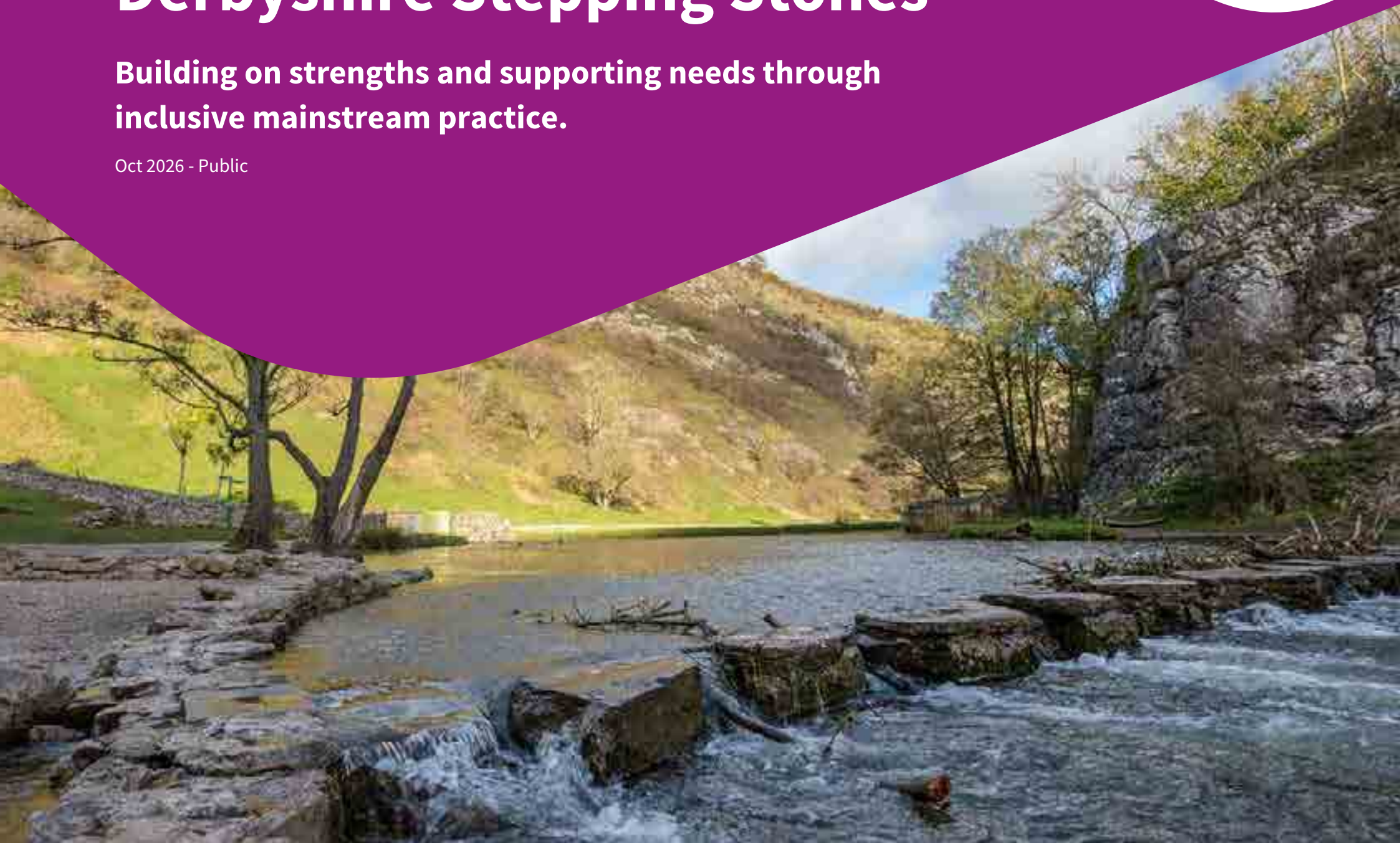
DERBYSHIRE County Council

Derbyshire Stepping Stones

Building on strengths and supporting needs through inclusive mainstream practice.

