



Growing my potential

Promoting safe, responsive, nurturing care and learning experiences and environments for babies and young children aged 1 and 2 years



Introduction

High-quality early learning and childcare (ELC) plays a vital role in making Scotland the best place to grow up. The Scottish Government's [Best Start: Strategic early learning and childcare plan 2022-26](#) outlines its commitment to expanding the offer of free ELC to 1- and 2-year-olds, starting with the young children and families that need it the most.

The intended outcomes of ELC expansion are:

- children's development improves and the poverty-related outcomes gap narrows
- family wellbeing improves
- opportunities increase for parents and carers to take up or sustain work, training and study.

This practice note has been designed to provide support and guidance to ELC settings, including childminders, caring for children aged 1 and 2 years. It promotes important aspects of high quality ELC and complements [A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare](#).

The practice note supports the national practice guidance for early years in Scotland, [Realising the ambition: Being Me](#). By providing the framework that supports self-evaluation and continuous improvement, this practice note aims to maximise the positive experiences of younger children. Additionally, it will support any service considering expanding their ELC provision to include children aged one and two or those increasing the number of children they care for. While this practice note focuses on babies and children aged 1 and 2 years, it is important that those caring for young children



recognise that babies and children develop in their own time and in their own unique way that is not set by age milestones.

There is increased agreement that the key features of high-quality ELC include:

- warm, sensitive and responsive staff interactions
- interwoven care and learning
- strong partnerships with families
- well trained, competent and skilled staff
- responsive, interesting and nurturing environments.

Warm, sensitive and responsive staff interactions



“Children’s care and learning routines should be individual to their needs and delivered with kindness and compassion.”

[A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare](#)

Babies and young children need safe, nurturing experiences and environments

The critical importance of children’s early life experiences and how this will impact on their future development health and wellbeing is universally acknowledged. The youngest babies and children attending a range of ELC settings are dependent on the adults around them to provide sensitive warm responsive care where they can feel cherished and unique as an individual. Children want to feel safe

and secure knowing that staff understand their individual needs and interests. From a secure, safe and nurturing relationship children will explore, develop and learn.

Babies and young children are capable and confident learners

Babies and young children are active and competent, but are dependent on the skilled, sensitive knowledgeable adults to keep them safe and support their learning, development and wellbeing. They benefit from warm and responsive relationships with caring staff who can 'tune into' the individual child's needs, likes, dislikes, routines and preferences.



“Children need to form close relationships for their psychological and physical wellbeing. Their first and enduring attachments will be with their close family. But beyond those first attachments children can also thrive in good out-of-home-care, as long as their needs for close relationships is recognised and a sense of continuity in those attachments determines the way that childcare is organised and given.”

Lin 2006:37

Babies and young children are social learners

Learning is a profoundly social process and ELC staff have a significant role in the developing language and thoughts of every child they care for. In developing their own sense of the world, babies and young children benefit from staff who are:

- **attentive**, watch the child's exploration with interest, enjoyment and wonder. Know when to participate and when to watch
- **encouraging**, listen actively, show emotional warmth, and verbalise what you see, think, and feel. You don't always have to question a child, it's better to wonder with them what might happen next
- **attuned**, take the time to interpret a child's verbal and nonverbal communication. Trust their ability to explore, be curious and solve problems. Follow their lead and let them take you on an adventure
- **interesting**, make singing songs and sharing rhythms a fun and meaningful experience. Offer new ideas by playing with the words and verses; make some new ones up. Rhythms and songs are often repetitive which supports the development of memory, and kickstart the practice of listening and speaking. But most of all, they are fun.

Interwoven care and learning



“Play and learning are like the two wings of a butterfly, interconnected and interdependent.”

