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# Excellence and Enjoyment: social and emotional aspects of learning

Going for goals!  
Revised Early Years Foundation Stage version





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Going for goals!  
Revised Early Years Foundation Stage version



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Please check all website references carefully to see if they have changed and substitute other references where appropriate.

## Red set

### Introduction

This theme focuses primarily on the key aspect of motivation, with a subsidiary focus on self-awareness. It gives an important opportunity for all children's abilities, qualities and strengths to be valued. The theme provides opportunities for the children to reflect on themselves as individuals, particularly their strengths as learners and how they learn most effectively.



Each set of activities focuses on the underlying prerequisites for successful goal-directed learning and behaviour: for example, taking responsibility and building feelings of confidence and self-efficacy – the belief that what you do makes a difference. Goal-directed behaviour is only valuable if we are able to make wise and balanced choices about our goals, so this theme provides opportunities for children to consider this and to practise problem-solving strategies.

Learning Opportunities for the Early Years Foundation Stage are described below.

Description	Development Matters/Look, listen and note: Ages and stages 30–50 months, 40–60+ months
<p>The Red set covers the early steps in developing feelings of self-worth and competence, decision-making, self-motivation, independence, prediction, and thinking logically and analytically.</p> <p>It focuses on developing the children's ability to work towards a self-determined goal, to persist, and to recognise when they have reached their goal.</p> <p>The activities support the children in learning about themselves and their own unique gifts and talents within the context of the Foundation Stage setting.</p>	<p><b>Knowing myself</b>                      I know that I can do more things now than I could when I was younger.                      I know that I will be able to do more things when I am older.                      I know that we are all good at different things.                      I can tell you what I like doing and learning.                      I can try new things in my learning.</p> <p><b>Setting a realistic goal</b>                      I can tell you what a goal is.                      I can set a goal for myself.                      I can tell you what I want to achieve and how I am going to do so.</p> <p><b>Planning to reach a goal</b>                      I can say what I am going to do next.</p> <p><b>Persistence</b>                      I can focus my attention and start a task.                      I can sustain my attention.                      I can work hard to achieve my goal.                      I know that working hard is important to reaching my goal.</p> <p><b>Evaluation and review</b>                      I can tell you what I have done and the things that worked well.</p>

## Development Matters – Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage

The following learning intentions are drawn from the Personal, Social and Emotional Area of Learning and Development. Ongoing observational assessment will also identify development, learning and progress from a number of other areas of learning [Early Learning Goals are in bold]. Progress, development and learning should be identified through observing children in a wide range of contexts.

Children develop a strong sense of self through interaction and communication with others. They learn to find a voice to express their thoughts, feelings and ideas as they make connections with others within a supportive learning environment, whether that be the home, local community, school or setting.

	Dispositions and attitudes	Confidence, self esteem, relationships, and community	Behaviour and self-control	Self-care and independence
30–50 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have a positive approach to activities and events</li> <li>Show increasing independence in selecting and carrying out activities</li> <li>Show confidence in linking up with others for support and guidance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feel safe and secure and show a sense of trust</li> <li>Make connections between different parts of their life experience</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Show willingness to tackle problems and enjoy self-chosen challenges</li> <li>Demonstrate a sense of pride in own achievement</li> <li>Take initiatives and manage developmentally appropriate tasks</li> <li>Show increasing independence in selecting and carrying out activities</li> </ul>
40–60+ Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Display high levels of involvement in activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value and contribute to own well-being and self-control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Show confidence and ability to stand up for own rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operate independently within the environment and show confidence in linking up with others for support and guidance</li> </ul>

<p>40–60+ Months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Persist for extended periods of time at an activity of their choosing</li> <li>● <b>Continue to be interested, excited and motivated to learn</b></li> <li>● <b>Be confident to try new activities, initiate ideas and speak in a familiar group</b></li> <li>● <b>Maintain attention, concentrate and sit quietly when appropriate</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have a positive self image and show that they are comfortable with themselves</li> <li>● <b>Respond to significant experiences, showing a range of feelings when appropriate</b></li> <li>● <b>Have a developing awareness of their own needs, views and feelings and be sensitive to the needs, views and feelings of others</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Consider the consequences of their words and actions for themselves and others</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Select and use activities and resources independently</b></li> </ul>
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## Planning

To help with planning, the type of learning and teaching involved in each learning opportunity is indicated by icons in the left-hand margin of this booklet:



- Adult-led – where language and ideas are specifically introduced and developed by the practitioner;



- Child-initiated – where learning is child-initiated, supported by adaptations to the learning environment and social interaction which promote particular avenues of exploration and discussion.

