

# Social and Emotional Aspects of Development

Local authority trainers' handbook

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# Local authority trainers' handbook

This handbook is part of a package of training and development on Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) which has four parts:

1. This LA trainers' handbook contains resources for trainers to use in planning professional development in PSED for practitioners working with children from birth to five. It links the existing PSED training file (Sure Start 2006) to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and suggests ways of repackaging the PSED file material for training practitioners working within the EYFS. It makes links with the Social and Emotional Aspects of Development (SEAD) Practitioner booklet which should be used alongside this and the Excellence and Enjoyment: Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials. It provides some suggestions for strategic use of funding and resources, a sample training course for inexperienced practitioners, activities for leaders and managers and a section on working with parents as partners in this important area of children's development and learning.
2. A booklet for practitioners focused mainly on the younger children in the EYFS (birth–36 months), although there is much that will be of interest to practitioners working with the older children. It is designed to be used in a number of ways:
  - alongside this LA handbook as part of an LA-organised training course
  - by individuals or groups of practitioners to aid reflective practice about supporting young children's personal, social and emotional development
  - by practitioners in discussion groups with parents.
3. Excellence and Enjoyment: Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL). This is a comprehensive whole-school approach to promoting social and emotional skills. The red booklets targeted at Reception classes and older nursery children (30–50 and 40–60+ months) have been repackaged in line with the EYFS.
4. A CD-ROM containing all the above plus case studies and other resources.

These can all be ordered from

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## Section 1

### The importance of Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) are three building blocks of future success in life. They are closely linked to each other and often bracketed together as one area of learning and development.

- Personal development (Being me) – how we come to understand who we are and what we can do, how we look after ourselves.
- Social development (Being social) – how we come to understand ourselves in relation to others, how we make friends, understand the rules of society and behave towards others.
- Emotional development (Having feelings) – how we come to understand our own and others' feelings and develop our ability to 'stand in someone else's shoes' and see things from their point of view, referred to as empathy.

Starting the process of successful PSED is essential for young children in all aspects of their lives. It will help them to:

- relate well to other children and adults
- make friends and get on with others
- feel secure and valued
- explore and learn confidently; and ultimately to
- feel good about themselves.

Early personal, social and emotional development has a huge impact on later learning, achievement and economic well-being. That is why the Early Years Outcomes Duty (EYOD), as stated within The Childcare Act 2006, places a duty on local authorities (LAs), with their partners 'to improve the well-being of all young children in their area and to reduce the inequalities between them'.

An LA is judged as to how well it is meeting this duty by reference to targets that are set based on the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) results. These are considered to provide a good proxy measure of development across the five Every Child Matters outcomes. The targets seek to improve young children's development across all areas of learning and development with particular focus on personal, social and emotional development, and communication, language and literacy. This focus acknowledges the importance, which has been identified by research such as Effective Provision of Pre-School Education, of these specific areas. The development of these is vital to enable children to achieve across all areas of learning and development and to lay the foundations of lifelong learning and achievement.

The gap-narrowing target focuses on improving the development of those children who achieve the lowest 20% of results. These are sometimes the children who need the greatest support to achieve strong personal, social and emotional development. Supporting this development for the children and fostering their parents' understanding of personal, social and emotional development will contribute greatly to their overall learning and development and ultimately narrow the gap.

It is everybody's duty within an LA to consider how the work that they do with children and families contributes to the EYOD and the meeting of the targets. This booklet is intended to support LAs and practitioners in contributing to meeting this LA duty.



## Section 2

### Understanding and supporting Personal, Social and Emotional Development

#### 2.1 What can parents and practitioners do to support children's personal, social and emotional development?

The simple answer to this question is 'work together'.

Most children are born into loving families who nurture and support their development. The loving things parents do every day such as cuddling, comforting, talking, playing, being proud of every achievement and celebrating it in the family, are the foundations of successful personal, social and emotional development. We are all competent learners from birth and it is usually our parents who give us the confidence to keep learning and stretching the boundaries of our understanding. Parents are very interested in their children's progress as they join groups of other babies or young children in an early years setting. Practitioners work hard to ensure that children are happy in their learning and development and it helps children if parents are genuine partners with practitioners.

Practitioners can help parents and children by:

- being knowledgeable about child development
- encouraging children and families to have a strong cultural identity and pride
- respecting and listening to the views of parents and thus building a strong relationship
- understanding the importance of attachment and a key person
- understanding and managing the behaviour of children and staff effectively
- encouraging a sense of belonging for children and families
- making opportunities for children to be successful
- understanding why happy, sociable children learn better
- recognising and celebrating achievement across all six areas of learning and development.

For further details of the above see practitioner booklet, sections 2 to 5.

There are a range of factors that can adversely affect children's personal, social and emotional development. The following can all have an impact:

- premature/low birth weight
- poor health
- poverty
- lack of warmth and affection
- parental drug or substance abuse
- poor housing
- abuse
- social, racial or cultural discrimination
- poor relationships with practitioners.

Stress has a very particular and hugely important impact upon the growing child. If a pregnant mother is stressed, possibly as a result of some of the factors above, then there is a release of the hormone cortisol into her bloodstream and this affects the baby's developing brain. Babies and young children can themselves become stressed if their caregivers lack responsiveness to their emotional and physical needs. Their bodies will also release cortisol, which, again, affects the developing brain.

A stressed baby or young child may not develop the connections between brain cells that are needed for successful future development and learning in all areas. Such babies may also develop poor attachment.

Practitioners alone cannot counter all of these factors but they can make a huge difference by the way they work with young children and their families. (See SEAD Practitioner booklet section 1.2)

## 2.2 What can LAs do to support children's personal social and emotional development?

LAs can support and challenge practitioners to improve their practice in these areas by providing appropriate training and professional development which models positive relationships and promotes the personal, social and emotional development of adults as well as children.

LAs need to ensure that practitioners have the skills, knowledge and support to work effectively in the areas outlined above. This will include providing training but also appropriate support from Early Years Consultants (EYCs) and other professionals. LAs should ensure that practitioners see their PSED training as an integral and important facet of their EYFS practice. The SEAD Practitioner booklet focuses on the four themes and principles of EYFS in order to demonstrate that successful practice in supporting children's personal, social and emotional development is embedded in the EYFS materials and is fundamental to children's well-being and learning – not something additional.

Although a universal approach to training (providing the same course for all practitioners) is sometimes useful, especially for giving information, for example, introducing EYFS, LAs should consider their strategies for identifying and meeting practitioners' and settings' specific training needs.

LAs should ensure that there is an LA vision for quality improvement and every setting should be involved in monitoring and evaluating their practice as part of the early years quality improvement process. EYCs will be supporting settings to self-evaluate and to develop their practice. LAs should ensure that PSED is included in this self-evaluation and that settings identify their strengths and areas for development.

Some practitioner groups will have a good knowledge of PSED and attachment and will need very different support and training to a group of inexperienced practitioners with little knowledge of development. For example, some practitioners (particularly those working in primary schools) will already be using the Excellence and Enjoyment: Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials and LAs should build on the knowledge and expertise that practitioners have gained. SEAL is a whole-school approach which is complemented by the Social and Emotional Aspects of Development (SEAD) materials. LAs should ensure that, following self-evaluations, practitioners are able to access training or support that will help them to develop their skills and knowledge at a level appropriate for them and their setting.

A tiered approach is often useful: a series of training sessions aimed at practitioners with different levels of prior knowledge, that enables practitioners to build on their existing skills.

LAs should also provide support and challenge to managers and leaders to audit and review their provision, practice and the continuing professional development (CPD) needs of their workforce. It is vital that leaders and managers actively support setting-based development and that there is a whole-setting approach. One person going out for training and feeding back at a staff meeting will not change the whole staff's approach to nurturing and supporting children's personal, social and emotional development.

Many LAs find that providing courses that require attendance at more than one session, with a setting-based task between sessions, helps to ensure that practitioners reflect on the issues and implement changes in their practice. Ensuring that LA support teams ( EYCs, Area SENCOs, etc.) are able to access information about the training that setting practitioners have attended is also useful, as they can support practitioners, leaders and managers to reflect on this training and to improve their practice in the setting.

All LAs need to provide support and training to settings to respect, value and work closely with parents in order to help parents to support children's learning at home. Many practitioners need support to ensure that they have the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to successfully and effectively engage parents in their children's learning. Being able to do this will support not just the development of PSED but all aspects of children's learning and development. **In section 3 you will find some suggested activities and resources that may be useful when planning training.**

### 2.3 Existing materials/resources to support PSED training

There are a number of resources that can support LAs in this role; some of these are included in this handbook.

#### The Early Years Foundation Stage

The EYFS documents, CD-ROM and website contain many different resources for practitioners to use. Using these in training will encourage practitioners to become familiar with them and help to embed effective use of the EYFS in setting practice. It will also help practitioners to recognise that PSED is fundamental to everything they do in EYFS not a 'bolt-on' set of activities.

#### The SEAD Practitioner booklet

The SEAD Practitioner booklet (Ref: 00707-2008BKT-EN) should be given to practitioners attending training and used as part of the training. It links personal, social and emotional development to the EYFS Themes, Principles and Commitments and is used in some of the suggested training sessions in this file.

#### The SEAL materials

Excellence and Enjoyment: Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) (Primary National Strategies, 2005) provides a comprehensive whole-school approach to promoting social and emotional skills which are classified within five social and emotional aspects: self-awareness, managing feelings, motivation, empathy and social skills. There is strong emphasis on collaborative staff development.

#### Links between SEAL, SEAD and EYFS

PSED within the EYFS provides a broad structure and ideas for considering how settings can promote personal, social and emotional development of children. SEAL provides guidance about how PSED can be supported and developed within the school. It provides some specific examples about how a school can help a child who is ready for a more structured approach (40–60 months), develop social and emotional skills through planned learning opportunities, inside and outside the classroom. PSED (within EYFS) can be divided into three main elements that have clear links with SEAL as follows:

| PSED (within EYFS)   | SEAL                          |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Personal (being me)<br><i>Dispositions and attitudes</i><br><i>Self-care</i>                         | Self-awareness and motivation |
| Social (being social)<br><i>Self-confidence and self-esteem</i><br><i>Behaviour and self-control</i> | Social skills                 |
| Emotional (having feelings)<br><i>Making relationships</i><br><i>Sense of community</i>              | Managing feelings and empathy |

The SEAD materials provide a link between the EYFS and SEAL.

The SEAL resources are organised into seven themes:

- New beginnings
- Getting on and falling out
- Say no to bullying
- Going for goals!
- Good to be me
- Relationships
- Changes.

Each theme includes year-group booklets, staff development activities, family activities and small-group activities. The year-group booklets on these themes targeted at the Foundation Stage are very effective in primary schools and have been used in nursery schools and classes. They provide easily accessible activities for use with children.

There are additional staff development activities within 'Getting Started with SEAL' and a set of workshops for use with parents and their children (Family SEAL), see [www.bandapilot.org.uk](http://www.bandapilot.org.uk).

EYFS updated versions of the Foundation Stage red SEAL booklets are available from DCSF publications (November 2008) as *Excellence and Enjoyment: social and emotional aspects of learning Early Years Foundation Stage red set booklets* (00840-2008FLR-EN)

### PSED training materials

This is a training resource consisting of a step-by-step guide detailing seven sessions. Background information, course instructions, key learning points, activity and assignment sheets, handouts and course evaluation forms are provided. The handouts have been developed so that they can be built into a useful resource for course participants. There is a DVD with 11 video clips of naturalistic observations of practitioners and children engaged in the usual activities of their settings. These are not exemplars of practice but to be used as shared observational experiences in the training. There is a resource file which contains further information about relevant books, materials and websites.



Many LAs already train practitioners very effectively to support young children's personal, social and emotional development. Some of these LAs have added case studies to the SEAL wiki: [www.nationalstrategiescpd.org.uk/mod/wiki/view.php?id=2410](http://www.nationalstrategiescpd.org.uk/mod/wiki/view.php?id=2410)

Other LAs have developed their own materials and linked them to SEAL or the PSED file, or Birth to Three, or other early years training. Section 3 contains some ideas for using these materials in supporting practitioners working with the EYFS. Section 6 includes case studies from LAs who have used a variety of existing materials in their PSED training.

## 2.4 Making best use of LA funding

All funding streams available for early years in the LA need to be strategically managed to most effectively support young children. The EYFS and the Every Child Matters outcomes should inform all funding decisions. A clear vision for early years which is clearly articulated and shared with all stakeholders, based on the EYFS principles, should underpin decisions based on detailed analysis of data and up-to-date knowledge about the strengths and weaknesses of settings. It is then easier to make appropriate decisions about the use of funding which makes best use of the LA's human as well as financial resources.

### Children's Plan funding

All LAs received detailed information in July 2008 about their funding allocations under the Children's Plan. SEAD is one of the main funding streams and has been allocated to all LAs. This element of funding is to help improve the skills and expertise of early years practitioners to support children's personal, social and emotional development. It forms part of the commitment made in the Children's Plan to support the early years workforce to access training for CPD by providing additional funding for supply cover. The Children's Plan identified supply cover as a key barrier to taking up training and CPD. The SEAD funding is worked out on a daily rate of £75 per day to release one member of staff per setting.

However, LAs are free to decide in consultation with local providers how to allocate and use much of this funding in order to enable practitioners to access relevant training opportunities in the most effective ways possible – for example 'after-hours' or weekend events which staff are paid to attend. The diversity of the sector and the size and type of LA (small unitary, large industrial, large rural, etc.) mean that there can be no one-size-fits-all model of training.

LAs need to think strategically about how SEAD can be linked to other funding streams. There are other Children's Plan funding streams such as :

- Every Child a Talker (ECaT)
- Buddying
- Birth to Seven Partnerships
- Graduate Leader Fund (GLF).

Some LAs will have funding for all these projects. Others only have funding initially for SEAD and possibly one or two others – although some of the funding will be rolled out more widely in subsequent years; for example ECaT and free entitlement.

There are also some other significant pots of money in all LAs.

### Outcomes Quality and Inclusion funding

This funding has been allocated to:

- strengthen the support and challenge provided by LAs to settings in order to continuously improve the quality of practice
- develop the early years workforce to respond effectively to that stronger support and challenge
- directly support the recruitment and/or training of a graduate leader for every PVI (Private, Voluntary and Independent) full daycare setting in LA areas.

### Standards Fund

The funding is to help LAs sustain and accelerate support for the early years workforce in schools and covers a specific system-wide focus on raising achievement for all children and closing the gap for the 20% poorest performers. The grant can be linked to the Children's Plan funding and used to release teachers:

- to attend additional CPD opportunities provided by the LA or private trainers on the EYFS, including training units on the Learning and Development and Welfare requirements, recognised Level 3 qualification such as National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in Early Years Care and Education or Children's Care, Learning and Development, observational assessment, first aid
- to carry out tasks related to CPD to embed the learning they have experienced
- to establish partnerships with others to support effective and coherent EYFS delivery, for example with other settings in maintained and PVI settings and health and social care practitioners.

