before, and reminders about immunisations, dental check-ups or returning library books.

Reflective practice

Think about the ways in which you plan group activities to provide opportunities for children to:

- exchange and extend their own ideas
- express their feelings
- explore the language of negotiation and reconciliation
- express themselves through song, dance and poetry.

Activity

Describe how you have contributed to maintaining a positive environment that supports children's speech, language and communication. Include information on the physical environment, your own role and responsibilities, training needs and opportunities, views of the child and the appropriate involvement of parents or carers.

LO5 Be able to evaluate provision for developing speech, language and communication for children in own setting

AC 5.1 Evaluate your provision

You need to evaluate the effectiveness of speech, language and communication support for children in your setting as this will enable you to:

- understand the wide range of speech, language and communication development demonstrated by young children
- know and understand the sequence of children's development
- use this knowledge to link theory and practice in your own setting
- assess children's language and development and communication skills
- plan activities appropriate to children's individual language needs.

Observing children's speech, language and communication

Early years practitioners working with young children need to be able to look and to listen attentively to how children communicate. By observing carefully, you can discover the range and variety of language used by the children in your setting and improve your own skills in providing appropriate opportunities for encouraging and extending children's speech, language and communication development.

Regular observations are also helpful in identifying any potential problems children may have with their speech, language and communication skills. The observing practitioner can identify the ways in which each child communicates, how the child interacts with others, the child's social skills, and any difficulties the child has in communicating.

A continuous record of a child's language needs or difficulties (for example, in a diary format) can help the practitioner to identify specific problems. Working with parents, colleagues and specialist advisers (if necessary), the early years practitioner can then plan a suitable programme to enable the child to overcome these difficulties. Observations can provide a check that children's language is progressing in the expected ways.

You can observe children's language in a variety of situations. Remember, we all use language in some form in everything we do. For example, you could observe the following situations:

- a child talking with another child or an adult
- an adult talking with a small group of children
- a small group of children engaged in a role-play activity
- a child playing alone
- small or large group discussions such as news time or circle time
- an adult reading or telling a story to a child or group of children
- a child or group of children participating in a creative activity such as painting or drawing
- a child or children playing outside
- a child involved in a literacy activity such as writing news, a story or a poem.

Evaluating children's speech, language and communication

Once you have recorded your observation of the child's language and communication skills, you need to assess this information in relation to:

- the aims of the observation
- what you observed about this child's language and communication skills in *this* situation
- how this compares to the expected language development for a child of this age
- any factors which may have affected the child's language ability such as the immediate environment, significant events, illness, the child's cultural or linguistic background, and any special needs
- how the adult supported the child's speech, language and communication.

Your tutor or assessor should give you guidelines on how to present your observations.

Planning to support a child's speech, language and communication

Following your observation and assessment of a child's speech, language and communication, your recommendations can provide the basis for planning appropriate activities and experiences to encourage or extend the child's abilities in these areas.

Effective planning is based on children's individual needs, abilities and interests, hence the need for accurate child observations and assessments. These needs have to be integrated into the curriculum requirements of your particular setting; for example, themes and activities may be related to the EYFS.

When you have decided on the appropriate activities and experiences (in consultation with colleagues and/or parents as relevant to your setting), you can then implement them. Remember to evaluate the plan afterwards. Further observations and assessments will be necessary to maintain up-to-date information on each child's developmental needs.

LO6 Be able to promote physical development

AC 6.1 Creating an environment

See AC 3.3 above and Unit 1 AC 4.1.

LO7 Be able to implement opportunities which promote the physical development of children from birth to five years

AC 7.1 Plan and lead an opportunity

See Unit 1 AC 5.1 as well as other relevant information in the unit to help you plan an opportunity to promote physical development.

Activity

Using the guidelines in Unit 1, plan an opportunity which promotes the physical development of children in each of the following age groups:

● birth to one year 11 months
● two years to two years 11 months
● three to five years.

See Unit 1 AC 5.1.

Activity

Using the guidelines in Unit 1, implement your plans.

AC 7.2 Reflect on own role in the provision for promoting physical development in own setting

Activity

Reflecting on your own practice

Reflect on your daily practice and think about how well you provide appropriate physical play experiences for the children you work with. For example:

● How do you consider the balance between child-initiated activity and adult-led activity?
● Do you join in with physical activity?
● How do you enable children and their parents to express opinions and be listened to?
● How confident are you in planning for children's individual needs and in observing and assessing their progress?
● How do you ensure that there is sufficient challenge in the activities you provide?
● How can you improve your practice?

LO8 Be able to evaluate the provision for promoting the physical development of children in own setting

AC 8.1 Evaluating the provision

You will need to be able to evaluate the provision in your setting for promoting the physical development of children. See Unit 1 AC 4.1 for the role of the EYP and consider it in the light of your own practice.

LO9 Be able to promote the personal, social and emotional development of children from birth to five years

AC 9.1 Creating an environment

See Unit 1 AC 5.1.

AC 9.2 Planning and leading an opportunity which promotes the personal, social and emotional development of children

See Unit 1 AC 5.1.

Activity

Using the ideas in Unit 1 and suggestions from your colleagues, plan an opportunity which promotes the personal, social and emotional development for each of the following age groups: children aged:

● birth to one year 11 months
● two years to two years 11 months
● three to five years.

See Unit 1, AC 5.1.

Activity

Using your plans for ACJ.2 and the information in Unit 1, provide/lead an opportunity which promotes the personal, social and emotional development for each of the following age groups: children aged:

● birth to one year 11 months
● two years to two years 11 months
● three to five years.

AC 9.3 Describe the benefits to children's holistic learning and development

See Unit 1 AC 2.2.

AC 9.4 Reflect on own role in relation to the provision for promoting the personal, social and emotional development of children in own setting

One of the roles of a key person is to provide a healthy dependence from which independence can grow. Peter Elfer et al. support this viewpoint, describing the relationship between a key person and child as an invisible piece of elastic. It stretches to give the child independence but springs back to the key person when the child is need of reassurance or comfort.

Activity

Think about your role in supporting children's personal, social and emotional development, using the following questions:

- Do I value my relationship with children and support them in developing independence?
- Do I take enough time to ensure that I have heard what a child is trying to tell me, rather than assuming I have understood and imposing my thoughts on them?
- Do I acknowledge a child's feelings as real and encourage children to express their feelings, giving them the vocabulary to say how they feel?
- Do I allow children to make choices and decisions and to take risks within safe boundaries and a secure relationship?
- Do I share mealtimes with children, so supporting the empowerment of babies and young children, their independence, and their social skills?

LO10 Be able to evaluate the provision for the personal, social and emotional development of children in own setting

AC 10.1 Evaluate the provision

Using the information in Unit 1, critically evaluate the provision for promoting personal, social and emotional development in your own setting. How successful do you think your setting is in promoting this?

LO11 Be able to support healthy eating in own setting

AC 11.1 Plan and implement an activity in own setting

Raising awareness of healthy eating

Almost all children have some experience of cooking, or at the very least food preparation, in their own homes. This experience can range from watching tins being opened and the contents heated, seeing fruit being peeled and cut, or bread being put in a toaster and then spread, to a full meal being cooked.

Food preparation and cooking activities are also useful in raising children's awareness of healthy and nutritious foods, educating them about diet and choice. For example, by discussing the need for an ingredient to sweeten food, children can be introduced to the variety available and be made aware of healthy options instead of sugar.

Children learn through active involvement so any cooking activity must be chosen carefully to ensure that children can participate. There is very limited value in them watching an adult carry out the instructions and occasionally letting them have a stir!

Other learning outcomes include:

- development of **physical skills** through using the equipment – pouring, beating, whisking, stirring, etc.
- **aspects of counting, sorting, measuring** – size and quantity, sharing, fractions, ordinal number (i.e. first, second), sequencing and memory through following and recalling the recipe instructions
- **independence skills** through preparation, controlling their own food and equipment, tidying up
- **expressing their ideas**, opinions, likes and dislikes
- understanding **how to present food** attractively through arrangement and decoration.

Planning a cooking activity with young children

When selecting a cooking activity, remember:

- that parental wishes must always be respected
- to check that all children can eat the food to be cooked

- to check that there are no problems regarding allergies or religious dietary restrictions
- to follow the basic food safety and hygiene guidelines.
- Ideas for planning and implementing a cooking activity include:
  - cutting and preparing fruit, vegetables, salad items or cheese
  - spreading breads, crackers or crispbreads with a variety of foods – butter, jam, cream cheese, yeast extract, etc.
  - making biscuits or cakes.

Having planned your activity, make sure you allow plenty of time for preparation, and follow the guidelines below.

Evaluation

After the activity, evaluate your activity. How successful were you in achieving your aims? Were all the children involved? What do you think the children learnt about healthy eating?