Ideas from practitioners who piloted these materials are noted in the right-hand margin of this booklet. The ideas include ways in which practitioners planned for diversity in their class or group; for example, to support the learning of children for whom English is an additional language, and of children with special educational needs.



## Key vocabulary

Introduce these words within the theme and across the curriculum.

learn	finish	before	after	now	today
tomorrow	future	goal	target	succeed	proud

## Key points from the assembly or group time

Samindra lived with his mother and sister. His father was away fighting in a war. They had a tractor to help them with the farm.

The tractor broke down and needed a new part (a carburettor). Samindra's mother hurt her leg and couldn't go to get the new part.

Samindra set off over the mountain. It seemed a long way and he was scared.

Samindra got over the mountain and bought the new part.

He returned home and gave his mother the new part for the tractor.

## Suggested whole-school/setting focus for noticing and celebrating achievement

Use the school or setting's usual means of celebration (praise, notes to the child and parents/carers, certificates, peer nominations, etc.) to notice and celebrate children (or adults) who have been observed:

Week 1: Taking responsibility – for our successes and when things go wrong

Week 2: Waiting for what you want; persistence (keeping going)

Week 3: Resilience – bouncing back or maintaining effort through a difficult experience or after a mistake or failure

Week 4: Setting and achieving goals



## Red set: Early Years Foundation Stage, Development Matters 30–50 months

### Circle games

#### **Look, Listen and Note 30–50 months**

I can set a goal for myself and for a group.

### Keeping very quiet



Pass a tambourine or a bunch of keys silently around the circle. Discuss improvements (for example, in the quality of the silence, or in the time taken to achieve this goal) and try again.

### Rounds

Today I am going to ...

Yesterday I ...

### Learning opportunities: understanding myself

#### **Look, Listen and Note 30–50 months**

I know that I can do more things now than I could when I was younger.

I know that I will be able to do more things when I am older.

I know that we are all good at different things.



Talk about something that one or more children in the group have achieved recently.

Introduce the idea of:

When I was a baby I could ...

Now I can ...

When I am older I will be able to ...

If children talk about achievements that can be demonstrated (for example, climb to the top rung of the climbing-frame ladder), plan for children to be able to do so. Emphasise that we achieve goals because we try hard.

Create a display of 'What I can do now' by having each child record something they can do – this might be through a picture or photograph.

Create a display of 'When I was a baby I could ...' You might like to ask a parent or carer to bring a baby into the Early Years setting and take photographs of the baby eating, drinking, having a nappy changed, being dressed, playing with a rattle and so on to add to the display.

Children and adults could bring in photographs of themselves when they were babies.

The experiences suggested above support children in achieving the following EYFS 30–50 month Development Matters statements:

- Make connections between different parts of their life experience
- Have a sense of personal identity
- Demonstrate a sense of pride in own achievement

## Learning opportunities: setting a realistic goal

### Look, Listen and Note 30–50 months

I can tell you what a goal is.

I can work to try to reach my goal.

I can set a goal for myself.

I can try new things in my learning.

I can tell you what I have done and the things that worked well.



Make intended learning opportunities part of the learning experience. If aims are explicit to children before they begin activities, for example 'This game will help us to practise working together in pairs', with a time for reflection afterwards, then children will start to consider activities as purposeful and goal-directed and will be able to say if they have met the goal.

You might observe the children playing and identify one thing that each child did well. Record these and share them with the group. Negotiate with the child a new 'goal' or target to extend this achievement. Consider how long each child might take to achieve his or her goal. Share some of these with the group. Explain to the children that we can make some goals happen almost straight away, while others might take a lot longer. Give examples of each, for example: 'Nanceba's goal is to play with Shanaz at playtime'; 'Randeep's goal is to become a firefighter'.

In the construction area, you might model the process of working towards a goal. Start talking with a group of children about what you are going to make, and then together build a clear picture of what you are going to make. You might model deliberate mistakes and allow the children to explain how they might put this right. When the children are making their own models, keep them focused on what they are making with questions about the ultimate goal.

Set a goal for each classroom activity. Ensure there is enough time for all children to 'succeed' in the task. Adults working in the setting should help children understand the idea of goals by using open-ended questioning, such as 'What are you trying to do?'; 'What do you have to do?'; 'Have you finished?'; 'How do you know when you have finished?'; 'What help do you need?'. When a child finishes a task, ask how he or she feels now that it is done.