Carlina Rinaldi

Babies and young children are full of potential. From birth, they are primed to explore and learn about their world. They observe, test, hypothesise and form ideas about their environment and the people within it. From as young as six months, children will explore cause and effect. For example, dropping food from their plate or by repeatedly pouring objects in and out of a bucket. This behaviour is not intended to upset adults; what they are doing is exploring height, length, distance, cause and effect. When babies and young children repeat patterns of behaviour this is referred to as schematic play, it is an important aspect of how some babies and young children explore and learn. Practitioners working with this age group should recognise the significance of schematic play and understand how best to support and extend these experiences to promote children’s learning. Babies and young children need stimulating first-hand experiences, understanding adults and familiar objects with open-ended opportunities so they can grow and develop a deep understanding about the world around them.



“Child-centred, empowering pedagogies are linked to better child development.”

[Improving early equity: from evidence to action](#)



Babies and young children don't just experiment with objects, they also like to conduct social experiments with adults and other children. Tina Bruce (2010: p12) reminds us that babies and young children do not need to be shown how to explore; they are born explorers. For example, new-born babies explore faces and can turn facial expressions into feelings. They are figuring out who will help them and what might be expected of them in a relationship. These tests and experiments are fundamental to a child's developing sense of self. How they are cared for and responded to impacts how they see themselves and their connection with the world. They need loving, compassionate, consistent and responsive care to form a positive sense of self and loveliness.



“It is about how children follow their ideas and interests in their way and for their reasons. This effectively promotes all aspects of children's development, learning and wellbeing.”

[A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare](#)

A child's personal plan can help staff and families support children's care and wellbeing. To do our best for each child, we need to get to know the child and have a place to write and reflect about a child's unique experiences. There is no exact format to personal plans and each service will need to develop its own approach, including families and children as part of the process. Personal plans should feel owned by those involved in the care of a child. As part of forming a child's plan, it is important to observe children's engagement with their environment. Observing children engrossed in play or during care routines will offer a rich picture of the whole child. However, try to avoid the pitfall of observing children in testing conditions or only during adult-led activities. Observations are there to deepen your understanding of a child and to offer insight into what might come next, they are not evidence of an activity. Examples of positive personal planning processes can be found in the [Personal Planning Guide](#).

The Health and Social Care Standards state:



“My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices.”





Strong partnerships with families



“Children and families are meaningfully involved and influence change within the setting.”

[A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare](#)

Research shows that parents and carers want to be involved in their child’s ELC experience and that children benefit from their involvement (Gross et al.). It is said that strong family partnerships have a particularly positive effect on children’s literacy and numeracy development. This is partly because families that make strong connections with their child’s ELC setting are more likely to have regular, two-way, and meaningful communications about their child’s care and learning.

Every ELC setting is different and how strong family partnerships are achieved will vary. However, it is important to develop your approach alongside the families in your ELC community. You could start by asking what a family needs to be included in their child’s ELC experience. The answer to that question will likely vary for different families and over time as the children you care for change. Working collaboratively with families will better assist you to understand what they need to:

- connect and be actively involved within your setting
- be an equal partner and fully involved in all decisions about their child in the ELC setting
- share with you their home care routines and knowledge
- participate in decisions about the setting
- be involved in their child’s learning and development.

To support a child, we need to foster strong partnerships with their family. The values and principles of [Getting it Right for Every Child \(GIRFEC\)](#) support ELC settings to be rights-respecting, strengths-based and to place the child and family at the centre of decisions and care. The Independent Care Review and The Promise articulate the importance of supporting family wellbeing and the role of siblings in a child’s life. While it isn’t always possible to keep siblings together in our settings, we should think innovatively about how we plan for and utilise a child’s existing relationships. A sibling bond can be very strong, and a sister or brother can help their sibling to settle or enrich their experience.

It is important to recognise our own limitations and when a family might need additional help and support from outwith your service. To support whole family wellbeing, it is important to form local partnerships with other professionals.

Well-trained, competent and skilled staff



“A shared ethos and commitment to developing high quality play, based on children’s needs and interests.”

