Welcome to the second edition of The Early Years Professional’s Complete Companion. This book provides a companion handbook for candidates currently engaged in Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) training, their mentors, work placement trainers and tutors. It will also help Early Years Professionals (EYPs) and Early Years teachers to reflect upon and develop their practice and leadership skills and to consider potential routes for continuing professional development. The book will initially outline what is required in terms of entry to EYPS training, and the four pathways that candidates may take. Its central focus will be upon the Standards against which all Early Years Professional candidates are tested through the validation process. These Standards are conceptually grouped in chapters (see below) in which experienced EYPS tutors, mentors and trainers take the reader on a holistic journey through the skills and knowledge that the candidate needs to develop to meet the Standards required. Ideas for practical activities and further reading are suggested, and the text is interspersed with boxes outlining examples of practice, accompanied by reflection and advice.

The book is organised into four parts:

Part 1: Introducing Early Years Professional Status
Part 2: The Children’s Agenda: principles in children’s development, social policy and inclusion
Part 3: Leading practice in the Early Years setting
Part 4: Becoming an Early Years Professional: validation and beyond

The complex interface between EYPS training and the Early Years Foundation Stage, the Common Core Skills and the associated ‘Lead Professional’ role will be emphasised throughout the text. The text as a whole will also comprehensively reflect upon the role of the EYP in the range of childcare/education settings in the UK. It depicts the EYP as a graduate professional responsible for the leadership of practice in Early Years settings, through the Early Years Foundation Stage. From the basis of this approach, readers will be supported in their development of an
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organic, holistic perspective on childcare and education, where the EYPS Standards are achieved in a synthesis of practical skills and knowledge development, not on a mechanical Standard-by-Standard basis. As such, readers will find that the Standards are not always covered within the chapters in the exact order nor within the same groupings in which they appear in the Department for Education documents.

The Standards are as follows:

**EYPS Standards from September 2012**

An Early Years Professional must:

1. **Support the healthy growth and development of children from birth to the age of five.**
   1.1 Know and understand how children learn and develop and how this can be affected by individual circumstances.
   1.2 Support individual children through all areas of learning and development as outlined in the EYFS.
   1.3 Encourage and support children’s learning in ways that are appropriate to their development.
   1.4 Support children through a range of transitions.
   1.5 Know when a child is in need of support and when to refer to other relevant services.

2. **Work directly with children and in partnership with their families to facilitate learning and support development.**
   2.1 Understand the important influence of parents/carers, engaging them effectively to support their child’s wellbeing, learning and development.
   2.2 Communicate effectively with children from birth to age five, listening and responding sensitively.
   2.3 Promote positive social and emotional behaviour, attitudes and independence.
   2.4 Know and understand the significance of attachment and how effectively to promote it.
   2.5 Develop and sustain respectful relationships with children and their families.

3. **Safeguard and promote the welfare of children.**
   3.1 Know the legal requirements and guidance on health and safety, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and the implications for early years settings.
   3.2 Establish and sustain a safe environment and employ practices that promote children’s health and safety.
   3.3 Know and understand child protection policies and procedures, recognise when a child is in danger or at risk of abuse, and know how to act to protect them.
4. Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge every child.
   4.1 Establish and sustain a stimulating and inclusive environment where children feel confident and are able to learn and develop.
   4.2 Engage in sustained shared thinking with children.
   4.3 Give constructive feedback to help children evaluate their achievements and facilitate further learning.
   4.4 Demonstrate the positive values, attitudes and behaviours expected from children.

5. Make use of observation and assessment to meet the individual needs of every child.
   5.1 Observe, assess, record and report on progress in children’s development and learning, using this to plan next steps.
   5.2 Engage effectively with parents/carers and wider professionals in the ongoing assessment and appropriate provision for each child.
   5.3 Differentiate provision to meet the individual needs of the child and provide opportunities to extend their learning and development.

6. Plan provision taking account of the individual needs of every child.
   6.1 Provide balanced and flexible daily and weekly routines that meet children’s needs and interests and enable them to learn and develop.
   6.2 Plan and provide appropriate adult led and child initiated play and experiences that enable children to learn and develop.
   6.3 Select, prepare and use a range of resources suitable for children’s ages, interests and abilities, which value diversity, and promote equality and inclusion.

7. Fulfil wider professional responsibilities by promoting positive partnership working to support the child.
   7.1 Understand the importance of and contribute to multi-agency team working.
   7.2 Take a lead in establishing and sustaining a culture of cooperative working between colleagues and wider professionals.
   7.3 Support colleagues to understand the part they play to enable every child to reach their full potential.

8. Lead practice and foster a culture of continuous improvement.
   8.1 Model and implement effective practice, and support and mentor other practitioners.
   8.2 Reflect on the effectiveness of provision, propose appropriate changes and influence, shape and support the implementation of policies and practices within the setting.
   8.3 Take responsibility for improving practice through appropriate professional development, for self and colleagues.
   8.4 Promote equality of opportunity through championing children’s rights and anti-discriminatory practice.
8.5 Understand the implications of relevant legislation, statutory frameworks, including the EYFS, and policy for early years settings and apply in practice.

(The Teaching Agency 2012)

They are covered within the chapters as follows:

**Part 1: Introducing Early Years Professional Status**

**Chapter 1: Introducing Early Years Professional Status**

In this chapter, Pam Jarvis introduces the role of ‘Early Years Professional’, how and why it was created, and how these initial concepts were developed into a set of training programmes or ‘pathways’. This chapter covers the following points:

- What is EYPS?
- Why was it developed?
- Who can enter training?
- What are the ‘pathways’?
- Is Early Years Professional training for me?

**Part 2: The Children’s Agenda: principles in children’s development, social policy and inclusion**

**Chapter 2: Principles in childcare and education**

In this chapter, developmental researcher Pam Jarvis and Early Years practitioner Jane George encompass the partnership in which they have designed and delivered child development modules for many years, synthesising the theoretical and the practical, and how these meet within the current Early Years guidance documents. This chapter is also used as a source of theoretical reference by the practice-based chapters throughout the book. This chapter addresses:

**Standard 1:** Support the healthy growth and development of children from birth to the age of five.

**Standard 2:** Work directly with children and in partnership with their families to facilitate learning and support development.

**Chapter 3: Safeguarding and child protection**

In this chapter, Jane George and EYP Doreen Malcolm join forces to discuss safeguarding and child protection, bringing their varied setting management experience together to explore this challenging area, while Pam Jarvis provides support for the legal/policy aspects relating to this area. This chapter addresses:
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**Standard 3:** Safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

**Chapter 4: Children as citizens: rights and responsibilities in the twenty-first century**

In this chapter, Pam Jarvis not only outlines the current social policy for children and families, but, from her academic background as both historian and educational researcher, considers the concept of ‘social policy’, rights and inclusion from both a historical and international perspective, to support students not only in building their knowledge in this area, but also their critical and analytical skills, with Jane George and Wendy Holland providing pertinent and illustrative examples. This chapter addresses:

**Standard 8:** Lead practice and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

**Part 3: Leading practice in the Early Years setting**

**Chapter 5: Leading in children's learning and development**

In this chapter, Wendy Holland reflects upon over 30 years of experience as a nursery teacher and teacher/EYP trainer and assessor to outline the core daily work of an EYP in supporting children’s learning in the Early Years. This chapter addresses:

**Standard 5:** Make use of engagement, observation and assessment to meet the individual needs of every child.

**Chapter 6: Promoting emotional security and positive behaviour**

Moving directly on from Chapter 5, Wendy Holland now turns her attention to supporting children’s emotional development, hence supporting positive behaviour within professional environments providing care and education for children from birth to age 5. This chapter addresses:

**Standard 2:** Work directly with children and in partnership with their families to facilitate learning and development.

**Standard 4:** Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge every child.

**Chapter 7: Transforming the environment for play and learning**

Wendy Holland considers a range of positive environments in which to support children’s learning, reflecting upon resources, routines and activities and the responsibility of lead professionals to provide high-quality experiences for the children in their care. This chapter addresses:

**Standard 6:** Plan provision taking account of the individual needs of every child.
Chapter 8: Partnership and leadership in Early Years

In this chapter, the editorial team reflect upon the broad range of partnerships required within the complex contemporary arena of Early Years education and care in the UK, encompassing nursery schools, children’s centres and non-state sector settings. This chapter addresses:

Standard 2: Work directly with children and in partnership with their families to facilitate learning and development.

Standard 7: Fulfil wider professional responsibilities by promoting positive partnership working to support the child.

Standard 8: Lead practice and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

Part 4: Becoming an Early Years Professional: validation and beyond

Chapter 9: Managing your placement supervisor, mentor and your own continuing professional development

In this chapter, Early Years Professional and EYPS candidate mentor Poonam Cant focuses upon the workplace/work placement, considering how EYPS candidates can negotiate their way through the processes required to move successfully into validation, considering typical experiences of candidates on all four pathways. This chapter addresses:

Standard 8: Lead practice and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

Chapter 10: Surviving validation (Development Review and Assessment)

In this chapter, Pam Jarvis and Jane George guide candidates clearly and succinctly through the validation process, outlining:

- What to expect from the validation process
- Preparing for the Development Review
- A holistic approach to the Standards
- Some tips for the written tasks
- Preparing for the assessment visit.