Tenses play a big part in talking about goals but not all of my learners were familiar with using 'going to' to talk about things they intend to do in the future. To model this structure, we displayed the question 'What are you going to do?' and constantly supported the children to talk about things they were going to do that day or over a longer period.





Set some tasks that require everyone to work together. For example, each child could have one piece of a jigsaw while the group has the task of putting the jigsaw together.

Ask each child to set a simple goal, achievable within the day. Parents/carers could be involved in this by choosing a goal with their child from a list and sticking the goal on the child's name on a display board. The child and parent/carer could either tick the goal or put them in a 'things we have achieved' box at the end of the day. Make time to discuss what children have achieved as a whole group.

The experiences suggested above support children in achieving the following EYFS 30–50 month Development Matters statements:

- Seek and delight in new experiences
- Make connections between different parts of their life experience
- Show willingness to tackle problems and enjoy self-chosen challenges
- Show increasing independence in selecting and carrying out activities

## Ongoing activities

Effective strategies to develop an environment that supports the skills identified in this theme include the following.

### Organising the day

Time provided for individual play with adult support when needed.

Free choice time, with a balance of activities.

Time management that allows for extended investigation and play.

Opportunities for children to take responsibility within the setting (e.g. involvement in setting routines).

Outcomes that are decided by the children.

Organisational systems that encourage children to be involved in planning what they are going to do (e.g. a planning board).

Opportunities for children to review and comment on their achievements.

Involving parents/carers in the setting, and providing information so that they can talk to the child about what they are going to do and review what they have done in the setting.

### The environment

Providing an environment that encourages independence.

Providing areas for different activities and personal choices.

Providing accessible equipment in labelled locations.

## The role of adults

Adults involved in children's play, including imaginative play.

Adults modelling goal-directed behaviour, persistence, making mistakes and learning from them.

Opportunities for children to talk to adults alone or in groups.

Celebration of success.

A questioning environment where children are given open-ended problem-solving tasks.

A non-judgemental atmosphere where it is considered to be OK to make mistakes and learn from them.

Adults who support children's ideas and use questioning to encourage the generation of new ideas.

A crucial element of effective Early Years Foundation Stage practice is to use the issues that arise within spontaneous play. The following examples illustrate the types of experience that can provide opportunities to develop key learning within this theme.

When a child's model breaks, this provides an excellent opportunity to explore the feelings of frustration that arise. It also provides an opportunity to support the child's persistence and to encourage emotional resilience.

When a child is distracted and leaves a picture or activity unfinished, this provides an opportunity to encourage the child to consider their original goal and their concept of 'finished'.

## Questions for reflection and enquiry

- What are you doing?
- What will it look like when you finish?
- How will you know when you have finished?
- What are you going to do first? Then what?
- How will you do that? What help do you need?
- What will happen if you ...?
- Why are you doing it that way?
- Is there anything else you need to do?

## Review

Review significant activities as the children complete them, asking if they think they achieved their goal.

Ask: 'What have you done today?' (Prompt as necessary.)

Provide a little time for quiet reflection about what they have done and what they would like to achieve tomorrow.

Ask: 'Did anyone help you to achieve your goal? What did they do?'  
'Did you help anyone to achieve their goal? What did you do?'

## Red set: Early Years Foundation Stage, Development Matters 40–60+ months

### Circle games



The children sit in a circle. Explain that they are to get up and find a new place if what you says applies to them. For example, 'Get up and find a new place if:

- ... you are going to play in the sand today';
- ... you are going to do some painting today';
- ... you are going to play with a friend today';
- ... you are going read a book today'.

We used 'yes' and 'no' lollipop sticks for the children to hold up so that a child with mobility difficulties could be more easily included.



### Rounds

Go round the circle and ask children in turn to talk about things they do:

I am good at ...

I like ...

### Learning opportunities: knowing myself

#### Look, Listen and Note 40–60+ months

I know that we are all good at different things.

I can say what I am going to do next.

I can tell you what I like doing and learning.

I can tell you what I have done and the things that worked well.



Observe the children carefully to identify their individual strengths. Use digital photography to illustrate these strengths. You might like to put these on a display. Try to represent the children's cultural diversity and your knowledge of them as learners outside the setting.

Use the photographs to talk about what the children have been doing in the setting. Ask them to comment on what the child is doing in the photograph and how well they are doing it. Have your own comments ready.

Ensure that all children gain recognition for something they can do and strengths they have.

Encourage children to make choices about when and what they will do in the setting. Talk about what they plan to do for the day. Review what they said they would do and what they actually did.