Oct 2026 - Public

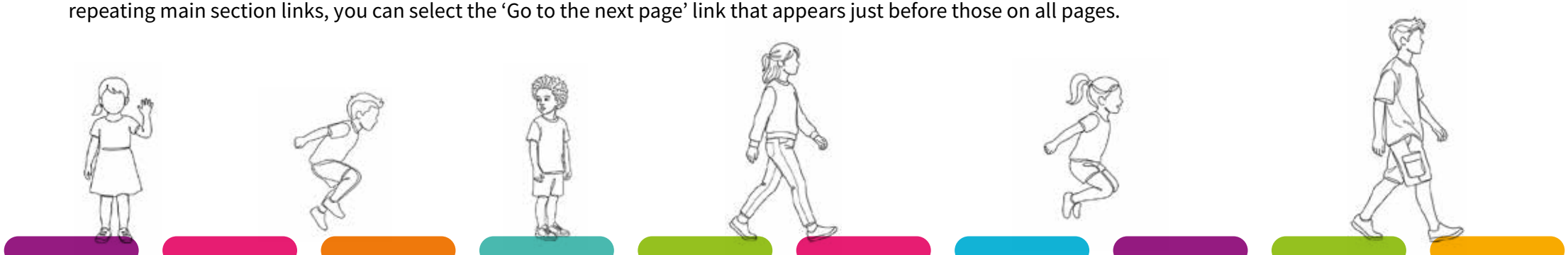


1. Derbyshire Stepping Stones

Welcome to the Derbyshire Stepping Stones resource. This has been created to support our children to be the best they can be so that they can access and be included in a range of opportunities and experiences.

1. Stepping Stones introduction
2. Whole school expectations
3. Communication and Interaction
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5. Sensory needs
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How to navigate this resource: you can read through or select an option from the contents above. On each of the following pages you will find links at the bottom of the page that go to the start of each main section. If you are using a screen reader and wish to skip those repeating main section links, you can select the 'Go to the next page' link that appears just before those on all pages.



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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Inclusive mainstream practice in Derbyshire

Our vision in Derbyshire is that every child and young person is able to follow their dreams, be valued for who they are, be safe and know they belong. This guidance builds on existing good practice across Derbyshire to support schools in providing a high-quality, inclusive education for all children and young people.

Inclusive mainstream practice in Derbyshire focuses on identifying, understanding and removing barriers to learning, participation and wellbeing. It describes how mainstream schools can meet a wide range of needs through their day-to-day practice, using existing funding and resources, and by responding early and effectively when children need additional support.

Inclusive practice is not about treating every child the same. Instead, it is about making reasonable adjustments, adaptations and small changes so that all children have equal access to learning and the same opportunities as their peers.

This core offer is often referred to as 'ordinarily available provision' within the SEND Code of Practice. It forms part of Derbyshire's Graduated Response and sets out the universal support that schools should provide for children with additional needs, with or without a formal diagnosis or specialist involvement.

Decisions about which approaches or adjustments are most appropriate are always made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the individual child or young person, their strengths and needs, and the context of their school.

This good practice guidance aims to achieve the following:

- Promote high-quality inclusive practice across Derbyshire schools.
- Support consistent standards of effective practice so that all children and young people receive a fair and high-quality offer, regardless of need, school or locality.
- Develop a shared understanding among schools, staff and professionals of duties around best endeavours and reasonable adjustments.
- Build schools' confidence in using inclusive approaches, strategies and resources so that children and young people with SEND are not disadvantaged compared to their peers.
- Support early identification, early intervention and effective use of the Graduated Response.
- Provide a practical resource to help schools review, develop and strengthen their SEND and inclusive provision.
- Offer clear information for children, young people and families about the support that should be ordinarily available in mainstream schools.

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1.2 Further resources

We recommend the resources below are used alongside the Derbyshire Stepping Stones to ensure needs are met effectively.

Derbyshire County Council Local Offer:

Information about SEND & Inclusion services, support and activities available to children, young people and families.

Visit Derbyshire Local Offer

Graduated Response Guidance:

Guidance on how your child's needs will be understood, supported and regularly reviewed.

Visit ISS Graduated Response - Derbyshire Local Offer

SEND & Inclusion Strategy:

Derbyshire's plan for improving SEND support and outcomes for children, young people and families.

View the Derbyshire SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2026 - 2031

Attendance Strategy/Toolkit:

Advice and practical help to support your child's attendance at school.