Chapter 11: Early Years Professionals: in their own words

In this chapter, Pam Jarvis turns her research focus upon the experiences of Early Years Professionals. She interviews seven EYPs who approached their validation on a range of pathways, and who inhabit a range of professional roles in Early Years settings. They reflect upon their experience of validation, their current professional roles, how their training and achievement of EYP status have impacted upon their professional lives, and how they see their future careers in terms of challenges and opportunities.
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Throughout the book, the reader is invited to engage in the carefully coordinated EYP training programme developed by this highly effective team, as the innovative programme that they deliver is communicated through the text. *The Early Years Professional’s Complete Companion* is a text that is unquestionably produced specifically for Early Years Professionals, by a team who has a sole focus on teaching and assessing Early Years Professionals, and informed by the opinions of those who have already entered this new professional arena as Early Years Professionals as products of this training programme. It is presented in this second edition to maintain its status as a key text for early career EYPs and EYPS candidates, and for tutors, trainers, assessors and mentors contributing to EYPS training programmes across the UK. This is not to say that Early Years Practitioners on other related routes – for example, teacher training and foundation degrees – may not find its content useful; the holistic approach taken should render the text quite flexible in this way.

**References**

Part 2

The Children’s Agenda: principles in children’s development, social policy and inclusion
Chapter overview

The Standards addressed in this chapter are:

**Standard 1** Support the healthy growth and development of children from birth to the age of five.

**Standard 2** Work directly with children and in partnership with their families to facilitate learning and support development.

The text will address the following key questions:

- What are the main EYFS principles, and how do they relate to mainstream development theory and research?
- What are the main theoretical perspectives that describe how children develop and learn, particularly between birth and their sixth birthday?
- What influences and experiences in the setting and beyond including transitions can impact on children’s well-being, development, learning and behaviour and how can we connect these to the theoretical perspectives introduced in the previous section?

The culture of childcare – ‘then’ and ‘now’

Caroline, an Early Years Professional, was very surprised at the level of distress that her mother, Jean, exhibited on being told that her 3-year old granddaughter, Maisie, would have to undergo a series of treatments as a hospital in-patient. Jean had known that Maisie would need treatment since she was born; the situation was not life-threatening, and had a very positive prognosis: Maisie had a slight deformation of her feet, which would respond to a series of routine operations between the ages of 3 and 5. Caroline reassured her mother: ‘She will be fine, Mum.’

‘That’s what my mum thought when I had my tonsils out in 1958’, replied Jean, with tears in her eyes. ‘I was only 3, too – she didn’t see how much I cried when she wasn’t there. I still remember a nurse who got very cross with me and told me to “pull myself’
Jean is certainly right about one thing – an awful lot of things have changed in the field of Early Years practice since she was 3 years old, including our understanding of children’s emotional development, and the capacity for practitioners to engage in multi-agency working, including ongoing liaison with parents, who are now seen as the most important ‘experts’ in the pursuit of defining their child’s individual needs.

The underpinning principles of childcare and education require that leading practitioners have a solid, up-to-date working knowledge of the current national guidelines for Early Years practice, and of a range of theoretical principles that describe how children develop emotionally, socially and intellectually. This chapter will outline a summary of the principles of the current Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance (DFE 2012), followed by a summary of the core theoretical perspectives that have underpinned the huge changes in Early Years practice that have occurred over the last 50 years. The recommended reading list will give you a range of texts to study further on these topics. It is hoped that you will use this chapter as a reference base for the
What are the EYFS principles, and how are they reflected in the content?

key underpinning theories of child development and the key content and principles of the EYFS, returning when necessary from the later chapters in the book to check (for example) developmental stage information or references to theoretical concepts.

What are the main EYFS principles, and how do they relate to mainstream developmental theory and research?

The EYFS principles (DFE 2012) focus around three prime areas and four specific areas of learning. The prime areas are proposed to relate to the underpinning knowledge and skills for ‘school readiness’ and it is proposed that they should be developed through activities within the specific areas.

The prime areas are:
- Communication and language;
- Physical development;
- Personal, social and emotional development.

The four specific areas are:
- Literacy;
- Mathematics;
- Understanding the world;
- Expressive arts and design.

The EYFS also requires that practitioners additionally use ‘four guiding principles’ to inform practice in Early Years settings. These are:
- That every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- That children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships;
- That children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers; and
- That children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, including those children who have special educational needs and disabilities.

The EYFS proposes that to plan and guide children’s activities, practitioners should reflect on the different ways that children learn and utilise these in their practice. It is proposed that the characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:
- Playing and exploring – children investigating, experiencing and ‘having a go’;
- Active learning – children should be encouraged to continue their concentration and to keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, enjoying the eventual achievement;
Creating and thinking critically – children developing their own ideas, making links between ideas, and working out strategies for getting a specific result.

There is also a requirement for every child under 5 to be assigned a key person, who manages the child’s learning to address their individual needs, and who interfaces with the child’s parents and family. In order for this to be done effectively, the government propose that there is a clear need for highly skilled staff in Early Years settings, EYPs in particular.

By the time the child arrives at their sixth birthday, the expectation is that they will be able to do the following:

**Communication and language**
- Listen attentively, and respond with relevant comments, questions and actions;
- Speak effectively, showing awareness of listeners’ needs, using past, present and future forms accurately. They should be able to create their own narratives and explanations, connecting ideas or events.

**Physical development**
- Show good control and coordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. Fine motor skills are in place, allowing them to handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.

**Health and self-care**
- Know the importance for good health of physical exercise, and a healthy diet, and how to basically keep healthy and safe.
- Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing and going to the toilet independently.

**Personal, social and emotional development**
- Have the confidence to try new activities, and say why they like some activities more than others.
- Have the confidence to speak in a familiar group about their ideas, choosing the resources they need for their chosen activities.
- Have the confidence to say when they do or don’t need help.

**Managing feelings and behaviour:**
- Have the ability to talk about how they and others show feelings.
- Be able to discuss their own and others’ behaviour, and its consequences with the knowledge that some behaviour is unacceptable.
- Be able to work effectively as part of a group or class, understanding that they must obey certain rules.
- Be able to adjust their behaviour to fit particular situations.
- Cope with changes of routine.
What are the EYFS principles, and how are they reflected in the content?

Making relationships:

- Play cooperatively, taking turns with others, sharing ideas about how to organise an activity.
- Show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings, and form positive relationships with adults and other children.

The specific area targets for children leaving the Early Years Foundation Stage (in the school year that they become six) are summarised below:

**Literacy:** read and understand simple sentences, using phonics knowledge to decode regular words. There is growing knowledge about decoding common irregular words, and can comprehend what they have read and talk to others about it. They should also be able to use their phonics knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They can write simple sentences, additionally using some irregular common words which can be read by themselves and others.

**Mathematics:** count reliably with numbers from 1 to 20, place them in order and say which number is one more or one less than a given number. They can also add and subtract two single-digit numbers and count on or back to find the answer, and are able to double, halve and understand 'fair shares'. They have the ability to talk about issues relating to size, weight, capacity, position, distance, time and money, comparing quantities and objects to solve problems. There is recognition, creation and description of patterns. They explore characteristics of everyday objects and shapes and use basic mathematical language to describe them.

**Understanding the world:** children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members. They know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions, and are sensitive to the fact that people do not always enjoy the same things. They know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things, talking about their immediate environment, making basic comparisons with other environments. They make observations of animals and plants and try to explain changes. They know that various technologies are used in homes and schools, and are able to select and use technology for particular purposes.

**Expressive arts and design:** children sing songs, make music and dance, and experiment with these. They safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function, using what they have learnt about media and materials in original ways, thinking about uses and purposes. They are able to represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through design and technology, art, music, dance, role-play and stories.

(DFE 2012)

This will be re-visited in many of the chapters following, so do not worry if this all seems rather a lot to take in at first. To keep up with what is required in your work, particularly with respect to leadership, you will need to engage in continuing professional development activities once qualified; see Chapter 9 for further information on this point. Senior practitioners also need to lead and liaise with...
other professionals in cross-agency practice, based on the guidelines contained in the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children’s Workforce (DCSF 2010). These are as follows:

- Communicating and engaging effectively with a wide range of colleagues, including those from other professional sectors that provide services for young children and their families;
- Understanding how children and young people develop and being clear about one’s own professional role to support them in this process;
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child based on a core knowledge of current legal procedures and frameworks;
- Supporting transitions, being able to skillfully judge when and how to intervene in this process;
- Multi-agency working from the basis of an understanding of one’s own role and the complementary roles of other professionals;
- Sharing information from the basis of an understanding of the complexities involved in this, balancing families’ rights for confidential services with an understanding of when and how to share information and concerns with colleagues and professionals from other agencies, based on an underpinning knowledge of current policy guidance and legislation.

**Henry: a ‘naughty boy’ or a difficult situation? A multi-agency response**

Henry, aged 2½, caused some amount of concern to the staff at the playgroup he began attending for four mornings a week. He did not seem to have any problems in separating from his mother, but his attitude towards the other children in the group was very aggressive, pushing and biting. Josie, a nursery nurse and Henry’s keyworker, found that if she responded to this by sitting Henry on her lap and talking quietly and calmly to him he would calm down very quickly and go back to play – until the next time. After Henry had a tantrum where he ‘swiped’ a set of quite heavy wooden toys off a table where several children were playing (luckily not resulting in any injuries), Josie spoke to Sam, the centre EYP, about how they should proceed.

**Identifying good practice**

Sam suggested that the centre staff should carry out a series of focal child observations (see Chapter 3) on Henry, so they might be able to discern some kind of pattern that indicated what might be the cause of Henry’s temper tantrums, then they could discuss how they might respond. He asked Josie to talk to Henry’s mother, Jan, about this, and to let her know that both Josie and Sam were always available to discuss ongoing issues. After this was done, Josie reported back to Sam that Henry’s mother was relieved – she had put Henry’s problems down to the ‘terrible twos’ stage on the advice of her own mother, but was now beginning to think that there was more to it.
What are the EYFS principles, and how are they reflected in the content?