[A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare](#)

It is important that staff have time to notice and value what is meaningful to a child. There are sensitive windows of opportunity when a young child’s brain is primed to grow and develop in specific areas. Research tells us the areas of a child’s brain associated with the development of emotional control, social skills, language and numeracy peak in sensitivity during the first three years of life. This means that the first few years of life are full of opportunity for a child to achieve their potential. ELC staff play a vital role in a child’s early life and high quality ELC strengthens learning and development opportunities, alongside life chances. Babies and young children need staff that are loving, compassionate, consistent and responsive.

Those responsible for the care of babies and young children will take in some of the daily distresses children feel. For example, the grief a child can feel at the loss of a favourite pebble. It is easy to become overwhelmed attending to the normal and varied needs and emotions of babies and young children. Therefore, it is important to recognise overwhelming feelings within ourselves or those around us. A tea break or chat with a colleague can help restore the internal calm and compassion needed to meet children’s needs.

The single most important factor in the quality of a child’s ELC experience is a high-quality workforce. It is the provider’s responsibility to ensure that staff are employed in adequate numbers and with the relevant skills, knowledge and ability to fulfil their role. The [Guidance on adult to child ratios in Early Learning and Childcare](#) sets the minimum expectation on adult to child ratios and should be considered alongside the [Health and Social Care Standards \(HSCS\)](#), which state: “My needs are met by the right number of people” (HSCS 3.15). Staffing arrangements must be planned carefully and reflect the changing needs of children. For example, you might need to consider how staff are deployed to support a new child fostering secure attachments with staff.

[A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare](#) supports providers to promote staff development, reflective practice and the importance of professional learning that draws on local, national and international evidence and research. Furthermore, the [Early Learning and Childcare – National Induction Resource](#) has been created to support providers, managers and new staff to work in partnership and establish a robust induction programme for all new staff working across a range of ELC settings.



Safe and nurturing environments

ELC settings should promote a nurturing and safe experience for all babies and children. Environments for babies and young children should provide quality play and learning experiences that support and nourish development, wellbeing and happiness. The quality of the care and learning environment is equally important to parents. This is a view which is supported by a survey carried out by the Care Inspectorate, where 69 per cent of parents said the environment was one of the main factors when choosing the service for their children ([Space to Grow](#)).

Further expansion of funded ELC for babies and young children requires settings and providers to reflect on current provision for this age group and consider what staff development and training opportunities may be needed to further support their workforce. ELC providers need to ensure the environment is safe for babies and young children, while also offering interesting and varied spaces that allow children the freedom to explore. The [Keeping Children Safe](#) practice notes and [Space to Grow](#) will help you to consider safe, innovative and child-centred environments.

Early years experiences should be relaxed, home like and led from children's own interests and personal care needs. Children will benefit from staff who recognise that care and learning are interwoven and supported by an enriching environment. For example, mealtime experiences offer a valuable opportunity for children to feel supported, develop communication skills and to support their earliest needs for independence and trying out a sense of responsibility, whether that is learning to self-feed or pour water for their friends. We have produced a [mealtime practice note](#) to support self-evaluation and improvement of mealtimes.



“The nappy changing experience should be a relaxed, happy and social routine that provides valuable opportunities for interactions between staff and children on an individual basis. The environment should be organised in a way that promotes those positive interactions while also supporting positive learning experiences.”

[Nappy changing guidance for early years](#)

Early years staff are tasked with keeping children safe while also offering enriching experiences. The Hub website offers varied guidance to support ELC staff in providing safe and enriching environments:

- [Nappy changing guidance for early years services](#)
- [Good practice guidance: prevention and management of choking episodes in babies and children](#)
- [Reduce the Risks of Cot Death: Early Years Safe Sleeping Guide](#)

Do you want to continue learning and reflecting on best practice?

[Realising the ambition: Being Me](#) is a valuable resource for anyone wanting to further explore what babies and young children need to grow and develop

Children's voices: getting to know me

“

Oh, I want that paintbrush that they have. It would be great for brushing my hair.