View the Derbyshire Attendance Strategy 2026 - 2028

Inclusion Framework:

Information about how schools create welcoming and inclusive experiences for every child.

Visit Inclusion Support Service (ISS) - Derbyshire Local Offer

Preparation for Adulthood (PfA):

Support to help your child develop independence and prepare for their future.

Visit Preparing for adulthood - Derbyshire Local Offer

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1.3 Principles of inclusive mainstream practice

Each principle is aligned to the Derbyshire Inclusion Framework to show how inclusive values are put into practice across the school:

Person-centred, strengths-based practice

- Opportunities
- Champion
- Co-production

High expectations for every learner

- Responsibility
- Champion

Belonging, participation and pupil and parent voice

- Belonging
- Co-production

Shared responsibility for inclusion

- Responsibility

Fair and responsive support

- Identification
- Provision

An accessible, inclusive curriculum

- Opportunities
- Flexibility
- Co-production

Early identification of need and effective graduated response

- Identification

Preparation for adulthood

- Opportunities
- Champion
- Belonging

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2. Whole school expectations

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2. Whole school expectations

This section sets out the expectations for all schools, recognising that provision must be shaped by the individual needs of children and young people (CYP). Schools and local authorities share statutory responsibilities under key legislation.

The **Equality Act (2010)** requires schools to make reasonable adjustments to ensure pupils are not disadvantaged. The **Children and Families Act (2014)**, alongside the **SEND Code of Practice,** places a duty on schools to use their best endeavours to secure high-quality provision for children and young people with SEND.

These expectations are reinforced through the **Teachers' Standards (2021)**, which emphasise high expectations for all pupils and the need to adapt teaching to respond to individual strengths and needs.

Much of this section should already be evident in effective day-to-day practice. It reflects high-quality teaching, inclusive approaches and the **Six Principles of Nurture**. While some adjustments or strategies may be identified in response to SEND, they strengthen provision for all pupils and support positive outcomes across the whole school.

Within this section:

- 2.1 How to use the whole school expectations
- 2.2 Belonging
- 2.3 Responsibility
- 2.4 Opportunities
- 2.5 Champion
- 2.6 Flexibility
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2.1 How to use the whole school expectations

A quick guide for schools and parents to understand Inclusive Support

Who this is for and how it helps:

Parents and carers

Use this to see what support school should provide and what you can ask.

Ask: what is being tried, who is helping and when it will be reviewed.

Schools

Use this to check everyday practice, evidence and next steps.

Check: what is in place, what evidence exists and what needs to improve.

The key part and what this means:

Inclusive Support

Inclusive Support means noticing, planning for and responding to needs.

Aim: help every child belong, take part and make progress.

Assess

Understand the need before choosing support.

Use evidence: learning, attendance, wellbeing, behaviour, pupil voice and parent views.

Plan

Agree the support and make it clear for everyone.

Decide: what will happen, who will do it and when it will be reviewed.

Do and Review

Put support in place, then check if it helped.

Review: continue, adapt or increase support based on impact.

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2.2 **Belonging**

Every child feels welcome, safe and part of the school community

The child is known, valued and respected

We make sure each child is known and respected.

- Know strengths: use one-page profiles for interests and what helps.
- Train staff: use inclusive, relationship-based and trauma-informed practice.
- Use pupil voice: let children help shape everyday support.

Changes and transitions are planned carefully

We plan changes and new starts with care.

- Plan together: include families, pupils and professionals.
- Prepare early: offer visits, phased starts, photos or visual timetables.
- Share information: pass on key support details before the move.

We look for alternatives to exclusion

We look for support options before suspension or exclusion.

- Understand need: use the graduated response early.
- Read behaviour: treat behaviour as a sign something may be hard.
- Ask for advice: contact Inclusive Support services early.

Returns after time away are supported

We plan a safe and positive return after time away.

- Agree a plan: use reintegration plans after absence or suspension.
- Review needs: look at attendance, wellbeing, safety and learning together.
- Build confidence: use a calm return plan so the child feels safe and ready.

Social times and wider school life are included

We help children join social times, clubs and wider school life.

- Adjust access: plan breaks, lunches, clubs and trips.
- Support unstructured times: use clear routines or adult support.
- Build belonging: use buddies, peer support and inclusive clubs.