Early Years Education (2012) explores the EYFS using the six overlapping phases of child development initially used in the previous EYFS documents (2007):

**Birth to eleven months**
The initial stage where babies are focused principally upon physical and social development. They learn to control the basic movements of their bodies, understand in basic terms the information that is being filtered through their senses, and begin to communicate with the other people who inhabit their world.

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*Leading practice*

Sam suggested that Josie share the task of carrying out the observations with Angie, the other nursery nurse in the setting, so that the collected data was not based only on the opinions of one person. After a fortnight, Josie, Sam and Angie met to discuss what had been observed. It emerged that Henry had no problems with other children if they approached him from the front, but both observers had recorded that if they came from the side, particularly the left, he would lash out. It was agreed that Sam and Josie would meet with Jan to discuss this. Sam’s suggestion was that maybe Henry had some problem with his sight that meant he was being taken by surprise when children approached from the side, but he was unsure why this had not been picked up in Henry’s two-year sight check. All was revealed when Jan informed him that Henry had not yet had his two-year sight check because the family had moved around this time, and been allocated to a different health visitor. She subsequently contacted her new health visitor, who carried out the test the following week. Henry was found to have some problems with the test, and was referred to an optician. The optician’s diagnosis was a ‘lazy’ left eye.

*Reflection*  
Sam’s decision to investigate this situation properly created the positive result that, instead of becoming the setting’s ‘naughty boy’, as might have happened in earlier times, Henry’s underlying problems were diagnosed and treated. This illustrates one of the key purposes behind the two-year progress check introduced by the coalition government in 2012. However, diagnosis does not always mean instant improvement. In Henry’s case, the treatment the optician advised involved patching the ‘good’ eye for a time, so Henry’s experience was that, for a short time, his sight got worse instead of better, and consequently his behaviour deteriorated to some extent. But the centre staff now knew about the underlying problem and Sam suggested various ways that they could cope with this, which included consideration for the safety of the other children in the setting. Due to other children leaving the setting to move on to nursery during this time, Sam managed to reduce Josie’s keyworker caseload temporarily so that she was consistently available to give Henry the emotional support he needed while his eye was patched. When his eye was unpatched, Henry was prescribed a pair of glasses which gave him relatively normal vision, and his behaviour improved dramatically.
Eight months to twenty months

From eight months infants begin to learn about locomotion, rolling, crawling and eventually walking. From the middle of the first year they begin to show attachment to familiar people in their world, and as they move towards the final third of their first year, the first words are uttered; these are often the names of people who represent the infants’ closest bonded attachments, e.g. ‘mama’, ‘dada’, ‘gan’.

Sixteen months to twenty-six months

Children moving from babyhood to toddlerhood are frequently full of energy, using their new skills of mobility to investigate every inch of their surroundings. Safety considerations within everyday environments now become paramount; children of this age will have little understanding of everyday dangers, so, for example, fireguards, electric socket shields and stair gates will be necessary in order to protect them from potentially harmful results of such investigations. Children will also usually enter the two-word utterance stage of language development during this stage (see below), and, while they will become quite skilled at communicating meaning to familiar adults, there may be misunderstandings with people with whom they do not regularly interact. The will to do or communicate something may not always be matched by the necessary capacity at this stage, meaning that there may be frustration and temper tantrums that need skilful handling by carers.

Twenty-two to thirty-six months

Language continues to develop to the point that the child becomes more able to interact successfully with a wide range of others, including peers. If children have the opportunity to mix with a range of adults and peers during this stage they will become more socially competent, developing rudimentary skills of peer negotiation, although where difficult situations arise they will turn to bonded adults for help. Children in the later part of this stage will typically begin to deal with
simple intellectual challenges such as shape-matching, simple counting, naming colours and learning simple songs and rhymes. Fine motor skills develop rapidly, meaning that children in this stage will typically enjoy mark making and simple construction activities.

**Thirty to fifty months**

Children’s abilities to engage in peer interactions increase; in particular they are able to engage in, and enjoy increasingly intricate collaborative make believe scenarios with their peers. Gender preferences in play styles and play companions begin to emerge, as does recognition of cultural differences and curiosity relating to this. There is a growing independence in ‘self-care’ activities such as toileting and dressing. Children will be happy to leave bonded adults for increasing periods of time, while still needing readily available help from familiar adults when confused, or comfort when distressed. The first literacy skills emerge, usually starting with the child’s ability to recognise and then write their own name, moving on to recognise and copy other familiar words and phrases.

**Forty to sixty months**

The child is now beginning to build an increasingly independent role in the peer group, typically engaging in literacy and numeracy activities with enjoyment and increasing understanding. Independent problem-solving and reasoning skills are now developing quickly and children of this age are very capable of having a simple (albeit usually quite brief!) reasoned debate. They are also increasingly capable of controlling their own behaviour towards a projected end; this includes a developing ability to delay gratification for short periods of time.

These stages have been drawn from many years of developmental research. We have provided a brief overview of such research below; however, you (especially those who do not have significant child development education and training prior to undertaking their EYPS pathway) are advised to read more widely on this point, using the recommended reading list at the end of the chapter as your starting point.
What are the main theoretical perspectives that describe how children develop and learn, particularly between birth and their sixth birthday?

The first questions to be asked about human psychology were posed by the ancient Greek philosophers. They proposed that human beings expressed individually different temperaments, which they named as sanguine (easy-going), phlegmatic (sluggish), choleric (irritable) and melancholic (depressive) (Galen, second century BC in Thomas 1990). Modern theorists reject such early conclusions, but the study of personality – in its infant guise, temperament – is still ongoing today (see below), increasingly underpinned by the biological knowledge that is continually being developed by studies in the field of human genetics and brain biology.

Modern studies of human development have their roots in the ‘Enlightenment’, the beginnings of scientific study that began in the late seventeenth century in Europe, following the Renaissance. Some of this research was carried out in the field of pedagogy, and you will read about this in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, which deal with Early Years education practice. This chapter will introduce you to the principal theorists and theories in the field of developmental psychology.

1 Introduction to emotional development: attachment theory

Attachment theory was originated by the British psychologist John Bowlby (1969) over the period directly following the Second World War (1939–45). It was based on a mixture of Freudian ideas and extrapolation of concepts from studies that biologists had carried out on non-human animals and their offspring. Bowlby’s central proposal was that human mothers and babies have a natural, evolved instinct to form a strong emotional bond. While this fixed focus on mothers was later found to be highly problematic, Bowlby’s concept of the ‘Internal Working Model’ is still a central facet of modern attachment theory. He proposed that, based on the earliest relationship (nowadays relationships), infants construct an Internal Working Model (IWM) of what to expect from other people, and of their own level of ‘lovability’. Bowlby proposed that a positive mother–child relationship creates an ‘other people are nice and I am lovable’ IWM, whereas a troubled mother–child relationship creates an ‘other people are unkind and I am not lovable’ IWM. This basic belief, he proposed, was the basis of all subsequent interactions and relationships for the child.

Bowlby also carried out studies with James Robertson, a social worker (Robertson and Bowlby 1952), on the problems that children experienced in the hospitals of the time, where visits by parents were extremely limited (see Jean’s memories of being in hospital during the late 1950s above). This research indicated that children went through a process of initial distress, followed by despair, and, if contact with attachment figures was lost altogether, they finally detached from the adult concerned. If the detachment stage was reached, the relationship became very difficult to rebuild. The younger the child at the time the relationship was put under strain, the more quickly they went through the stages and the greater the negative effect the process had upon their psychological health and subsequent emotional development.
What are the main theoretical perspectives . . .?

Schaffer and Emerson (1964) found, in a longitudinal study of babies aged 0–2 that several bonds with adults were formed in the first months. The babies tended to have one primary attachment and several secondary attachments, being perfectly content to be cared for by any of these ‘bonded’ adults. Only approximately 50 per cent of these babies had the primary attachment to the mother; the other 50 per cent had formed a primary attachment to another member of the family (most commonly the father or grandmother). The primary attachment tended to be the person in the family who showed the most sensitive responsiveness to the baby. The studies of Mary Ainsworth (e.g., Ainsworth and Bell 1970) also indicated that the quality of attachment that a child had to the main carer had a lasting effect on the IWM. However, later studies found her ‘strange situation’ methodology to be flawed, particularly in its tendency to diagnose problematic attachments in children from non-Western cultures, where, on examination of the child’s life outside the laboratory situation that Ainsworth created for her tests, no such problems appeared to exist.

Modern studies of the attachments children build in daycare have produced complex and controversial findings, but the picture that emerges is that children in high-quality daycare do not suffer attachment problems, while those in low-quality daycare suffer a range of problems relating to both emotional and intellectual development. Such findings led directly to the New Labour Government’s decision to fund dramatic improvements in daycare provision over the first decade of the twenty-first century; this included developing the role of the EYP. A summary of findings is presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Recommendations for daycare drawn from attachment theory

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<td>Children under 3 (and preferably under 5) need regular care from adults to whom they are attached, and can rely upon.</td>
<td>Daycare settings need to do everything in their power to avoid high staff turnover, e.g. good wages and working conditions; employment of well-qualified, dedicated staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children need a lot of individual attention from adults, including one who sees the child as their ‘especial’ focus.</td>
<td>Daycare settings must have a high number of adult staff so that children can receive a lot of individual attention, much of which should be given by a keyworker whose role is to provide care for a small group of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . who show sensitive responsiveness to the child, showing a genuine interest in their communications, and an understanding of what they want/need at different times and in different situations (sustained shared thinking).</td>
<td>Staff in daycare settings need to be specifically trained to work with children under 5, and to have enough professionalism, personal maturity and experience to be able to ‘decentre’ from their own thoughts and needs to understand and show interest in the sometimes mundane communications of small children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children need developmentally appropriate play resources and help/encouragement from adults to progress in their learning.</td>
<td>Daycare settings should be well-resourced with toys and large indoor and outdoor play equipment and adults should be specifically trained to understand how young children learn, particularly what levels of understanding to expect in children throughout the 0–5 developmental period.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Basic hygiene/health and safety practices etc. are not noted here, but are still obviously important!
Focus on practice

Antony, his brothers and ‘sensitive responsiveness’

(Author’s observation. Note: this observation was undertaken in a time when Reception was still part of Key Stage 1, before the instigation of the Foundation Stage.)