In 100 LAs the Standards Funding includes the Communication, Language and Literacy Development (CLLD) programme. The full-time specialist CLLD consultant is expected to play a significant role in working strategically to strengthen the LA's expertise in CLL. The consultant will also work directly with schools and PVI settings and will monitor children's progress in CLL and PSED.

LAs need to think strategically about how projects can be linked, for example, ECaT and SEAD. For instance, could training and professional development for practitioners in selected settings focus on the role of the key person (SEAD) in improving young children's receptive language (ECaT) and the teaching of reading (CLLD)? This work might also link to the free entitlement – for example, exploring how children's PSED should be considered when longer sessions are provided and how EYFS guidance about Enabling Environments should underpin provision. The Early Language consultant with responsibility for ECaT in 20 settings needs to be deployed strategically and work with others, such as EYCs and CLLD consultants for maximum impact.

### **Making a Big Difference and Buddying and/or Birth-to-seven partnerships**

LAs which have funding for projects such as Making a Big Difference will need to consider how they might use the SEAD supply cover funding alongside these projects which share a focus on narrowing the achievement gap. Shared learning between leaders and staff across settings can involve new and aspiring graduate leaders.

### **The role of EYCs**

One of the main sources of support for settings are EYCs. They have a key role to play in delivering, building on and following up training and developing a shared understanding with all providers of what constitutes high-quality provision in the EYFS generally and in PSED in particular. They support and challenge settings to:

- conduct effective self-evaluation
- use appropriate Quality Improvement (QI) tools to review and improve provision
- monitor children's progress through observation, assessment and planning
- work with parents
- capture and share best practice across all settings
- work with leaders and managers to further develop their knowledge, skills and understanding.

They should be managed effectively to work very closely with ECaT and CLLD consultants as well as with their primary colleagues to ensure the most appropriate and challenging support across the sector.

### **Working with leaders and managers**

Effective leadership and management of settings is crucial to practitioners really knowing and understanding the principles and practice required in the EYFS and children in every setting receiving the very best support for their personal, social and emotional development. The best training for headteachers, leaders and managers enables them to take responsibility for CPD for themselves and their staff and for working with others to promote continuity of experience for children. There is a suggested session for leaders and managers in section 4.

## Section 3

### Using the Sure Start PSED (Blue File) training materials

These materials, often referred to as the 'PSED Blue file' were developed by the Sure Start Unit in collaboration with Kings' College London. They are a useful training resource consisting of a step-by-step guide to a comprehensive training course that includes training sessions, handouts, a DVD that gives observational examples of practice, assignments and additional resources.

All LAs should have at least one copy of these materials, or they can be downloaded from: [www.surestart.gov.uk/publications/?Document=1995](http://www.surestart.gov.uk/publications/?Document=1995). They can also be ordered from DCSF publications, tel: 0845 6022260, email: [dcsf@prolog.gov.uk](mailto:dcsf@prolog.gov.uk)

Although these materials were developed before EYFS, the content links very closely to *Birth to Three Matters* and the *Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage*, this means that they are still very relevant and contain a wealth of useful activities and links to additional resources for trainers. In the following section an explanation of how the PSED materials are organised and how they link to EYFS is given.

They will be referred to as the Blue File in this document.

#### 3.1 How are the Blue File PSED materials organised?

The whole training course consists of seven sessions, each timed to last 3.5 hours. Ideally the sessions should be separated by intervals of at least a week to give participants time to reflect on the content and to complete assignments. However, it is possible to 'dip in and out' and to use the materials creatively for shorter courses.

The Blue File materials consider the development of PSED using five 'domains':

1. Being social
2. Being close
3. Being me
4. Having feelings
5. Having friends and relationships.

Each of these domains is then broken down into building blocks.

The following table (Table 1) illustrates how the domains are divided into 'building blocks', the focus of each and how these link to the aspects of PSED in EYFS.

#### 1.1

| Domain       | Building Blocks              | Focus   | EYFS aspects of PSED                                    |
|--------------|------------------------------|---|---|
| Being social | Awareness and interest       | The way that babies and young children begin to give their attention to their closest caregivers and then gradually relate more to other adults and children. | Self-confidence and self-esteem<br>Making relationships |
|              | Relating to others           | The way that babies and young children communicate their social and emotional needs.  |   |
|              | Understanding and responding | The fact that being social is a two-way process.  |   |

## 1.2

| Domain      | Building Blocks          | Focus  | EYFS aspects of PSED  |
|-------------|--------------------------|--|---|
| Being close | Feeling secure           | Children's in-built desire to develop a strong emotional attachment to a particular caregiver, usually the mother.   | Dispositions and attitudes<br>Self-confidence and self-esteem |
|             | Separating and exploring | The ways in which babies and young children venture into and learn about the world around them and the people in it. | Making relationships<br>Self-care                             |
|             | Seeking help and comfort | The way in which children must be able to turn to a key person for care and reassurance.                             |   |

## 1.3

| Domain   | Building Blocks         | Focus  | EYFS aspects of PSED   |
|----------|-------------------------|--|--|
| Being me | Who I am                | Children developing as separate human beings and their growing appreciation of who they are, what they can do and their place in the family and the wider world. | Dispositions and attitudes<br>Self-confidence and self-esteem<br>Behaviour and self-control<br>Self-care<br>Sense of community |
|          | How I feel about myself | The way that children begin to trust and feel positive about their own abilities and their own backgrounds and ethnicity.  |  |
|          | Being myself            | The way that children assert and look after their individuality.   |  |

## 1.4

| Domain          | Building Blocks             | Focus  | EYFS aspects of PSED       |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Having feelings | Experiencing feelings       | How children become increasingly aware of their feelings.                                | Behaviour and self-control |
|                 | Knowing and naming feelings | Supporting children to identify and share their feelings.                                |                            |
|                 | Managing feelings           | How children can manage their increasingly complex feelings in socially acceptable ways. |                            |



## 1.5

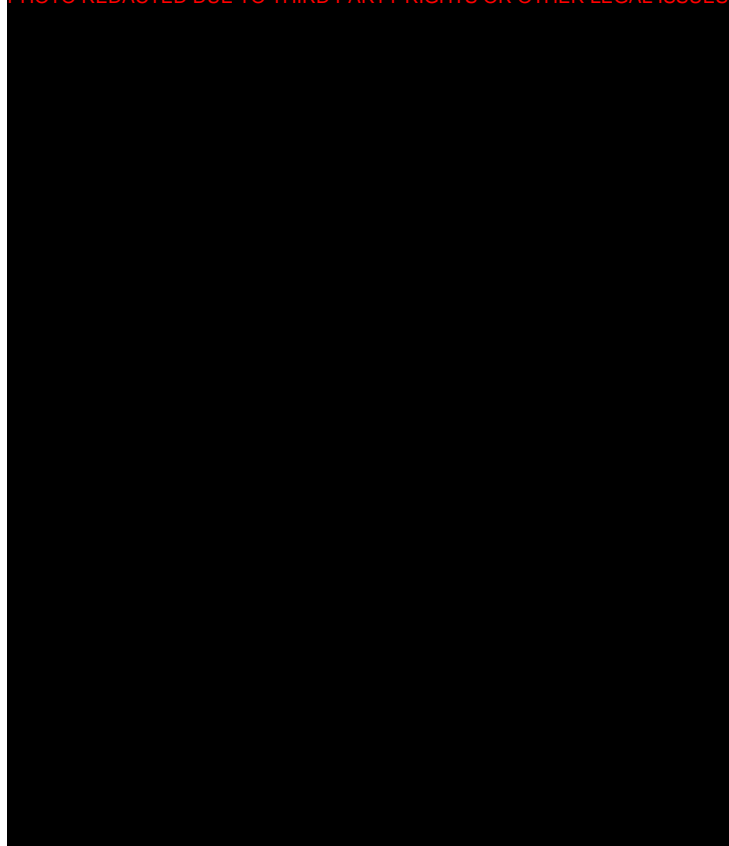
| Domain                           | Building Blocks        | Focus   | EYFS aspects of PSED  |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|---|---|
| Having friends and relationships | Being friendly         | The ways in which children use their communication and social skills to form friendships.   | Self-confidence and self-esteem<br>Making relationships<br>Behaviour and self-control |
|                                  | Being caring           | Helping children to act thoughtfully and carefully towards others.  |   |
|                                  | Getting on with others | How children gradually recognise and appreciate the conventions, standards and limits that govern social relationships and behaviour. |   |

## 3.2 How are the training sessions organised?

Each session considers a domain in detail and all seven sessions are organised in the same way. Four topics are covered in a session. Topic 2 usually relates to children's development and topic 3 to practitioner skills and knowledge. The other topics relate to setting and reviewing the between-session assignments.

The introduction to each session of the Blue File also contains some useful, simple background reading and at the end of each session there is a list of resources.

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### 3.3 How does the content relate to EYFS Principles and Commitments?

This table (Table 2) demonstrates how the sessions and topics reflect the EYFS Principles and Commitments and also how the sessions are organised.  
(Adapted from Table 4 on p. 12 of the PSED Blue File.)

#### How the content of PSED materials links to EYFS Principles and Commitments

| Session              | Topic 1                               | Topic 2 Children's Development   | Topic 3 Practitioner Skills and Knowledge   | Topic 4            |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|--------------------|
| 1. PSED and learning | Introduction, course aims and outline | PSED and learning  | The reflective early years practitioner   | Assignment setting |
| EYFS                 |                                       | A Unique Child<br>Child development<br>Keeping safe<br>Health and well-being<br>Learning and Development<br>Play and exploration<br>Creativity and critical thinking | Positive Relationships<br>Respecting each other<br>Supporting learning<br>Key person<br>Enabling Environments<br>Observation, assessment and planning<br>Supporting every child<br>The learning environment |                    |
| 2. Being social      | Assignment review                     | Being social   | Listening skills  | Assignment setting |
| EYFS                 |                                       | A Unique Child<br>Child development<br>Learning and Development<br>Play and exploration<br>Active learning   | Positive Relationships<br>Respecting each other<br>Supporting learning<br>Key person  |                    |

| Session                | Topic 1           | Topic 2 Children's Development  | Topic 3 Practitioner Skills and Knowledge  | Topic 4            |
|------------------------|-------------------|---|--|--------------------|
| 3. Being close<br>EYFS | Assignment review | Being close<br><br>A Unique Child<br>Child development<br>Enabling Environments<br>Observation, assessment and planning<br>Supporting every child<br>Learning and Development<br>Play and exploration<br>Creativity and critical thinking | Qualities and attitudes<br><br>Positive Relationships<br>Key person  | Assignment setting |
| 4. Being me<br>EYFS    | Assignment review | Being me<br><br>A unique child<br>Child development<br>Inclusive practice<br>Learning and Development<br>Play and exploration<br>Creativity and critical thinking   | Knowing children<br><br>A Unique Child<br>Inclusive practice<br>Positive Relationships<br>Supporting learning<br>Key person<br>Enabling environments<br>Observation, assessment and planning | Assignment setting |

| Session   | Topic 1           | Topic 2 Children's Development  | Topic 3 Practitioner Skills and Knowledge   | Topic 4            |
|---|-------------------|---|---|--------------------|
| 5. Having feelings<br><br>EYFS                  | Assignment review | Having feelings<br><br>A Unique Child<br>Child development<br>Keeping safe<br>Health and well-being<br>Learning and Development<br>Play and exploration<br>Creativity and critical thinking | Encouragement and limit setting<br><br>Positive Relationships<br>Respecting each other<br>Supporting learning | Assignment setting |
| 6. Having friends and relationships<br><br>EYFS | Assignment review | Having friends and relationships  | Working together  | Assignment setting |
|   |                   | A Unique Child<br>Child development<br>Positive Relationships<br>Respecting each other<br>Key person<br>Learning and Development<br>Play and exploration<br>Active learning                 | Positive Relationships<br>Key person<br>Enabling environments<br>Observation, assessment and planning         |                    |

| Session   | Topic 1           | Topic 2 Children's Development  | Topic 3 Practitioner Skills and Knowledge  | Topic 4 |
|---|-------------------|---|--|---------|
| 7. Promoting PSED aspects of Learning in practice | Assignment review | Promoting PSED in practice  | Getting extra help   | Close   |
| EYFS  |                   | A Unique Child<br>Inclusive practice<br>Positive Relationships<br>Supporting learning<br>Respecting each other<br>Enabling environments<br>Observation, assessment and planning<br>Supporting every child<br>The learning environment | A Unique Child<br>Inclusive practice<br>Enabling Environments<br>The wider context |         |

The table demonstrates that the content of the file relates to the main principles and a number of the commitments that trainers should consider when providing training on PSED.

### 3.4 Using these materials to provide SEAD training

These materials can still be used in a variety of ways alongside other resources and the EYFS guidance materials.

Trainers can:

- use the materials as a whole package to provide in-depth training
- use individual sessions or topics to provide training tailored to specific aspects of PSED
- 'dip in' and use some of the materials as part of a course that is being developed in an LA
- 'rearrange' the training sessions and repackage the materials under EYFS Principles or Commitments.

### 3.5 Rearranging/repackaging the materials to use in training

If you look at Tables 1 and 2 you will see how the materials link to the EYFS.

**Think about the focus of a training session that you want to develop to meet the identified needs of practitioners. You can also consider other National Strategy resources that will be useful when planning the session and some suggestions are included in the examples.**

Table 3

| Focus of training session  | EYFS PSED aspects   | Suitable PSED Blue File sessions  | SEAD Practitioner booklet | Other National Strategies materials to consider   |
|--|---|---|---------------------------|---|
| Practitioners need support with behaviour and setting appropriate limits and boundaries for children's behaviour<br><br>Often these issues are linked to effectively communicating with, listening to and understanding children's developmental needs | Making relationships<br><br>Behaviour and self-control      | Session 5 Having feelings<br><br>Topic 2 Activity 2; Topic 3 Encouragement, limits and consistency  | Sections 2 and 3          | <i>Confident, capable and creative: supporting boys' achievements</i> (Ref: DCSF-00682-2007)<br><br>Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) (Ref: DfES 0110-2005G)<br><br>(Especially Getting on and falling out)<br><br>The Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) <i>Supporting Children With Speech, Language and Communication Needs</i> (Ref: 00215-2008BKT-EN)<br><br>ECaT materials |
| Role of the key person   | Self-confidence and self-esteem<br><br>Making relationships | Session 2 Topic 3 Listening effectively to young children<br><br>Session 3 Topic 3 Qualities and attitudes of the key person<br><br>Session 6 Topic 3 Working together with babies and young children | Sections 3 and 4          | EYFS guidance materials relating to key person<br><br><i>Seamless Transitions – supporting continuity in young children's learning</i> (Ref: 0267-2006PCK-EN)   |

**(Trainers please note:** To avoid confusing practitioners if you use the Blue File materials please change references to Birth to Three Matters and FS to EYFS.)