AC 11.2 Reflect on own role when supporting healthy eating in own setting

AC 11.3 Make recommendations for healthy eating in own setting

Consider your own role when supporting healthy eating in your setting. Try to answer the following questions to help you reflect on your own experiences:

- Am I a good role EYP for the children?
- Do I always seek to promote healthy eating, through a thorough understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet?
- Are mealtimes and snack times enjoyable for all the children?
- Do I encourage children to help themselves to water throughout the day?
- Do I observe children to ensure they are eating a healthy diet?
- Am I aware of the food preferences of individual children or of their needs for a particular diet?
- Do I consult with parents or carers about their child's dietary needs?
- Do I try to involve both children and their families when planning food-related activities?
- Does my setting use all opportunities to promote healthy eating and through the examples set by adults?
- Do I make recommendations to children and parents about healthy eating?

Activity ·

- Create a weekly plan which shows all the meals, drinks and snacks for the children in your setting.
- Identify how your plan meets the children's nutritional needs, using the Guidelines in Table 2.4 on page 143.
- Describe the methods you have used to identify each child's needs and preferences.
- Describe the steps you would take to cope with a child who refuses to eat.

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Guidelines: implementing a cooking activity with children

- Check any allergies/individual dietary requirements.
- Always prepare surfaces with antibacterial spray and clean cloths.
- Always ensure children have washed their hands and scrubbed their fingernails.
- Always provide protective clothing and, if necessary, roll up long sleeves.
- Always tie back long hair.
- Always check equipment for damage.
- Always follow the safety procedures and policies of the work setting.

- Always ensure adequate supervision.
- Always remind children not to cough over food or put their fingers or utensils in their mouths when handling food.
- Always check the use-by dates of food items and store them correctly.
- Always check for 'E' numbers and artificial ingredients in bought food items.

AC 11.4 Explain the impact of food choices on health and development for mother and baby during: pre-pregnancy, pregnancy and breastfeeding

Pre-conception diet

Following a healthy balanced diet before a woman becomes pregnant will allow her to build up reserves of the nutrients vital to the unborn baby in the first three months.

Diet during pregnancy

Every pregnant woman hears about 'eating for two' but the best information available today suggests that this is not good advice. Research shows that the quality (not quantity) of a baby's nutrition before birth lays the foundation for good health in later life. Therefore, during pregnancy women should eat a well-balanced diet. See the guidelines in the box below.

Key term

spina bifida This occurs when the spinal canal in the vertebral columns is not closed (although it may be covered with skin). Individuals with spina bifida can have a wide range of physical disabilities. In the more severe forms the spinal cord bulges out of the back, the legs and bladder may be paralysed, and obstruction to the fluid surrounding the brain causes hydrocephalus.

Guidelines for a healthy pre-conceptual diet

- Eat something from the four main food groups every day (potato and cereals, fruit and vegetables, milk and milk products and high-protein foods).
- Cut down on sugary foods and eat fresh foods where possible.
- Avoid pre-packed foods and any foods which carry the risk of salmonella or listeria, such as soft or blue-veined cheeses, paté, liver and raw meat.
- Do not go on a slimming diet: follow your appetite and do not eat more than you need.
- Vegetarian diets which include milk, fish, cheese and eggs provide the vital protein the baby needs.
- Vegans should eat soya products and nuts and pulses to supply protein, and vitamin B12 may need to be taken as a supplement.
- Folic acid tablets and a diet rich in folic acid taken both pre-conceptually and in pregnancy help the development of the brain and spinal cord, and also help to prevent defects such as spina bifida. Sources of folic acid include broccoli, nuts and wholegrain cereals.

Guidelines for a healthy diet in pregnancy

- Lean meat, fish, eggs, cheese, beans and lentils are all good sources of nutrients. Eat some every day.
- Starchy foods like bread, potatoes, rice, pasta and breakfast cereals should form the main part of any meal, with vegetables.
- Dairy products like milk, cheese and yoghurt are important as they contain calcium and other nutrients needed for the baby's development.
- Citrus fruit, tomatoes, broccoli, blackcurrants and potatoes are good sources of vitamin C, which is needed to help the absorption of iron from non-meat sources.
- Cut down on sugar and sugary foods like sweets, biscuits and cakes, and sugary drinks like cola.
- Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables that provide vitamins, minerals and fibre. Eat them lightly cooked or raw.
- Green, leafy vegetables, lean meat, dried fruit and nuts contain iron, which is important for preventing anaemia.
- Dairy products, fish with edible bones like sardines, bread, nuts and green vegetables are rich in calcium, which is vital for making bones and teeth.
- Margarine or oily fish (e.g. tinned sardines) contain vitamin D to keep bones healthy.
- Include plenty of fibre in the daily diet; this will prevent constipation, and help to keep the calorie intake down.
- Cut down on fat and fatty foods. Reducing fat has the effect of reducing energy intake; it is important that these calories are replaced in the form of carbohydrate. Fat should not be avoided completely, however, as certain types are essential for body functioning, as well as containing fat-soluble vitamins.
- Folic acid is a B vitamin, which is very important throughout pregnancy, but especially in the first 12 weeks when the baby's systems are being formed. (Most doctors recommend that pregnant women take a folic acid supplement every day, as more folic acid is required than is available from a normal diet.)
- Department of Health advice is to eat according to appetite, with only a small increase in energy intake for the last three months of the pregnancy (an increase of 200 kcal a day).

Table 8.3 Foods to avoid during pregnancy

Foods to avoid	Reasons
• Soft and blue-veined cheese, such as Camembert, Brie, stilton and chèvre, goat's cheese • Paté (any type, including liver paté and vegetable paté) • Prepared salads (such as potato salad and coleslaw) • Ready-prepared meals or reheated food, unless they are piping hot all the way through	**Listeria** High levels of the listeria bacteria are occasionally found in prepared foods. Some ready-prepared meals are not always heated at a high enough temperature to destroy the bacteria. Listeriosis (infection with listeria bacteria) can cause problems for the unborn child, such as: • miscarriage • stillbirth • meningitis • pneumonia.
• Raw or partially cooked eggs, such as home-made mayonnaise, and some mousses and sauces • Unpasteurised milk (both goat's and cow's milks)	**Salmonella** Salmonella is found in unpasteurised milk, raw eggs and raw egg products, raw poultry and raw meat. Eggs should only be eaten if they are cooked until both the white and the yolk are solid. Salmonella food poisoning could cause: • miscarriage • premature birth.
Some types of fish, such as shark, swordfish and marlin, must be avoided altogether	**High levels of mercury** High levels of mercury can harm a baby's developing nervous system. Women should eat no more than two tuna steaks a week (or four cans of tinned tuna). High levels of mercury can cross the placenta and may cause delayed development.
• Unwashed raw fruit and vegetables • Raw or undercooked meat • Unpasteurised goat's milk or goat's cheese	**Toxoplasmosis** Toxoplasmosis is an infection caused by a parasite found in cat faeces. It can also be present in raw or undercooked meat, and in soil left on unwashed fruit and vegetables. Although rare, the infection can occasionally be passed to the unborn baby, which can cause serious problems, such as: • miscarriage • stillbirth • eye damage • hydrocephalus.
Liver and liver products (e.g. liver paté)	**Too much vitamin A** Women should avoid eating liver and liver products such as paté and avoid taking supplements containing vitamin A or fish liver oils (which contain high levels of vitamin A). If high levels of vitamin A build up in the body they can cause serious problems, including birth defects.
Peanuts and foods that contain peanuts	**Peanut allergy** Avoiding foods like peanuts (and foods that contain peanuts) may reduce the baby's chances of developing a potentially serious peanut allergy. This is especially true if there is a history of allergies, such as hay fever or asthma, in the family.

Foods to avoid during pregnancy

During pregnancy, women should avoid certain foods. Sometimes this is because they cause problems such as food poisoning. At other times, certain foods contain harmful bacteria and toxins which can cause serious problems for the unborn baby.

Nutrition for mothers who breastfeed their baby

If the mother is going to breastfeed her baby, she should follow the principles for the healthy diet in pregnancy. Both calcium and energy requirements increase dramatically when the woman is lactating, and most women find that breastfeeding is also one of the most effective ways of regaining their pre-pregnancy weight. The mother should have at least half a litre of milk and a pot of yoghurt or some cheese each day to satisfy her body's need for extra calcium, and should try to drink one-and-a-half to two litres of water a day. The Food Standards Agency recommends that breastfeeding mothers take supplements containing 10 micrograms (mcg) of vitamin D each day.

Activity

1 Why is it important to eat a healthy diet before conceiving a baby?
2 Why is folic acid an important part of the diet during pregnancy?
3 List five foods that should be avoided during pregnancy, and explain the reasons why.

LO12 Be able to support children's exercise in an outdoor space

See Unit 5 LO6 for more on outdoor environments and Unit 3 AC 1.2 for how to keep children safe.

AC 12.1 Plan and lead an activity which supports children's exercise in an outdoor space

See Unit 1 AC 5.1, Unit 3 AC 1.2, and Unit 5 AC 4.1 and LO6.

Planning for physical activities

Children need to feel motivated to be physically active. You can support them to develop movement skills through:

- valuing and following their interests (letting them initiate an activity)
- praise
- encouragement
- appropriate guidance.

