

Element 2: Principles, including Rights of the Child and Practitioner Image of the Child

Principles related to *Children and their lives in early childhood: Activities A-E*

Activity B: Seeing all children as competent and confident

This activity involves thinking about your own experiences as a learner as well as thinking about some scenarios of children as learners.

Part 1: You as a learner

Take a few minutes to remember a time when you were facing a challenge. This could be learning to drive a car, cooking an important meal, drawing or doing maths at school, singing solo in a choir, returning to study or another example.

- Did someone believe in your ability to succeed?
- How did that person support you and facilitate you to achieve the goal?
- How did that make you feel?
- Did someone believe you could not do the task?
- How did they convey that?
- How did that make you feel?

Part 2: The competent child

This activity involves you thinking about different scenarios and explaining why you chose a particular response.

Scenario 1

Sergei is eleven months old. He is learning to crawl and as he crawls he bumps gently against a highchair. He is not hurt and does not cry.

How do you react? Why do you choose this response? What might influence how you respond?

Scenario 2

There are eleven children aged eighteen months to three years in the toddler room. The manager suggests that the children could be more independent at snack-time.

How do you react? Why do you choose this response? What might influence how you respond?

Scenario 3

A two-year-old child is learning English as a second language. The parents are concerned about his ability to learn two languages at once because they are learning English also. They ask for your advice.

How do you react? Why do you choose this response? What might influence how you respond?

Scenario 4

A group of three- and four-year-olds are in the block area. They are building a city and want to draw a map of it.

How do you react? Why do you choose this response? What might influence how you respond?

Scenario 5

A four year-old boy is telling you about dinosaurs. He says his favourite is Tyrannosaurus Rex and his next favourite is the Brontosaurus.

How do you react? Why do you choose this response? What might influence how you respond?

Scenario 6

Anna is four years old and has Down Syndrome. Her boot gets caught and comes off.

How do you react? Why do you choose this response? What might influence how you respond?

Sample responses and additional resources

Scenario 1

- Do you pick him up and cuddle him and tell him it will be alright?
- Do you watch him, to be there if he needs you, and see him come out from under the high-chair beaming that he crawled so far?
- Do you lift him up and put him in the high-chair in case he hurts himself?

Scenario 2

- Do you think they are too young to pour their own water from the jug and to choose fruit and crackers from a serving plate and continue to manage snack time as you always have?
- Do you say they could do it but it would take too much time and be too messy?
- Do you get smaller plates and jugs to support the children to developing self-help skills?

Additional resources

Promoting independence at snack time

Being independent at snack time

Learning experience: making wraps'

Scenario 3

- Do you tell the parents not to worry, you will teach him English?
- Do you encourage the parents to speak English only at home with their child?
- Do you explain to parents that it is important to continue to speak their first language to their child at home, as this supports him learning a second language? Do you reassure them that he will naturally develop English in your setting through conversation, play, books and songs?

Additional resources

Tipsheet: Supporting children to become bilingual

Tipsheet: Supporting your child to become bilingual

Scenario 4

- Do you tell them it's nearly tidy-up time?
- Do you give them some paper and let them get on with it?
- Do you provide some real maps, some measuring tapes, pencils, markers and some large sheets of paper and assist them where needed without taking over the play?

Scenario 5

- Do you smile with your colleagues at the cuteness?
- Do you extend his language by talking with him about palaeontologists, excavations, fossils, herbivores, carnivores and look at books and websites to scaffold his knowledge further?
- Do you tell him there are no dinosaurs anymore?

Additional resources

Learning experience: Dinosaurs

Scenario 6

- Do you watch and see if she can put it back on herself?
- Do you put the boot back on for her?
- Do you ask another child to help her?

Additional resources

Nurturing dispositions

After-activity notes

Aistear and *Síolta* support the learning and development of all children from birth to six years. Your curriculum also needs to support every child to reach his/her full potential. Do you have high expectations for all children?

Think about messages you might indirectly or unconsciously give some children about things they can or cannot do. Are there different messages or expectations for different groups of children, for example, children with special educational needs, boys or girls, children from different cultural contexts or particular backgrounds? Are there opportunities for all children to progress to more complex tasks? Is there a balance between familiarity which helps children to feel secure and novelty and challenge which engages their interest, and extends their thinking and learning?