Antony, just 4, who is three weeks into his Reception year, is on the far side of the Key Stage 1 playground when I arrive, nearly into the older children’s playground. He is in fits of giggles, being given a piggy-back by his oldest brother, while the next oldest one looks on. Antony has two older brothers, very close in age, one in Year 2 and another, the piggy-backer, who is in Year 4 and really should be in the older children’s playground . . .

Later during the play session, the lunchtime supervisor rings the bell, which is the signal for ‘stop play’. She gives the children a general reminder that they are not to push, or pull each other’s coats, and tells them they are all to stand still for two minutes as a punishment for doing this . . . Antony remains standing quite still for a moment after play resumes. Kirsty, his friend from Reception, was individually told off by the lunchtime supervisor for jigging around when the children were standing still, and she cried. She is now holding the lunchtime supervisor’s hand and several of the children in her class are around her, Antony being one of these. This is interesting because Antony is usually very active at playtimes . . . Some of the other Reception children also seem quite subdued, probably because they are not used to being punished in this way.

Antony’s oldest brother comes over; he is well into the Key Stage 1 playground now. He twists Antony’s shoulders, making him ‘dance’, then rubs his nose against Antony’s and they stand forehead to forehead. Antony then goes around behind his brother, puts his arms around him, the brother walks forward and Antony follows, arms around him, and then the older boy turns around and rubs Antony’s hair. This was not the only time I observed that, when some of the Reception children became upset, concerned or worried, an older sibling appeared to offer some comfort and reassurance. The staff generally seemed to turn a ‘blind eye’ to this . . . The lunchtime supervisor spotted Antony’s brother, but she did not tell him to go back to his own playground in this instance.

Identifying good practice

I was a visitor in this school, carrying out observations of the children for a piece of extended research, so it took me a while to learn ‘the rules’, and even longer to learn that sometimes the staff allowed some rules to be stretched where they thought it would be of benefit to the children. While the formal rule in the school at that time was that the Key Stage 1 playground was for the children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, and the Key Stage 2 playground was for the children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, the unwritten rule seemed to be that staff did not reprimand or send an older child back to the Key Stage 2 playground if they were there to comfort a younger sibling, and the older children seemed to be fully aware of this. While all attempts were made by this school to ease the Reception children into mainstream
school as was the practice at that time, the staff fully recognised that children who were only just 4, while they were moving into a stage of development where they can manage to function for a large part of their day without immediate access to people to whom they had bonded attachments, may still craved such support in times of unhappiness and uncertainty. In this way, the older siblings were neatly providing a ‘sensitively responsive’ interaction by filling such an ‘attachment gap’ and the school’s flexible approach to this situation also indicated ‘sensitive responsiveness’ to practice with their youngest pupils.

Leading practice
As I got to know the setting better, I found out that there had been some instances where support staff (typically those who were new and untrained) had tried to enforce the playground allocation rules, regardless of the older child’s purpose in the younger children’s playground - usually to great protest from the older child in the situation. The Key Stage 1 and lunchtime coordinators dealt with such situations with great tact, finding somewhere else for the siblings to go together, and explaining to the adult concerned at a later time that this rule was ‘made to be broken’ in some, very specific instances. This is actually quite a difficult and dichotomous message to communicate to a member of staff - how do you think you might go about this?

Reflection What do you think about the existence of ‘rules that are made to be broken’ (in some circumstances) in Early Years settings?

Task Discuss this with your fellow EYPS candidates and colleagues. Where might you find a flexible rule like this in a non-school based setting? Do you think it would be easier to deal with, more difficult, or about the same?

2 Introduction to individual differences: temperament theory

The underpinning idea for a concept of ‘temperament’ came from a very famous psychologist called Hans Eysenck. He was concerned with adult psychology and is the originator of the modern concepts of an extravert/introvert, neurotic/stable personality. Eysenck (1981) proposed that there were very subtle differences in the brain biology of individuals, rather like the setting of a thermostatic mechanism. This, he proposed, would underlie our outwardly expressed personality. Developmental researchers soon proposed that the origins of adult personality could be discerned within infant styles of interacting with the external environment; this area of individual difference was termed ‘temperament’.

Based on the New York Longitudinal Study of temperament, which began in the 1950s, Thomas and Chess (1977) proposed that they had discovered nine dimensions of infant temperament:

- Activity level
- Quality of mood
- Approach/withdrawal
- Rhythmicity
Adaptability
Threshold of responsiveness
Intensity of reaction
Distractibility
Attention span.

Not surprisingly, these proved difficult to define reliably in more short-term studies. It was subsequently proposed that these dimensions were not all fully independent of each other, and could be collapsed into three basic ‘types’: the ‘Easy’, ‘Difficult’ and ‘Slow to Warm Up’ child. Other researchers and practitioners did not necessarily find potentially judgemental labels such as ‘easy’ and ‘difficult’ particularly helpful, however!

Buss and Plomin (1984) proposed that they could simplify Thomas and Chess’s temperament dimensions to three, and that these could be related to Eysenck’s theory of adult personality:

- Emotionality (relates to Neuroticism)
- Activity (relates to Extraversion/Introversion)
- Sociability (also relates to Extraversion/Introversion).

Buss and Plomin further proposed that impulsivity and shyness might also be independent dimensions from the three named, although they maintained that their ‘EAS’ system was an adequate model of temperamental differences between infants. Kagan (1988) suggested that there was a firm physiological basis for differences
What are the main theoretical perspectives...?

underlying temperament types, due to regulation of neuronal activity in the limbic system – again, similarly to Eysenck’s theory. Kagan’s theory was based on strength of emotional reaction, a continuum which he proposed was principally responsible for levels of personality traits such as sociability, shyness, adventurousness, talkativeness. Kagan proposed that people could consciously try to modify their behaviour and reactions, but that they could not change the biological activity that occurred in their bodies, e.g. increased heart rate and pupil dilation; hence, he proposed, the basic temperament ‘type’ was determined by genetic inheritance. More recent studies (see below) have suggested that cortisol levels may not be ‘set’ only by individual inheritance, but also by external events occurring during gestation and early childhood.

Dunn and Kendrick (1982) suggested that events that the child was exposed to in infancy and early childhood (particularly the birth of a sibling) could have a considerable effect on their behavioural style, and that, as time went on, transactions in the relationships between the carers and the siblings would have an important impact on all the children’s temperaments and eventual adult personalities. Chess and Thomas (1984) suggested that ‘goodness of fit’ between a child’s temperament and that of their regular carers has a huge effect on the child’s self-confidence and resilience. This leads back to the concept of ‘sensitive responsiveness’ evoked in attachment theory, and how important this can be for a child during unsettling ‘transition’ phases in their life.

Focus on practice

Kayleigh and Sarah: ‘sensitive responsiveness’ to children and their parents during times of transition

Kayleigh was a premature baby who spent three weeks in an incubator before coming home for the first time. Her mother Sarah had always been rather anxious about her, and as she has grown older Kayleigh has shown many of the signs of being what Chess and Thomas might call a ‘difficult’ child. She shows high emotion and great sensitivity to environment; she does not like to mix with strangers, either adults or children. Sarah has identified that Kayleigh seems very sensitive to her emotional responses, and realises that this can create a ‘vicious circle’, in the sense that Sarah will worry that Kayleigh will respond poorly to a situation, and her concerns will seem to communicate themselves to Kayleigh, so Kayleigh’s emotional responses are heightened. Kayleigh is now just 3, and in good health, and Sarah is five months pregnant. She wants to settle Kayleigh into a private nursery class for four mornings a week before the baby arrives. She has taken Kayleigh for an introductory session, during which Kayleigh cried and clung to her mother most of the time, apart from a short period of interest at the painting table. Kayleigh is to return next week, and Sarah is already dreading the experience. Jenny, the EYP in the setting, who manages the transitions, is aware of the situation.
Identifying good practice
Jenny talks to Barbara, the nursery teacher, and Jill, the nursery practitioner who is to be Kayleigh’s keyworker, about how to proceed. They decide the following:

- Jill will undertake another home visit, and talk to Sarah about Kayleigh’s normal activities and routines, and how these might be a little more closely aligned with the activities and routines of the nursery class, so that Kayleigh feels some familiarity within the nursery environment.
- Jill will also try to ensure that Sarah feels as much at ease with her, and with the situation, as possible, so that Kayleigh is not picking up so many negative emotions from her mother about the situation.
- Amber, who lives next door to Sarah and Kayleigh, is attending the nursery for one more term before moving on to the Reception class in the school in September. Kayleigh knows Amber a little, and they have sometimes ‘visited’ to play. Jill is going to suggest that, if possible, the parents take turns in bringing Kayleigh and Amber to nursery together (Sarah for the first couple of weeks if she prefers), so that Kayleigh does not come in alone.
- Jill will also find out if Kayleigh has a favourite toy that she would like to bring to nursery, one that can act as what attachment theorist Winnicott (1951) called a ‘transitional object’, providing some comfort when people to whom she has bonded attachments are not physically present.
- Sarah and Jill will agree a schedule via which Sarah will leave Kayleigh for longer and longer periods over the first few weeks of her attendance until she is attending the whole session without Sarah. Jenny explains to Jill that this will not only involve providing reassurance for Kayleigh, but also for Sarah.