Your plan should:

- meet the individual movement skills needs of babies and children
- promote the development of movement skills
- encourage physical play.

Whenever possible, you should involve children in your planning by finding out what they would like to do and what equipment they would like to use.

Again, careful observation is vital to the successful implementation of a plan. You will need to observe the way in which children are playing, and be ready to adapt the activity if it does not seem to be meeting the children's needs and stimulating their interest. Sometimes your plan might be 'taken over' by the children. They may find a different way of playing with a piece of equipment, or they may introduce other play props into their play.

Building opportunities for physical activity into everyday routines

Children need to have opportunities for physical activity every day. They need opportunities to walk, run, jump, climb and swing. Most of these activities will take place outdoors, but there are other ways in which you can build in opportunities for physical activity in the setting. Everyday routines are those that are usually built in to a setting's provision and include:

- dressing and undressing
- hanging up their own coats
- tidying up and putting away equipment
- wiping and setting tables for meals and snacks
- pouring their own drinks
- washing and drying up.

The importance of physical activity in everyday routines

Helping children to develop physical skills in everyday routines will promote their confidence and self-esteem, as well as providing a positive pattern for later in life. Children also need to have opportunities to go for a walk every day, so that

being outside and walking in the fresh air become a regular, enjoyable experience.

How to provide opportunities in practice

It is important to stand back and consider how physical activity is built into your own practice. It is often quicker and easier to do things ourselves, but children can be encouraged to develop self-help and social skills if we build opportunities into our practice. Toddlers can be asked to fetch their own coat or shoes, for example, or you could make a game out of tidy-up time, involving children in sweeping up and putting away the toys they have been playing with.

Reflective practice

Physical activity in everyday routines

Think about a session in your setting:

- How many opportunities are there for children to be engaged in everyday routines that could involve physical activity?
- How much time do children spend outdoors? Are these opportunities limited by rainy or cold weather?
- How could you improve the provision of physical activity opportunities?

AC 12.2 Reflect on an activity which supports children's exercise in an outdoor space

See AC C.1 above for advice on assessing and observing.

AC 12.3 Make recommendations for the outdoor provision for own setting

See AC C.1 for information on identifying and recording areas for improvement. See the activity in AC H.3 for reflecting on your own practice.

LO13 Be able to support children in personal care routines

AC 13.1 Support children in personal care routines

See the units listed here for supporting children in personal care routines in relation to:

- toileting: Unit 2 AC 3.2
- washing/hand washing Unit 2 AC 3.2, Unit 3 AC 1.2
- meal times: Unit 2 AC 3.2
- resting and/or sleeping: Unit 2 AC 3.3.

LO14 Be able to promote the emotional well-being of children in own setting

AC 14.1 Identify the needs of children in own setting

You will need to be able to work with others in your setting to identify the emotional needs of children so that you can work with them to support their emotional well-being. As you get to know children and age-related expectations for their social and emotional development, you will be able to recognise those who need particular help. However, all young children will need to have support in developing their confidence and independence. See Unit 1 AC 2.1 for stages of social and emotional development as well as the cross references below.

AC 14.2 Work with children in a way that supports their well-being

See the units listed here for working with children in relation to:

- supporting independence: Unit 2 AC 1.1
- building resilience and perseverance: Unit 5 AC 6.1
- building confidence: Unit 2 ACs 1.1 and 4.1
- supporting self-reliance: Unit 2 AC 4.1
- equipping children to protect themselves: Unit 1 AC 4.1
- building relationships between children: Unit 1 AC 4.1 and Unit 5 LO8.

AC 14.3 Contribute to the well-being of children during transitions

See Unit 2 LO2.

AC 14.4 Plan and lead an activity to promote emotional well-being in own setting

Unit 5 LO8 provides information to assist with the planning and implementing of play activities. When

choosing an activity to promote emotional well-being in your setting, consider the following questions:

What sort of activities in the setting help children to think about:

- the things that make them feel good about themselves?
- the people who help them?
- how to keep themselves safe?
- how to recognise and avoid possible danger?
- reasons for making particular choices?
- the reason they are allowed to do or to have some things and not other things?

Suggested activities may focus on:

- role-play opportunities
- imaginative play which takes into account different cultures and lifestyles through a variety of utensils, costumes and small world props
- play with malleable materials, e.g. sand and water, dough
- musical activities that provide opportunities for releasing pent-up emotions
- dolls and puppets which reflect a mix of both gender and cultural diversity
- stories, songs and poetry that explore different emotions
- toys and games which require cooperative play
- games which encourage turn-taking
- activities to promote self-reliance skills: e.g. hand-washing routines, skills in dressing self and managing buttons and shoelaces.

Carry out the activity you have planned, noting what works particularly well in order to evaluate the activity.

Activity
Implement an activity for a group of children in your setting which promotes emotional well-being. Afterwards, reflect on what worked particularly well in the activity. For example:

- Were all children able to join in?
- How could you improve the activity next time?

AC 14.5 Reflect on own role when promoting emotional well-being in own setting

You need to ensure that the child is at the centre of your practice; their needs are paramount. This means that every child is valued for his or her individuality. As a practitioner, your role is:

- to listen to children
- not to impose your own agenda on them
- not to single out any one child for special attention
- to ensure that children maintain control over their own play
- to be friendly, courteous and sensitive to their needs
- to praise and motivate them; display their work
- to speak to the child, not at the child; with young children, this means getting down to their level and maintaining eye contact
- to respect their individuality
- to develop a sense of trust and caring with each child.

Reflecting on your own practice
Being able to reflect on your practice in planning and providing opportunities for play will help you to understand which things have worked well, and which have not worked so well. This will help you to think of ways to improve your practice. There are various ways to reflect on your practice. These include:

- observing the children's responses during play – their enjoyment and skill development
- reviewing what worked well and what did not work so well – in terms of equipment provided, numbers of children involved and an assessment of how involved children were in their play
- asking children for feedback
- asking colleagues for feedback
- recording your reflections in a Reflective Diary.

Identifying your strengths and weaknesses and how to improve your practice
Practitioners need to reflect on their own contributions to good practice. This involves identifying their strengths and weaknesses.

Activity
Identify your own strengths and weaknesses when promoting emotional well-being in your own setting. How could you improve your practice in this area?

In practice

How to praise and encourage children

- Give praise and positive feedback for all achievements, however small.
- Be prompt in giving praise and encouragement, as the effect is much greater when delivered immediately after the effort or achievement.
- Encourage children to make choices and to try new things; sometimes they need to learn by their mistakes.
- Avoid making comparisons with another child.
- Always remember the child is an individual.
- Encourage them to feel included in decision-making and respond to their questions in a considerate way.
- Be specific about why you are praising them: Avoid general praise, such as: 'You've done well today.' Instead say: 'Well done, Jack, for helping to clear away all the blocks.'

LO15 Be able to evaluate provision in own setting in relation to promoting emotional well-being in line with current frameworks and theoretical perspectives

AC 15.1 Evaluate provision

In order to critically evaluate provision in relation to the promotion of emotional well-being, you need to use your critical abilities to:

- examine the strengths and weaknesses, and
- evaluate the ways in which the provision promotes emotional well-being with reference to current frameworks and theoretical perspectives.

Guidelines for promoting a positive self-image and sense of well-being in children

- Value children for who they are, not what they do or how they look.
- A child needs love, security and a feeling of trust. There is no single way to give these feelings to children: it will depend on where children live, their family and culture. There is no standard family or institution, or a single best way to love children and give them self-esteem.
- People who give children positive images about themselves (in terms of skin colour, language, gender, disability, features, culture and economic background) help children to develop good self-esteem. Look at the book area and the displays on the walls in your setting. Are you giving positive messages?
- Visitors to the nursery can provide positive images. The people children meet occasionally or on a daily basis will all have a strong influence on them. If children almost never see men working in early years settings or women mending pieces of equipment, they form very narrow ideas about who they might become. Books, pictures, outings and visitors can all offer positive images which extend children's ideas of who they might be.
- Adults who are positive role models help a child's self-esteem.
- Children need to feel some success in what they set out to do. This means that adults must avoid having unrealistic expectations of what children can manage, such as dressing, eating or going to the toilet. It is important to appreciate the efforts that children make.
- They do not have to produce perfect results: the effort is more important than the result.

- Adults help children's self-esteem if they are encouraging. When children make mistakes, do not tell them they are silly or stupid. Instead say something like, 'Never mind, let's pick up the pieces and sweep them into the bin. Next time, if you hold it with two hands it will be easier to work with.'
- Children need to feel they have some choices in their lives. Obviously, safety and consideration for others are important, but it is usually possible to allow children to make some decisions.
- Children need clear, consistent boundaries or they become confused. When they are confused they begin to test out the boundaries to see what is consistent about them.
- Children need consistent care from people they know. Many early years settings have now introduced a key person or family person system, which provides continuity.
- Children need to have a feeling of trust that their basic needs for food, rest and shelter will be met. Rigid rituals are not helpful, but days do need a shape or routine. This will give children a predictable environment. They will have the know-how to help in setting the table, for example, or washing their hands after going to the toilet.
- Children and their families need to be given respect so that they can then develop self-respect. Children, parents and staff need to speak politely and respectfully to each other.
- Children have strong and deep feelings. They need help, support and care from early years educator.

