

# Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

## Playing and Exploring

Children will be learning to:	Examples of how to support this:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Realise that their actions have an effect on the world, so they want to keep repeating them.</li></ul>	Encourage babies' exploration of the world around them. Suggestions: investigating the feel of their key person's hair or reaching for a blanket in their cot. Play games like 'Peepo'. As they get more familiar, the baby or toddler will increasingly lead the play and want the adult to respond.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reach for and accept objects. Make choices and explore different resources and materials.</li></ul>	Show and give babies interesting things, such as a rattle or a soft toy. Arrange for babies to take part in Treasure Basket play. Offer open-ended resources for babies and toddlers to play freely with, outdoors and inside.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Plan and think ahead about how they will explore or play with objects.</li></ul>	Provide different pebbles, shells and other natural materials for children to explore and arrange freely.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Guide their own thinking and actions by talking to themselves while playing. For example, a child doing a jigsaw might whisper under their breath: "Where does that one go? - I need to find the big horse next."</li></ul>	Help children to develop more control over their actions by giving them many opportunities to play freely and find their own ways of solving problems. When appropriate, sensitively provide a helpful commentary. You might suggest: "Why don't you look for the biggest pieces first?" That will help a child who is trying to solve a jigsaw. Children may copy your commentary by talking out loud to themselves first. In time, this will develop into their 'inner voice'.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Make independent choices.</li><li>Do things independently that they have been previously taught.</li></ul>	Provide a well-organised environment so that children know where materials and tools are and can access them easily. Provide enough materials and arrange spaces so that children can collaborate and learn alongside peers. Once children know how to use scissors, they can use this skill to achieve what they want to do. For example, they may want to make a mask or cut out material for a collage.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Bring their own interests and fascinations into early years settings. This helps them to develop their learning.</li></ul>	Extend children's interests by providing stimulating resources for them to play with, on their own and with peers, in response to their fascinations. Join in with children's play and investigations, without taking over. Talk with them about what they are doing and what they are noticing. Provide appropriate non-fiction books and links to information online to help them follow their interests.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Respond to new experiences that you bring to their attention.</li></ul>	Regularly provide new materials and interesting things for children to explore and investigate. Introduce children to different styles of music and art. Give them the opportunity to observe changes in living things in the setting, and around the local environment. Take children to new places, like a local theatre or museum.

## Active Learning

Children will be learning to:	Examples of how to support this:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Participate in routines, such as going to their cot or mat when they want to sleep.</li><li>Begin to predict sequences because they know routines. For example, they may anticipate lunch when they see the table being set, or get their coat when the door to the outdoor area opens.</li></ul>	Help babies, toddlers and young children feel safe, secure and treasured as individuals. The key person approach gives children a secure base of care and affection, together with supportive routines. That can help them to explore and play confidently.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Show goal-directed behaviour. For example, babies may pull themselves up by using the edges of a low table to reach for a toy on top of the table. Toddlers might turn a storage box upside down so they can stand on it and reach up for an object.</li></ul>	Provide furniture and boxes at the right height to encourage babies to pull themselves up and reach for objects. Opportunities to play and explore freely, indoors and outside, are fun. They also help babies, toddlers and young children to develop their self-regulation as they enjoy hands-on learning and sometimes talk about what they are doing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Use a range of strategies to reach a goal they have set themselves.</li></ul>	Provide plenty of high-quality, open-ended resources for children to play with freely, inside and outdoors. Suggestion: children can use wooden blocks to make lots of different structures.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Begin to correct their mistakes themselves. For example, instead of using increasing force to push a puzzle piece into the slot, they try another piece to see if it will fit.</li></ul>	Help young children to develop by accepting the pace of their learning. Give them plenty of time to make connections and repeat activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Keep on trying when things are difficult.</li></ul>	Help children to think about what will support them most, taking care not to offer help too soon. Some children learn by repeating something hard on their own. They learn through trial and error. Others learn by asking a friend or an adult for help. Others learn by modelling. They watch what you do or what other children do.

## Creating and Thinking Critically

Children will be learning to:	Examples of how to support this:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Take part in simple pretend play. For example, they might use an object like a brush to pretend to brush their hair, or 'drink' from a pretend cup.</li><li>Sort materials. For example, at tidy-up time, children know how to put different construction materials in separate baskets.</li></ul>	Help babies, toddlers and young children to find their own ideas by providing open-ended resources that can be used in many different ways. Encourage and enjoy children's creative thinking as they find new ways to do things. Children need consistent routines and plenty of time so that play is not constantly interrupted. It is important to be reflective and flexible.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Review their progress as they try to achieve a goal. Check how well they are doing.</li><li>Solve real problems: for example, to share nine strawberries between three friends, they might put one in front of each, then a second, and finally a third. Finally, they might check at the end that everyone has the same number of strawberries.</li></ul>	Help children to reflect on and talk about their learning through using photographs and learning journeys. Share in children's pride about their achievements and their enjoyment of special memories. Suggestion: you could prompt a conversation with questions like: "Do you remember when...?", "How would you would do that now?" or "I wonder what you were thinking then?"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Use pretend play to think beyond the 'here and now' and to understand another perspective. For example, a child role-playing the billy goats gruff might suggest that "Maybe the troll is lonely and hungry? That's why he is fierce."</li></ul>	Help children to extend their ideas through sustained discussion that goes beyond what they, and you, have noticed. Consider 'how' and 'why' things happen.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Know more, so feel confident about coming up with their own ideas.</li><li>Make more links between those ideas.</li></ul>	Help children to look come up with their own ideas and explanations. Suggestion: you could look together at woodlice outdoors with the magnifying app on a tablet. You could ask: "What's similar about woodlice and other insects?" You could use and explain terms like 'antennae' and 'thorax'.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Concentrate on achieving something that's important to them. They are increasingly able to control their attention and ignore distractions.</li></ul>	Offer children many different experiences and opportunities to play freely and to explore and investigate. Make time and space for children to become deeply involved in imaginative play, indoors and outside.