We listen and keep governors informed

We listen to pupils and families and share learning with governors.

- Gather views: use reviews, meetings or surveys.
- Include children: add their views to plans and reviews.
- Update governors: share what is working and what needs to improve.

Everyone should feel they belong

We keep improving belonging across the school.

- Use the framework: reflect and plan with the Inclusive Support Framework.
- Embed inclusive support: make it part of values, policies and routines.
- Prioritise wellbeing: support both pupils and staff.

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2.3 **Responsibility**

Inclusive Support is everyone's responsibility. Every teacher and leader helps pupils access Inclusive Support

Leaders and governors take responsibility

Leaders and governors take clear responsibility for Inclusive Support.

- Include the Inclusive Support lead: in leadership and school improvement planning.
- Review data: look at attendance, exclusions, progress and support.
- Set priorities: clarify roles, teachers adapt, the lead advises, leaders monitor and governors challenge.

Staffing, time and resources match need

We match staffing, time and resources to pupils' needs.

- Review staffing: use provision maps and pupil needs.
- Link funding: connect the Inclusive Support budget to need and impact.
- Use services: follow Derbyshire roadmaps and adapt when needs change.

All staff build skills and confidence

All staff learn how to support additional needs.

- Train staff: cover graduated response, adaptive teaching and inclusive support.
- Share practice: use coaching, modelling and learning walks.
- Train support staff: link training to pupil needs and provision maps.

Inclusive Support is shared by all staff

All staff understand plans and use agreed support.

- Train staff: use Assess, Plan, Do, Review (APDR).
- Share plans: use one-page profiles and APDR plans.
  Brief staff: update them on needs, strategies and risks.

Learning is inclusive

We adapt the curriculum so pupils can access broad, balanced learning.

- Adjust lessons: use quality teaching and reasonable adjustments.
- Plan together: subject leads and the Inclusive Support lead agree adaptations.
- Check access: use provision maps and inclusive support learning walks.

Every child is known and supported

Staff know pupils well and support progress.

- Listen first: use pupil and parent views in planning.
- Track early: check progress, attendance and wellbeing.
- Build trust: use strong relationships and a key worker when helpful.

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2.4 **Opportunities**

Everyone has fair access to learning, activities and future opportunities

Independence and future skills are developed

We help pupils build independence and skills for adult life.

- Practise routines: give everyday responsibilities.
- Link to life: connect learning to community, work and independence.
- Raise aspirations: talk about future goals and careers early.

All pupils can take part

We plan so pupils who need Inclusive Support can join trips, clubs, events and school life.

- Plan early: agree trip, club and lesson adjustments, such as a buddy, quiet space or adapted task.
- Reduce anxiety: use preparation, flexible support or buddies.
- Track access: check who takes part and remove barriers.

Pupils who need Inclusive Support join wider opportunities

We help pupils who need Inclusive Support take part in clubs and leadership.

- Invite pupils: include them in council, clubs and wider roles.
- Adapt access: change how pupils join in or show leadership.
- Celebrate contribution: recognise their role in school life.

Wellbeing education is accessible

We teach relationships, safety and wellbeing in ways all pupils can use.

- Teach clearly: cover emotions, self-regulation and social skills.
- Practise often: revisit learning in real situations.
- Add support: offer safe spaces, trusted adults or targeted help.

Lessons and curriculum include everyone

We design learning so every child can access it and succeed.

- Sequence clearly: break learning into manageable steps.
- Adapt teaching: use modelling, chunking, pre-teaching, adapted tasks and checks.
- Review access: change tools or support if they are not working.

Inclusive Support funding improves opportunities

Leaders use Inclusive Support funding to improve access, participation and progress.

- Set outcomes: link spending to clear aims.
- Review impact: check spending at leadership meetings.
- Change support: stop or adapt provision that is not helping.

Teachers work directly with pupils

Teachers share responsibility for pupils who need Inclusive Support.

- Plan together: teachers plan with teaching assistants (TAs).
- Learn together: use practical training and coaching.
- Make changes: build confidence through small steps.

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2.5 **Champion**

The school celebrates difference and helps every pupil feel valued

Diversity is actively celebrated

We celebrate difference and help pupils value each other.