Leading practice
When Kayleigh has been at nursery for three weeks, Jill and Barbara inform Jenny that, while Kayleigh seems to be making good progress, despite Jill’s efforts at reassurance that Kayleigh is happy and settled, Sarah seems unable to leave her in the setting for more than an hour without popping back to ‘see if she is OK’. Barbara and Jenny decide that it would be a good idea for Jenny to talk to Sarah about this.

If you were Jenny, how do you think you would approach this situation?

Reflection. Such conversations with parents cannot be wholly planned, as the practitioner undertaking them needs to be able to respond to the situation as it unfolds, sometimes involving other staff on a ‘need to know’ basis. By this time Sarah will be nearly six months pregnant, and perhaps helping her to focus on how she will maintain Kayleigh’s routine when the new baby arrives (which should include the three-hour session at nursery) might help Sarah to move on in the previously agreed schedule, leaving Kayleigh for progressively longer periods in the nursery. Jenny will try to help Sarah to consider that, if Kayleigh is used to spending the full session at nursery without her mother present by the time the baby arrives, the resulting changes will not unbalance Kayleigh’s routine so dramatically, and thus minimise the unsettling events arising for her from the new arrival. If Jill (who is currently completing her Foundation Degree in Early Years, with a view to eventual EYPS validation) is informed and involved in this process, Jenny will also be able to model good practice in working with parents for her.
What are the main theoretical perspectives . . . ?

3 Introduction to social development

Uri Bronfenbrenner (1979) did not deny that genetics was very important in determining what children become in later life. However, he proposed that crucial interactions with the child’s ‘nature’ were created by the ‘nurturing’ environment. Many highly influential childhood intervention and enrichment projects eventually grew from the basis of Bronfenbrenner’s ideas. He proposed that children inhabited a series of systems that were nested one within the other like a set of Russian dolls.

- The innermost system is the **Microsystem** which describes the child’s everyday environments (e.g. home, school).
- The **Mesosystem** provides the contacts between the structures of the microsystem, e.g. a parent–teacher association or a local parent and toddler group.
- The middle system is the **Exosystem** which describes aspects that have a direct influence on the microsystem environment (e.g. parents’ jobs, relationships with extended family and friends).
- The outer system is the **Macrosystem** which describes the cultural surroundings of these environments (e.g. language, culture, wealth and poverty, ethnicity and religion).

See Figure 2.2.

![Figure 2.2 Bronfenbrenner’s concept of ‘systems’](image-url)
At a time when many scientific discoveries were beginning to indicate that what we ‘are’ is determined to a great extent by genetics, Bronfenbrenner emphasised the still crucial influence of the environment. He made it clear that, while nature determined how ‘long’ individual human potential was, nurture determined how far it was going to be ‘pulled’ (see Figure 2.3). His theories have subsequently been the launching pad for two very high-profile childhood enrichment programmes on both sides of the Atlantic, HeadStart (US 1962–present, 2012 online) and Sure-Start (UK 1998–present, 2012 online).

Dunn and Kendrick (1982) considered children’s development in family environments during the period when they were aged between 3 and 7 years. The following important environmental influences upon children’s early social development were indicated by the findings of this study:

- Children’s interactions with friends and family strongly impacted on their ability to understand emotions and ‘other minds’ ('theory of mind').
- Frequent discussion about why people do/feel what they do especially seemed to develop ‘theory of mind’ skills in young children.
- Young children very quickly learned to use different types of discussion and argument with different family members.
- Children who develop early skills of emotional understanding build on this and are more advanced at later stages.
- Child–child relationships were very important in their development of these skills, both with siblings and with friends.
What are the main theoretical perspectives . . . ?

Focus on practice

Five-year old football play and resulting peer relationship learning

(Author’s observations)

Over 2002–03, I carried out an ongoing series of observations in primary school, of which one of the aims was to study the relationships developed by the children through their outdoor free play. Some of the observations undertaken were of the 5- and 6-year-old boys in the group when they engaged in football play. Here is an extract from one of the transcripts. At this time, Antony had just had the plaster removed from a recently broken arm, and was not really supposed to engage in football play at all:

‘Antony gets the ball. The other boys are very careful not to tackle Antony and they let him have his turn with the ball . . . He kicks it, and all the other boys run after it. I hear Leo’s voice: “Tom, it’s my turn”. Tom kicks at goal, and Antony saves it in front of Benji. We seem to have three goalkeepers now, Aiden also standing by the goal post. Benji takes the ball from Antony and kicks it out. It hits Ashley on the hand and a cry goes up: “hand ball”. Antony picks up the ball and takes it out of play. He says “I’m taking it, hand ball.” (Chanting “score, score, score”.) He puts it down, takes a kick at goal and scores. He says “like Beckham”.

‘The ball rolls out of play down to the tarmac. Tom brings it back up. He is standing on the hill looking like he is going to throw in, but he kicks it instead. It goes behind the goal. Antony takes the next throw in. They seem very sure about the boundaries of their football pitch, but it is not clear to an adult observer . . . He puts the ball down and kicks it through the goal sideways and then jumps up and down (children cheer). Benji says “no goal” as he was not in the goal at the time . . . But they are not
counting the goals anyway. Benji is saying “no, no” and holding on to the ball. They all chant at him: “time waster”. So he kicks the ball back into play again.’

Identifying good practice
There are many aspects of social learning through peer relationships that can be identified in this short set of observation extracts. Though only 5, these children realised that Antony could not play unless they gave him some special consideration, and it is clear that they effectively managed to do this. This indicates some amount of ability to decentre from their own situations to understand the situation of another, currently recovering from injury. The children show some rudimentary knowledge of the rules underlying football in their invocation of ‘hand ball’, ‘time wasting’ and ‘goal scoring’, and their understanding that there is a designated area outside which the ball is no longer in play, but it is clear that this is still at a very basic level, indicated (for example) by the presence of three goalkeepers and a complete lack of team-based play. Benji indicates that, while he can evoke the rules as he understands them, he is also willing to acquiesce to majority opinion and send the ball back into play - a highly flexible response to social pressure, which also indicates some underlying ‘Theory of Mind’. As these children play, they co-create rules and practices. My analysis, after several observations of this nature, was that their learning about the rules of the game was very much secondary to their learning about the social interactions that they had with each other, all underpinned by the impetus to achieve the continuation of a play situation that they were all enjoying. There is little that is required from adults in such a situation, apart from a discreet vigilance to ensure that physically dangerous or ‘bullying’ situations do not develop.

Leading practice
During my time on this piece of research, I occasionally saw adults intervening in the children’s play in attempts to completely change the meanings that the children had created between themselves, with the inevitable result that such play broke down. For example, when a group of boys were playing a chasing game which involved Benji dragging a skipping rope while the other boys chased him, the female teacher on playground duty stopped their game, and gathered the group together to talk to them. She showed them how to turn the rope, with one child at each end. All the boys tried to skip, but none seemed to have any idea of when to jump as the rope swung around. The teacher then called to Miranda to demonstrate . . . she was very good at skipping, but the boys lost interest and wandered off. The chasing game soon began again, with Benji at the front, this time with a ‘push wheel’. When the bell went, I asked him what they were playing. ‘Fire engines’, he replied. I wondered if that was also the game ongoing with the skipping rope. If so, the play narratives used by the boys and the adult were not at all compatible. It could also be theorised that some of these differences were underpinned by a cross-gender misunderstanding, something that all female Early Years Practitioners (who massively outnumber men within the profession) need to consciously consider.

As a leading practitioner, how would you explain to your staff how to judge when and how to intervene in children’s play, to protect and enhance, without imposing a potentially destructive adult agenda?
Introduction to cognitive developmental theory

Jean Piaget was the first theorist to produce a comprehensive theory of human intellectual development. In *The Psychology of the Child* (Piaget and Inhelder 1969) he outlined his theory that children learn in interaction with the *concrete* world (i.e. world of objects), with experiential learning underpinning the child’s construction of a cognitive network of schemas, assimilating and accommodating new knowledge. A schema is, in Piaget’s context, a set of mental connections. At the time of Piaget’s research there was little evidence of how the living brain worked, but now we know that infants and children do indeed rapidly build up connections between brain cells called neurons over the developmental period. Piaget proposed that the child either assimilates a new experience (taking it into thought without creating a new concept, e.g. you lick an ice cream and you also lick an ice lolly) or accommodates it (creating a new concept in thought, e.g. you can’t pick up spaghetti with just a spoon, or a knife and fork; you have to learn a new action with a spoon and a fork). The child moves towards accommodation by a process of ‘equilibration’, which means needing to balance all related schemas against one’s current picture of reality.