“

I like it when I can see your face. I feel safe when you are near. The safety I feel gives me the self-confidence to explore.

“

I need something to pull myself up. I think I could stand if I had something to hold on to.

“

I like facing you at lunchtime. You have a big smile and I like the sounds you make. This is fun.

“

Wow, when I roll the blocks off the table they crash on the floor. Let's try that again...

“

I like my comforter when I am going to sleep. It smells like my home.

“

At home my granny helps me to rinse my own plate. I love doing that because we blow the soap bubbles too.

Listen to children through their emotions, words, sounds and actions. What are they telling you?

It is important to talk to a child's family and to observe their interaction. To offer a child responsive care you need to adopt some of the home routines and customs that work well for a child. This will help children to settle, feel safe and to explore.

The first few years in life are a sensitive period of social development for children. They learn about others and concepts such as sharing throughout childhood. It is staff's role to understand and support children when they experience new or big emotions and situations. We don't need to manage it, we just need to be there to support them through it.

Staff are the most important resource within any ELC setting. It is important to be at the child's physical level and attuned to them emotionally. Your enthusiasm about them and their experiences will promote wellbeing.

Young children need the novelty of new experiences and the opportunity to revisit what is familiar to them. Novelty and familiarity support children to master new skills and develop ideas about the world around them.



Children learn from everyone around them. Provide lots of opportunities for them to babble, talk and to have fun with each other. Mealtimes are a great opportunity for watching, listening and talking, especially for babies.

Focus on what a child can and can almost do. Avoid planning for rigid developmental expectations far into their future. This can result in an unrealistic expectation of what a child can do. Be in the moment with the child and wonder what they need from you now.

Alongside warm cuddles from staff, transitional objects from home such as a teddy bear or a blanket, help children to feel safe and secure.

Well-trained, competent, and skilled staff provide high quality Early Learning and Childcare

Warm, sensitive, and responsive staff interactions



Babies are born sociable. They need the space and opportunities to express themselves. Babies and younger children are more likely to express their views with actions that we can observe and respond to, as appropriate. Play and mealtimes offer lots of opportunities for children to express their views and for staff to show they are listening. ❤️



When I lift the child up to the changing mat, I always tell them what I am doing. This offers reassurance but also develops their listening and talking skills. ❤️



As their keyworker, I feel I know the child's individual preferences. How they like to be fed or what they like to play. If I am unavailable, I make sure other staff know what they like so the child feels safe and valued. ❤️

Strong partnerships with families



I'm so glad I spoke to their mum today. She said they had a disturbed sleep last night. The child is unusually upset today. I will see if an early nap will help. ❤️



Woo, they climbed up the slide today. That showed increased courage and skill. I will need to share this achievement with their family. ❤️



When the child was collected, I showed their family the big spoons we played with. Their family can do this at home and repeat some of the new words and ideas we explored today. ❤️

Nurturing environments



The babies are becoming confident crawlers. We will need to make some changes to offer physical challenge. Babies and young children thrive off novelty. However, they also need familiarity, so we won't change everything. ❤️



I have filled baskets with items of interest. I will now sit and watch what they do with it all. It isn't always easy to know when to intervene but the more I watch them play the more attuned I become. ❤️



Across the course of the day, babies and young children need different things from us and their environment. We ensure our environment provides spaces to be quiet and relaxed, as well as challenged and stimulated. ❤️

Interwoven care, love, and learning



As a team, we regularly discuss our observations of the children then create exciting, inventive, and inspiring play spaces based on what we know. ❤️



I have noticed they enjoy handing out the plates and buttering their own toast. Even young children want to have responsibility and buttering the toast helps them to develop their fine motor skills. ❤️



I recognise babies and children do not learn isolated curricular subjects. They simultaneously learn multiple concepts and ideas when they are engaged in something meaningful. Children who are playing are learning. ❤️



It's busy being a 1-year-old ❤️

Please expect me to be busy, it's my job to be busy! I am naturally curious about the world around me, and I love to explore.