- Plan events: use assemblies, curriculum links and awareness days.
- Check resources: show a wide range of identities and experiences.
- Ask pupils: make celebrations meaningful and respectful.

Inclusive Support is visible across the school

Inclusive Support is a clear part of school life.

- Share the vision: use assemblies, newsletters and staff meetings.
- Use positive language: promote high expectations and belonging.
- Model inclusive support: leaders show inclusive choices each day.

Inclusive Support progress is noticed and celebrated

We track and celebrate progress for pupils who need Inclusive Support.

- Review progress: look at Inclusive Support data with whole-school data.
- Notice small steps: celebrate trying, asking for help, attendance, confidence and progress.
- Share success: show staff which inclusive strategies work.

Many kinds of success are recognised

We celebrate academic, personal and wider success.

- Value effort: recognise resilience, attendance and personal growth.
- Use fair rewards: celebrate different strengths and contributions.
- Thank staff: recognise staff who improve inclusive practice.

Healthy lifestyles and wellbeing are promoted

We promote wellbeing and positive mental health.

- Teach wellbeing: use Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) and daily routines.
- Offer support: include physical activity and emotional help.
- Act early: train staff to notice wellbeing needs.

Families are included in celebrating success

Parents and carers are kept involved in their child's success.

- Share positives: send calls, emails or postcards home.
- Invite families: include them in events and reviews.
- Make contact accessible: use methods families can easily use.

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2.6 **Flexibility**

We adapt the school environment to fit pupils' needs, not the other way round

Physical and sensory spaces are adjusted

We adjust classrooms and sensory spaces to support pupils.

- Check the room: look at lighting, noise, layout and seating.
- Offer support: use ear defenders, picture prompts, quiet spaces or movement breaks.
- Review often: use pupil voice and staff advice to improve adjustments.

The environment is reviewed and improved

We review the environment and make clear improvements.

- Audit yearly: involve staff and pupils in environment checks.
- Set actions: turn findings into clear improvement steps.
- Check impact: use learning walks and review meetings.

Flexible pathways have a clear purpose

We use alternative timetables or provision only when needed and planned.

- Set a goal: agree the reason, criteria and intended outcome, such as a short-term timetable change.
- Keep it time-limited: plan how the pupil will return or build up.
- Track progress: check attendance, engagement and learning.

Classrooms and displays are accessible

Classrooms and displays are clear, inclusive and helpful.

- Keep displays clear: make them easy to read and useful.
- Use supports: add picture prompts, checklists and clear routines.
- Show belonging: make sure every learner feels represented.

All pupils access the universal offer

All pupils get strong everyday teaching, with extra support when needed.

- Define the offer: set out quality teaching and adaptive teaching.
- Add support: identify need early and give targeted help.
- Review provision: check progress and next steps.

The Accessibility Plan is a live tool

We use the Accessibility Plan to improve provision.

- Update yearly: set clear priorities.
- Link actions: connect it to environment, curriculum and support changes.
- Check delivery: leaders review progress against the plan.

Changes are risk assessed and reviewed

We use risk assessments to support safe access and inclusive support.

- Assess changes: complete risk checks for significant adaptations.
- Balance safety: support pupils to learn and take part.
- Review plans: adapt them as needs change.

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2.7 Identification

Inclusive Support means identifying needs early so every child can belong, take part and make progress

Identifying needs early and accurately

We use information to identify needs early.

- Check information: learning progress, attendance, behaviour and wellbeing.
- Listen early: include pupil and parent/carer views.
- Review past support: build on what is known and tell parents what happens first.

Teachers know their pupils well

Teachers know pupils well and take the first steps.

- Adapt class teaching: change tasks, routines or support.
- Ask the school's Inclusion Lead: get advice if more help or assessment is needed.
- Share what helps: make sure key adults use the same strategies.

Clear whole-school process for identifying needs

Support starts as soon as a need is seen; we do not wait for a diagnosis.

- Use clear prompts: picture instructions, a now/next board or a checklist.
- Offer safe support: a quiet space or a trusted adult check-in.
- Review quickly: change support if it is not helping.

Behaviour is understood as communication

We use the whole-school graduated response: Assess → Plan → Do → Review.