LO16 Be able to follow organisational policy and procedures in relation to keeping children safe

AC 16.1 Identify policies that keep children safe in an early years setting

See Unit 3 AC 2.3.

AC 16.2 Follow procedures

See the following units for information about procedures in relation to:

● registration: Unit 3 AC 1.2
● collection: Unit 3 AC 1.2
● food and drink provision: Unit 2 ACs 4.2, 5.3
● security: Unit 3 AC 1.2.

Bullying

Anti-bullying strategies

The EYFS requires that 'children's behaviour must be managed effectively and in a manner appropriate for their stage of development and particular individual needs'. Every early years setting needs to develop a policy around the support of children's behaviour and the prevention of bullying. In any group, there are likely to be instances of bullying, including early years settings and schools.

Supporting children to become assertive and to resolve conflicts can help to minimise bullying.

But remember that, in the end, it is the adults' responsibility to uphold acceptable behaviour. Some children may not be able to stop others from being aggressive and domineering, however much they try to be assertive. When **challenging behaviour** occurs, take firm action when necessary. You may have to say to a child, 'Pushing like that is not allowed. Do you remember yesterday when Jason said he felt sad when you pushed him? So I am going to have to take you away from the trains for two minutes.' You can help the child by saying clearly which part of their behaviour is not acceptable, while not being negative towards the child personally. This is why you would *not* say, 'You are being naughty.' It is important that you follow this up by settling the child back into the play – 'We can go back to the trains, but I need you to remember that there is no pushing' – and then spend time in that area, helping the children to play together.

> **Key term**
>
> **challenging behaviour** This term has been used to refer to the unwanted or unacceptable behaviours that may be shown by children or adults. Such behaviours include aggression (hitting, kicking, biting), destruction (ripping clothes, breaking windows, throwing objects), self-injury (head banging, self-biting, skin picking), tantrums and many other behaviours. Normally, challenging behaviour puts the safety of the individual or others in some jeopardy, or has a significant impact on their quality of life.

E-safety

See Unit 3 AC 2.3.

Settings should have policies for the management of e-safety, such as a social media and networking policy or an e-safety policy. These will set out the setting's requirements with regard to staff and child safety when using networking sites. See the following units for information relating to:

● confidential record-keeping: Unit 3 ACs 2.1, 3.4, 3.7,
● ratios and supervision: Unit 3 AC 1.2
● moving and handling: Unit 3 AC 1.2

AC 16.3 Explain actions to take

For information on what action to take in response to emergencies, see the following units relating to:

- a child who is unwell: Unit 4 AC 1.1, 2.1
- injury: Unit 4 AC 3.2
- accidents: Unit 3 AC 1.2 and Unit 4 AC 3.2
- emergency: Unit 3 AC 1.2
- fire drill: Unit 3 AC 1.2
- evacuation procedures: Unit 3 AC 1.2.

A missing child: your setting's health and safety policy should have information about what to do if a child goes missing within the setting. Although it is very unlikely, it may happen and you should be clear on your responsibilities.

LO17 Be able to use hygienic practice to minimise the spread of infection

AC 17.1 Use hygienic practice

See the following units for information on hygienic practice in relation to:

- hand washing: Unit 3 AC 1.2
- food hygiene: Unit 3 AC 1.2
- dealing with spillages safely: Unit 3 AC 1.2
- safe disposal of waste: Unit 3 AC 1.2
- using correct personal protective equipment: Unit 3 AC 1.2.

LO18 Be able to manage risk within an environment which provides challenge for children

AC 18.1 Explain why it is important to take a balanced approach to risk management

See Unit 3 AC 1.2 (How to provide challenging and risk-taking environments for children) and also Unit 5 AC 6.1.

AC 18.2 Carry out risk assessment within own setting

See Unit 3 AC 1.2 for information on risk assessment, a step-by-step guide and activity on risk assessment.

AC 18.3 Describe how health and safety risk assessments are monitored and reviewed

It is important to monitor and review risk assessments as there may have been changes; for example, new equipment introduced or new procedures. After completing an initial risk assessment, a date should be set for the next one. This could be once a term, twice a year or annually, depending on the size of the setting, the number of staff changes, changes to the physical environment, additional equipment or resources. When new equipment arrives, a new risk assessment should be completed and the findings added to the original document.

The process of review includes answering the following questions:

- Have there been any changes?
- Are there improvements you still need to make?
- Have you or your colleagues identified a problem?
- Have you learnt anything from accidents or near misses?

Activity ·

In your setting, examine some recent risk assessments and find out if there are any improvements to be made. Find out who is responsible for reviewing risk assessments and for implementing any recommendations.

· ·

AC 18.4 Support children in own setting to manage risk

See Unit 3 AC 1.2 and Unit 5 AC 6.1.

AC 18.5 Reflect on how own setting manages risk

When managing risk, you will need to be able to reflect on your own role. This should include:

- actions taken against the risks that are identified
- the effectiveness of those actions, and
- any further amendments required.

By building the skills of reflective practice into your everyday work, you will develop the skills of

identifying any adjustments that are required in order to minimise risks during an event or experience.

See also Unit 5 AC 6.1.

LO19 Be able to use information, advice and support to promote equality, diversity and inclusion

AC 19.1 Access information, advice and support about equality, diversity and inclusion

See Unit 6 ACs 2.2, 4.1 , 4.2, 5.1.

AC 19.2 Reflect on ways information, advice and support about equality, diversity and inclusion can be used to inform practice.

See Unit 2 AC 4.1, Unit 3 AC 1.2, Unit 5 AC 7.1, Unit 6 ACs 4.1 and 5.1.

LO20 Be able to work in ways which support equality, diversity and inclusive practice

AC 20.1 Interact with children in a way that values them and meets their individual needs

See Unit 1 AC 1.1, Unit 2 AC 4.1, Unit 3 AC 1.2, Unit 6 AC 3. 1.

AC 20.2 Analyse the benefits of supporting equality, diversity and inclusive practice

See Unit 3 AC 1.2.

AC 20.3 Evaluate the impact of own attitudes, values and behaviour when supporting equality, diversity and inclusive practice

See Unit 6 AC 3.1.

LO21 Be able to facilitate play opportunities with children

AC 21.1 Create a plan which includes a balance of child-initiated and adult-led play opportunities

See Unit 5 for the different types of play: AC 5.1 for a description of child-initiated and child-led play and AC 5.2 for the characteristics and benefits of the above types of play.

Planning play opportunities

There are no strict rules about what planning should look like in the revised EYFS, nor about what types of planning should be in place. The only requirement is that planning should be fit for the purposes described in the revised document and meet the requirements set out by individual schools, settings or groups of settings.

Underpinning all planning should be evaluative questions about its usefulness and whether it makes a difference to teaching and learning in the setting, regardless of whether a child is five months old or five years old.

Planning needs to balance different areas of development and learning, and play should be central. Sometimes adults will lead directly (teaching children to cook a recipe, or plant vegetables in the garden). Sometimes adults will lead indirectly, in the way they set up the environment and materials, or engage with children in their play and during their experiences. There needs to be a balance of the adult being involved in direct and indirect teaching, and child-initiated learning.

AC 21.2 Differentiate planned play opportunities to meet the individual needs of the children

Differentiating planned play opportunities

When planning activities for children you should remember to include all children. See Unit 3 for legislation relating to equality, diversity and inclusive practice.

Rigid plans hold back learning: they do not meet the learning needs or develop the interests of individual children, and lead to an activity-based curriculum which does not help the group or individual children to develop and learn.

Planning begins with the observation of the child as a unique, valued and respected individual, with their own interests and needs. We could say this is all about getting to know the child, but further general planning is also necessary, because there is only so much that children can learn on their own. They need an environment that has been carefully thought through, plus the right help from adults in using that environment. This aspect of planning ensures that the learning environment indoors and outdoors is balanced in what it offers, so that it helps all children in general, but also caters for individual children.

In this way, the curriculum:

- differentiates for individual children
- is inclusive and embraces diversity
- offers experiences and activities which are appropriate for most children of the age range (the group), because it considers the social and cultural context and the biological aspects of children developing in a community of learning
- links with the requirements of legally framed curriculum documents (which include the first three points).

Many early years settings now focus on particular children on particular days. This means that every child is observed regularly, and the curriculum is planned in a **differentiated** way to cater for the interests and needs of individual children.

Key term

differentiation Altering and adapting the way in which activities are presented to children to enable them to access them and to make progress.