I am now able to move around more and sometimes I feel brave about moving a little further away from you. Although I still like to know you are there so I can return for a cuddle when I need one. You are the secure base I return to when I need a rest or reassurance.

Please remember that I don't need to do things well, I just need lots of opportunities to practice things again and again.

Exploring and revisiting familiar objects helps support my learning and development. Please have lots of objects with different textures for me to touch, taste, drop, bang, throw, stack, pour and hide. I explore and make sense of the world using my senses.

I love watching other children and playing with them. But remember, I am too young to understand sharing. That part of my brain is still developing, and I will learn about my impact on others over time.

Please remember, I like to taste everything so make sure that the things I can reach, or touch are safe for me.

I love spending time with you, I love it when I can see your face and see your smile. I love that you know me and listen to me when I am upset. I know you are listening because you tell me: "I can hear you are upset, would you like a little cuddle?"

When you wonder out loud and talk to me about my emotions it helps me to understand them.

Please remember that when I am tired, I might like to have my special bear with me, I also like when you cuddle up with me for a little story.

Stories are best when it's just you and I reading together. When it's just us enjoying the book, you are better able to respond to me and I can watch your face as we read. I love that you let me hold the book and it has little doors that I can open and close, it's so exciting!

When I am hungry, I can get very upset, but I know that you are there to help me. I know you understand because you tell me: "I can see you are hungry, let's get you something nice to eat."

I like it when you sit with me, and we chat while I am eating lunch. I am enjoying trying to feed myself and I know this can get very messy sometimes, but I am learning so much. I know I can sometimes

take a long time to eat, but please don't hurry me.

I love it when you take me outside. I can feel the wind on my face and look up to see the birds. I can sit on a rug with you and listen to stories and sing songs. I like to play where I can explore and investigate. I enjoy having space to move freely. I love to climb and find places to crawl in and out of, again and again. I like to dig and get muddy and often feel sad when I am taken back inside.

Please remember that when I get stuck doing something, it is more helpful to me if you help me do it myself than if you do it for me.

Please expect me to look for you and want to feel you near me. I may not stay for long, but I need to know that you are near and that you will give me a cuddle, offer me reassurance or a smile when I need one. It makes me feel special and safe.

Most importantly, please love me.



Recognise, Reflect, Relate

Know and understand the babies and children in your care

- How do we observe children? What techniques do we use and how do we know these are useful?
- How do we ensure that children have at least one strong emotional connection with someone responsible for their care, support and learning?
- How do we know when a child needs challenge, additional support or help to pursue their interests?
- How do we include children's needs, interests and capabilities in our planning processes and risk assessments?
- How do we listen to and communicate with the children who are developing listening skills and language?
- What do we need to consider and how can we arrange staffing to support children when their keyperson is on a break or annual leave?

We want to share our learning so you can be confident you provide safe, nurturing and supportive care. The three R's (Recognise, Reflect and Relate) can help you to do this.

Recognise what a baby or child is communicating to you

It is important to take account of children's voices in matters that affect them. Each child will experience the care you provide differently.

What I need from you:

- Get to know me. I have my own unique abilities, interests and needs.
- Get to know my family. Take time to talk and learn from those who know me best.
- People I trust help me to feel safe. Recognise that we need time to build our trusting relationship.
- Life is full of lots of new experiences for me. I can easily become overwhelmed. Recognise when I do and help me restore my sense of calm.
- When I feel overwhelmed, sometimes all I need is for you to remain calm and to offer me comfort.
- If I am upset, please talk to me. When you verbalise what is going on for me, it helps me to develop my own understanding.
- I am still developing ways of communicating with you and do not always know how to tell you what I want or how I feel. Please notice what my actions and expressions are telling you.
- Please keep my environment free from unnecessary and intrusive noises so I can listen to and participate in conversations.
- My brain is tuned to be sensitive to language sounds. I need you to ensure I can carefully listen to and imitate the voices I hear. Listening to and play with words is vital for my language

development. If there are too many other sounds, like continual music playing, it is difficult for me to focus on our chatter.