Tom has autism and uses a visual timetable. Because he 'posts' each activity from his timetable into a box as soon as he has finished, it is easy to review what he has done in the day.



The experiences suggested above support children in achieving the following 40–60+ month Development Matters statements:

- Have a positive self-image and show that they are comfortable with themselves
- Have a developing awareness of their own needs, views and feelings and be sensitive to the needs, views and feelings of others

## Learning opportunities: my goal is ...

### Look, Listen and Note 40–60+ months

I can set a goal for myself.

I can focus my attention and start a task.

I can concentrate on what I am doing.

I can tell you what I want to achieve and how I am going to do so.



Discuss 'Things we would like to be able to do' and record children's ideas, maybe starting with something you yourself would like to be able to do. When everyone who wants to has had a turn, remind the children that these 'wishes' are sometimes called 'goals' – something we try to make happen.

Go through the list the children have generated and decide together which are 'quick' goals and which will take longer to make happen.

Create a display, using the children's pictures or photographs to show what the children want to achieve.

Talk to the children about something that one or more children in the group have achieved recently, within the last year if possible. Record responses. If the achievement is something the children can demonstrate, ask selected children to do so. Children could design and make awards for themselves or each other to celebrate their achievements.

Introduce a puppet into the setting and explain that she would like to learn something new today. This is her learning goal. Perhaps you will say she wants to learn how to draw a house. Say she isn't very good at drawing a square yet. Ask the children to help her to learn to do this. What should she do? Leave the puppet in the setting so that the children can help her reach her learning goal. Make sure the puppet reaches her goal. Show the children what she has done and take a photograph of her to show what she has achieved.

Ask each child to set a simple goal, achievable within a week. Parents/carers could be involved in this by choosing a goal from a list with their child and sticking the goal on the child's name on the display board. The child and parent/carer could either tick the goal or put them in a 'Things we have achieved' box at the end of the week. Make time to discuss what children have achieved as a whole group.

We used targets that focused on children's learning behaviour, like sitting still for five minutes at story time, and put photos of the individual child 'doing it right' on the wall, with a certificate when they had achieved it.



Encourage children to set themselves goals for physical development, for example:

- learning to catch a ball
- balancing on the bar
- jumping (higher, more often, further)
- doing a somersault
- learning to ride a bike
- learning to swim
- learning to whistle.



Encourage children to set goals for their self-directed activities. Ensure there is enough time for all children to 'succeed' in the task. Adults working in the setting should help children understand the idea of goals by using open-ended questioning, for example: 'What are you trying to do?'; 'What do you have to do?'; 'Have you finished?'; 'How do you know when you have finished?'; 'What help do you need?'. When children finish a task they might get a sticker to say they have reached the goal.

Arrange some activities that require everyone to work together; for example, each child having some pieces of a construction kit, while the group has the task of putting the pieces together.

Help children to get started with an activity by playing and learning alongside them and engaging their interest.

Talk about what you are trying to achieve and encourage them to talk about what they are doing and what they want to achieve.

The experiences suggested above support children in achieving the following EYFS 40–60+ month Development Matters statements:

- Display high levels of involvement in activities
- Continue to be interested, excited and motivated to learn

## Learning opportunities: keeping going

### Look, Listen and Note 40–60+ months

I can work to reach my goal.

I know that working hard is important to reaching a goal.

The grandmother of one of the children came in and showed us how to knit. Another came and showed us how to make noodles. I took photographs.



Invite a visitor (or another staff member) who has achieved something appropriate – preferably demonstrable within the school or setting (such as juggling) – to come and speak to the children. Ask the children to come up with some questions to ask the visitor (for example, 'Could you do it when you were little?'; 'Is it hard?'). Ensure that the visitor is briefed in advance. Key points to draw out are that the skill took time to learn and that practice was necessary. Record the visit in pictures if possible for display. Try to represent the diversity in your group by including the traditional skills represented in different cultures.



Use the assembly story to decide on what the children as a class will say to help anyone who is having a problem ('You can do it'; 'You're nearly there', etc.).

Use the story of *The Hare and the Tortoise* to illustrate the achievement of a goal through persistence.

Have children talk to parents/grandparents about what they were like as children.

Make zigzag books of 'Babies can ... but I can ...' For example: 'Babies can crawl, but I can walk'.

The experiences suggested above support children in achieving the following EYFS 40–60+ month Development Matters statements:

- Persist for extended periods of time at an activity of their choosing
- Maintain attention, concentrate and sit quietly when appropriate

## Ongoing activities

Effective strategies to develop an environment that supports the skills identified in this theme include the following.