The importance of differentiation

As not all children learn in the same way, there will be differences in their progress. For instance, some children understand and remember well if they *see* something. Others need to be more actively involved

to make good progress. If a child is making slow progress when being taught in the same way as the rest of the group, staff should try other ways through differentiation to help them succeed. This can mean any or all of the following:

- providing activities at a more basic and simple level
- changing ways of teaching that match the child's way of learning
- moving the child into a small group
- giving different support through a key person
- breaking down complicated information into small steps.

Most children learn in a rather uneven way: they have bursts of learning, and then they have plateaux when their learning does not seem to move forward but they are actually consolidating their learning during this time. This is why careful observation and assessment for learning of individual children, plus a general knowledge of child development, are very important.

Activity

How does your setting differentiate planned play opportunities to meet the needs of each child?

AC 21.3 Lead a planned play opportunity

Catching the right time for a particular part of learning during development is a skill, as is recognising the child's pace of learning. Children have their own personalities and moods. They are affected by the weather, the time of day, whether they need food, sleep or the toilet, the experiences they have, their sense of well-being, and their social relationships with children and adults.

Some of the richest learning comes from experiences of everyday living. Examples would be getting dressed, choosing what to do, going shopping, using what you have bought for cooking, using a recipe book, washing up, sharing a story or photographs of shared events (visiting the park), laying the table, eating together, sorting the washing and washing clothes. It is a challenge to find ways of making this manageable for children to take part in with

independence, but careful planning makes this both possible and enjoyable, and makes for a deep learning experience.

Guidelines: encouraging children's active participation

- Even when an activity is adult-directed, it should always involve active participation by the children.
- Activities that have an 'end product' (e.g. a model or a special occasion card) must allow for children's experimentation and creativity so that each one is different and original.
- There is absolutely no value in directing every aspect of a task. You should not aim to have all the children's work looking the same or 'perfect' (i.e. your idea of what the finished article should look like).
- Ownership is very important: children need to feel that their work is their own.
- What children learn from doing the activity – practical skills, understanding of materials, textures, sounds, and so on – is far more important than the finished article.
- Young children should also be able to choose whether or not to make a card or a model.

AC 21.4 Support children's participation in a planned play opportunity

Giving attention to children's play activities can range from being a passive observer through to being fully involved in their play. In a planned play opportunity, you need to ensure that each child is actively participating, and that each child is able to make his or own choices within the sphere of activity.

AC 21.5 Demonstrate how play opportunities provide a balance between child-initiated and adult-led play

See Unit 5 AC 5.1.

AC 21.6 Encourage parents/carers to take an active role in children's play

See Unit 5 AC 4.2.

LO22 Be able to reflect on play opportunities

AC 22.1 Evaluate how a planned play opportunity meets the play, learning and developmental needs of children in relation to current frame work requirements

See Unit 5 AC 1.2.

See Unit 5 AC 9.1.

AC 22.2 Analyse own role in relation to planned play opportunities

See Unit 5 ACs 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.2.

AC 22.3 Make recommendations for the next stage of children's learning and development in relation to planned play opportunities

Reflective practice

Research shows that children develop and learn through their play and the first-hand experiences they are offered by adults who are interested in what they do, and who support and extend their learning. Children benefit from the relationships and companionship they find with other children. However, none of this can happen if the conditions are not favourable: the role of the adult is crucial in creating, maintaining and planning the general environment.

1 How can I take more account of children's home, social and cultural experiences when planning for play?
2 What types of play opportunities am I providing for the children inside and outside?
3 What themes, aims and learning goals am I supporting through the planned play opportunities?
4 How do I find out the level of engagement that children show in adult-led activities?

Using assessment to inform future planning

In order to plan for what is often called the child's 'learning journey', early years practitioners need to develop an understanding of:

- what children know
- the skills they have developed
- the attitudes they have towards learning, and
- the interests they have.

Sharing information

In addition to building this knowledge, practitioners need to share information gained from observation and assessment to:

- inform their future planning
- group children for particular activities and interests
- ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all children
- promote continuity and progression.

Information should be shared between the setting and the home, so that a holistic picture of the child's needs, preferences and skills emerges. Parents have important information about their child's competence at home which will help practitioners to plan for their next stage of learning.

LO23 Be able to apply theoretical perspectives and philosophical approaches on play in own practice

AC 23.1 Plan and implement a play opportunity using theoretical perspectives and philosophical approaches on play to support the needs

Stages of development and interests of children aged:

- 0–1 year 11 months
- 2–2 years 11 months
- 3–5 years

See Unit 3 AC 3.1 and Unit 5 AC 3.1 for theoretical perspectives. See also Unit 1 LO5 for how to plan opportunities for children's learning and development.

See Unit 5 AC 3.1 and AC 3.2 for philosophical perspectives and Unit 1 LO5, and Unit 5 LO4 and Unit 5 LO1 for planning for different age groups and stages of development.

LO24 Be able to evaluate theoretical perspectives and philosophical approaches on play

AC 24.1 Evaluate how theoretical perspectives and philosophical approaches to play support own practice

See Unit 1 AC 3.1 and Unit 5 ACs 3.1 and 3.2 for theoretical perspectives and philosophical perspectives.

You will need to look at the different theorists and consider whether they have influenced and supported your practice, as discussed and shown through example activities in Unit 5 ACs 3.1 and 3.2.

AC 24.2 Share evaluation of how theoretical perspectives and philosophical approaches to play provision supports practice

See Unit 1 AC 3.1 and Unit 5 ACs 3.1 and 3.2 for theoretical perspectives and philosophical approaches. In order to evaluate these you will also need to consider the impact theory has had on practice in early years settings (see Unit 5 AC 3.2 and Unit 1 AC 3.1).

LO25 Be able to support children's behaviour and socialisation within play environments

AC 25.1 Model positive behaviour

See this unit, AC 6.4.

AC 25.2 Plan an environment which supports children's socialisation and group learning

See Unit 5 AC 8.1.

AC 25.3 Use strategies when supporting children to manage their own behaviour

See this unit, AC 6.4 and Unit 5 AC 8.2.

LO26 Be able to provide enabling play environments

AC 26.1 Plan an enabling play environment indoors and outdoors

See Unit 5 AC 6.1 and use the advice given to plan your own play environment.

See Unit 5, AC 6.1 and use the advice given to create your own play environment.

AC 26.2 Evaluate enabling play environments in own setting

Activity

See Unit 5 AC 5.2 and 5.3 on the resources for the different types of play. Evaluate enabling play environments in your own setting.

Looking at the role of play and how it stimulates learning (Unit 5 AC 1.2, and play provision in early years settings Unit 5 AC 2.2), consider and evaluate how your play environment meets the needs of the children and supports their right to play within the early years framework.

LO27 Be able to meet the additional needs of children

AC 27.1 Identify the individual needs of children in own setting

See Unit 7 AC 4.2 for planning for children with additional needs.

Identify the individual needs of children in own setting

You need to know and understand the details about particular disabilities as they affect the children in your setting and your ability to provide a high-quality service. Children with disabilities and those with specific requirements in your setting may include children with:

- hearing impairment
- visual impairment
- physical disabilities
- behavioural difficulties
- emotional difficulties

- communication difficulties
- learning difficulties.

Some children may require additional support in the setting due to specific requirements such as additional sensory and/or physical needs, as a result of hearing, visual and/or physical impairment. As children with sensory or physical impairments may be dependent on others for some of their needs, it is essential to provide opportunities for them to be as independent as possible. Give them every chance to join in, to express opinions and to interact with their peer group. Remember to focus on each child as a unique person with individual strengths rather than focusing on the child's particular disabilities, e.g. what they can do rather than what they cannot.

Reflective practice

Supporting children with special needs

Reflect on the following questions:

- How well does your setting provide for the special needs of children?
- Is there effective communication between the child's parents or carers and the setting?
- Do the play experiences and activities avoid stereotyping and ensure that each child has an equal opportunity to take part in activities?

AC 27.2 Plan and implement activities in partnership with others to meet children's additional needs

See Unit 6 ACs 4.1 and 4.3.

When working with children, you should maintain a balance between flexibility and consistency in your approach to time allocation to ensure that the needs of individual children are met. An individual support plan will ensure that this time allocation takes into account:

- the individual child's learning, play or leisure needs in terms of staffing, resources and equipment, e.g. mobility and communication aids
- the management of medical issues and personal care routines, e.g. epilepsy or difficulties with eating and drinking

- approaches to minimising the impact of sensory and physical impairments, e.g. the use of specialised lighting or appropriate positioning of equipment
- individual counselling and the management of difficult emotions and behaviour, e.g. helping the child recognise what triggers outbursts and how to respond
- the use of therapeutic treatments, e.g. speech and language therapy, physiotherapy and/or hydrotherapy.

An effective individual support plan:

- builds on the child's understanding of their own support needs, as well as the views and contributions of parents, carers, families and others
- uses the expertise and involvement of a range of professionals from different agencies that may include therapists, nursing staff, social workers and representatives from the voluntary sector
- can make a significant contribution to an effective and inclusive environment for a disabled child or young person, by ensuring that parts of therapeutic programmes are successfully integrated in the activities of the setting.