- Take your time when you talk to me. Explain things to me and show me what you mean. Remember, many of the words you are using will be new to me.
- Talk, sing, and read to me. I love to see pictures and hear stories and songs.
- I am developing a sense of myself and others. Understanding others is a skill that grows as I do. That is why I find sharing difficult.
- Give me opportunities and time to repeat and practice actions. This helps me learn and develop.
- Provide me with somewhere cosy and warm to sleep or rest.
- Please do not rush me when I am eating or drinking.
- Let me feed myself, make a mess and spend time with you and my friends. This will support all areas of my development.
- I love exploring through my senses. I get to understand objects by putting them in my mouth or listening to the sounds they make.
- Keep my environment safe so I only have access to things that cannot hurt me or make me unwell.
- Nurture me, respond to me and enjoy being with me.
- Make sure I have fun and feel loved.





Reflect on your practice with babies and young children

These questions are designed to help support staff in the process of reflection and staff discussion to identify areas for improvement.

Assessing the environment

- How do you think your environment looks from a child's perspective? From the entrance to the toilets, how does the environment make a child feel?
- How do you ensure there are varied opportunities for babies and young children to use all their senses?
- How do you incorporate aspects of children's homes, communities and cultures?
- How do you ensure that the young children have daily opportunities to play outdoor?
- How do you manage risk effectively by balancing the risks and benefits of outdoor learning experiences?
- How do you know what kind of spaces and resources children need indoors and out?
- How do you provide children with space to be active while also having a space for quieter play or rest?
- How do you minimise intrusive background noise?
- How do you ensure the environment supports children to take ownership of their experiences?
- How do you observe children's interaction with their environment to learn more about a child and what they might need to sustain an interest or master a current and developing skill?

Staff roles and responsibilities

- How does the key person meet the needs of every child in their care and respond sensitively to their individual needs and feelings?
- How comfortable are you with the idea that children and staff develop an understanding of the world together?
- How do you responsively plan and support children's play?
- How much time do you give to listen to children, allowing them to lead conversations through their facial expressions, sounds and words?
- How does your daily routine support you to spend time watching the children interact, explore and play?
- How do children feel safe when you, their special and connected person, are not in the same room as them?
- How do you provide children with space and time to meaningfully explore and be creative?
- How do you respect and promote children's rights?
- How do you keep children safe while also encouraging them to explore freely?

Staff communication

- How do you ensure effective communication within your playroom and the staff team?
- How do staff develop the confidence and skills needed when working in partnership with parents?
- How do we know if one of our team is feeling overwhelmed and needs support?
- How does your approach to the support and supervision of staff positively impact on staff and children's wellbeing?
- How do you encourage staff to reflect on the challenges of working with babies and young children?

Family engagement

- How can you develop your family involvement policy (or plan) with staff, children, families and the community?
- How do you know that everyone has a shared understanding about what parent/carer involvement is in your setting?
- How are families encouraged to share their knowledge and insights about their children with you to support their individual needs?
- How do you work in partnership with families to plan children's emotional support across their day?
- How do you exchange information about a child's learning and development between the home and setting?
- How do you support parents' anxieties and fears about leaving their children?



Relate to the individual worlds of each baby and child

Prompts for staff self-evaluation and learning

The following scenarios have been designed to stimulate professional discussion. Please use these scenarios in your team to encourage self-evaluation as part of your continuous professional learning and development.

Scenario 1

Thomas, my world at 2 years old

Thomas is 2 and he attends a childminder's service three full days per week. At times, there are at least two other children at the service with him. Thomas is fascinated with transporting. He never appears to spend very long in one area and can be found flitting around the room, collecting objects on his travels. He likes to hold specific objects and can quite often be observed moving these in his hands. He is also very specific about the object he holds, ideally a red fire engine, but failing this, any play vehicle.

