



## Teaching and interactions

Early years practitioners are teachers in their own right. Everything they do in their day-to-day practice involves teaching children and although it may not be in their job titles, it is most certainly in everyone's role. Staff effectively teach young children through the environment they plan for them.

### **The quality of interactions**

Practitioners have a key role in creating an enabling environment that encourages children to become deeply involved in stimulating activities that reflect their individual interests and abilities. It is then the adult's skilled interactions that move children's learning forward.

Ensure that you:

- Engage in dialogue and model language
- Encourage children to express their thoughts and use new words
- Watch, listen and respond
- Encourage independence and confidence
- Allow children to explore, solve problems, speculate and test new ideas
- Are a positive behaviour role model
- Support physical and self-care needs

In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- Active learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

### **Sustained shared thinking (SST)**

"SST occurs when two or more individuals 'work together' in an intellectual way to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate an activity, extend a narrative etc. Both parties must contribute to the thinking and it must develop and extend the understanding" (EPPE2004)

The use of effective open-ended questions by adults can encourage children's thinking and challenge children to think and talk about 'what else' is possible. For example:

- How did you do that?
- How else could you do that?
- What do you think would make it easier/better?

During the observation, assessment and planning process it is important that you are aware of this and ensure that there are opportunities for SST

## **Sustained Shared Thinking and Emotional Well-Being (SSTEWS)**

It is really important that practitioners are skilled in assessing, monitoring and supporting children's socio-emotional, linguistic and cognitive development to ensure that children feel safe, comfortable, interested and stimulated. These are essential conditions for a child to be ready to learn and to begin to think deeply. Therefore, it is crucial to measure how well we are supporting children with the care and emotional well-being, as well as their cognitive development (Sustained Shared Thinking)

### **What is emotional well-being**

Young children' emotional well-being is linked to their ability to:

- Interact positively with others
- Manage their frustrations or other negative emotions without excessive distress
- Use adults effectively when they need help with managing negative emotions

### **Children's readiness for school**

Children who are 'ready for school' and the next stage in their learning will:

- Be excited, enthusiastic, curious and confident about learning
- Be resilient and ready to take on all that is on offer
- Ask questions, take risks and find solutions
- Feel safe, secure and cared for
- Know that they are at the forefront of the adults mind
- Feel that the contributions they make are valued and respected
- Have a broad range of knowledge and skills gained through everyday experiences
- Be active and healthy
- Feel that their efforts will be recognised and celebrated
- Be comfortable to communicate their thoughts, ideas and needs in their own way



- Start to develop an awareness of their own emotions and behaviour, as well as being able to reflect upon them
- Be independent in using self-care skills
- Start to develop their turn taking and cooperative skills
- Be comfortable in approaching others