Your contribution to the planning of an individual support plan will depend on your exact role and responsibilities within the setting. You may be involved in developing a plan with an individual child to support learning, play or leisure needs. You may be involved in a variety of planning sessions and meetings, or simply be required to implement the plans of others such as teachers and/or specialists. An individual support plan may be either short term (e.g. a week, a month or half term) or long term (e.g. a term, several months or a whole year), and can cover a range of developmental and learning needs, including social, physical, intellectual communication or emotional. A plan for several months or the whole year will, of course, require more work than a plan for a week or two.

An individual support plan should be based on detailed observations and assessments of the child's learning and development. These assessments will include information from parents and appropriate professionals, as well as the observations and assessments made by you and your colleagues.

As part of your role in the planning process, you may be involved in making suggestions for the specific content of an individual support plan. You will work in conjunction with colleagues, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) and possibly a specialist such as an educational psychologist, speech and language therapist, physiotherapist or occupational therapist.

The individual support plan should include:

- the child's age and level of development
- the specific area of impairment or special need
- the intended length of the plan
- where and when the plan is to be implemented, e.g. at home, in the setting or both
- details of the activities to be provided to support learning, play or leisure needs
- who will provide the activities and any necessary support
- the resources required, including any specialist equipment.

Working in partnerships with families is particularly important when a child has additional support needs. Each parent or carer should be made to feel welcome and valued as an expert on his or her child, playing a vital role in helping practitioners to enable their child to participate and learn.

Parents usually know more about their children and their children's specific requirements, so it is important to listen to what parents have to say. The role of the early years practitioner is the following:

- Actively encourage positive relationships between parents (or designated carers) and the setting.
- Only give information to parents consistent with your role and responsibilities within the setting; for example, do not give recommendations concerning

the child's future learning needs directly to parents, if this is the responsibility of another professional.

- Ensure that any information shared with parents is agreed with the relevant colleagues such as the child's key person.
- Ensure that any information about a child shared with their parents is relevant, accurate and up to date. Always follow the confidentiality requirements of the setting.

When liaising with parents about the additional needs of their children, you should consider the family's home background and the expressed wishes of the parents. You must also follow the setting's policies and procedures with regard to specific requirements, e.g. inclusion strategies, policies, procedures and practices. You may need to give parents positive reassurance about their children's care, learning and development. Any concerns or worries expressed by a child's parents should be passed immediately to the appropriate person in the setting. If a parent makes a request to see a colleague or other professional, then you should follow the relevant setting policy and procedures.

Parents and carers often find that the most helpful sources of information and advice come from others with shared experiences. There are many organisations which exist to provide support and answer questions; for example, Contact a Family, The Down's Syndrome Association, Mencap and The Royal Society for the Blind. There are many more, most with their own website and helpline.

Communicating with parents and carers

The principles of effective communication are discussed in Unit 14. One of the main purposes of communicating with parents and carers is to provide and to share information about the child and about the setting, both about the early years setting and the home. Practitioners need to build up a partnership with parents and carers, and to do this they need to promote a feeling of trust.

Providing flexible support for the family

Parents and carers want support which is flexible enough to respond to their particular family's needs, and which is both available in an emergency and can also be planned in advance. Children want support which enables them to do the kinds of things their

peers do: this can vary from going swimming with their siblings to spending time away from home with their friends. The most popular services are generally those developed by parents or carers themselves, or by local organisations.

Coordinating the support

A single point of contact for the family (such as a key person, link worker or care coordinator), with a holistic view of the child and family, can help the family to find out about what services are available and the roles of different agencies, and to get professionals to understand their needs. Families with a single point of contact report better relationships with services, fewer unmet needs, better morale, fewer feelings of isolation and burden, more information about services, greater satisfaction, and more parental involvement than families without this service. Care coordination should ensure that the family's needs for information, advice and help are identified and addressed.

Types of support and information include:

- communication aids such as learning to use sign language, Makaton, speech board
- social and emotional support such as coming to terms with the impact of disability on own family
- financial support such as claiming benefits
- information about services and availability such as housing adaptations
- information about children's and families' rights
- information for parents about their child's condition and how they can support their child's development
- information for children and their family about their condition and treatment, about how to live with the condition and how to overcome disabling barriers
- support that enables families to do activities together, as a whole family
- short-term breaks and domiciliary services
- accessible and appropriate play and leisure services.

Parent partnership services

The Parent Partnership Scheme (PPS) is a statutory service that offers the following support:

- information, advice and support for parents or carers of children with SEN

- putting parents or carers in touch with other local organisations
- making sure that the views of the parent or carer are heard and understood, and that these views inform local policy and practice.

Some parent partnerships are based in the voluntary sector, although the majority of them remain based in their LEA or Children's Trust. All parent partnerships, wherever they are based, work separately and independently from the LEA, which means that they are able to provide impartial advice and support to parents and carers.

Activity

Find out about the services available to provide support and information for families with disabled children in your local area. Examples may include domiciliary services, special nursery provision, play and leisure services, Portage, and Home-Start.

AC 27.3 Reflect on own practice in meeting children's additional needs

You should be able to reflect on your own practice as part of your everyday learning. In this way, every experience (whether positive or negative) will contribute to your development and personal growth.

Reflective practice

In relation to meeting children's additional needs, reflect upon the following questions:

- Have you regularly observed individual children to help you to identify their holistic needs?
- Have you found out more about a child's particular additional need?
- Have you established a good relationship with the child's parents?
- Do you understand your own role within the setting in planning for children's additional needs?
- Are you able to plan activities to meet the play and learning needs of a child with additional needs?
- Do you regularly review and evaluate your plans and activities?
- Have you identified what you have achieved and what you still need to work on?

AC 27.4 Evaluate the provision for children with additional needs in own setting

See Unit 6 AC 4.3.

LO28 Be able to carry out observations in own setting in line with current frameworks

AC 28.1 Observe in line with current frameworks

See Unit 7 LO3 and AC 3.1 as well as the information in Unit 5 on current frameworks.

AC 28.2 Reflect on outcomes of observations carried out in own setting

Part of being a reflective practitioner is being able to reflect on the outcomes of the observations you have carried out. You could choose the most relevant questions from the list below to help you to reflect on the observations carried out as part of AC CC.1.

AC 28.3 Discuss children's progress with key person and colleague

See Unit 1 AC 4.3 and Unit 7 ACs 1.1 and 4.3 for the importance of working in partnership.

AC 28.4 Work with others to plan next steps in relation to the needs, stages of development and interests of children

Early years practitioners need to share information gained from observation and assessment to:

- inform their future planning
- group children for particular activities and interests
- ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all children
- promote continuity and progression.

Information should be shared between the setting and the home, so that a holistic picture of the child's

Progress check

These areas of focus refer to individual children. For group observations, you may want to reflect on the outcome of a particular group activity, such as a cooking activity, or a creative project.

- **Health and physical development**: what kinds of large motor and small motor activities does the child prefer? How does the child manipulate scissors and crayons? Does the family have any concerns about the child's health?
- **Emotional and social development**: can the child generally be described as flexible and easy-going? Slow to warm up, cautious or fearful?
- **Skills and abilities**: what does the child do well? What does the child find challenging? What skills is the child trying to achieve?
- **Interests and preferences**: what activities cause the child's eyes to light up? What does the child talk about? When given a choice, what does the child choose to do?
- **Culture and home life**: how does the child express cultural or family traditions during play?
- **Approach to learning**: how does the child approach a new activity? How would you describe the child's interaction with materials?
- **Communication skills**: how much verbal language does the child have? Does the child talk to other children? Other adults? What does the child talk about?
- **Use of body language**: how does the child move? Does the child use gestures? Is the child physically expressive?
- **Social interaction**: does the child interact with other children? How does the child initiate interactions? How does the child handle conflicts?
- **Cognitive skills**: does the child show interest in books and other print material? Does the child notice similarities and differences?
- **Group activities**: was the group activity suitable for each child? Did each child become involved? Did you fulfil your stated aim?
- **Indoor provision**: did you identify any areas of indoor provision that worked particularly well? Did you evaluate the resources used, in terms of staff and equipment? Were there any aspects of the provision that could be improved?
- **Outdoor provision**: did you identify any areas of indoor provision that worked particularly well? Did you consider the role of risk and challenge in outdoor play? Were there any aspects of the provision that could be improved?

needs, preferences and skills emerges. Parents have important information about their child's competence at home which will help practitioners to plan for their next stage of learning.

Activity

For each of the observations carried out for AC CC.1, you should work with others to plan the next steps in relation to the children's needs and interests.

Key terms

formative assessment Assessment that is ongoing.

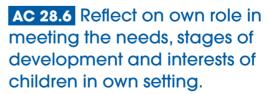**summative assessment** Assessment that takes place at a set time, for example at the end of the EYFS.

AC 28.5 Track children's progress using formative assessment and summative assessment

See Unit 7 LO5 and Unit 9 for information on summative assessment. Also see Unit 15.