Thomas can be very possessive over the objects that he is transporting and can often hide them to ensure that nobody else can have them. Thomas can become very upset if he is unable to find these specific objects or if he is expected to share these. Thomas can also become very upset at certain points through the day when he is encouraged to return these objects during daily routines such as lunch, snack or nap time.

- How would you support Thomas and his current interest in transporting?
- How do you ensure your environment is predictable and children know where to find specific objects?
- How do you recognise and support children's schemas in your setting?
- What is your expectation around 'sharing' when you think of a 1- to 2-year-old?
- How would you share this learning with parents/carers?
- What emotions and thoughts do you think Thomas experiences at various points of this scenario?
- What strategies would you put in place to support Thomas at key points in his day, for example, mealtimes?



Scenario 2

Maisie, my world at 1 year

Maisie is 1 and she has been attending your setting for a couple of weeks. Before Maisie started, you met with her parents to discuss her individual needs including routines, sleep patterns and food preferences. Maisie's parents provided limited information about her.

Maisie does not have any siblings, and this is the first time her parents have been involved with any ELC service. The family recently moved to the area and said they had not yet met any other families with young children. Maisie has struggled to settle with you. She often cries and is upset. Maisie frequently stops crying and smiles when you hold her.

You speak to Maisie's parents every day when they drop Maisie off and collect her. Although Maisie's parents chat to you and always offer thanks for caring for Maisie, they do not ask anything about her day. Each day you give Maisie's parents written feedback about her day. Her parents usually put the written information in Maisie's bag but never ask about what has been written.

Discuss this scenario

- What do you consider are Maisie's emotions and feelings?
- How can you support Maisie to settle better into the service?
- How can you build a relationship with the family?
- How can you support the family?
- How can you gain more information about Maisie's individual care needs?
- Who else do you think you need to talk to for guidance and support?
- How does your work with families help them to support and understand their child's development and learning?



Scenario 3

Sally, my world at 18 months

Sally is 18 months old has been attending nursery for four weeks. She has a big sister Lucy who also attends the nursery. Both children spend two full days there. Sally is very distressed when separating from her family in the morning. She will accept comfort from one staff member, but staffing arrangements are rotational so staff working patterns change. She does not have a key person yet as staff are still considering who that should be. Sally tends to sit near the playroom door and becomes distressed if someone new comes into the room.

Sally is a confident crawler and staff have observed her pulling herself up to standing position using the table as a support. She has also started taking a few steps independent of help from staff. She also loves the basket of ribbons that is sometimes out. She appears to rub the ribbons with her fingertips and often holds them up towards staff.

- What emotions and thoughts do you think Sally is experiencing?
- What do you think Sally is telling you and what do you need to do to support her?
- What can you do to help Sally with her transition from home to nursery?
- How can you help Sally form secure and strong relational connections with you?
- How can other people, including her big sister, help you to ensure Sally feels happy, safe and secure in your care?
- How can you use Sally's interests and developing skills to settle her and support her?
- How would you ensure the resources that Sally enjoys are easily accessible to her?
- How does your work with families help them to support and understand their child's development and learning?



Scenario 4

Azeem, my world at 22 months

Azeem is 22 months old. He loves playing in the water. He pours the water between different containers and particularly enjoys it when you add things to his water play such as leaves or flowers. He pulls these apart and fills the containers with them. He will repeat these actions with anything he can fill his container with. His family have also expressed their frustration that he always pours his juice out and onto the table at home.

Azeem communicates his wants and wishes by pointing at objects. He doesn't use clear words to verbally express what he wants. Azeem's family have asked you if he uses words in nursery because they don't feel he does at home. You have also noticed Azeem can become very frustrated at times and occasionally hits other children playing in the same space as him.