### 3.6 Are the Blue File materials suitable to use with practitioners working with very young babies and children?

Although you will find that the DVD and some of the activities are aimed at practitioners working with children aged 3, 4 and 5, much of the content is suitable, or can easily be adapted to use with practitioners working with babies and younger children.

### 3.7 Does the Blue File cover partnership with parents?

The Blue File frequently mentions the important role of the practitioner in working with parents. However there are no activities and exercises that specifically focus on this aspect of work. The importance of gaining information from and sharing information with parents is included in many of the Key Learning points and in the handouts; these can be reinforced with practitioners every time they are used.

Other aspects of working with parents, such as developing a culture of respect in a setting, are covered in Blue File activities and suggestions as to which may be useful are given in section 5 of this handbook – Parents as Partners.

There are additional staff development activities within 'Getting Started with SEAL' and a set of workshops for use with parents and their children (Family SEAL).

EYFS updated versions of the Foundation Stage red SEAL booklets are available from DCSF publications (November 2008) as *Excellence and Enjoyment: social and emotional aspects of learning Early Years Foundation Stage red set booklets* (00840-2008FLR-EN)

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## Section 4

### Example training sessions

In this next section you will find some examples of training sessions.

Remember that these are only suggestions and you should be considering how to compile a training course that meets the identified needs of the practitioners. Timings are not included as the activities can be shortened or developed to meet particular needs.

The following two sessions are aimed at inexperienced practitioners working with babies and very young children. They have been developed using the Blue File as a basis to demonstrate how useful those materials still are. They include new examples of activities to complement the materials and examples of how to use the SEAD Practitioner booklet in training.

Tables such as the one below are included at the beginning of some suggested sessions to illustrate how the Blue File has been used in the training and to give details of other materials that have been used or suggest additional useful materials. The suggestions are not exhaustive and the LA effective practice examples later in this document (Section 6) will provide additional ideas.

The focus here is on the younger children in the EYFS. For practitioners working with the older children you will find some useful materials in the Appendices. There is guidance on the **key person in Reception and nursery classes** and an article by Jenny Mosley on **Quality Circle Time** in the early years.

| Focus of training session                                     | EYFS PSED as Aspects/Principles     | Suitable PSED Blue File sessions   | Other materials used or suggested   |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Inexperienced practitioners working in baby and toddler units |                                     |  |   |
| Session 1   | Unique child<br>All aspects of PSED | Session 4<br>Activity 1 Being me<br>Being social<br>Session 3 The development of Having feelings | EYFS Development matters<br>Topic 3 (p. 42 Blue File PSED materials) Listening effectively to babies and young children<br>Talk to your baby:<br><a href="http://www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk">www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk</a> |
| Session 2   | Unique child<br>All aspects of PSED | Session 1<br>Topic 3 The reflective early years practitioner                                     | <i>Creating the Picture</i> (Ref: DCSF 00283-2007DWO-EN-01) only available at:<br><a href="http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications">www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications</a>                      |



## A two-part training course for inexperienced practitioners

Session 1 – PSED – A unique child – An introduction to the development of PSED

Session 2 – The role of practitioner in supporting PSED

### Session 1

#### A unique child

##### Resources needed:

- EYFS PSED Card
- Blue File DVD 4
- SEAD Practitioner booklet
- EYFS CD-ROM
- SEAD LA **handout 1**

Handouts from Blue File

- **BFs4 handout 4**, pp. 92–93 'Getting to know young children'
- **BFs4 handout 2**, p. 90 'How I feel about myself and being myself'
- **BFs4 handout 3**, p. 91 'The development of Being me'
- **BFs2 handout 2**, from pp. 48–49 'The development of being social'
- **BFs5 handout 3**, pp. 113–15 'The development of having feelings'
- **BFs4 Activity Sheet 1**, p. 87 'Who I Am'.

##### Introduction

1. Explain that this session concentrates on an overview of the personal, social and emotional aspects of babies' and young children's development and learning.

Remind participants of the aspects of PSED that are in EYFS – show the PSED card and briefly talk through the aspects of PSED and what personal, social and emotional development means for children.

Point out that this session, in this two-part course, looks specifically at the development of PSE and session 2 will cover the role of the practitioner in supporting children's development. Ensure that participants understand this course is not about providing a list of activities to promote PSED but about babies' and children's development and the knowledge, skills and abilities that practitioners need to support children's learning.

2. Blue File PSED Materials DVD 4 as an introduction to the topic.

Ask participants to watch the DVD, paying close attention to the interactions between the practitioners and the children. Play DVD 4.

**Take some feedback** about how the babies and children are interacting with the other children and the practitioners; how is social contact being made?

Using the notes below point out the obvious differences in the children's skills and abilities.

- The youngest baby attempting to make social contact – how this develops so that by the time children are three they are able to communicate their needs verbally.
- The importance of the role the practitioner plays in each of the clips.

DVD 4: Being social: Listening and Responding (3'17'") consists of three scenes of babies and young children being social with practitioners and with each other.

1. The first scene is of eight-week-old Dupre engaged in an interaction with a practitioner and three-year-old Chevaun, at a children's centre. The scene shows Dupre's awareness and interest in being social and shows her using vocalisations and other non-verbal means of communicating with the practitioner and Chevaun. The practitioner uses skills of effective listening, including paying close attention, giving eye contact, pausing, giving Dupre a chance to respond and supporting Chevaun's interactions with her. It demonstrates that even very young babies are capable of participating in 'conversations' and shows Chevaun adjusting the way she relates and responds to suit the situation.
2. The second scene is of three-year-old Alexander, watched by 17-month-old Freya, showing their childminder how he wants to be rocked in a rocking chair. Alexander uses language and non-verbal skills to communicate and the childminder listens closely, pays attention, concentrates and keeps on listening until she understands what he wants her to do.
3. The third scene is of three-year-old Owen joined by a practitioner while he is engaged in domestic role-play at a children's centre. He uses verbal and non-verbal communication to relate to the practitioner who meets his developmental needs by supporting and extending his language. They are joined by three-year-old Ahlam whose home language is Somali and the practitioner uses her engagement in play as an opportunity to support and extend her use of English. The practitioner shows warmth, enthusiasm and interest, and uses simple, slow and direct language throughout the scene.

**Point out** that key outcomes for early personal, social, and emotional development are:

- progress in early personal, social and emotional development helps to meet Early Learning Goals
- positive outcomes improve babies' and young children's well-being, learning and achievement, and behaviour
- early progress and outcomes provide the foundation for development in later childhood, adolescence and into adulthood
- negative personal, social and emotional outcomes from birth to end of the EYFS increase the chances of problems with later personal, social and emotional development, learning problems and fulfilment of potential, and school attendance.

Move on to Activity 1.

### Activity 1

Tell participants that you are now moving them on to look more closely at development.

Ask participants to turn to section 1.1 of the Practitioners booklet. Talk through 'What is PSED and why is it important?'

#### *1.1 What is Personal, Social and Emotional Development and why is it important?*

*Personal, Social and Emotional Development are three building blocks of future success in life. They are closely linked to each other and often bracketed together as one area of learning and development.*

*Personal development – (Being me) how we come to understand our selfhood, who we are and what we can do, how we look after ourselves.*

*Social development – (Being social) how we come to understand ourselves in relation to others, how we make friends, understand the rules of society and behave towards others.*

*Emotional development – (Having feelings) how we come to understand our own and others' feelings and develop our ability to 'stand in someone else's shoes' and see things from their point of view.*

Tell participants that you are going to cover some aspects of the development of each of these areas in this session – it is impossible to cover everything but this will help you to reflect on your current knowledge and the areas that you need to develop further.

Point out that in this session:

- Personal Development is called Being me
- Social Development is called Being social; making relationships, making friends, social development
- Emotional Development is called Having feelings.

Emphasise that there will be inevitable overlaps in these areas – one does not develop in isolation from the others.

Ask participants if they know of resources that can help them when considering the development of PSED.

Point out that there is one set of resources that they all have access to that can provide lots of information – the EYFS materials.

Show the PSED Card and explain briefly how this is set out, the aspects and the three areas you are asked to give particular attention to: Positive Relationships; Enabling Environments; and Learning and Development.

Use EYFS CD-ROM and go to hexagon 'flower' on home page entitled 'Search areas of Learning and Development' and select PSED. Narrow down to one age range, for example, 'Birth to 11 months' and point out to practitioners how useful all the information is. Select Self-confidence and Self-esteem as examples of the development of Being social. (NB: If you are able to access the internet during a training session click on Early Support and show participants the additional information available – if not point out to them that they can access more details online.) Pages 29–31 in the *EYFS Practice Guidance* (Ref: 00266-2008BKT-EN) also contain development information to help participants without computer access.

Point out what it says in the *EYFS Practice Guidance* page 11.

*Development matters:*

*2.3 The Development matters column identifies the developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that children will need if they are to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the EYFS.*

*2.4 It is important to note that children will not necessarily progress sequentially through the stages, since these do not represent age-related goals. Some elements may appear to have been achieved very quickly, others will take much longer. As children move from one element to another, they take with them what they have already achieved and continue to practise, refine and build on their previous development and learning.*

Tell participants that they will be asked to complete a task in their setting relating to a child's development and the information in EYFS and the handouts from this session will be useful for that.

### **Being me**

Getting to really know and understand individual children, to appreciate their individuality and their sense of self, is a crucial part of early years work. It requires genuine interest in every child's preferences, strengths and abilities; moods and dispositions; sensitivities and self-reliance; culture and background; as well as their lives outside of the setting.

## Activity 2

Use Blue File Activity 1 Being me, p. 79. ('Who I Am' BFs4 Activity Sheet 1 is on p. 87.)

Ask participants to share with their neighbour a brief description of a child that they are working with at the moment, using the sheet as a prompt. They may not be able to answer all the questions, but should think about:

- what the child likes to do best
- what the child's preferences are. (What food? When do they like to take a nap? Favourite songs or activities?)

**Take some brief feedback**, noting how different the children are. Reinforce the key learning points and – to discuss development and reinforce the point that you will really have to have observed the children closely to know them so well – remind participants about the importance of working with parents. For example, does the child have the same likes/dislikes at home – what are their favourite games at home? Does the practitioner share their knowledge of the child with parents?

Be ready to answer comments such as 'They are only a baby and so too young to know anything about their race or culture.' 'They are too young to know whether they are a boy or a girl.'

Ask participants to then discuss examples of how they support this individuality, for example, 'I know he likes "Round and round the garden" so I always do it with him when I'm playing with him.'

### Take brief feedback.

Point out that this recognition of the baby/child, the fact that you have noted their preferences and are letting them know that by repeating their favourite things, is good for the development of self-esteem; it helps children to feel good about themselves and aids their personal development.

Ask for examples of other ways that practitioners support the development of self-esteem with young babies and children.

Give out **BFs4 handout 4** 'Getting to know young children', (pp. 92–93) and pick out a few points to talk through.

Refer practitioners to **p. 12** in SEAD Practitioner Booklet

The EYFS theme of A unique child requires practitioners to 'tune in' to children as unique individuals. This involves:

- knowing about how children develop
- observing children closely
- listening actively, attentively, and with respect, to all children and parents whatever their background
- being able to put yourself in the child's or parent's shoes by stepping outside yourself, and the way your setting is run, and seeing things from their point of view – often called having empathy
- valuing what you learn from observing children and from talking with their parents and acting on it for the benefit of the children.

As they get older children who feel good about themselves usually have more friends. They are more likely to tackle things that they find difficult. On the other hand, children who lack confidence and feel bad about themselves are more likely to avoid challenges and may become anxious or turn in on themselves. Children who overestimate themselves in highly unrealistic ways are more likely to feel ashamed, frustrated and angry about not meeting their own expectations.

Give out **BFs4 handout 2**, (p. 90) 'How I feel about myself and being myself'.

The Development of Being me (p. 91) can be given out following the activity. Pick out a few points and remind participants that they can use this and Development Matters to think about the progress of development.

### Being social

Point out that this is about Making relationships; how do children develop relationships with others?

#### Resources:

- Activity 1 (p. 39) Blue File
- Blue File DVD 4
- SEAD Practitioner booklet

Point out to participants the following:

Being social is a fundamental part of everyday life. It is the means by which we relate to and understand others and the means by which they relate to and understand us. It weaves sounds and language, variations of tone and emphasis, facial expressions and gestures together with our thoughts, feelings, ideas, experiences and desires.

Children's ability to relate, understand and respond to adults and their peers moulds and shapes their progress through life. For example, children who are better at expressing themselves and responding to others are more popular. On the other hand, without these social skills children find it hard to make close friendships, hard to play with others, as well as difficult to learn and solve problems.

The ability to be social is of course intrinsically linked to stage of development – very young babies, for example, may play alongside others in a group but do not play 'together' with other babies, however, as children develop they become able to relate to and play with other children.

Babies and young children are usually very sensitive and aware of other children and adults. For example, from very early after birth, babies quickly recognise their mothers and other main caregivers as well as showing a strong interest and preference for human faces. From these simple beginnings, babies and young children gradually become more adept and sophisticated at picking up and reading the signs and signals of their caregivers, other adults and children. By recognising caregivers and others, babies begin to form attachments with people.

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**The EYFS tells us:** (on the PSED Card)

*Being acknowledged and affirmed by important people in their lives leads to children gaining confidence and inner strength through secure attachments with these people.*

These emotional bonds that children develop with their parents and other caregivers are crucial for their personal, social and emotional development. A child with secure attachment feels able to rely on their parents or caregivers for safety and comfort and uses these important attachment relationships as bases from which

to explore the world. It is important that children and especially babies form attachments to practitioners and this will be covered in more detail in the next session.

A child whose social awareness and interest has not been encouraged may be slow to respond and appear indifferent or unconcerned as they struggle to grasp and react to their caregivers, other adults and peers.

### Activity 3

Complete Activity 1 (The building blocks of being social, p. 39 Blue File) using DVD 4 again. You may wish to omit number 5 by writing points on a flipchart and just discussing them. Focus on the points relating to babies.

In the DVD from the IDP *Supporting Children With Speech, Language and Communication Needs* (Ref: 00215-2008BKT-EN) document there is a clip in the section entitled 'A unique child; recognise different methods of communication' of childminder Mark interacting with Poppy which may also be useful as an example here.

Following the discussion about how children being social changes from birth to five, give out **BFs2 handout 2** from pp. 48–49, 'The development of being social'.

Ask the participants to look carefully at this handout in their own time.

Point out to participants how important it is to listen and respond appropriately to children and to help them to develop their skills as communicators in order that they have the skills needed to be social. If you need to cover these aspects in more detail with some groups refer to:

- topic 3 (p. 42, Blue File) Listening Effectively to Babies and Young Children
- *Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics Phase One Teaching Programme* (Ref: 00113-2008PCK-EN). Download from: [www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk)
- Inclusion Development Programme – Supporting Children with Speech, Language and Communication needs: Guidance for practitioners in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Ref: 00215-2008BKT-EN)
- Talk to your baby website: [www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk](http://www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk)

### Having feelings

Introduce the topic by making the following points.