### Organising the day

Time provided for individual play with adult support when needed.

Free choice time, with a balance of activities.

Time management that allows for extended investigation and play.

Opportunities for children to take responsibility within the setting (e.g. involvement in setting routines).

Outcomes that are decided by the children.

Organisational systems that encourage children to be involved in planning what they are going to do (e.g. a planning board).

Opportunities for children to review and comment on their achievements.

Involving parents/carers in the setting, and providing information so that they can talk to the child about what they are going to do and reviewing what they have done in the setting.

### The environment

Providing an environment that encourages independence.

Providing areas for different activities and personal choices.

Providing accessible equipment in labelled locations.

### The role of adults

Adults involved in children's play, including imaginative play.

Adults modelling goal-directed behaviour, persistence, making mistakes and learning from them.



Opportunities for children to talk to adults alone or in groups.

Celebration of success.

A questioning environment where children are given open-ended problem-solving tasks.

A non-judgemental atmosphere where it is considered to be OK to make mistakes and learn from them.

Adults who support children's ideas and use questioning to encourage the generation of new ideas.

A crucial element of effective Early Years Foundation Stage practice is to use the issues that arise within spontaneous play. The following examples illustrate the types of experience that can provide opportunities to develop key learning within this theme.

When a child's model breaks, this provides an excellent opportunity to explore the feelings of frustration that arise. It also provides an opportunity to support the child's persistence and to encourage emotional resilience.

When a child is distracted and leaves a picture or activity unfinished, this provides an opportunity to encourage the child to consider their original goal and their concept of 'finished'.

## Questions for reflection and enquiry

- What are you doing?
- What will it look like when you finish?
- How will you know when you have finished?
- What are you going to do first? Then what?
- What will happen if you...?
- Why are you doing it that way?
- Is there anything else you need to do?
- What are you going to do/learn today?
- Is it OK to hurt someone if they get in your way?

## Review

Ask: 'What have you done today?' (Prompt as necessary.)

Review significant activities and ask if the children achieved their goals. (With younger children, the review will need to happen alongside the activity, so that they can draw on it in their reflection.)

Provide a little time for quiet reflection about what they have done and what they would like to achieve tomorrow.

Ask: 'Did anyone help you to achieve your goal? What did they do?'  
'Did you help anyone to achieve their goal? What did you do?'

Revisit the idea that we can help each other to achieve our goals by being encouraging and saying kind things.

## Red set

### Curriculum and other links/follow-up work

#### A forest walk

**Core activity:** Children spend a day visiting a local wood or wildlife area. Prepare them for the visit with discussions, books, videos and role-play about the natural world. Group children into small teams of three or four (together with an adult or adults who can model appropriate language and behaviour) for collaborative, problem-solving tasks that require goal setting and persistence, such as building a shelter, laying a trail, making collections, etc.

**Personal, social and emotional development:** Show children boundaries of the wood or forest area and how to make and retain contact with their group to ensure safety and encourage responsibility towards self and others. Give tasks as a group (such as building a shelter for an animal) that require collaboration, goal setting and persistence.

**Communication, language and literacy:** Encourage children to explore different ways of communicating with each other across distance – calls, drums, signals, signs, etc.

**Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy:** Give children tasks and problems that require exploration of shape, size, position and direction. You might play 'Can you find out what I'm thinking of ...?' Without telling them what object you are thinking of, explain to the children the location of something in the area using appropriate positional language. For example: 'I am thinking of something that is under that tree, and between these two bushes. Do you know what it is?' Give them an opportunity to talk to their peers before submitting their guess. When the children have had some experience of this game, they may be able to make up the descriptions themselves.

**Knowledge and understanding of the world:** Involve children in making collections of plants and mini-beasts, and identify species. Discuss ecological systems and interdependency of different species of flora and fauna. Talk about how each species organises its daily activity in order to survive: building nests, collecting food, etc. Talk about how each species grows and develops.

Building a shelter requires the children collectively to devise a design, plan for it, locate required resources and build it.

Encourage children through mime, words or pictures to reflect on the beauty and wonder of the natural world and those things that particularly captured their interest and enthusiasm.

**Physical development:** Encourage children to explore the wood or forest environment physically: balancing, climbing, using each other to support. Encourage them to complete physical challenges.

**Creative development:** Children might make forest sculptures using natural tree and plant waste.



Audience: Headteachers, teachers and practitioners in primary schools, nursery schools, middle schools, special schools and early years settings

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