AC 28.6 Reflect on own role in meeting the needs, stages of development and interests of children in own setting.

See Unit 1 ACs 2.1 and 4.1, and Unit 5 AC 4.1.

Reflective practice

Reflect on:

- the ways in which you communicate with children
- the variety of activities you provide for children, both indoors and outdoors
- the ways in which you use regular observations to find out about children's needs and interests.

Think about these aspects of your work in relation to supporting children's developmental needs. For example:

- Do you vary your method of communication to account for the individual child's needs and stage of development?
- Do you provide a wide range of activities which are designed to promote particular skills?
- Do you plan activities to promote development for individual children?
- Do you use observations to build up a picture of children's interests and needs?
- Do you involve parents in the observations you carry out with their children?

Activity

After considering these questions, can you think of ways in which you could improve your practice?

LO29 Be able to maintain accurate and coherent records in line with organisational requirements

AC 29.1 Explain confidentiality in relation to record-keeping and reporting

See Unit 14 ACs 5.2 and 5.3 for explaining confidentiality requirements. Also see Unit 3 AC 3.7, Unit 7 AC 2.1, Unit 11 AC 3.1.

AC 29.2 Explain organisational requirements in relation to completing records, storing records and sharing information

See Unit 14 AC 5.1 for record-keeping in line with organisational requirements. See Unit 7 ACs 2.1, 2.2 and AC 4.3, Unit 8 AC 7.5, Unit 10 AC 6.1, Unit 14 AC 5.1.

AC 29.3 Maintain confidential records in line with organisational procedures

See the following units for information on maintaining confidential records in line with organisational procedures in relation to:

- health, safety and security: Unit 3 AC 1.2
- accidents: Unit 3 AC 1.2
- incidents: Unit 3 AC 1.2
- daily registers: Unit 3 AC 1.2
- medication: Unit 3 AC 1.2
- special dietary requirements: Unit 2 AC 5.3. As well as being aware of children's special dietary requirements and keeping records on them, your setting should ensure that all staff who need to know their requirments are informed. One way of doing this is to keep a confidential folder which all staff are required to sign regularly to show that they have seen it and are aware of children's requirements
- planning: Unit 7 AC 3.1
- observation and assessment: Unit 7 AC 2.1.

Useful resources

For more information, visit the National Parent Partnership Network (NPPN) website

www.parentpartnership.org.uk.

LO30 Be able to support emergent literacy

AC 30.1 Develop a language-rich environment for children from birth to 5 years

See Unit 9 ACs 2.1 and 2.2.

AC 30.2 Meeting individual speech, language and communication needs

See Unit 9 AC 4.3, Evaluate strategies to enhance speech, language and communication development.

AC 30.3 Strategies to plan activities

See the units listed below for activities that engage children and extend literacy development in relation to:

- speaking and listening: Unit 9 AC 4.5
- emergent reading: Unit 9 AC 4.5
- sustained shared thinking: Unit 9 AC 4.5
- emergent writing: Unit 9 AC 4.5
- technology/digital literacy: Unit 9 AC 4.5
- socialisation: Unit 5 AC 8.1
- group learning: Unit 5 AC 8.1.

For more information on planning and strategies, see Unit 9.

AC 30.4 Plan and lead an activity to support emergent literacy

See Unit 9.

As outlined in Unit 1 AC 5.1, leading an activity involves managing the activity from the planning stage to evaluation. Using your plans, arrange to implement the activity and evaluate it.

Activity •

Plan, lead and evaluate an activity using the strategies outlined in this unit.

• •

AC 30.5 Benefits to children's holistic learning and development from emergent literacy support

Child development should always be viewed in the round, or holistically. This is because each area of development is linked with and affects every other area of development. Unit 1 looks at the benefits to children's holistic learning and development when communication skills are promoted. Read through the section on pages 351–52 to find out how all aspects of communication benefit children's learning holistically. These are the same for emergent literacy skills. Children will benefit by gaining independence, self-esteem and confidence.

AC 30.6 Evaluate how planned activities support emergent literacy and current frameworks

The EYFS outlines:

- the ways in which early years practitioners and teachers monitor children's progress
- when and how to keep records
- when and how to refer a child for specialist help (for example, the local speech and language team).

It is important that schools use the EYFS when planning their Reception year classes for individual children. The EYFS helps Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) teachers to see how the seven areas of the EYFS link to learning in Key Stage 1. This is not about getting children ready for the next class. It is about building on what children know and can do, supporting them in this, and using what they know to help them into the less familiar. Then they continue their learning journey with a high level of well-being, eager to learn more.

Activity •

The EYFS Profile helps early years practitioners and teachers to plan activities for children starting Key Stage 1. Evaluate your planned activities in relation to the Early Learning Goals for communication, language and literacy.

• •

AC 30.7 Analyse own role in relation to planned activities

Reflective practice

Your role will vary from one activity to the next. It is important to be reflective about your role in providing activities. In particular, analyse your role by answering the following questions:

- How have I ensured that children are not rushed but are supported in ways that are right for each child's stage of development?
- How have I taken into account the children's previous experiences, current interests and developmental needs?
- How have I encouraged the use of language and provided access to a rich vocabulary?
- How have I managed children's time so that they have the opportunity to become deeply involved in their activities?
- When have I identified learning opportunities that arise spontaneously through play?

However well planned, it is important to be flexible. As the EYFS says (EYFS Practice Guidance 2.9):

It is important to remember that no plan written weeks before can include a group's interest in a spider's web on a frosty morning or a particular child's interest in transporting small objects in a favourite blue bucket. Yet it is these interests which may lead to some powerful learning. Plans should therefore be flexible enough to adapt to circumstances.

AC 30.8 Make recommendations for meeting individual children's emergent literacy needs

See Unit 9 AC 6.1 and use this information as well as guidance from your tutor and setting to make recommendations.

LO31 Be able to produce resources to support emergent literacy

AC 31.1 Develop a resource file of activities

See the suggested links in AC A.4 below to develop a resource file of activities for children from birth to five years to encourage:

- speaking and listening
- emergent reading

- sustained shared thinking
- emergent writing
- technology/digital literacy
- socialisation
- group learning.

You can use the activities to develop a resource file.

LO32 Be able to implement activities to support children's emergent mathematical development

AC 32.1 Planning an activity

When planning, implementing and evaluating activities to support the early years framework for learning, your overall aims should be to:

- support all the children you work with
- ensure that each child has full access to the relevant curriculum
- encourage participation by all children
- meet children's individual learning and development needs
- build on children's existing knowledge and skills
- help all children achieve their full potential.

Before starting to plan activities to support children's emergent mathematical development, you need to find out about each individual child's needs and preferences.

Remember that children develop at their own rates, and in their own way.

Also see Unit 10, AC 2.2.

Example of an activity to support children's mathematical development: water play

Water play provides many opportunities to develop mathematical language and an understanding of mathematical concepts. For example, inviting the children to help set up the water tray and to think about questions such as:

- How deep shall we make it?
- How many jugs of water will we need to make it that deep?
- How can we find out how many centimetres deep the water is today?
- Which containers shall we use today – the short tubes or the long ones?

The following list contains a sample of mathematical concepts that can be built through water play:

- empty/full
- many/few
- before/after
- in/out
- more/less
- same/different
- heavy/light
- shallow/deep
- up/down
- sets
- classification
- rational
- counting
- liquid measure
- ordinal counting
- linear measure.

As outlined, leading an activity involves managing the activity from the planning stage to evaluation. Using your plans, arrange to implement the activity and evaluate it.

Activity ·

Plan, lead and evaluate an activity using the strategies outlined in this unit.

· ·

AC 32.2 Evaluate how planned activities support children in relation to current frameworks

Activity ·

Evaluate your planned activities in relation to the Early Learning Goals for mathematics or experiences and outcomes for mathematics.

· ·

AC 32.3 Analyse own role in relation to planned activities

Activity ·

Analyse your own role in relation to one planned activity. Write a reflective account of your role.

· ·

AC 32.4 Make recommendations for meeting individual children's emergent mathematical needs

Each setting will have its own policy and methods for assessing the progress of children's mathematical development. Your role is to aim to meet each child's individual mathematical needs. This can be done by:

- identifying problems and monitoring progress
- providing activities targeted to individual needs

- providing an environment rich in mathematical print and mathematical resources in every area
- evaluating the effects of your practice – what worked well and not so well?

How to provide and prepare resources to support learning and development

The British Association for Early Childhood Education (www.early-education.org.uk) produces a wide range of publications and resources to support early childhood practitioners and parents to support young children to learn effectively. The booklet on *Core experiences for the EYFS* from Kate Greenaway Nursery School and Children's Centre can also be ordered from this website.

LO33 Be able to produce resources to support emergent mathematical development

AC 33.1 Develop a resource file of activities

See the Unit 10 AC 2.2 for information on developing a resource file of activities for children from birth to five years to encourage:

- number and counting
- measure, shape, size and pattern
- weight, volume and capacity
- space and time
- data representation
- problem solving.