- Children make enormous advances from birth to the end of the Foundation Stage in being able to recognise, understand and manage feelings and emotions.
- Over time, they become increasingly familiar with their feelings; they begin to name and talk about them and those of others.
- Becoming better able to control and manage emotions gives children the chance to find ways to feel content and feel good, as well as cope with and manage uncomfortable and unpleasant feelings.
- Children who are better at managing their feelings get along better and are more accepted by their peers. They are better at seeing the points of view of others and less likely to become overwhelmed by their own feelings. On the other hand, children who have difficulty in coping with their feelings are more likely to show the extremes of emotion such as intense anxiety, fearfulness or anger. They are more likely to avoid difficult situations, and find it difficult to concentrate, consider others or to work out what to do to make themselves and their situation better.

Give out **handout 1**.

SEAD LA **handout 1**

| Emotions and Feelings  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| 8–20 months  | 22–36 months  | 30–50 months  | 40–60 months   |
| Strategies babies use to indicate likes and dislikes   | How children show their enthusiasm for the things that they like, or their anxiety about things that concern them | How adult approval or disapproval affects what children do                            | Express needs and feelings in appropriate ways   |
| The sounds, words and actions babies use to show feelings such as pleasure, excitement, frustration or anger | How children express their frustrations   | How children show care and concern for other living things and the environment        | Understands that own actions affect other people, e.g. becomes upset or tries to comfort another child when they realise that they have upset them |
| How babies express affection   | How children begin to show affection and concern when other children are upset                                    | How children demonstrate being stubborn or negative and how they react to frustration | Generally cooperative and amenable to rules and routines and has fewer tantrums  |

(From EYFS Practice Guidance PSED Look, listen and note pp.26–40)

Divide participants into three small groups and allocate each group one of the age ranges: 8–20 months, 22–36 months, or 30–50 months. (Not 40–60 months.)

Ask each group to discuss and note down some of the ways in which they have seen babies and young children express these feelings. For example, Group 1, 8–20 months: discuss the ways in which babies indicate their likes and dislikes. Give ten minutes and then **take brief feedback** from each group.

Ensure that feedback includes the following Key Learning Points.

- Feelings are a mix of physical sensations, thoughts and subjective experience, and behaviour and actions.
- Babies and young children become increasingly aware of their own feelings.
- Young children show interest in the feelings of others, and begin to realise that they differ from their own.
- It takes time for babies and children to get used to how feelings work and to know the difference between different emotions.
- Young babies are very reliant on caregivers to understand how they feel and to soothe and calm them as well as offer interest and excitement.
- Young babies initially react spontaneously and immediately to how they feel and gradually find ways to manage and alter how they feel.
- Growing self-awareness and language skills make it easier for younger children to do things for themselves about how they feel.
- They also become better at explaining how they feel and asking for help, making it easier for them to manage their increasingly complex feelings in socially appropriate ways.

Following feedback point out the 40–60 months column to participants and explain how children will develop the ability to express their needs and feelings in more appropriate ways. Also emphasise that practitioners and parents need to ensure that they support children's development and learning by:

- giving consistent familiar care and experiences; this makes it easier for babies and children to connect how they feel with what they experience and how they act
- helping children to name, interpret and explain feelings as well as to make connections between feelings and their causes
- influencing the ways that children manage their feelings by modelling appropriate behaviour and using encouragement and limit-setting.

Point out that the practitioner role will be covered in more depth in the next session.

Give out **BFs5 handout 3** (pp. 113–115 in Blue File, Session 3 'The Development of Having feelings'). Pick out some relevant points and ask for examples from practice.

Point out that during this session you can only give some things to consider about development. Practitioners should use EYFS and the handouts to reflect more carefully on individual children's development. Observe a baby and then perhaps have a look at Development Matters and see if they can pick out some of the things that the baby demonstrated. With experience of working with babies and reflecting on development they will learn and recognise how babies develop their PSE skills.

### **TASK to be completed in setting**

Ask participants to complete this task before the next session.

1. Choose another baby/child in your setting and complete BFs4 Activity Sheet 1 (p. 87, PSED Blue File).
2. Use the handouts that have been given out in this session on development and Development Matters in EYFS and choose a few statements (no more than five) that describe the stage that a child in your setting has reached. For example, a young baby is at the stage where 'Begins to indicate own needs by pointing'. Remind practitioners not to use Development Matters as a 'checklist' but as a guide to development.



3. Make a few notes about 'attachment', observe a child/children and note who they turn to for comfort and reassurance; who are they attached to and how does the practitioner encourage this attachment?

**End of session 1**

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## Session 2

### The role of the practitioner in supporting PSED

#### Resources needed:

- Blue File
- Blue File DVD 2
- EYFS Guidance and CD-ROM
- SEAD Practitioner booklet

Handouts from Blue File

- **BFs1 handout 2**, p.28 Outcomes of personal, social and emotional development
- **BFs1 handout 3**, p.29 Factors that encourage personal, social and emotional development and
- **BFs1 handout 4**, p.30 Factors that hinder personal, social and emotional development pp. 28–30.
- **BFs1 handout 5** The reflective practitioner pp. 31–32

SEAD LA **handout 2** see p. 33

#### Activity 1

Assignment review – ask participants to share their observations in groups, discussing what they noticed. Were there any surprises? What sort of things did they not readily know? Who were the babies attached to? How was the attachment encouraged or developed?

**Ask for feedback** from a few groups so that comparisons can be made.

#### Activity 2

**Factors that affect the outcomes of personal, social and emotional aspects of learning and development.**

Activity 2, p. 23 Blue File. DO NOT DO Topic Summary.

Complete Activity 2 Blue File p. 23.

Give out **BFs1 handouts 2, 3** and **4** and pick out a few points.

#### How can practitioners support the development of PSED?

Practitioners need to reflect on their own practice.

#### Resource

Blue File DVD 2

Complete Topic 3 The reflective Early Years Practitioner, Activity 1 pp. 24–26 (to make activity shorter do not write down points as suggested in Activity 1 point 3, but feed back orally and ensure Key Learning Points are included).

Give out **BFs1 handout 5**, The reflective practitioner pp. 31–33

**Activity 3****Attachment**

Refer to EYFS

Remind practitioners about what it says on the EYFS PSED card:

***What personal, social and emotional development means for children***

- *For children, being special to someone and well cared for is vital for their physical, social and emotional health and well-being.*
- *Being acknowledged and affirmed by important people in their lives leads to children gaining confidence and inner strength through secure attachments with these people.*
- *Exploration within close relationships leads to the growth of self-assurance, promoting a sense of belonging which allows children to explore the world from a secure base.*
- *Children need adults to set a good example and to give them opportunities for interaction with others so that they can develop positive ideas about themselves and others.*
- *Children who are encouraged to feel free to express their ideas and their feelings, such as joy, sadness, frustration and fear, can develop strategies to cope with new, challenging or stressful situations.*

**How settings can effectively implement this area of Learning and Development** (Source: PSED Card). There will not be enough time in this session to explore all the points on the card so trainers might want to focus on the following.

**Positive Relationships**

Form warm, caring attachments with children in the group.

**Enabling Environments**

Ensure that each child has a key person.

Ask participants to look at the following paragraphs from the SEAD Practitioners' booklet p. 13

*2.1 a What is attachment?*

*Babies are vulnerable and totally dependent on others for survival. When they learn that they can depend on and trust one person (usually, but not always, their mother) to consistently meet their physical and emotional needs they have what is called a 'secure attachment... However, no one person can provide everything a growing child needs, and children can form close attachments with several people.*

*These emotional bonds that children develop with their parents and other caregivers are crucial for their personal, social and emotional development. A child with secure attachment feels able to rely on their parents or caregivers for safety and comfort and uses these important attachment relationships as bases from which to explore and learn about the world.*

Trainers may also find this useful as a resource

Article on teaching expertise from Early Years Update July 2007

'Attachment: Supporting young children's emotional wellbeing'

Juliet Neil-Hall discusses the importance of attachment and meeting the emotional needs of young children and their parents.

Key emotional needs

There are ten key emotional needs that all human beings have:

- attention
- acceptance
- appreciation
- encouragement
- affection
- respect
- support
- comfort
- approval
- security

Successful attachment depends on the infant or young child sending out programmed 'signals' and the parent or carer responding to these in such a way that the child feels contained and held, loved, nurtured and safe.

Extract by Neil-Hall, J. First published in Early Years Update, Issue 50, 2007, available from Optimus Education on 0845 4506404, [www.teachingexpertise.com](http://www.teachingexpertise.com). Used with kind permission.

All this emphasises that good relationships underpin all aspects of development and learning.

(The following activity has been compiled using EYFS PSED Development Matters as a basis.)

In small groups think about:

How you in your setting support this development – what strategies do you use to ensure that babies feel secure and form close attachments? How do you 'form warm, caring attachments with children in the group'?

Use SEAD LA **handout 2** on the next page. This gives details of babies' development taken from EYFS Areas Of Learning PSED Development Matters. Complete the 'Practitioner' side in your groups by thinking about what practitioners can do to support babies' development and to help to establish and form a close bond with a baby.

For example:

Baby – Expresses discomfort, hunger or thirst

Practitioners respond by:

Recognising the different ways that babies express these things and then responding and meeting needs – 'Oh, I think that you are hungry now' and then ensuring that on most occasions feeding is carried out by the same practitioner and becomes a bonding and learning opportunity.

**SEAD LA handout 2**

| Babies (Birth to 11 months)   | Practitioners should |
|---|----------------------|
| Expresses discomfort, hunger or thirst.   |                      |
| Makes sounds and movements to initiate social interaction.  |                      |
| Calms from being upset when held, rocked, spoken or sung to with soothing voice.  |                      |
| Learns by interacting with others.  |                      |
| Looks intently at faces nearby and later watches speaker's face carefully.  |                      |
| Maintains eye contact during interactions with a familiar person or smiles and makes sound in response to eye contact.                                  |                      |
| Responds when talked to, for example moves arms and legs, changes facial expression, moves body and makes mouth movements.                              |                      |
| Likes cuddles and being held: calms, snuggles in, smiles, gazes at carer's face or strokes carer's skin.  |                      |
| Expresses discomfort, hunger or thirst.   |                      |
| Is usually soothed by warm and consistent responses from familiar adults.   |                      |
| Maintains eye contact during interactions with a familiar person or smiles and makes sound in response to eye contact.                                  |                      |
| Recognises and is most responsive to prime carer's voice, for example, may become more vocal, active or make more eye contact.                          |                      |
| Babies (8–20 months)  | Practitioners should |
| Points to draw other people's attention to things of interest.  |                      |
| Looks back to familiar adult to check if not sure about something (for example, looks back to check your reaction if a stranger tries to pick them up). |                      |

Give 15 minutes and **ask for feedback**.

Feedback should draw the group to the conclusion that carers need to respond to babies' interactions – lots of cuddles, closeness, etc. to initiate bonds, babies need their individual needs met, plan routines around babies' needs, don't try to get a group of very young babies to fit into a very rigid routine, build up a relationship with consistent and caring adults.

### **Alternative activity using the SEAD Practitioner booklet**

#### **Attachment**

Use Section 2.1a p. 13 and discuss the Mel and Maisy example.

You could then ask the group for barriers to attachment in group care and how these can be overcome, for example, how baby room and routines can be organised to allow for individual attention, or by talking to a young baby when you cannot give them your direct attention, so that they are aware of your interest and your presence nearby.

Ask the group to discuss going to work on a 'bad' day, when you yourself are not feeling 100% well emotionally. How does a work colleague pick up that you are not so good that day? What signals do you give out?

**Take brief feedback** – and then ask how would this behaviour affect your work with the babies? How will they pick up on your emotions? How will that make the babies feel? Remind the group about babies' need to be social and their reliance on feedback. Lead the discussion to focus on having to 'hang your troubles on the tree outside the nursery' and putting the babies' needs first.

Another activity that can be included here:

Refer to SEAD Practitioner booklet Section 3.1b, page 23. Constructive relationships with everyone in the setting. Ask participants to discuss the scenario and the effects that their relationships with other practitioners may have on children's development.

Direct practitioners to EYFS CD-ROM Areas of Learning and Development/PSED/Effective Practice for more suggestions of what would be appropriate.

Summarise Key Learning Points and **ask for feedback** from a few participants; one thing that they have learnt and one thing that they will change.

#### **End of first training course**

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## Suggested training activities for leaders and managers

Before completing the following activities that ask leaders and managers to reflect on their role in leading PSED, it is important to ensure that they have a thorough knowledge of the subject themselves. Some may need to attend other training before they can lead the development of a setting-wide approach.

Before doing any of the activities discuss ground rules for confidentiality within the group. Point out that as a group they will be encouraged to support each other – one person may have already encountered and solved a problem that someone else in the group is now facing and could share their experiences. This will be very useful but the group should agree that issues that involve practitioners or children that are discussed should be kept confidential within the group. To stop issues becoming too personal participants should be encouraged to say 'a practitioner', 'a parent', or 'a child', rather than naming them.

## Leading and managing PSED, developing a setting-wide approach

### Resources

- DVD 11 from PSED Blue File,
- SEAD LA **handout 3**: An effective leader

### Activity 1

#### What happens in your setting?

1. Ask the participants to imagine that they have a new member of staff starting in their setting. How will that member of staff know what the setting's approach to PSED is?

#### Take feedback.

This is likely to range from 'We expect them to know' to 'We have a written policy', or 'We explain it to them'.

2. Ask participants to discuss briefly the same question but with parents, how do they know?

#### Take feedback.

Tell the group that it is very important that the setting has an agreed 'vision' or 'ethos'. This will enable all staff and parents to understand what happens in relation to PSED and the role that they have to play and also what children are expected to achieve.

### Activity 2

#### The role of the leader or manager in developing a vision or ethos

What is the difference between a leader and a manager?

Explain to participants that these two roles are often seen to be interchangeable and many times a leader is called a manager, or vice versa.

Ask the participants to share with each other in small groups a description of their current role. If they are a leader or manager in a room or section: What do they do? How do they lead and manage? What are their particular responsibilities?

Ask the groups to make a note of their main responsibilities and the similarities and differences in their roles.

### Take some feedback

Answers are likely to include:

- supervising team members
- planning
- administration
- working with other managers and leaders
- linking with parents
- health and safety
- child protection.

There may be some feedback related to leadership of the curriculum – just note this and point out to the participants that many of the things that they have suggested can be described as 'management' tasks, for example, managing staff, managing the paperwork, managing health and safety.

Ask participants to consider how they provide leadership in their role and **take feedback** from the whole group.

Ensure that the following points are covered.