- Assess: gather learning, attendance, behaviour, wellbeing and family views.
- Plan: agree the support, who will do it and when it will be reviewed.
- Do and Review: try the support in class and check the effect in 4–6 weeks.

Working well with parents, carers and professionals

Families and pupils help shape the support.

- Share progress: talk about what is working and what is still hard.
- Update together: include parent/carer and pupil views in reviews.
- Try a new approach: change support if more help is needed.

Fair and informed decisions

Leaders check that support is fair and works for all pupils.

- Review patterns: look across classes, year groups and pupil groups.
- Check consistency: make sure staff use agreed strategies.
- Improve support: use findings for staff training and whole-school practice.

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2.8 **Provision**

Support follows Assess → Plan → Do → Review. Assess, Plan, Do, Review means: understand the need, agree support, try it, then check impact

Needs-led support is planned and reviewed

We use Assess → Plan → Do → Review in everyday school systems.

- Example: if reading is hard, agree daily practice, try it, then review progress.
- Discuss needs: use pupil progress and inclusive support meetings.
- Share plans: give staff one-page profiles or support plans.
- Check impact: focus on outcomes, strategies and what changes.

Support is mapped across the school

We map everyday, extra and specialist support so it matches need.

- Keep a provision map: show what support is available.
- Check balance: make sure staffing and interventions fit current needs.
- Strengthen teaching: improve classroom support before adding extras.

Interventions are chosen because they work

We choose interventions with a clear purpose and review them.

- Set criteria: agree who it is for and what it should improve.
- Track impact: check learning, engagement and wellbeing.
- Link to class: train staff and connect learning back to lessons.

Pupils who may be vulnerable get early help

We act early for pupils at risk of absence, exclusion or disengagement.

- Use information: look at attendance, behaviour, Inclusive Support and safeguarding.
- Meet regularly: hold inclusive support meetings to plan next steps.
- Plan support: create relationship-based plans with families.

Resources are used carefully

We use funding, staff, services, technology and alternative provision carefully.

- Link spending: match Inclusive Support funding and staffing to current needs.
- Use advice: bring in external services when they will improve support.
- Name a lead: check the impact of provision and spending.

Support is reviewed, safe and improving

We review support, manage risk and improve inclusive practice.

- Review each term: use data and pupil/parent views.
- Set priorities: add clear actions to school and Inclusive Support plans.
- Manage risk: use risk assessments to provide safe inclusive support.

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2.9 **Co-production**

Children, families and services work together to plan support and decisions

Pupil and parent voice shapes practice

Pupils and parents help plan support and decisions.

- Plan together: use reviews, one-page profiles and Assess, Plan, Do, Review (APDR) plans.
- Agree next steps: set targets and strategies with pupils and families.
- Make it accessible: use scales, pictures or simple questions; agree what works at home.

Feedback is gathered and used

We ask for feedback and use it to improve Inclusive Support.

- Ask regularly: use surveys, parent forums and pupil groups.
- Close the loop: share “you said, we did” updates.
- Improve provision: use feedback to plan training and support.

Communication routes are clear

Families know how to share concerns and get support.

- Publish routes: explain how to contact the school’s Inclusion Lead or request a meeting.
- Follow up: agree response times and record actions.
- Build trust: offer key adult check-ins when more contact is needed.

Pupils can influence school life

Pupils have real chances to shape their school community.

- Include pupils: offer council, mentoring or wellbeing roles.
- Listen daily: use check-ins and restorative conversations.
- Celebrate change: show how pupil views have made a difference.

Inclusive Support systems and information are clear

Families can find Inclusive Support information and know how to get help.

- Publish information: share the Inclusive Support report, Local Offer links and support overview.
- Keep plans current: update one-page profiles and Inclusive Support plans.
- Explain access: show how to contact the Inclusive Support lead and services.

Strong partnership with families and services

We work with families and services to strengthen support at every level.

- Meet together: hold Team Around the Child meetings with families involved.
- Join up services: work with Inclusive Support services, Educational Psychology, Health and others.
- Share progress: keep plans, strategies and updates clear for home and school.

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2.10 How to use the sections 3-10

A quick guide for schools and parents to understand how to use the strategy sections

Who this is for and how it helps:

Parents and carers

Use this to see what specific areas the child may need support with, along with activities you could offer and ideas of what you could say to the child.