See Unit 10 AC 3.3 for information on developing a resource file of activities for children from birth to five years to encourage:

- sustained shared thinking
- socialisation
- group learning.

LO34 Be able to work with parents/carers in a way which encourages them to take an active role in their child's emergent literacy and mathematical development

AC 34.1 Working with parents/carers

See Unit 10 AC 5.1.

LO35 Be able to contribute to learning and development for school readiness in relation to the current framework

AC 35.1 Strategies to plan, lead and evaluate an opportunity

See the units listed below for information on using strategies to plan, lead and evaluate an opportunity for each of the following areas of learning and development in the current framework in your setting:

- communication and language: Unit 9
- physical development: Units 1 and 5
- personal, social and emotional development: Unit 1
- literacy: Unit 9
- mathematics: Unit 10.

Understanding the world

In the Revised Early Years Foundation Stage, Understanding the world is about how children get to know about other people, the place where they live and about all aspects of the environment. It is broken down into three aspects:

- people and communities
- the world
- technology.

People and communities

As children learn about the world around them, they find out about the past through talking to parents, grandparents and friends. They develop an interest in their own story as well as the stories in their family: this is the beginning of developing an understanding of the past, and helps them to learn about how other people are different from them, yet share some of the same characteristics and ideas.

The world

Understanding of the world develops as children take notice of everything around them, including places and all the things within them, such as trees in the natural environment and roads and traffic in the built environment. Finding out about places begins initially when a child learns about their own home and the things nearby, then later as children notice things on journeys to and from home, such as the sequence of the traffic lights or names on street signs. This awareness is extended by visiting places and finding out about different elements of environments in books, on television and through using other technology. This aspect also focuses on learning about cause and effect and is developed through having conversations with adults and other children about the things they observe.

Technology

Technology has become commonplace for many families, and children often see and use it quite naturally when they activate a toy such as an ambulance or police car to make a siren sound. Recognising the role of technology at home or in a setting is important because this helps children to identify the different types of technology and what they are useful for.

Plan opportunities which support children's understanding of the world

Finding out about the world around them is what babies and young children do very effectively when they investigate by touching, holding or pressing things and by climbing on and jumping off things. Older children love to explore and investigate how and why things work, and to test out their ideas of what will happen if they do a particular thing like pouring more and more water into a container, for example.

Lead opportunities which support children's understanding of the world

Activity . . . .

Implement and evaluate the planned activities.

Expressive arts and design

Plan and lead opportunities which encourage children's engagement in expressive arts and design

In the Early Years Foundation Stage Expressive arts and design (EAD) is broken down into two aspects:

- exploring and using media and materials
- being imaginative.

Figure 15.1 Exploring natural objects

Exploring and using media and materials

This is about how children experiment with media and materials, finding out about their properties and modifying and manipulating them. It includes exploring sounds, patterns, movement and different tools and techniques.

Being imaginative

This is about children's explorations into the world of pretence, building on their experiences of the real world and transforming them into something new. This can be through role play, music, pretend play, block play, small world play or a range of other areas.

Plan opportunities which encourage children's engagement in expressive arts and design

Helping children to be creative is as much about encouraging attitudes of curiosity and questioning as about skills or techniques. Children notice everything and closely observe the most ordinary things that adults often take for granted. Building on children's interests can lead to them creating amazing inventions or making marks on paper that represent for them an experience or something they have seen. Encouraging children to choose and use materials and resources in an open-ended way helps them to make choices and to have confidence in their own ideas. Retaining childhood confidence in their ideas and skills can easily be lost if others 'take over' and try to suggest what the child is making, thinking or doing. Just expressing an interest in the process a child has gone through is often enough, or asking open questions such as 'Please tell me about it – that looks interesting,' may be all that is required to help a child hold on to their remarkable creativity. For ideas on planning opportunities which encourage children's expressive arts and design, see the section on creative and imaginative play in Unit 5.

AC 35.2 Holistic opportunities to promote learning and development when planning

See Unit 8 AC 5.1. Also see Units 1 and 5 for more information on learning and development.

AC 35.3 Partnership working when planning opportunities to promote learning and development

See Unit 1 AC 4.3 and Unit 7 ACs 4.3 and 5.3.

AC 35.4 The role of assessment regarding children's progress at two years and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

See Unit 7 for more information, and Unit 11 AC 3.1 for more information on the two year old progress check. For government guidance on assessment see 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage' (2014) available at www.gov.uk.

LO36 Be able to work in partnership

AC 36.1 Contribute to partnership working in own setting

See Unit 7 ACs 4.3 and 5.3.

AC 36.2 Work in partnership with parents/carers to help them recognise and value the significant contributions they make

This is covered broadly across the units, but see Units 1, 2 and 7 for information on partnership working.

LO37 Be able to use reflective practice to contribute to own professional development

AC 37.1 Develop a curriculum vitae

See Unit 13 AC 3.2.

AC 37.2 Analyse professional development needs in relation to the role of the EYP

See Unit 13 ACs 2.2, 2.3 and 4.2.

AC 37.3 Review learning needs, professional interests and development opportunities

See Unit 13 AC 1.2.

AC 37.4 Devise a professional development plan

See Unit 13 AC 2.3 for advice on devising your own professional development plan in relation to:

- **feedback obtained** from colleagues, children, parents, mentor and other professionals: this can help you to identify your own strengths and weaknesses
- **own progress**: this can be measured against targets you and/or your supervisor have set
- **own goals and ambition**: these are important as they can influence your plan for career development and promotion.

Feedback may be given by:

- verbal interaction from colleagues, manager, parents and children
- written report based on professional observation
- appraisal meeting and documentation
- Ofsted inspection report
- advisory teacher guidance.

AC 37.5 Work with others to make a personal development plan

See Unit 13 AC 2.3.

AC 37.6 Use learning opportunities to support professional development

Your early years setting should keep you informed about opportunities for progression, but it is your responsibility to:

- take advantage of opportunities to gain new knowledge and skills
- identify the new knowledge and skills which will be useful in your work

- use support to find out how to use the new skills and knowledge in your work
- use the new knowledge and skills to improve your practice
- use support to ask for feedback on improvements to your practice.

Activity ·

Describe how you have used learning opportunities to support your own professional development.

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Cathy Nutbrown, in her review for the government 'Foundations for Quality' (2012), wrote:

'continuing professional development for all who work with young children is an essential part of striving for excellence, so individual practitioners and the settings they work in must prioritise it.'

She recommended that all new practitioners should have professional support in their first six months of employment, in the form of mentoring. The arrangements for this should be led by the sector. The Government should support this by bringing together online induction and training modules that can be accessed by all who work in early education and childcare.

AC 37.7 Maintain subject knowledge across curriculum subjects of personal interest

Reviewing current research and using professional literature

Using professional literature will help to inform your practice and in turn promote professional development. Reviewing literature is carrying out an analysis of what others have said or found out about the research area in question.

The first step is to decide which literature is most relevant to you. In other words, what are you hoping to find out? Through the literature, you should be able to confirm your concerns, discarding, modifying or adding to them as you read.

1 **Be systematic**: keep a careful record of all you read, including exact bibliographic references. Each time you find a book or an article which you think will be useful, note it down on a card, remembering to record a full note of the author, etc. You should include a few notes for each reference to remind you of the main issues raised by the author when you return to it. For example:

- **Quotes and references**: if you come across a statement which you might wish to quote, or one which you feel summarises the issues well, make sure you write down a full reference, including the page number.
- **Reading in greater depth**: this allows you to identify competing perspectives within each sub-theme, to compare and contrast them and to identify strengths and weaknesses in the views given.

The search may include books, journals, policy statements, professional journals and other publications, including electronic ones. While books are important, journals tend to be more up to date in their treatment of the issues which you might be researching. Many of the articles available online through the internet are highly topical.

2 **Be critical of what you read**: most writers have a particular viewpoint on an issue and you should consider the validity and reliability of statements made, the authority of the author and the professional relevance of the issues raised.

3 **Read reviews** of books and reports in journals, and follow up those which seem promising.

4 **Ask yourself questions** about what you read:

- Target audience: is it aimed at practitioners, academics, or researchers?
- Relevance: does it raise significant issues?
- Evidence: what is the evidence for arguments made? Is it appropriate? Do you have enough information to know if they drew appropriate conclusions?

  If the focus of your enquiry is the effectiveness of a new policy within your area, for example, on learning and teaching in schools, it will be important to understand and analyse policy documents as well as any other relevant official publications. However, government policy documents will always take a rather one-sided view of the issues, so you need to

balance this by reading about aspects of, for example, philosophy (child-centred education), psychology (how children learn) and sociology (poverty and discrimination).

5 **Libraries** can be very useful in showing you the way to find appropriate information on a particular topic.

Activity ·

Choose a subject area which particularly interests you. Find out how to access literature and other information to research the topic.

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AC 37.8 Explain how reflective practice leads to improved ways of working

See Unit 13 ACs 4.2 and 4.3.