- Good team-working and two-way communication between them and their team – everyone feeling that their contribution is valued, that they have an important role to play within the team. This will include working closely with parents.
- Modelling good practice for others to follow – for all staff, not just the inexperienced team members, 'leading by example', influencing the practice of the staff.
- Monitoring – monitoring and guiding the progress of projects, staff, new staffing rotas, inclusive practice, different ways of working, etc.
- Reflecting on practice – theirs and others' – ensuring that standards are high in all areas and if difficulties arise or standards drop investigating the reasons with the team.
- Encouraging and supporting – encouraging and supporting staff in ways that are appropriate to the setting.
- Ethos or vision – a good leader ensures that the ethos is good, that there is a shared 'vision' which ensures that everyone is working towards the same aims, everyone knows what they would like the children in their care to achieve and they all work together in a consistent way to achieve these aims.
- Implementing change – if decisions are taken, making sure that all staff understand why these have been taken. In most instances if people understand the reasons for change and have had an opportunity to discuss the reasons they will be happy to make the changes, or may come up with even better suggestions!

Give out SEAD LA **handout 3** 'An effective leader'

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**SEAD LA handout 3**

An effective leader is someone who:

- is reflective
- has excellent knowledge of children and early years education
- is a team player
- learns on the job
- models good practice
- listens to staff, parents and children
- is a decision maker and supports staff to implement changes
- communicates with others continuously and clearly.

An effective leader will work with their staff team to develop a vision for the setting/area/room. They will ensure that all staff understand the vision and are supported and encouraged to implement the vision. They will also ensure that parents understand the ethos and vision of the setting and encourage them to support it.

An effective manager will organise the resources and the staff so that they have what they need to implement the vision. This will include elements such as staff development, equipment and time.

Both leaders and managers will consider the implications involved in making changes.

(Source: Sure Start Magazine, June 2008 available as full article about leadership from: [www.surestart.gov.uk/publications/periodicals/earlyyears magazine](http://www.surestart.gov.uk/publications/periodicals/earlyyears magazine))

Watch DVD 11 from PSED Blue File. Ask participants to watch the video again, but this time to make notes – what are the main points that are being made about the approach to PSED?

### **Take feedback.**

Points are:

- PSED is seen as a priority as everyone wants happy, settled, confident children; children are central to the approach
- parents very important and lots of opportunities to talk with them
- support for staff – staff morale is good
- all team members feel valued and are given some responsibility (what is not included in the DVD is the importance of the key person – so add this here).
- key person role
- positive relationships between staff
- continuity of practice
- meet regularly and PSED is discussed as a team
- communication between team is very important
- staff understand children's development
- the environment, including the emotional environment, is important.

Point out how closely the points made in the DVD about PSED link to the handout about being an effective leader. These points apply to all aspects of work, not just PSED.

### **Another possible activity - Thinking about confidence**

How far does the enabling environment in the setting encourage children and adults to be brave and take risks? How far is this confident approach modelled by leaders and managers?

Cartwright-Hatton's research, (Ref: Hatton, S. (2007) *Coping with an Anxious or Depressed Child*), and therapeutic work with anxious children shows that adults can make a difference by encouraging and praising confident thinking and risk taking such as rough and tumble play. The seven confident thoughts to be encouraged are:

- The world is a pretty safe place.
- I can cope with most things.
- Bad things don't usually happen to me.
- Bad things don't usually pop up out of the blue.
- I have some control over the things that happen to me.
- People are pretty nice really.
- Other people respect me.

Ask practitioners to think about:

- how people feel if they think these thoughts

- how far these confident thoughts are part of their own thinking
- how they model a 'can do' confident approach with children
- a confident child and a less confident child in their setting and how many of these seven confident thoughts seem to inform their actions.

When Cartwright Hatton works with practitioners she asks them to imagine they are a temperamentally anxious child, who:

- lives with a very anxious parent and...
- goes to a very risk-averse nursery.

She then asks:

How will this child answer the following questions?

- How safe is the world?
- Am I a competent person who is generally OK at assessing risk?
- What will happen if I take a risk and it goes wrong?
- Will I be able to look after myself?
- How will other people respond if I run into problems?

(Extracts from materials presented by Cartwright Hatton, S. Used with kind permission.)

### Activity 3

#### Evaluating and auditing practice

LAs will all have different systems for evaluating effective practice and there are a variety of professionals supporting settings and encouraging self-evaluation. There is a lot of relevant information on self-evaluation and quality improvement for LAs and settings in the Early Years Quality Improvement Support Programme (EYQISP) (Ref: 00669-2008BKT-EN).

In developing their practice in leading and managing PSED, practitioners need to carry out an evaluation of their existing practice and plan for future actions. Trainers need to ensure that any evaluation is in line with the policies and procedures in place in their LA and is not seen as an extra burden for practitioners.

Evaluating the effectiveness of PSED practice should be part of every setting's routine self-evaluation.

However, as a training activity, following the previous activities it may be useful to ask leaders and managers, perhaps in small groups, to consider the following areas (see Table 4 below) and begin to think about actions that can be taken. This is not an extensive audit of provision, but a set of discussion points. Appendix 2 in the SEAD Practitioner booklet can also be used in a similar way.

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## Leaders and Managers SEAD audit

| In my setting   | Evidence | Strengths | Areas for development | Actions |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------------------|---------|
| Staff understand children's development   |          |           |                       |         |
| PSED seen as priority, happy, settled, confident children, children are central to the approach |          |           |                       |         |
| Parents are seen as very important and staff are given lots of opportunities to talk with them  |          |           |                       |         |
| All team members feel valued  |          |           |                       |         |
| Key-person role is well developed   |          |           |                       |         |
| There are positive relationships between staff  |          |           |                       |         |
| There is continuity of practice in promoting PSED throughout the setting                        |          |           |                       |         |
| We meet regularly and PSED is discussed as a team   |          |           |                       |         |
| The environment, and this includes the emotional environment, is important and is suitable      |          |           |                       |         |

Useful resources for trainers and practitioners:

Primary National Strategies – Developing Quality Through Leadership: Action research in Private, Voluntary and Independent Early Years Settings (Ref: 00015-2007PCL-EN)

For a whole-school approach to social and emotional development: SEAL guidance booklet (Ref: DfES 0110-2005-9).

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## Section 5

### Parents as Partners

#### How can LAs ensure that working with parents to support PSED is included in training?

Some LAs deliver training courses that specifically cover effective work with parents in the EYFS or deliver courses on the role of the key person that include working with parents. Others ensure that this is an aspect that is included in all training courses.

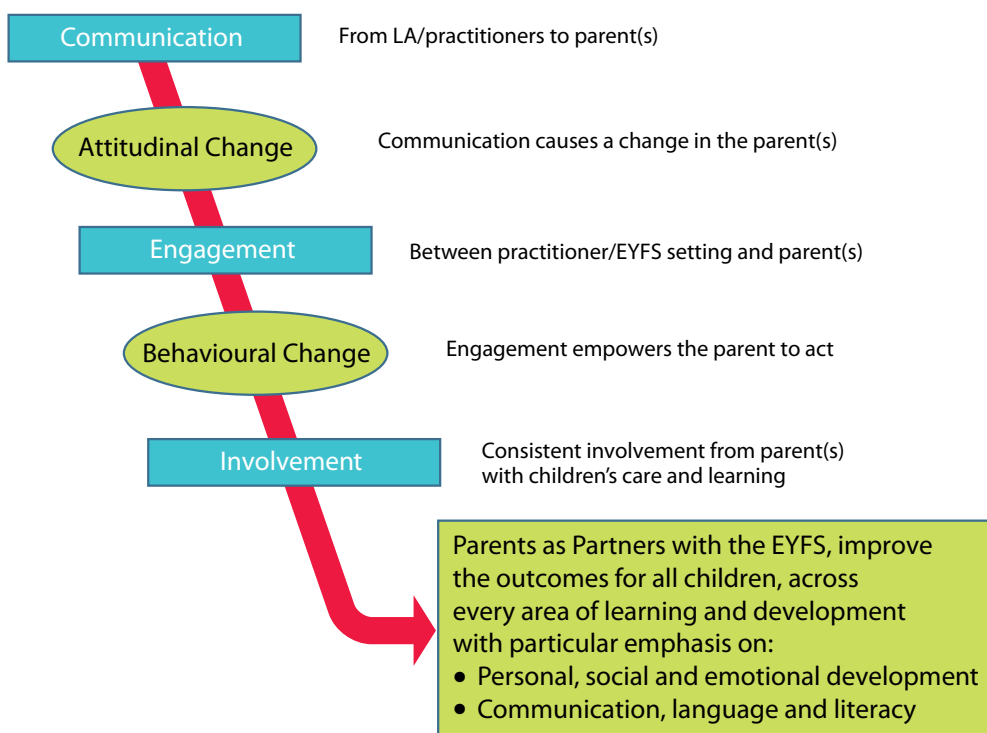
Ensuring that parents are involved and contributing to children's records may already be included in training relating to observation, assessment and record keeping.

LAs should check that this important aspect of effective practice, working in partnership to develop PSED, is covered in existing training courses. If so it may not be appropriate to offer another course specifically on PSED. However, trainers may feel that some practitioners may benefit from specific support in this area of work.

#### The Communication, Engagement and Involvement taxonomy

When providing training for practitioners LAs should consider the three-layer taxonomy which is at the heart of the Parents as Partners in Early Learning (PPEL) project. It describes the meaning of the terms Communication, Engagement and Involvement and their relationship in the context of enabling effective parental involvement in children's learning.

The concepts and linkages underpinning the three-layer taxonomy can be summarised using the following flow diagram:



The following examples of activities that can be included in training are based on the content of the SEAD handbook. They are examples of how to support practitioners to **Communicate** with, **Engage** and **Involve** parents. Refer to Section 3.2 in the SEAD booklet for more information and scenarios that can be used.

## Suggested Activities

### Activity 1

#### Parents as Partners in Communication

| Focus of training   | EYFS PSED Aspects/ Principles   | Suitable PSED File sessions                  | SEAD Practitioner booklet | Other materials used or suggested as useful  |
|---------------------|---|--|---------------------------|--|
| Parents as Partners | Positive relationships<br>Enabling environments<br>Making relationships | Session 6<br>Working Together in Partnership | Section 3 and 4           | National Strategies – <i>Seamless Transitions – Supporting Continuity in Young Children's Learning</i> (Ref: 0267-2006PCK-EN)  |
|                     |   |  |                           | National Strategies – <i>Foundation Stage Parents: Partners in Learning</i> (Ref: DfES 1210-2005-G)  |
|                     |   |  |                           | Parents Partners in Early Learning (PPEL) DVD Ref 000671-2007DVD-EN, height chart Ref 00672-2007 POS-EN and case studies Ref 00196-2008PCK-EN, download from <a href="http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/eyfs/site/2/2.htm">http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/eyfs/site/2/2.htm</a> |

Ask practitioners to think about their first contact with their own setting when they went for a visit or for an interview. What were their first impressions? What made them think that this was a place that they would like to work?

**Take some feedback** and then 'unpick' answers such as 'nice people', 'good atmosphere', 'looked inviting'.

Ask practitioners to think about their own setting again and what parents' first contact with the setting usually is.

**Take some feedback** and then ask practitioners in small groups to consider the following questions from a parent's point of view.

- What kind of questions would you expect to be asked during your first phone call?
- What questions would you want to ask during your first phone call?
- When you visit what would tell you that the staff would welcome and care for your child in the way that you would like?
- What would tell you that you would feel happy talking to the staff about any problems which might occur?

**Take some feedback.** First impressions are very important as they are setting the scene for a good two-way relationship, where practitioners and parents work together to benefit their child.

#### Point out and discuss

This initial contact will also be reinforced by:

- brochure/prospectus information
- admission procedure
- settling-in procedures
- communication systems between parents and all staff.

In order for parents and practitioners truly to work in partnership the initial information sharing, as well as the basic contact and medical details, are likely to focus on the child as an individual.

For example, discussion points which could be helpful are:

- What are the details of the routine at home, for example when changing nappies are there songs or rhymes which the child is used to which could be used in the setting? Which words are used to prepare the child for the nappy-changing routine?
- How does the child indicate they are happy, sad, frustrated?
- What helps the child to calm if they are distressed?
- What activities does the child really like?
- What is the child's usual response to new situations/experiences?

Ask practitioners to consider these and list other details they could discuss with parents to gain a fuller picture of their child.

Ask practitioners to reflect on whether the observation, assessment and record-keeping methods allow for the collection of this initial information. If not how can they be incorporated?

Ask participants to consider how parents will be feeling when they leave their child in a new setting.

**Take some feedback** and include the following.

Leaving your child with another adult can be difficult to do at first; no one will know your child as well as you do. As a parent you might wonder if the adults will:

- understand your child's communication
- notice if your child is unwell
- share concerns with you in a caring and understanding way
- tell you what happens to them through the day, sharing joys as well as sadness
- let you be involved in your child's life in the setting – point out that this can happen by practitioners:
  - talking to you about your child and what they do in the setting and at home
  - giving you photographs of your child in action in the setting
  - encouraging you to take part in activities with your child.

Some parents may feel intimidated by the 'professionals' in a setting and will need to be put at ease. Do all parents feel comfortable in the setting? How can practitioners ensure that parents really do feel welcome?

Support practitioners to think about the parents that use their setting, not to stereotype, but to consider some of the issues/barriers that they may come across to successful initial communication with individual parents. These may include:

- parents learning English as an additional language (EAL)
- parents with difficulties with basic skills – how much written information is being given and how much of this is being reinforced by supporting oral information?
- working parents who are not in the setting for very long each day
- communicating with fathers.

Support practitioners to develop ways to overcome these barriers. In the Additional Materials section you will find resources to help you to provide some solutions.



## Activity 2

### Engagement and Involvement

Following on from this initial contact it will be important to build on these relationships. Discuss with practitioners how they can then develop their relationships with parents and engage and involve parents in their children's learning. This will include ensuring effective and responsive two-way communication and respectful relationships. The key-person role is pivotal to this. Trainers will need to consider how this links to equality and diversity training that might be available within the LA.

#### Developing a culture of respect/key-person role

| Focus of training session       | EYFS PSED Aspects/ Principles  | SEAD Practitioner booklet | Suitable PSED Blue File sessions  | Other materials used or suggested   |
|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------|---|---|
| Developing a culture of respect | Positive relationships<br>Making relationships<br>Sense of community | Section 3 and 4           | Session 6 Topic 3 Working Together in Partnership<br><br>Session 7 Topic 2 Promoting PSED in practice | EYFS CD-ROM Positive Relationships and Enabling Environments (especially 3.2 and 3.3) |

The following scenarios can be used as discussion activities:

#### Example 1

A young mother rushes through the doors of the nursery; she is struggling to hold her 10-month-old baby, who is clinging to her and his bag full of things for the day. His hair and clothes are dishevelled and he is starting to cry. The mother looks harassed and says 'I'm going to be late to work and he is going to cry again when I leave him.'

