

Supporting children's learning through teaching and play: childminder 403559

URN: 403559

Region: North West

Remit: Early years

Provider background

This childminder was registered in 2000 and lives with his partner, who is also a registered childminder, in a suburb of Liverpool.

Brief description

This good practice example shows how the childminder supports children's learning with skill and care. It demonstrates what can be achieved when workers have the right knowledge, skills and attitudes about working with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

This is part of a set of eight good practice examples showcasing good practice in early years to support the report: ['Teaching and play in the early years – a balancing act?'](#).

The good practice in detail

This childminder is very successful in teaching children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). In his [inspection in March 2014](#), his teaching was noted to be excellent in helping children to be 'eager to learn' and supporting them to 'make rapid progress in their development'.

There are some key aspects to how this childminder approaches his work.

Linking with families

Children's time in this provision always begins with the childminder learning from parents or carers about their child's interests, abilities and needs. The childminder then shares information with parents and carers regularly about how well children are learning during their time with him. This helps families to support children's learning at home.

Observing and assessing

Developing a close relationship with each child is at the heart of this childminder's approach.

He gives children lots of attention, often on a one-to-one basis while the other children play nearby. When the day gets busier, he spends time focusing on children in small groups. Because he is watchful, he gets to know the individual children very well. He then records any significant or new learning in children's files. He later checks these observations against expectations for different ages of children. He gives careful thought to what he is seeing.

He explains:

'Some things take time for children to achieve but you can't beat the importance of observations. You need to consider the individuality of the child and be flexible in your approach to different children's needs. I always have their development in the back of my mind and check whether children are advanced or behind for their age.'

The childminder also recognises that some children's development may be slower while others' may be more rapid – the key is to consider each child as an individual.

Developing the curriculum

This childminder places a very high priority on supporting children's personal, social and emotional development. This includes a close emphasis on helping children to settle and giving them support and reassurance to separate from their parents at drop-off time. He helps children to understand basic house rules, such as: be superheroes, be safe, be nice and be happy. These rules are enhanced by photographs and displays of children's writing around his home. He plans regular outings for children to local places of interest. He encourages children to share resources and to support one another during play activities. He listens carefully to what children want to say – he avoids rushing children who are not yet confident.

He gives children encouragement and helps them to try new experiences and to play with and alongside other children and adults. He plans frequent opportunities for children to play outdoors and have ample opportunity to grow vegetables and to plant bulbs and seeds. He helps children to watch and ask questions about the birds, hedgehogs and frogs they see. He uses playful activities such as football and den building to encourage children to think and ask questions.

The childminder supports children's learning by:

- playing with, listening to, watching and talking with children for extended periods
- providing lots of opportunities for children to explore resources such as wooden blocks and to create stories with small-world toys

- spending lots of time with children, having fun with language
- reading stories, looking at books and teaching children (and parents or carers) nursery rhymes to instil enjoyment at the earliest age and support the development of early reading skills.

Focusing on teaching

This childminder is clear what teaching means in the EYFS. For him, it has the following elements.

- Children gain knowledge or skills, get better at what they can already do or learning something new.
- Children develop confidence in themselves and love finding things out.
- Adults use opportunities in play; to coordinate, be a friend in or be a part of children's play.
- Adults use children's interests to help them learn new knowledge.
- Adults are 'the oracle' but also show children how and where to find out answers to their questions.
- Adults make as much use as possible of unexpected opportunities to extend children's thinking.
- Adults are the suppliers of resources.

Reviewing and improving practice

This childminder attends training provided locally, including by the local teaching school. He reviews his practice regularly. Working with his co-childminder, he talks frequently about children's learning and how teaching might benefit children even more. He is keen to regularly try different ideas to see if this helps children to make greater progress.

The good practice case studies that Ofsted publishes highlight specific examples of practice that providers of education, learning and children's services have used to achieve successful outcomes.

For education, the case studies do not recommend a single particular approach to teaching and learning. Ofsted has no preferred lesson structure or teaching style. We showcase and share a wide range of approaches that providers have found work well for them in achieving good outcomes for children, young people and learners.

Are you thinking of putting these ideas into practice; or already doing something similar that could help other providers; or just interested? We'd welcome your views and ideas. Complete our survey [here](#).

Click [here](#) to see other good practice examples.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.