Piaget proposed that building thought processes to adult competence continued until the child was 12. Nowadays, we know it takes much longer than this, and that there is a wealth of individual and cultural difference in such construction. However, Piaget’s concept of stages is still useful as a rough guide to children’s intellectual competence in the early years of life. He carried out an extensive series of experiments that indicated babies under about six months do not even realise that objects that they cannot immediately see still exist within the world; hence he proposed that such young infants have no concept of ‘object permanence’. This, he proposed, relates to lack of mental connections within such an immature mind. Babies do not yet have the available symbols within their mind to ‘hang’ such concepts and memories upon. Achieving the concept of object permanence is one of the major goals of the sensori-motor stage (birth to 18 months), alongside organising information coming from the senses, and the achievement of basic motor skills (walking, holding objects etc.). Children aged approximately 18 months move on to the ‘pre-operational’ stage, where they will spend approximately 4½ years...
building schemas relating to developing linguistic and social competence and reducing egocentricity (a focus solely on the self and one’s own point of view). Children in the earlier periods of this stage are unable to hypothesise logically with respect to social or intellectual situations, frequently showing ‘centration’ (a focus on only one simple, surface-based aspect of a situation). Margaret Donaldson (1978) outlined a series of experiments undertaken by her research team that indicated that, once a child understood the social situation in which a problem was embedded, they were much more likely to be able to work towards a successful solution. It is therefore common, but not inevitable, that children will show more sophistication in dealing with social situations than intellectual situations as they move through this stage. A Piagetian concept that can be used to describe this inconsistency is ‘décalage’ (literally ‘gap’ or ‘interval’). Once children reach the next stage, that of ‘Concrete Operations’ (7–12 years), their ability to think logically about both social and intellectual situations becomes more flexible and mature.

The Russian developmental psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, was also a theorist in the constructivist tradition, like Piaget, proposing that children built their understanding of the world on the basis of their interactions within it. However, Vygotsky (1978) placed more emphasis upon the role of interaction with other people, proposing that language was crucially important in learning, in that it was the principal medium through which a child would begin to ‘internalise the external’. While Piaget proposed that cognition precedes language, Vygotsky proposed that language precedes cognition. While Piaget proposed that a child had to be ‘ready’ to grasp a particular skill or idea, Vygotsky proposed that interaction, particularly with an adult or a more able peer, could take a child one step further in their learning than they were able to move alone. He referred to the area into which a child could be ‘coached’ as a ‘Zone of Proximal Development’ (ZPD). Jerome Bruner, who brought Vygotsky’s work to the attention of the West, proposed that the adult’s ongoing role in a teaching and learning process is to progressively scaffold the child’s learning at an appropriate level, i.e. within the ever-progressing ZPD (Wood, Bruner and Ross 1976). Building on this point, Wood and Middleton (1975) proposed that the best way adults can help children learn is by creating a contingency, by consciously and carefully tailoring adult input on a minute-to-minute basis so it is always contingent to the child’s learning (i.e. supporting the
What are the main theoretical perspectives...?

child into the constantly moving zone of proximal development). This leads us back to the concept of ‘sustained shared thinking’ that is advocated in the EYFS.

Focus on practice

On a Bear Hunt with Pinky: developing sustained shared thinking

Three-year-old Anastasia is constructing a picture based on a story that her teacher has read the group called Bear Hunt. There is a box of pre-cut card bear shapes on the table, and a basket of brown furry material. Anastasia has spread glue on her bear shape, but she is looking around for some pink furry material, because she wants the bear to look like Pinky, her favourite teddy who sits on her bed at home. She goes to the trainee nursery practitioner, Vanessa, who has designed the activity and is working with the children at the table. Anastasia holds out a piece of brown material to Vanessa and says ‘Where’s the pink?’ ‘Can’t you stick it on, Anastasia?’, says Vanessa, ‘Here you are.’ She sticks the material on to the middle of Anastasia’s bear shape and says, ‘There. Can you do the next one?’ Anastasia shakes her head, and wanders off to the painting table, where she finds some pink paint. She is soon in conversation with Brenda, the centre EYP, about the picture she is painting of Pinky, her teddy bear. Vanessa finds the abandoned bear shape on the table at the end of the session when the children have gone home. She shrugs, and then puts it into the waste paper bin.

Identifying good practice

In order to access Anastasia’s zone of proximal development, Vanessa needed to listen to what Anastasia was saying to her and respond appropriately, i.e. to consider what the child was thinking rather than seeing the situation from her own adult point of view. Anastasia was presenting her with a problem that she needed help to solve, but Vanessa provided her with a solution that Anastasia had already considered and rejected. In doing so, Vanessa has missed the opportunity to help the child to solve the problem in a way that she would comprehend as useful and effective. If Vanessa remembered that the abandoned bear shape belonged to Anastasia after the session, she might wrongly conclude that the task was ‘too difficult’ for the child; this is what frequently happens when adults do not try to consider the situation from the child’s point of view. If Vanessa had responded to the situation with more insight, she might have moved on to consider that the activity itself was very limited, given the materials available to the children, and then towards some ideas on how to improve the activity next time by providing a wider range of materials for the children to use.

Leading practice

Brenda sees Vanessa put the unfinished bear picture into the bin. She has picked up from her conversation with Anastasia that the child had abandoned the activity; she also knows that Anastasia was not the only child in the setting to do so during that session. She has allowed Vanessa to design and run the activity in this way so that she can learn from the experience, but Vanessa’s response to this indicates that she has not intuited that there is anything wrong with the activity; in fact, Brenda heard her telling another member of staff during the session that the children ‘are not very good at sticking activities’. What would you say to Vanessa, if you were in Brenda’s position?
5 Introduction to language development

Words are *symbols*. Each word that we utter ‘stands for’ something, in our own minds, and (hopefully!) in the minds of the person we are talking to. Usually these meanings match – if they do not, there can be misunderstandings, which may be quite amusing. For example, in a very old joke:

‘I say, I say, I say – my dog has no nose.’
‘Your dog has no nose? How does he smell?’
‘Terrible!’

Some words will stand for simple concrete objects, e.g. ‘dog’, ‘cat’, ‘table’. Other words stand for complex abstract ideas, e.g. ‘love’, ‘peace’, ‘justice’. However, the average 10-year-old child will have a working (if not exact) idea of what all these words mean.

When we converse with someone we match the symbols in our heads with the symbols in theirs. This is usually possible when we use the same sounds (and squiggles, if we include written language) to stand for the same ideas and objects, although we may not always communicate exactly what we intend. If people use different sounds and squiggles from us to stand for the same ideas and objects (i.e. they speak a different language), translation is often possible, but this inserts an extra ‘step’ which makes communication even more imperfect.

The basic stages of language development proceed as follows:

**Protoconversation**

The ‘protoconversation’ was first described by Mary Bateson in the 1970s. She described 7-to-15 week old infants responding to their mothers’ talk with appropriately timed smiles and coos in a give-and-take, dialogue-like pattern, hence ‘proto’ (stands for) conversation (Bateson 1975). The adult will often act as though the baby’s ‘responses’ are intentional. In this way, Bateson proposed, the baby learns the turn-taking conventions of adult conversation.

**Reflection** It can sometimes help with very young trainees to give them a very limited set of paints and ask them to paint a picture of themselves – they will very quickly comment that they haven’t got the right colour for their hair/eyes etc. and from that personal, practical experience they can more easily move on to consider how every craft activity should offer children a choice and a chance to personalise their work. From there they can then move on to understand why the perennial Early Years prompt to ‘tell me about your picture’ is such a crucial interaction between young children and their carers, and why forcing children of this age into the ‘Blue Peter’ situation (where they are required to make a copy of something an adult has made earlier!) is not particularly helpful at this stage of their development.

Pearson Education Ltd/Jules Selmes.
Stage 1
This is the one-word stage; the child develops a small repertoire of single words, usually the names of familiar people and objects, e.g. ‘mum’, ‘dad’, ‘cup’ [around 1 year to 18 months].

Stage 2
Two-word sentences which tend to be simple descriptions of actions and possessions now emerge, e.g. ‘my ball’, ‘throw ball’. This stage was referred to as telegraphic speech (Oates and Grayson 2004); nowadays we might be more likely to call it ‘text speech’; the point is that the child usually manages to convey a surprising amount of information in very few words (alongside gestures and facial expressions) [around 18 months to 2½ years].

Stage 3
Simple grammatical sentences are now beginning to be uttered, and towards the middle of this phase their content begins to encompass past tenses, reflecting a growing understanding of past and future. Children start to use grammatical constructions, e.g. ‘I walked’, but in doing this they sometimes inadvertently ‘regularise’ irregular verbs, e.g. ‘that tree grewed’ instead of the grammatically correct ‘that tree grew’. This indicates that they are not just simply repeating adult speech but learning (and sometimes stumbling on) grammatical rules to underpin their own original utterances. They also begin to learn to play with language in songs and rhymes [around 2½–3½ years].

Stage 4
The ‘where, what, why’ stage. The child becomes a competent language user, and begins to use this new skill to ask adults everything the child wants to know about the world. As any parent knows, some of these questions will be impossible to answer; for example, at this age my son once asked his father ‘Why elephants?’ On further investigation this did not refer to what elephants were, or what they did, but simply why they ‘were’. Children of this age sometimes appear to use their new linguistic competence to engage in a developmental stage of what could be termed basic philosophical enquiry! [around 3½–4½ years].

Stage 5
Children may now use more complex sentences involving more than one clause. For example, they will begin to use the more grammatical ‘Who is playing with that ball?’ structure, rather than the more babyish ‘Who play ball?’ [around 4–5 years].

Stage 6
Children now join sentences smoothly together with conjunctions like ‘and’ and ‘but’, e.g. ‘John and Asif came with me’ and ‘I used to like Samantha, but I don’t like her now.’ They can also turn the meanings of sentences around, e.g. ‘Is that your coat?’ and ‘That is your coat’, and enjoy playing with language in this way; for example, see the joke at the beginning of this section! [around 4½–5½ years].
Children who have had other developmental problems also tend to have delayed development of linguistic competence. This may be particularly in evidence if hearing loss has been a problem. Children who have been diagnosed with, or are in the process of being investigated for, conditions within the autism spectrum disorder category also typically have a range of difficulties with language development.