- What emotions and thoughts do you think Azeem experiences at various points of this scenario?
- What can you do to support Azeem?
- How do your observations inform your planning to support individual children's learning?
- Who else do you think you need to talk to for guidance and support?
- What would you do to support Azeem?
- How will you include Azeem's family in what you do?
- How does your work with families help them to support and understand their child's development and learning?



Top tips when caring for wonderful ones and terrific twos

To maximise children's wellbeing, we must consider their holistic developmental needs. A variety of health professionals, including an occupational therapist, speech and language therapist, physiotherapists and nutritional dietitian, shared with us their top tips for your care of babies and children aged between 1 and 2 years.

- Create environments that allow for parents to be involved so you can learn from each other.
- Children need their environments to be stimulating but not chaotic.
- Create safe and secure environments that children can thrive in.
- Provide lots of opportunity for babies and children to be active, from tummy times to toddler strolls. Active children are healthy, happy and they sleep better.
- Prematurity, illness, hospitalisation, parental health and environmental factors can influence the rate of a child's progress. Consider a child's whole world when you are planning for their care and learning.
- Plan for where the child is developmentally, rather than what you think they should be doing by a certain age.
- When achieving developmental milestones, the key is to ensure a baby or child progresses from one stage to the next. Speak to parents and partner agencies if you have any concerns.
- Recognise and adapt your communication when a child has difficulty understanding you.
- Children need to see what you say, as well as hear what you say. They are studying you to learn how to form words with their mouths and make sense of your nonverbal cues. Provide lots of face-to-face and fun interactions like singing and stories.
- Use nonverbal and visual supports during interactions and experiences.
- Create environments that offer both familiarity and novelty. For example, have relaxing spaces for daily sleep routines and know when to change resources to support the development of new skills.
- Encouraging younger children to self-feed and allow them to get messy and explore food.
- Recognise the value of everyday care routines. For example, chewing food helps to develop the oral muscles needed for tongue control and speech development.

- Provide opportunities to eat in groups. Even our youngest children require sociable mealtimes, so they develop good eating habits and good communication skills.
- Establish good eating habits. Young children have small stomach capacity and benefit from small but regular nutritional meals, snacks, and drinks.
- Offer opportunities and gentle encouragement to try new food.
- Foster a strong commitment to staff training and continual professional development to enable all staff to meet children's needs.
- Don't work alone, seek out local partnerships.
- Nominate staff champions. People who can champion a particular area of high quality ELC, such as inclusive communication or schematic play.



Key Improvement Resources

Developing your pedagogy

[A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare](#)

[Realising the ambition – Being Me](#)

[Children & Young People’s Commissioner, Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

[Getting it Right for Every Child \(GIRFEC\)](#)

[Health and Social Care Standards](#)

[Best start bright futures tackling child poverty delivery plan](#)

[Space to Grow](#)

Growing up healthy

[ACES](#)

[Becoming breastfeeding friendly Scotland](#)

[Food matters](#)

Keeping children safe

[Good practice guidance: prevention and management of choking episodes in babies and children](#)

[Guidance on adult to child ratios in early learning and childcare settings](#)

[Infection prevention and control in childcare settings \(daycare and childminding settings\)](#)

[Keeping children safe-look, think, act campaign](#)

[Nappy changing facilities for early learning and childcare services – information to support improvement](#)

[National child protection guidelines](#)

[Royal society for the prevention of accidents – Keeping kids safe](#)

[Safe sleep Scotland](#)

Play is the way

[Heuristic play](#)

[How To Identify Schemas in Play: Cathy Nutbrown](#)

[Loose parts play – a toolkit](#)

[My World Outdoors](#)

[Our Creative Journey](#)

[Out to Play](#)

[Play Strategy for Scotland](#)

[Play Types toolkit](#)

[Positive approach to risk in play](#)

[Schematic Play](#)

[Scotland's Outdoor Play and Learning Coalition Position Statement](#)

Strong partnerships with families

[Parents as partners in their children's learning – toolkit](#)

[Family learning and engagement](#)

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