**Ask participants to discuss in small groups which of the following two reactions by the practitioner key person is best and give the reasons why.**

A. The key person says, 'Here let me have him, he'll be all right in a minute. Did you remember to bring all his nappies and everything? Good, we'll see you later then.' She then walks away from the Mum with the crying baby into the cloakroom to take off his outer clothes. When Mum has gone she says to her colleagues, 'Every morning the same! She's never organised, she ought to get up earlier, no wonder he always cries when she leaves.'

B. The key person gives a reassuring smile to Mum and says to her and the baby 'Oh dear, you look like you have your hands full Sandra. Shall I take that bag so that you can give him a proper hug before you go?' Mum hugs and kisses the baby saying, 'I don't know why he cries every morning, I don't know what to do with him.' The key person reaches out and smiles at the baby, saying, 'Are you coming to me now then?' She says to the Mum 'It's nothing that you are doing you know, it's quite natural for babies of this age to become a little upset as they separate, they are just learning to express their emotions and it is a bit difficult for them to let go of Mum. Let's make sure that we have a proper goodbye and I'll help him to wave to you. He will be fine in a minute. Say "Bye-bye" to Mummy now, see you later.' When Mum has gone the key person comforts the baby, gets out his favourite toy and holds him close while she talks softly to him. She later takes a photo of him playing happily so that she can share it with Mum when she picks him up.

## Feedback

The key person:

- offers a sensitive response
- comforts both mother and child
- recognises mother's concerns and shows that she understands; she shows empathy and is not critical
- discusses development with mother
- is encouraging mother to ask other things, without being seen as a 'bad' parent by admitting that she doesn't know something
- creates a supportive environment
- sets up a goodbye routine that the child can come to recognise
- doesn't criticise mother with colleagues.

Point out how this helps to set up a culture of respect.

In the SEAD Practitioner booklet 3.2, p. 26 there is a similar scenario which opens up some issues relating to parents who are learning English as an additional language. It could also be used for discussion.

### Example 2

Kwame is three and has been coming to the nursery for about six weeks; usually he is very happy to be there. His aunt and cousin are arriving today to stay with the family for a few days. Kwame has been helping his mum to get things ready for his cousin. He really likes playing with his cousin.

Kwame and his mum arrive at the nursery and are met by Jamila, his key person. Jamila smiles, says hello and asks if Kwame has been helping his mum to get things ready for his cousin's visit. Kwame smiles and Mum tells Jamila that he has been finding toys his cousin will like and helping to make his bed. Kwame watches Jamila's face as Mum talks about what he did to help. When Jamila smiles and praises him he smiles too and looks to see his mum's response. He holds both Mum's and Jamila's hands while they are talking. Jamila tells Kwame that they can take some pictures in the nursery today for him to show to his cousin. Mum gives Kwame a cuddle and says she will look forward to seeing the photographs when she picks him up. Jamila asks what time the visitors will be arriving. Mum tells her it will be after she has collected Kwame from nursery. Jamila suggests to Kwame that they get the camera now and think about what pictures they will take. Kwame waves goodbye to Mum and goes with Jamila into the nursery.

At lunchtime Kwame gets tearful and upset; Jamila sits with him and they talk about the pictures they have taken. At first Jamila is not sure why Kwame is upset. As they talk Kwame gets tearful again and asks if his cousin will be at his house yet. Jamila talks about his mum saying that his cousin would not arrive until after she had collected Kwame from nursery. Jamila wonders if Kwame is also tired after helping his mum the night before and perhaps getting excited about his cousin's visit. She suggests that they choose a book and sit with some of his friends in the story shack to share the book together. Kwame falls asleep for a little while on Jamila's lap during the first book.

- How would Kwame and his mum have felt about the setting at the end of the day as they set off home to meet their visitors?
- How has Jamila strengthened her positive relationship with Kwame and his mum?

### Feedback to include

Kwame and his mum would both feel very valued as individuals and positive about the setting. The two-way interaction and the care that Jamila has taken to demonstrate how she values what is happening at home will make it easier for Mum to share other things with her. By using the camera she is sharing the nursery day with Mum. Demonstrating things that Kwame likes to do could give Mum the opportunity to reflect on those activities and to think about the types of things that the child can do at home. These small instances create opportunity for engagement and involvement, and true partnerships with parents and a key-person should be constantly encouraging this type of two-way interaction.

In this scenario Jamila has made a special effort to:

- find out about things at home and in the setting which are important to the child
- develop a shared understanding with parents
- affirm for the child the good relationship that exists between her and his mum.

Jamila has shown Kwame that his needs are important to her, she notices how he shows his feelings and communicates his needs and she responds to them in an appropriate way. You can do this by using:

- your welcome and goodbye routines to show the child that they matter to you and that you will remember things which are important to them such as a special event or new shoes
- observations to identify the signals (including smiles, giggles, facial expressions, body language) the child gives which tell you that they:
  - need help
  - want to try by themselves
  - are really involved and enjoying what they are doing.

Sharing your learning and observations with parents is a very important way of letting each child see that they are important and that the adults in their life are working together to help and care for them.

### Example 3

Are Dwayne and Joshua and their parents equally listened to and valued in this scenario?

Dwayne and Joshua arrive at nursery together with their mothers. Tracy, the room leader, opens the door and says, 'Hello Dwayne and Joshua, you're early today! Dwayne those are lovely new shoes! We've got lots of great things to do today. Your favourite train is in the garden, Dwayne. Shall we show Mummy the model you built yesterday?' Dwayne smiles and pulls his Mum forwards into the room. Tracy turns to Joshua and says, 'Don't cry Josh, Mummy has gone now, hang up your coat.'

Reflect and note:

- the ways that Tracy showed respect and interest
- how you might feel if you were Dwayne's mum
- how you might feel if you were Joshua's mum
- what Dwayne might think and feel about the start of his day
- what Joshua might think and feel about the start of his day
- how you would have done it differently
- the difference you would have made to each of the children and mothers.

**Feedback**

Tracy responds differently to the two boys and their mums.

Dwayne and his mum's positive experience is perhaps at the expense of Joshua and his mum.

Practitioners need to be aware of the impact of their interactions on the children and adults that they work with.

The adults are setting the children examples for interaction with others. Dwayne and his mum are learning that they're more important than Joshua and his Mum and – they are given confidence, being affirmed and valued, but at the expense of Joshua and his Mum.

**Point out and discuss with participants:**

Constructive relationships are ones that can be built on and are designed to be lasting and effective. In a good-quality setting these will be characterised by:

- respectful language and tone
- friendly, confident but professional relationships
- mainly smiling and happy to help but appropriate concern shown when the situation demands
- problem-solving and 'can do' approach to new situations
- interest in parents' views about their child and his/her development
- willingness to accommodate child/family needs appropriately
- encouraging parents' involvement in the life of the setting and finding ways to help parents feel at ease, especially when the child first starts attending
- being open to the views of others and investing time and energy in working with them.

**Additional materials**

There are many other materials, not mentioned above, that can be used when putting together training related to working with parents; some are detailed below.

| Resources   | Consists of   | Details  |
|---|---|--|
| It's child's play – Early Years Foundation Stage available to download from: <a href="http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/eyfs/resources/downloads/eyfs_everything_d16-7781-0808.pdf">www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/eyfs/resources/downloads/eyfs_everything_d16-7781-0808.pdf</a> | Primarily intended for parents, this leaflet explains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● what the Early Years Foundation Stage is</li> <li>● the importance of play in the early years</li> <li>● what will change in September</li> <li>● how the early years Foundation Stage will work</li> <li>● how you will know how your child is doing</li> <li>● the Early Years Foundation Stage's safeguards</li> </ul> | Leaflet for parents  |
| PEAL<br><a href="http://www.Peal.org.uk">www.Peal.org.uk</a>  | Variety of resources and training, for example, Parents, Early Years and Learning activities  | A variety of resources, including the activities booklet that has useful reflective activities for practitioners, also useful for trainers |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Communicating Matters<br>(Ref: 02026-2006PCL-EN)   | Training materials   | Sessions to develop practitioners' listening skills and also importance of parents' and children's stories                             |
| <i>Supporting children learning English as an additional language: guidance for practitioners in the Early Years Foundation Stage</i> (Ref: DCSF 00683-2007BKT-EN)   | Primarily guidance on working with children but includes some guidance on the importance of working with parents   | Practitioners working with parents of children with EAL  |
| Working with Early Years Children and Families Sure Start Magazine<br><a href="http://www.surestart.gov.uk">www.surestart.gov.uk</a>   | Magazine available online that has useful articles for practitioners and trainers, for example, 'Dad's away' article in March 2008                             | Article on how you can help fathers to feel welcome and involved   |
| EYFS CD-ROM 2.2 Positive Relationships and website<br><a href="http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/eyfs">www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/eyfs</a>   | Parents as Partners information, research, etc.  | In-depth guide to effective practice and other relevant research articles  |
| 'Supporting parents to engage in their children's early Learning' DCSF Briefing to LAs updated July 2008   | Briefing paper for Lead Officers and FS Advisors updated regularly on:<br><a href="http://www.familyandparenting.org/ELLP">www.familyandparenting.org/ELLP</a> | Links to all projects and links to websites  |
| Inclusion Development Programme: <i>Supporting, Children with speech, language and communication needs: Guidance for practitioners in the Early Years Foundation Stage</i><br>(Ref: 00215-2008BKT-EN)  | DVD and Booklet  | DVD has practitioner explaining how the playgroup works closely with parents   |
| 'Getting Started with Family SEAL', p. 5 in <i>Excellence and Enjoyment: Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning – Family SEAL</i><br>(Ref: DCSF 0151-2006DWO-EN)<br>Download from:<br><a href="http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk">www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk</a> | Booklet  | Guidance and workshops to use with parents and families  |
| Sure Start Children's Centre Practice Guidance November 2006<br><a href="http://www.surestart.gov.uk">www.surestart.gov.uk</a>   | Provides guidance for children's centres   | Useful for research on working with and engaging parents   |
| Oates, J. (2007) <i>Attachment Relationships: Quality of Care for Young Children</i> , Open University Early Childhood in Focus series number 1<br><a href="http://www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk">www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk</a>                                      | Booklet available free from:<br><a href="http://www.bernardvanleer.org">www.bernardvanleer.org</a>   | A short work by international experts in the field brings research summaries and photos together in a powerful and accessible document |
| Step into Learning Professional Development Resources<br><a href="http://www.surestart.gov.uk">www.surestart.gov.uk</a> (Search Publications)  | Modular training programme. Module 1 raises awareness of how to communicate effectively with parents   | Helps practitioners identify and support parents who may have difficulty with literacy   |
| Every Parent Matters<br><a href="http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/everyparentmatters">www.teachernet.gov.uk/everyparentmatters</a>   | DfES Publication   | Policy and Guidance  |

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## Section 6

### Case studies of effective LA training and development

Many LAs are already training practitioners very effectively to support young children's personal, social and emotional development. Some of these LAs have added case studies to the SEAL wiki: [www.nationalstrategiescpd.org.uk/mod/wiki/view.php?id=2410](http://www.nationalstrategiescpd.org.uk/mod/wiki/view.php?id=2410)

Other LAs have developed their own materials and linked them to SEAL, the PSED file, Birth to Three, or other early years training.

LAs will choose the most appropriate training and development opportunities for their context and their practitioners and children. In many ways it does not matter too much what sort of training an LA chooses to do – what really matters is that it respects the expertise and experience of practitioners and brings about change in practice and that it has an impact on the well-being and achievement of our youngest children. The best training and professional development challenge taken-for-granted ways of acting and being and support adults' social and emotional development.

The case studies that colleagues share here have been offered in the spirit of collaboration in a joint project to support the learning and development of young children, their families and the practitioners who work with them. They are work in progress. More can be found on the CD-ROM. If you would like to offer a case study to be included on the early years website as we develop the SEAD materials then please email: [earlyyears@nationalstrategies.co.uk](mailto:earlyyears@nationalstrategies.co.uk)

## Case study 1

### Manchester – Birth to Three Practice Development Team

#### Developing the role of the key person through Elinor Goldschmied's 'Intimacy Island' approach

The Intimacy Island project focuses on a whole-setting approach. It involves self-assessment against standards, self-appraisal of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement, self-made plans to raise quality, reflective practice and actions to improve and self-review of progress made.

The process includes:

- ongoing collaboration with Children's Centre teachers and the setting's whole-staff team
- exploration of the terms 'attachment' and 'intimacy' and the importance of these in the holistic development of babies and young children
- an introduction to the concept of 'Intimacy Island'
- links to research
- clear evidence of how 'Intimacy Island' supports the EYOD by enabling more children to have the opportunity to achieve higher levels of CLL and PSE development
- links to the themes and commitments of the EYFS
- exploration of the role of the key person and the benefits to babies, young children, parents, the setting and staff themselves
- an action research approach
- identification of ongoing barriers to effective relationships and ways that these may be overcome
- developing more effective relationships between practitioners and babies and children
- developing more effective relationships between practitioners and parents.

If you would like more information about the project please contact:

Janet Swanston

Acting Practice Development Manager

Birth to Three Practice Development Team

[jswanston@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:jswanston@manchester.gov.uk)

Office: 0161 274 6731

Mobile: 07931 546225

## Case study 2

### Derbyshire

#### Heuristic play

##### Aims

- To gain a theoretical and practical understanding of heuristic play.
- To recognise the value and benefits of heuristic play.
- To consider how to organise a heuristic play session – including the challenges and dilemmas this may present.
- To explore ways in which heuristic play may be developed with parents/carers and extended to the child's home environment.

##### PART 1

The work of Elinor Goldschmied

'Eurisko'

Treasure baskets and collections of objects and containers

Inclusion

##### PART 2

'Food for the brain'

Learning to be a learner

Value and benefits for parents and practitioners

##### PART 3

Resources

Setting up and tidying away

The adult role

Context

##### PART 4

Heuristic play at home

Parental learning

Engaging parents' interest

Parental involvement

Delivery of the course is supported by a training DVD which was made as part of the PPEL project and by a second DVD 'Heuristic Play at Home' (also made with parents who participated in the PPEL project) which is given to course participants to extend the work they do with parents.

For further information contact:

Kate Young

Early Years Coordinator – Derbyshire

Tel: 07785 702147

kate.young@derbyshire.gov.uk



## Case Study 3

### Newham

#### PSED: Birth to Five training materials and programme

The course was targeted at PVI managers and SENCOs with an emphasis on how to take it back to staff and develop their skills and practice. The course was open to all EY practitioners.

The course ran over six days: 3 x 2 days with two weeks in between and assignments. (Previously we ran it as a three-day course).

We felt that this gave practitioners a chance to really develop their understanding. We used learning journey questionnaires at the start and end of the course to assess impact on understanding.

The PSED materials used a lot of discussion and a DVD. We felt that we needed to balance this with input and practical activities, especially activities that helped practitioners walk in children's shoes 'mind mindfulness'. We often asked 'How does this look in your setting? What would you keep the same, change, try out that is new? How will you convey this to other staff?'