The day-to-day adult role in assisting children with their language development is very important. As outlined above, carers and small babies show turn-taking behaviour in interactions that psychologists have labelled ‘proto-conversation’ (Dougherty 1999). Later on, when children begin to speak, adults and older children automatically simplify their speech when talking to small children, emphasising key words and often repeating key phrases. This has been referred to as ‘parentese’ or the ‘baby talk register’, but adults who are not parents, and even older children will usually instinctively do this when conversing with children under 2. Another instinctive adult technique is to introduce a ‘frame’, e.g. ‘What is this? It’s a frog. What is this? It’s a fish.’ A lot of toddler books are constructed in this fashion; a favourite with my children was ‘Where’s Spot?’ (Hill 1980), which repeats ‘Where’s Spot? He’s not in the . . .’ over a few pages until Spot is found.

Traditional songs and rhymes that small children are taught to sing are also frequently constructed in this fashion as well, e.g. ‘The Wheels on the Bus’ and ‘Ten Green Bottles’. This format presents a nugget of information in a familiar ‘frame’, so the child pays attention to and learns the new information without the pressure and confusion of a continually changing ‘frame’. Such games can be very useful in extending children’s language competency.

6 Introduction to biological perspectives of child development

The human central nervous system begins developing at two weeks gestation. The human brain weighs around 350 grams at birth; by the end of the first year it weighs 1000 grams. An adult brain weighs between 1200 and 1400 grams. This illustrates the huge importance of the first year of life for brain development. When we are born we have many more neurons (brain cells) than we actually need. Over the first few years of life, the human brain undergoes a huge neuronal connection programme. Those neurons that are not connected to others shrivel and eventually die. Most children have a ‘good enough’ environment, but if they experience extreme neglect their brains do not develop as they should; in particular, there is a fixed ‘window’ for some skills to be triggered (e.g. language). If this window is missed, the child may not be able to make up the lost ground at a later point in their life. A well-documented case of this type is that of ‘Genie’, a 13-year-old American girl who was found locked in her bedroom in the early 1970s (Rymer 1994). The evidence that could be put together suggested that she had been locked away from other people since she was a very small child. Although she was unable to speak when she was discovered, she initially made good progress in learning individual words; however, she never progressed to putting these words together to form grammatical sentences. The researchers concluded that the developmental window for learning grammar and syntax had passed for ‘Genie’, that the neurons that should have been dedicated to this task had died away, and were not able
to be reactivated. Modern research increasingly indicates that much early brain development, while underpinned by genetic programmes, is shaped by a child’s early environments. A good example of this is how easily small children learn to be bi- or even multi-lingual, developing native competence in all languages learned in infancy, while adults struggle to learn subsequent languages and seldom become accomplished enough to speak them without a foreign accent.

Recent biological research also suggests that the amount of stress that children are placed under in infancy has a crucial ‘thermostat setting’ effect on the biological mechanisms relating to the stress response, commonly known as ‘fight or flight’. Children who have a lot of stress in infancy, in particular that created by experiences of being passed from carer to carer with little or no attention paid to the time to form bonded relationships, are vulnerable to developing abnormalities in the levels of the hormone cortisol, which mobilises the ‘fight or flight’ mechanisms in all mammals. Children experiencing ongoing stress typically have abnormally high resting levels of cortisol and these take longer to return to baseline after individual stressful experiences.

Initial studies of children in Western daycare suggested that, across the board, they appeared to show cortisol levels that rose steadily throughout the day, a very worrying finding. However, Antipodean researchers Sims, Guilfoyle and Parry (2006) compared the cortisol levels of children in daycare settings judged as ‘high quality’ against the cortisol levels of children in daycare settings judged as ‘satisfactory’. They found that, while the children’s cortisol levels rose throughout the day in the satisfactory settings, they fell throughout the day in the high-quality settings. These researchers went on to outline what features defined a ‘high-quality setting’:

- **Staff relationships**: happy engaging atmosphere, with staff guiding children’s behaviour positively.
- **Respect**: staff initiate and maintain communication with children, accommodating their individual needs, including the recognition of social and cultural differences.
- **Partnership**: staff and families exchange effectively both verbal and written information about the children, and about the centre’s routines and expectations.
- **Staff interaction**: staff communicate effectively and function as a team.
- **Planning and evaluation**: the centre programmes reflect a clear centre philosophy and shared goals, which cater for the needs, interests and abilities of all the children, and all the children are helped towards successful learning.
- **Learning and evaluation**: the centre programmes encourage children to make confident choices and take on new challenges.
- **Protective care**: staff supervise children at all times, and individual needs for safety, rest and comfort are met. Children are appropriately dressed for indoor and outdoor play. Toileting and nappy procedures are positive experiences.
- **Managing to support quality**: staffing policies and practices facilitate continuity of care for each child.

(Sims et al. 2006)
Chapter 2 Principles in childcare and education

These features lead us back to the beginning of the chapter, where similar aspirations can be found in the content of the EYFS.

Focus on practice

Providing a calm environment in a stressful world

It is a Monday morning, 9.20 a.m. Four-year-olds Jenna, Shaun and Olivia are hanging up their coats at the children’s centre that they regularly attend. Jenna’s father has just been made redundant, and her mother has just finished her nursing degree. Jenna’s mother is currently working on a series of part-time temporary contracts, still looking for a permanent job. This morning, Jenna heard her parents arguing because her mother wanted her father to take Jenna to the setting, but he was still in bed. Both of Shaun’s parents work long hours, and his father, who brought him to the centre, was running late today. He made a business call on his mobile phone as soon as he got out of the car outside the centre, and forgot to kiss Shaun, or to say goodbye. Shaun looks out of the window, watching his father pull quickly out of the car park. Olivia lives with her single mother and her 11-year-old sister Amy. Amy has some important tests at school today and, when Olivia started to sing at the breakfast table this morning, Amy (who can be quite nice sometimes) screamed at her to ‘shut up’.

The children all have their own pegs in the cloakroom, and they recognise the pictures that have been there since they started at the centre over a year ago. Although all their families were running a little late this morning, there is no pressure for the children to be exactly ‘on time’; the morning starts with the children’s self-registration, which is accomplished by their removing a name tag that hangs on their coat pegs so they can hang their coats up, and then putting the tag in a basket by the playroom door. The children are not called together as a group until 11.30 a.m., although it is standard practice for their keyworkers to greet them on arrival, and speak briefly to their parents.

As they hang up their coats and put their tags in the basket, the children can see their keyworkers interacting with other children playing with the activities on the tables in the playroom. The children know that they can ask any of the adults in the setting for help at any point, and that their request will meet with a calm and helpful response. A snack will be available shortly, and the children will be able to have this any time between 9.30 and 11.00 a.m. Lunch, afternoon snack and tea will also be served at regular intervals in the day, and there will be regular activities that punctuate the day, for example a story before lunch and a song with actions just before the afternoon snack is available.

The setting is light and roomy, and the staff try to ensure that no one pushes or shouts, although the children are allowed to be a little noisy when they are running around and laughing outside. The equipment is well maintained and the centre policy is to maintain a slightly higher adult-child ratio than the minimum required by law. The adults work well as a team; all of them are fully aware of the centre practices and policies, and the children’s parents are encouraged to engage with the chil-
What are the main theoretical perspectives . . .?

Children's activities in the centre; this is more often successful at the end of the day rather than at the beginning, when the parents' schedules may be very tight. Shaun runs in and joins in a game with the 'matchbox' toy cars that has already begun between his friends Jon and Andrew. Olivia makes her way to the painting table, dips a brush into the red paint and begins spreading the paint across the paper. 'That's very bright, Olivia', says Rob, her keyworker. 'It's Amy, she's cross about her SATs', says Olivia. 'Oh dear', says Rob, 'I was cross when I had SATs, too. What other colours are sort of “cross” do you think?' Olivia thinks for a moment, and then dips her brush into the yellow paint. She applies it to the paper so that it drips into the red, creating a bright orange. 'That's great, Olivia', says Rob, 'all really sort of “cross” colours, look at that orange you've made with the red and the yellow.' Jenna goes into the Home Corner and picks up a doll. When Dominic follows her in she says, 'why can’t you take her to school, Daddy? I'm busy'. 'OK', says Dominic. They begin to put the doll into the little buggy, which Jenna then takes outside.

Identifying good practice
What stresses have the children been exposed to in their home lives, and how has the practice in the setting helped them to settle down more calmly to their day after a rather fraught start at home? Go through the description above, producing your own bullet-points relating to the relevant practices.

Leading practice
Task  A new placement student in the setting runs after Jenna, intending to tell her not to take the doll and the pushchair outside. How would you respond to this situation? How would you explain to the student that it is important for the child to move through her narrative with the doll and the pushchair, even if it does end with the toys abandoned in the corner of the playground, when Jenna decides she would prefer riding around on a tricycle? Discuss this with your fellow EYPs candidates and colleagues.
What influences and experiences in the setting and beyond can impact on children’s well-being, development, learning and behaviour, and how can we connect these to the theoretical perspectives introduced in the previous section?

We have seen from the information above that the underpinning theory and the current early years guidelines indicate that young children need to gradually develop their knowledge and understanding of the world principally through self-selected play-based experiences. These should involve active learning, in calm, well-resourced environments where they are supported cognitively and emotionally by adults who have a sound underpinning knowledge of child development, and an understanding of each child’s unique individual needs. While no setting is perfect, this chapter has led us to the consideration of what ‘good practice’ may actually entail, and how to define this against practice which is not so enlightened.