#### **PSED Day 1: Development**

Used stages of development from '*Growing Up Again: Parenting Ourselves, Parenting Our Children*' by Jean Illsley Clarke and Connie Dawson.

Also used Kohlberg's stages of moral development and D. Erikson's Eight Stages of Psychosocial Development.

#### **PSED Day 2**

Played some SEAL games and looked at EY SEAL resource. Collected practical ideas to enable children to engage socially. Sitting babies near each other, having enough of a particular resource, thinking about activities that are set up for children in nursery – baby room, toddler, pre-school.

#### **PSED Day 3**

Used 'Attachment in practice' DVD.

Newham 'Working with babies and under threes' document section on key person.

#### **PSED Day 4**

Framework for 'How identity is formed' based on BBC 'Child of our time' questionnaire.

#### **PSED Day 5**

Linked strongly to EYFS PSED Cards.

#### **PSED Day 6**

Practical team work activity

Commenting, practical interaction activity

Action plan – short-, medium- and long-term.

For more information contact:

Ruth Butcher  
Early Years Advisory Teacher  
BSDAT (Behaviour Support Development Advisory Team)  
New Tunmarsh Centre  
Tunmarsh Lane  
E13 9NB

## Case Study 4

### Cambridgeshire

#### SEAL (The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) in pre-school settings – Cambridgeshire Pilot

##### Initial Training Day – 23.11.07 – Bar Hill

Aims:

- To provide an overview of the Primary SEAL programme, including key concepts about emotional literacy.
- To explore links with the EYFS Framework and with the 'Promoting Health in Early Years Settings' programme.
- To consider activities and approaches included in the SEAL Foundation Stage materials.
- To begin to plan approaches to implementing the SEAL programme in nursery and early years settings.

##### Programme

|       |   |  |
|-------|---|--|
| 9.30  | Introductions – us, context, aims, programme  |  |
|       | Warm-up activity – Find somebody who...<br>Round – name, setting and one thing I have enjoyed in my setting this week   | Complete for 4–5 people  |
| 9.50  | Introduction to SEAL – the context of the primary programme<br>Emotional literacy theory – importance of emotions presentation<br>The key strategies – emotional barometer, calming down, problem solving – through Mean Soup?<br>Give 10 minutes discussion time for processing  | What is SEAL, what is in it, how does it work, how does a school deliver it?   |
| 10.40 | Coffee  |  |
| 11.00 | Links with 'Promoting Health in Early Years Settings'<br>a) Card activity to explore impact of aspects of practice on health (include mental and emotional well-being aspects) – place cards in middle, on edge of paper or outside according to how big an influence that example is on health.<br>b) Then sort into dimensions (HPS)<br>c) Show MEW guide from PHEYS framework<br>c) Look at frameworks – including examples of practice – illustrative guide | Cards have examples of practice in early years on each<br>To include frameworks showing links across/between programmes<br>Talk about how it links with SEAL programme |
| 12.00 | Links with EYFS framework   |  |
| 12.30 | Lunch   |  |

|      |  |   |
|------|--|---|
| 1.15 | <p>Practical approaches and activities</p> <p>Input on Circles and Circle Time</p> <p>Round – pass teddy – my name is and something special about me</p> <p>Roll the ball</p> <p>Puppet – Bertie dog – new to setting – how does he feel and what could you say to help him?</p> <p>Feelings fans – find happy and sad (refer back to Bertie)</p> <p>Pictures from SEAL resources – find two examples of somebody feeling happy, two examples of sad – talk about why you think they might be feeling like that</p> <p>Mirror – look at yourself looking happy/looking sad</p> <p>Round – I feel happy when/pass the smile</p> <p>Sasha's handout – overview of the themes</p> <p>In pairs (from setting) take one booklet – look through and share an activity with the group</p> <p>Booklists, books and other resources. Read a story</p> | <p>In threes – choose two from photos on floor. They look at photocards – talk about how they know how the person is feeling and what might have happened to make them feel like that</p> <p>Ask them to work on four themes – New Beginnings, Getting on and falling out, Going for Goals and one other</p> <p>From Foundation Stage materials – explain how booklets work – focus on Foundation One</p> |
| 2.30 | Planning the way forward – what could this look like in the setting? What are the first steps?   |   |
| 2.50 | The rest of the pilot – timescales, support, meeting back together, networking?  |   |
|      | <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Box of tricks activity – reflecting on today</p>  |   |
| 3.00 | Close  |   |

### Handouts/Resources (x 30)

SEAL PowerPoint presentation on memory stick

Cards for health-promoting activity

Handout of PowerPoint

Paper for placing cards

Mean Soup book

HPS framework with dimensions

SEAL booklist

MEW section from PHEYS programme

Collection of books from Ann Leeming

Planning trigger sheet (A3) on implementation

Find someone who...

Good practice guides from PHEYS programme

25 feelings fans

Other resource books – e.g. Circle Time

Story to read

Puppets, including Bertie dog

Box of tricks

Teddy for Circle Time

Ball for Roll the ball

Mirror

**SEAL handouts:**

Appendix 5 – Circle Time

SEAL overview sheet

Emotional barometer

Calming down

Problem solving

Banda pilot website

Sasha's theme overview

For more information please contact:

Annabel Talbot

Manager, Personal Development Programmes

Personal, Social & Health Education Service

Cambridgeshire County Council

Tel: 01480 375171

Fax: 01480 375170

Email: <mailto:annabel.talbot@cambridgeshire.gov.uk>

[www.pshe.ccceducation.net](http://www.pshe.ccceducation.net)

**There is also more detailed information about Cambridgeshire's approach on the SEAD CD-ROM**

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## Case study 5

### Northumberland

#### PSED and SEAL

Early years and SEAL consultants worked together to plan a lively and reflective approach to PSED using the Birth to Five training resource and the Red set SEAL.

The course was planned into five modules over the course of the year. Each half-day session used the PSED manual as a base and this was developed with SEAL activities reflecting the order of the SEAL resource.

The pattern for each half-day followed the shape of module 1 below.

|                           | Content   | Notes   |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Session 1<br>Introduction | Stamping Name Game (SEAL p.7)<br>Feelings line (put peg on line for how they feel today). Pair up and discuss what could happen to move your peg in different direction<br>Partner introduces and shares with group<br>Personal reflection<br>House keeping<br>Evaluation envelopes – What do you want from course and today?<br>How will you know when you've got it?<br>Personal contact details<br>Course content and session outline  | Notebooks/file<br>Give out envelopes, paper and personal contact sheet.<br>Give out course content and session outline.   |
| Session 2                 | Watch DVD focusing on question:<br>What are the key aspects of babies' and young children's learning?<br>Split into five groups and each group to look for one domain<br>Create poster and gallery<br>Feelings line. Think of 1 child, go through factors P28. Adults to move where they think children are<br>5 minutes discussion and feedback on factors that influence this<br>Focus in one of Domains: Being Social<br>DVD 4 focus: What do you mean by listening and how do you know?<br>Discuss and scribe<br>Brainstorm: Factors that affect babies and young children being social | DVD 1 (Blue)<br>5 A3 sheets (1 for each domain)<br>Take in all sheets to create overview for next session<br>P28<br>Give out handouts 1–4 (session 1)<br>DVD 4 (Blue)<br>Refer to p. 41<br>Handouts 1 and 2 session 2 |
| Coffee                    |   |   |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Session 3<br/>Reflective Practitioner</p> | <p>Refer to session outline: next session is about being a reflective practitioner</p> <p>Read through handout 5: Think about situation where you have demonstrated some of the skills</p> <p>Discuss as a group</p> <p>Group drawing/collage on flip chart paper to show a reflective practitioner</p> <p>Listening not listening activity</p> <p>Discussion how did they feel</p> <p>Watch DVD 4 (baby bit) again</p> <p>Discuss how to encourage babies and young children to listen</p> <p>Introduce Circle Time skills</p> <p>Seal activity: send Ripple / other activity?</p> <p>Review which Circle Time skills are used</p> | <p>Give out session 1 handout 5</p> <p>Flipchart paper, pens and collage materials.</p> <p>Give out session 2 handouts 3 and 4</p> <p>Session 2 handout 4</p> <p>Circle Time skill pictures</p> |
| <p>Session 4</p>                             | <p>Assignment</p>   |   |

Highlighted areas show SEAL input. Additional reflection tools were included:

- Personal envelopes containing personal targets were added to each session and scaled for achievement. We checked these between sessions as an ongoing evaluation tool. The contents of each envelope were added to and reflected upon, each time we met.
- Reflect log notebook. Participants were asked to keep a journal.
- SEAL emotional barometer-type activities were used each session, as were rounds and games taken directly from the Red resource. Activities were added or adapted to SEAL style wherever possible.
- Participants completed the PSED assignments between sessions. End evaluations reflected personal growth and confidence development.

For more information please contact:

Rhona Wilson  
 Primary Consultant B & A  
 School Improvement Service  
 Schools and Family Support Division  
 Children's Services Directorate  
 Northumberland County Council  
 Aln House  
 Hepscott Park  
 Morpeth  
 NE61 6NF  
 Tel: 01670 534377  
 RHWilson@northumberland.gov.uk

## Appendix 1

### Guidance: the key person in Reception classes and small nursery settings

#### Introduction

Theme: Positive relationships

Principle: Children learn to be independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

The Early Years Foundation Stage requires that each child in a nursery setting or Reception class should be allocated a key person.

Sometimes a 'key person' is understood to be a person to coordinate observations and record-keeping for the child. While an administrative system like this may be an important part of the way you work in nursery or Reception it is not the same as a key-person system. A key-person system is not principally about administration and record-keeping.

A key person is:

- a named member of staff who has more contact than others with the child
- someone to build relationships with the child and parents
- someone who helps the child become familiar with the provision
- someone who meets child's individual needs and care needs (e.g. dressing, toileting, etc.)
- someone who responds sensitively to the child's feelings, ideas and behaviour
- the person who acts as a point of contact with parents.

In a large, free-flowing nursery setting, this is important because otherwise children can be cared for indiscriminately by ten or even more adults, without developing a particular relationship with any one. Considerable research indicates that the outcomes for children in settings like these are not good: it is a system of group care that can lead to anxiety, aggression or withdrawn behaviour.

In a smaller nursery or Reception class, children do not have to cope with so many different adults. But it will be helpful to think about certain points of the day, like lunchtime: are the children in the EYFS assigned to the care of specific adults at times like these? How is the transition managed? Who gives children extra help if they need it at times of transition like this?

Other elements to consider as part of the key-person approach in smaller nursery settings and Reception classes are:

- How do parents and carers work with staff during the settling-in period? How do staff make sure that children feel secure when the time comes to say goodbye and stay in the nursery or Reception class without the parent or carer?
- How are care routines like toileting, getting dressed or changed, eating, resting or sleeping managed for children so that they feel personalised, not institutional and uncaring?
- How are children comforted when they feel distressed or tired?
- If children's behaviour is challenging, how do you ensure that a limited number of staff who have a trusting relationship with the child manage difficult incidents?

In the rest of this document, we have tried to summarise some of the important aspects of the key-person approach. There is more information and guidance on the EYFS CD-ROM and website. We think it is useful for practitioners to consider the principles and rationale behind the approach, and how these can best be put into practice in each nursery setting or Reception class. We think it is important that staff discuss and think about this and use professional judgment, rather than try to follow a single prescription.

### **Why have a key person?**

Can you remember or imagine what it is like to be at a party or an important meeting where you don't know anyone, or travelling alone in unfamiliar city; how comforting and reassuring it is if the party host, chair of the meeting or travel guide, introduces you to people you can join with, explains what the agenda is or shows you where the important places are? It is helpful to us all, when in a strange situation, to have someone we can rely on to interpret unfamiliar experiences for us until we feel confident to manage the situation on our own. Even then, if we feel unwell, unsure or overwhelmed, knowing that there is someone there whom we can ask for help if necessary, is reassuring and can enable us to tackle something on our own that we might otherwise avoid.

This is what key people do for their allocated group of children. Young children need to know that someone in particular keeps them 'in mind' while they are away from their parents. When they have someone who gets to know them well and supports them in their interactions with others, their confidence and well-being is supported.

### **What does having a key person mean for children?**

As adults we value the people we are close to in our lives because they understand us well, accept our good and bad sides and give us their time and attention when we need it. Young children also need familiar and trusting relationships in order for them to develop emotional well-being.

The people we feel close to are the people we may feel most anxious about losing. They are also the people with whom we can express our feelings. Therefore young children may show their need to feel secure through clinging to their parent or key person and being uncooperative with people they do not know well. They may protest when their parent or key person leaves them and show their distress by rejecting comfort or distraction, becoming aggressive or defiant or withdrawing and not engaging in activities. Though difficult to manage, these are ordinary ways in which children respond to separation and anxiety. In these situations, children benefit from having a key person who can accept their emotions and respond with understanding.

This does not mean condoning negative or anti-social behaviours, but by acknowledging the feelings that may underlie such behaviours, such as anger, anxiety, distress or jealousy, children are given the message that we empathise with their difficulties even when we do not approve of their method of expressing them. Providing vocabulary for feelings will support children to become aware of their emotions.

By adopting a key-person approach that emphasises the centrality of 'loving and secure relationships' to their practice (EYFS 2007), practitioners are supporting children to feel good about themselves and be confident. When children feel like this, they are more likely to be able to engage in more complex and creative play, freely access a broad curriculum and take risks in their learning through guessing, experimenting and making mistakes.

### **Being 'tuned in'**

The key to effective early years practice is knowing the children in your group really well. This enables you to start with what the children already know and are interested in rather than what you think they should be taught. Deep knowledge and understanding of individual children comes from spending time with your key children at play, good information-sharing with parents and close and regular observation. Therefore, effective implementation of the key-person approach includes observing your key children regularly and analysing the information to both increase your understanding of the children and provide evidence for the records of your key children's developmental progress. Learning what your key children's conversations, play and behaviours mean will enable you to better understand the connections they are making in their learning and to engage in sustained shared thinking (EYFS, Learning and Development: Creativity and Critical Thinking, see [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/eyfs/site/4/3.htm](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/eyfs/site/4/3.htm)).



### **Being available and responsive**

Young children understand much by observing our body language and facial expressions and will interpret these according to their previous experience, sometimes in ways that we do not intend. Therefore it is important that we make it clear to children that we are available to support them through what we do as well as what we say. By sitting at the children's level and being involved in their play, you will show that you are available to them to come to as they need and, especially for new children, by drawing their attention to interesting things around them and smiling and nodding as they explore, you will support their explorations and independence, thereby providing a secure base. It is often tempting to move away from an activity once children are 'settled' but for new children or children who find peer interactions challenging, this can be very disruptive, so practitioners need to be sensitive to when their presence and involvement in play is necessary.

### **Being consistent**

In small nursery and Reception classes, where there are two members of staff working as a close team, there are good opportunities for children to experience consistent interactions and expectations. This kind of experience is important for children moving between the worlds of home and school where the environment and routine are very different.