Focus on practice

Developing the independent learners of the future

We are going to provide you with an example of two different (fictional and highly stereotyped) settings to consider:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brilliant Babies</th>
<th>Jolly Jumpers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has a fixed start time</td>
<td>Has a flexible start time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has very fixed routines which serve the convenience of the adults</td>
<td>Has flexible routines which serve the needs of the children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has set tasks that the children must complete</td>
<td>Has a range of activities from which the children can choose freely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a set routine that the adult staff must follow, whether or not this fits in with the needs of the children in their care</td>
<td>Expects adults to self-regulate their duties in partnership with others (including parents) and encourages them to be as flexible as possible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What influences and experiences in the setting and beyond . . . ?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brilliant Babies</th>
<th>Jolly Jumpers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has a set regime for recording that the adults must follow, even where the procedures do not ‘fit’ with the information they wish to record</td>
<td>Allows the adults to record how and what they judge to be useful, as long as enough information on every child is collected via the processes undertaken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults tell the children what to do</td>
<td>Adults are emotionally and cognitively available to the children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults feel that their role is to direct and instruct</td>
<td>Adults feel that their role is to support the children’s development and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The practice is driven by targets and ‘box-ticking’</td>
<td>The practice views the current Early Years Framework as a set of useful guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The leaders in the setting ‘direct practice’ and ‘manage learning’</td>
<td>The leaders in the setting ‘lead practice’ and ‘support learning’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child is dependent upon the adults and learns to blindly obey</td>
<td>The child becomes an independent learner, building their knowledge and understanding of the world principally through a range of self-selected, play-based activities with sensitive adult support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child enters later years of schooling unable to evaluate a situation in order to make judgements and choices</td>
<td>The child enters later years of schooling able to evaluate and make choices on the basis of their own judgements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Identifying good practice**

Of course, you are unlikely to find a ‘pure’ example of ‘Brilliant Babies’ or ‘Jolly Jumpers’ in your own practice environment – most settings have features of both, although they may have more features of one than the other! By this point in the chapter, you should be very clear about which setting is exhibiting the best practice; however, the challenge remains as to how to achieve this in a ‘real world’ environment, where highly directive regimes in the later stages of education may have a ‘top-down’ pressure that Early Years settings may sometimes find hard to completely resist.

**Leading practice**

At some stages of your career, you will be expected to defend your setting’s practice in the face of some criticism, not least with regard to inspection.

**Task** How would you defend child-centred, play-based learning, even if it does not generate the ‘correct’ mechanical responses to fixed assessment measures that more structured practice may produce in very young children? Discuss this with your fellow EYPS candidates and colleagues.

**Reflection** Even experienced professionals are likely to experience some qualms when considering the question above. Early Years practitioners must remain firm in their core understanding that an emotionally secure, reflective, independent learner is not quickly produced within the process of development and learning. We can look for inspiration to the Scandinavian countries and their measured ‘educare’ approach to Early Years education for support in this respect, particularly with regard to the excellent outcomes their children achieve in the later years of development (see Chapter 3).
Chapter 2 Principles in childcare and education

Developmentally appropriate practice

We have been discussing ‘developmentally appropriate practice’ all through this chapter, but as we come to the end we would just like you to take a moment to reflect on this as a concept. It may seem obvious that one would not expect to teach and care for 16-year-olds in the same way as one would teach and care for 6-year-olds. However, development is so rapid over the first five years, it can be difficult to keep up with ongoing changes, sometimes over a period of weeks rather than months and years.

The American National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) propose that developmentally appropriate practice can be achieved if practitioners focus on the following aspects:

1. What is known about child development and learning – referring to knowledge of age-related characteristics that permits general predictions about what experiences are likely to best promote children’s learning and development.
2. What is known about each child as an individual – referring to what practitioners learn about each child that has implications for how best to adapt and be responsive to that individual variation.
3. What is known about the social and cultural contexts in which children live – referring to the values, expectations, and behavioral and linguistic conventions that shape children’s lives at home and in their communities that practitioners must strive to understand in order to ensure that learning experiences in the program or school are meaningful, relevant, and respectful for each child and family.

(NAEYC 2009, pp.9–10)

You will see a lot here that you can relate to the theories above, particularly Bronfenbrenner, Piaget and Vygotsky. However, it is easy to be lulled into a false sense of security in collective settings, in the sense that just because you have a comprehensive approach to continuous provision that you are engaging in developmentally appropriate practice. This was at the heart of a debate that raged for over 20 years in primary education, as a response to the Plowden report (1967). Eventually, it was suggested that some teachers had misunderstood Piagetian theory and its representation in the Plowden report to the extent they had the idea that children could be almost entirely left alone to structure their own learning within an environment of developmentally appropriate resources (see for e.g. Gillard 2004, online).

Leading developmentally appropriate practice within a collective care and education environment is by contrast a much more difficult prospect than ‘teaching from the front’. The adult has to educate the child from the basis of the child’s own agenda, being fully aware of the zones of proximal development of all the children under their care, and carefully working within these to scaffold learning, which requires much ‘decentring’ from the adult position in order to engage in authentic sustained shared thinking with each individual child.
What influences and experiences in the setting and beyond . . . ?

**Reflection** If 4-year-old Zac (who is clearly deeply involved in his play with a train set) tells you that a train track that he is currently playing with ‘has broken so the trains can’t go any further’, how might you respond to this? How might you deal with a less experienced practitioner who immediately says ‘well then you need to put in a signal’ and continues with a barrage of questions to find out what Zac knows about signals (What does red mean? What does green mean? . . .). Think back to Anastasia’s pink teddy, and then consider how you might interact with Zac to find out why he proposes the track is broken, and what he thinks should be done about it.

**Coping with transitions**

Children undergo a range of transitions in their first five years, some more than others. While some may be a feature of simply ‘growing up’ (e.g., from nursery to school) others may be unplanned and less easy to control (e.g. from living with mother and father to mother and grandmother if parents separate). It is the role of the key worker to help children cope with transitions in their lives and to work through these with the least amount of upset possible.

Allingham (2011) suggests that adults need to promote the following aspects:

- Positive attitudes
- Diversity and difference
- Safety
- Valuing individuals
- Listening
- Respect
- Cultural identity
- Physical and emotional well-being
- Building relationships
- Confidence
- Feeling safe to take risks
- Positive sense of self and others
- Secure relationships
- Autonomy
- Independence
- Positively affirming environments.

**Reflection** Think about how you felt when you made a recent transition in your life - for example moving house, moving to a new job or starting your current training programme. Apply the above bullet points to this, reflecting in your journal what may have gone well and what may not have gone quite so well.
Chapter 2  Principles in childcare and education

Identifying good practice

If you can also remember a situation where one of the children you were working with had to cope with a transition, it would be useful to apply this list to their situation, again considering what may have gone well and not quite so well, and what you did to try and help them through the relevant event.

Leading practice

If you could develop a reflective training session for the staff in your setting on this topic, using the prompts above, you might be able to include reference to this in your validation tasks, particularly if you are on one of the entry pathways and in need of some evidence for your knowledge and leadership of working with parents and families (as this will undoubtedly come into your reflections). You should see plenty of opportunities to use the developmental theory you have read about, in this chapter and in the recommended reading in an activity of this nature.

Conclusion

What are the main EYFS principles, and how do they relate to mainstream developmental theory and research?

Summaries of the EYFS principles and the mainstream developmental theories/research are detailed above, and we hope you will view this first chapter as a key source of reference as you move through the following chapters, returning to its pages where authors raise related points. You are also directed to the DFE website, where you will find regular updates on the EYFS. If you are on the three longer pathways, you should also find that the child development content of your college programme will give you a range of opportunities to relate theory and research to the EYFS and your day-to-day practice. Those on the GPP may also be offered ‘refreshers’ and online resources to address this aspect of EYPS training. If you want to supplement your reading, you will find some ideas for recommended texts at the end of this chapter. You may also find the Open University ‘Open Learn’ pages relating to child development to be of interest in this respect: www.open.edu/open/learn and follow the link to ‘Childhood and Youth’.

What are the main theoretical perspectives that describe how children develop and learn, particularly between birth and their sixth birthday?

While it was impossible to cover all theoretical perspectives that might be useful in this respect, this chapter has been designed to get you off to a good start, by introducing central theories and theorists in the areas of emotional, cognitive, social, language and biological development, and theories of individual difference underpinned by temperament. We hope that you will use the directions to further reading below to increase your knowledge in these areas, and engage in discussions with your fellow EYPS candidates and colleagues relating to the more controversial aspects of each area of theory. The more widely you read, the more
confident you will become in such debates. You should also become a regular reader of at least one of the journals listed below, so you can keep up with theoretical, policy and practice developments in your chosen professional field. Leaders in any field must be, by definition, independent learners.

What influences and experiences in the setting and beyond can impact on children’s well-being, development, learning and behaviour, and how can we connect these to the theoretical perspectives introduced in the previous section?

You should now be beginning to make such connections, for example:

- Attachment theory with the keyworker system
- Zone of Proximal Development, scaffolding and contingency with sustained shared thinking
- Biological theory relating to the initial calibration of the arousal mechanisms within the infant brain with calm, flexible routines within childcare and education settings.

The wide range of concepts introduced within this chapter should serve as a platform from which to access the following chapters within this book; so please feel free to return to this base as many times as you wish to reflect upon the later ideas with which you are presented. You have now launched your journey towards becoming an expert and leader in child development, hence the hub around which the practice of a childcare and education setting will revolve: that is, an Early Years Professional.
Further reading


Some useful websites

The Department of Education: www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/earlylearningandchildcare.
Early Education: www.early-education.org.uk.
The Early Years Foundation Stage framework: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/a0068102/early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs.
Journals

Child Development
Children Now
Early Years - an International Journal of Research and Development
Early Years Educator
Educational Researcher
Nursery World
Psychological Review

References


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