All children benefit from the emotional security that familiarity of people, places and experience brings. This can often be overlooked in the organisation of play and lunchtime sessions, when suddenly children are expected to engage in very different routine activities with a different group of staff. Such changes in familiarity and routine can raise the stress levels of all children, though most will be able to use their existing emotional and social skills to adapt quickly to new situations. For some children such as those with additional emotional, social or learning needs, or who are newly-arrived in the community and learning English as an additional language, the stress caused by frequent changes of practitioner (such as playtime, lunchtime, PE), may result in distress or negative behaviour. Practitioners need to give thought to the organisation of these times so that children are given time to become gradually familiar with all the relevant practitioners, the routines and the environment over an extended period of time.

### **Liaising with parents**

To support children's sense of well-being and belonging, practitioners need to develop close working partnerships with parents to generate mutual respect and trust. By learning about and understanding each family's customs, the practitioner can extend their knowledge of the individual child to provide effective care and learning opportunities. This means sharing information about children's:

- emotional needs, for example any fears or worries the child has
- physical needs, for example the degree to which the child can dress and use the toilet independently
- language and cultural heritage: can the practitioner use important words in each child's home language and are they knowledgeable about significant events in the child's cultural and religious life?

It is important to spend time with your key children's parents regularly, sharing observations and information and gathering ideas for future plans.

### **Settling in**

Starting at nursery or school can be stressful for children. They are in a strange and perhaps overwhelming environment, meeting several new children and adults, encountering unfamiliar toys and experiences, and then the person they rely on most leaves them. Settling new children into a setting successfully, and with minimum distress is probably one of the most skilful and challenging things a practitioner does. It can be a fraught time for parents and children. For practitioners, too, memories of their own separations and losses in life make this an emotionally charged time. For all these reasons, it can be tempting to cut short or even dispense with settling-in times. While some

children might cope with the sudden loss of their parent or carer in this way, others may not. They may be damaged by the experience.

An effective settling-in system gives parents, children and practitioners sufficient time to get to know each other well before children are separated from their parents. An agreed settling-in policy might include:

- advance planning of admissions
- home or initial visits
- periods of time when parents support children as they get used to the nursery or Reception class
- special planning for the first day
- ways of supporting children and parents at the point of parting, and reuniting
- guidance for parents on ways to help children at times of change.

### **Dilemmas**

The key-person approach is not simple to implement. Sometimes dilemmas arise and as with all good early years practice, the best way to address these dilemmas is through observation and discussion, and making a professional judgement.

In order to be able to respond sensitively to children's feelings, practitioners need to be sufficiently open emotionally to be able to understand those feelings and yet also retain their own sense of 'adulthood' in order to hold the child's distress. Sometimes adults can find themselves responding to children's demands 'in kind'.

Some examples of this are:

- feeling overwhelmed by the crying of unsettled children who themselves are overwhelmed by being in school
- getting impatient when toddlers become frustrated.

These are times when it is useful to take a step back and talk with colleagues about what is going on for the child, and think about how the adults can provide help, and set appropriate limits if necessary.

Practitioners need to understand that in order to be healthily independent a child needs to be able to express dependency at vulnerable times.

This is an emotionally demanding and skilful area of practice that some practitioners find overwhelming and so avoid becoming close to children. Yet those that are able to be available, sensitive and responsive to their key children can take pride in knowing that not only are they contributing positively to the quality of their key child's mental model of relationships for the future, they are also assisting healthy brain development and learning abilities.

Research indicates that an effective key-person approach leads to:

- better-satisfied and engaged staff
- improved care and learning for children
- parents who feel confident about the quality and devotion of professional staff.

## Appendix 2

### Circle Time for the Early Years - Jenny Mosley

Circle Time is appropriate for older children in the EYFS, not babies and toddlers. Jenny Mosley's Quality Circle Time model is a whole-school approach to setting up and maintaining a positive school management system to promote positive behaviour and create a caring and respectful school ethos: [www.circle-time.co.uk/site/home](http://www.circle-time.co.uk/site/home)

Since the beginning of time, young children and adults have gathered together in circles to learn about themselves and others through a rich weave of rhymes, songs and games. Settling into a circle should come naturally. We know, however, that many families are either under enormous stress or just time-impooverished and that many of the usual nurturing rituals to help children grow emotionally, socially and linguistically are just disappearing. This short paper will outline how, with planning and preparation, you can tap into the potential of Circle Time as a highly effective approach to deliver the SEAD philosophy and curriculum.

A properly structured Circle Time programme offers Early Years settings a comprehensive, practical and focused format that supports young children's social and emotional development in the following ways.

- Circle meetings provide pleasurable experiences that give children a positive attitude to learning.
- Children come together to share their learning and play.
- Children learn to share adult time and attention, equipment, and space.
- Children learn to develop an identity within the group.
- Children see for themselves that it is beneficial to be self-controlled and friendly towards others.
- The supportive environment means that children feel emotionally safe enough to take more risks, thereby becoming more confident and independent.
- Children learn positive ways to form and maintain relationships with each other.
- Children learn appropriate ways to express their emotions and how to 'read' emotions in others.
- Children learn to look, listen, think, and to develop problem-solving skills.

The Circle Time process is democratic and provides opportunities for all children to feel valued.

From a practitioner's point of view, Circle Time provides:

- a structure that offers security and continuity and allows children to move seamlessly from simple to more complex activities
- a structure that ensures that you tap into games, songs and activities and use them in productive and intentional ways
- a regular opportunity to observe and assess children's progress and make plans to move them forward
- an insight into how each child learns and a means of identifying any gaps in their learning.

Each Circle Time session includes different activities that have been carefully chosen to ensure that children's attention is focused on a single learning objective. This is very important because it means that everything they do has a useful purpose as well as being enjoyable and 'fun'. In other words, it is not a time to play games for their own sake or a way of filling in a bit of spare time. It is not just a chat time dominated by the adults. It is a high-quality, timetabled and planned way to help children learn important, life-affirming lessons.

## Preparing for Circle Time

You need to select a suitable place in which to hold Circle Time sessions. This should be carpeted and large enough to seat the children in a comfortable circle with sufficient space to carry out the activities. Initially, it may be difficult for very young children to sit in a circle and concentrate on the activities. Marking a symbolic place for them with their own cushions, carpet squares, or even golden paper doilies, will help. Also, make sure that you hold your circle in an area that is free from distractions by ensuring that toys and books are out of sight and out of reach. Put a 'Do Not Disturb – We Are Enjoying Circle Time' sign on your door.

Circle Time should be visually timetabled. Very young children need to join in short circle sessions for about ten minutes every day. As they move through your setting, you will be working towards less frequent sessions – that last for about 15–30 minutes and are held at least once a week. At the point when Circle Time is happening for at least 20 minutes weekly, it is a good idea to introduce the idea of sitting on the chairs. Chairs give you an opportunity to 'teach' body language: 'I like the way you are listening and looking at the same time.' You need to sit on the same-sized chair as the children – as this gives the signal that we are all equal; we are a team, and all our voices are equally valuable. Facilitating a Circle Time session takes energy so it is vital that you choose a time when both you and the children are feeling fresh and vibrant. Try and make sure you take a tiny break before you start – so you can let go of any irritations and are ready to be positive.

## Getting started

Introducing Circle Time to very young children presents some special challenges due to their immaturity, short attention span and lack of experience in a focused learning environment. You also need to deal with a great variation between personalities, physical needs and social experience. Initially, your objective should be for all the children to have fun, make friends and gain confidence in some basic learning skills so that they all look forward to coming back for more.

Here are some good principles to follow.

- Play games that help children to learn, and stay away from any 'drills' that may make them tense and nervous.
- Keep things moving at a good pace so they are always interested.
- Minimise 'preaching' – young children have short attention spans and you often only have about ten seconds to make your point.
- Concentrate on improving selected individual skills – young children get confused if you try to cover too many things in one session.
- Introduce a shy puppet who needs their kind words or strokes.
- Always end the session with a 'calm-down' so that children leave the Circle Time session feeling positive and relaxed.
- Praise all the children's skills throughout the Circle Time session – no negative remarks: 'I like the way you are looking at me when you are speaking,' said to the child near the one whose attention is wandering everywhere works wonders!

## What happens in Circle Time sessions?

### The Five Learning Skills

To begin with, you need to use activities, games, rhymes and songs that teach the Five Learning Skills. This is important because these skills underpin everything you are planning to do with your children in the future.

The Five Learning Skills of Circle Time are looking, listening, speaking, thinking and concentrating. The following short routine can be practised as a fun daily game. Once you have explained the skills, you can say the words while they perform the actions, or vice versa. You can then make them into a game by playing Simon Says, concentrating on the five skills.

In Circle Time...

We use our looking skills (point to eyes)

We use our listening skills (point to ears)

We use our speaking skills (point to mouth)

We use our thinking skills (put hands on side of head)

We use our concentration skills (clasp hands and place in laps)

Once these skills have been learnt they can then be incorporated into Circle Time sessions. We call these the Five Steps of Circle Time. Initially you only select two or three steps – to keep it simple – for example:

- 'meet-up' games and activities to introduce the skill that you wish to work on
- turn-taking rounds, rhymes or games that reinforce children's experience of the chosen skill
- calm-down activities to ensure that everyone leaves the meeting feeling positive and ready to try out new skills.

The activities you choose will depend on the maturity of the children in the group. For instance, very young children will enjoy simple, one-word 'rounds' while older children are capable of speaking whole sentences if you give them a suitable starter sentence-stem. Some children aren't ready to speak out at all so can each take a turn in just picking up their chosen picture card to show to the circle something they like listening to. Or they could whisper their word to a puppet who speaks for them.

Once your children are familiar with the Five Learning Skills, you can begin to introduce games, songs and activities that help them to explore the moral values that help us get on together. We call these:

### The Golden Rules

We are gentle – we don't hurt others

We are kind and helpful – we don't hurt anybody's feelings

We listen – we don't interrupt

We look after property – we don't damage things

We work – we don't waste time

We play safely – we don't spoil others' games

We are honest – we don't cover up the truth

People often ask, 'But why do you include the negatives?' We believe children learn by opposites. Most adults have never explicitly learnt the Golden Rules – they use a language of 'Don't'. This way we give everyone the same language by encouraging them to praise the opposite. 'I really like the way you were gentle when you gave Jo that heavy toy.' (Parents love to have copies of the Golden Rules.) The best way to display them, in the inside and outside of settings, is with photos of children keeping the Rules.

Once you have taught the Five Skills, the children are then ready to learn the Golden Rules. These can be introduced one at a time through planned circle sessions. Eventually, when the children are ready, Circle Time sessions would follow the full Five Steps.

## Five Steps of Quality Circle Time

**Step One: Meeting Up** – You choose a game to help everyone 'meet up'. By beginning with a specially selected game, and not with 'talking', you establish that learning is fun – and being with each other is even more fun.

**Step Two: Warming up** – Children need to 'warm up' to speaking. Some are shy, some like to dominate. By using a small talking object, during 'the round', every child has a turn and knows not to interrupt the one who is speaking. You can 'coach' shy children in small groups before Circle Time by using a puppet. The puppet tells them what is going to happen and asks them what they would like to say. They whisper into his or her ear, then the puppet speaks for them during the round. The round could be a whole sentence based on a given sentence stem, or a word, or a turn-taking song or rhyme.

**Step Three: Opening up** – We help children develop empathy, by exploring situations and issues that are important to them. The Golden Rules can also be 'opened up' during this step. Young children don't respond well to boring adult talk, so you need to use a range of metaphorical approaches to keep their interest. For example:

- Puppets: The puppets can have the same problems as the children, for example not wanting to leave Mum in the morning, feeling shy, unable to share. Through the use of clever interactive scripts children can explore their feelings. Puppets also have a lot of joys they want the children to share in.
- Stories: These are a powerful way of engaging children's hearts and minds. This is particularly true of role-play if the adult helper takes a turn in playing. The circle is like a 'theatre-in-the-round'. The space in the middle is magical – where any 'story' can be acted and reflected upon.

**Step Four: Cheering up** – Often the previous 'opening-up' step is intense – involving children in imagining, mime and empathising. If you were to suddenly stop the circle and say 'Well done – all out to play', it would be too abrupt. Step Four helps to get children 'centred' again and sufficiently resilient to face the 'hurly-burly' of play.

The 'cheering-up' step moves children back to the laughter of shared learning again. In the middle of the circle self-chosen children can teach new games to their peers. We can, through mime, learn to skip with their accompanying rhymes. We can sing new songs. We praise each other for the particular skills or values we focus on in Step Three. It's a time for celebration!

**Step Five: Calming down** – We now need to bridge the children calmly to go to their next activity. Here you can play a calming game like passing the tambourine around without any sound. You can play some of nature's sounds on a CD and they have to listen and guess. You can teach some simple breathing techniques or even, eventually, engage them in gentle, simple visualisations like sitting in a lovely safe green park, feeling a little breeze and watching the little rabbits nibbling under the hedges, feeling very happy and peaceful.

### 'Pick 'n' Mix' the Five Steps

You are the professional. You can choose different steps according to the emotional and social needs of your children and size of your circle. You might do a Step One – Step Four – Step Five. Any variation. BUT you never end on a Step Three. Step Three opens hearts and minds – so it always needs another step after it to distance the child from his/her earlier involvement and to get them ready to rejoin the 'outside' world. Any of the other four steps will help them with this task. You can even use Step Two with a round of: 'When I go outside, I want to...'

## Golden Rules for adults

- Physically get ready for Circle Time by preparing a structured session plan and all its resources. Base the plan on the needs of the children.
- If you have a large group, break them up into smaller circles of eight to ten and make sure each adult helper follows the same session plan.
- Emotionally get yourself ready for Circle Time. Make sure you are in a good mood! Take a quick break before you start. Put a really happy, fun face on – or delay Circle Time until you can!
- Be led by the children's needs, feelings and thoughts.
- Don't speak too much.
- Join in and take turns, but don't dominate.
- Keep a brisk pace – don't get engaged in listening for just a few of the vocal children. If you keep to the Five Steps, everyone will be heard – but don't be afraid to go with the flow either!
- No 'put downs' in the circle – always praise the child who is doing the opposite behaviour to the child whose behaviour is worrying you. Children are fascinated by other children, so if you draw their attention to the positive behaviour they learn without being embarrassed or 'shamed'.
- Consider asking parents or grandparents into the circle. Many parents need to learn all the rhymes, songs and games too. It makes it so much more fun when you have an inter-generational circle. It gives the message that everyone loves learning and that we can all be respectful towards each other.
- Circle Time is designed to be both very structured and adaptable at the same time. Don't be afraid to try things out and learn from experience.

What makes Circle Time special is that it is able to focus everyone's attention on the personal, social and emotional aspects of many areas of the curriculum and helps children to approach each new challenge with calm assurance and self-belief.

Circle Time puts personal, social and emotional development where it belongs – at the very heart of everything you do with the young children in your care.

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