Schools

Use this to develop everyday practice across your setting.

The key part and what this means:

It's important to recognise strengths alongside needs.

Celebrate

Recognise what the child can do and encourage them to practise these skills to build independence.

Develop

Identify what the child is finding tricky and use the ideas to practise these skills.

Joint working

'The child' has been used throughout to mean a child that you either work with or care for. School staff and parent/carers should work together to share success and identify next steps.

The areas within the Derbyshire Stepping Stones align not only to the four broad areas of SEND need, but also to the four Preparation for Adulthood outcomes: education, training and employment, independent living, community inclusion, and health and wellbeing. This highlights how the development of key skills from the early years onwards contributes to positive long-term outcomes for children and young people, recognising the important links between everyday support strategies and future adult aspirations.

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3. Communication and interaction

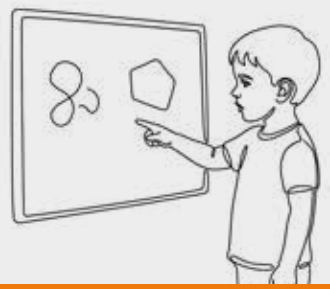
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3. Communication and interaction

Within this section:

3.1 Communication and interaction



3.2 Engage and interact



3.3 Make requests



3.4 Communicate information/comment on events



3.5 Listen and know about language



3.6 Greet others



3.7 Conversations



3.8 Communicating without words



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3.1 Communication and interaction

Recommended strategies for an environment to support and develop good communication:

Create a communication-friendly environment

- Reduce unnecessary background noise and distractions.
- Ensure there are opportunities for face-to-face interaction.
- Arrange spaces to encourage shared attention, conversation, and social engagement.
- Provide quiet areas where children can communicate comfortably.

Use visual supports throughout the environment

- Display visual timetables, labels, symbols, photographs, choice boards, and communication prompts.
- Ensure key areas, resources, and routines are clearly represented visually.
- Visual supports can help children understand, anticipate, and communicate more effectively.

Model and encourage effective communication

- Adults should use clear, simple, and age/ development-appropriate language.
- Model active listening, turn-taking, and appropriate social communication. Give children time to process information and respond without interruption.
- Expand on children's communication by adding words and ideas to what they say.

Provide meaningful opportunities for communication

- Create situations where children need to request, comment, question, share ideas, problem-solve, and make choices.
- Use motivating activities linked to children's interests.
- Encourage interaction with both adults and peers across a range of contexts.

Recognise and value all forms of communication

- Respond positively to speech, gestures, facial expressions, signing, symbols, communication aids, and other methods of communication.
- Ensure all communication attempts are acknowledged and valued.
- Adapt communication approaches to meet individual needs and preferences.

Support social interaction and relationship building

- Provide structured and unstructured opportunities for children to interact with others.
- Encourage collaborative activities, group discussions, role-play, and cooperative games.
- Promote inclusion and respect for different communication styles.

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3.1 Communication and interaction

Make communication resources easily accessible

- Ensure communication aids, visual supports, writing materials, and technology are readily available when needed.
- Organise resources so children can independently access tools that support their communication.

Build confidence through positive reinforcement

- Acknowledge and celebrate communication attempts and successes.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as:
  "You shared your idea clearly."
  "You asked a great question."
  "You found a way to let others know what you needed."
- Positive reinforcement encourages children to communicate more frequently and confidently.

Promote choice and self-expression

- Offer regular opportunities for children to express preferences, opinions, feelings, and ideas.
- Use visual choice boards, discussion opportunities, and open-ended questions.
- Ensure children's views are listened to and acted upon where appropriate.

Ensure consistency across adults and settings

- Use consistent language, visuals, expectations, and communication approaches.
- Share successful strategies between home, school, and other settings.
- Consistency helps children generalise communication skills and build confidence across different environments.

These environmental strategies support the development of **communication, language, social interaction, confidence, self-advocacy, participation, and emotional wellbeing**, creating an inclusive environment where all children can communicate successfully and feel valued.

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3.2 **Engage and interact**

Be happy to see an adult they know

Build predictability and trust

- Ensure the adult is consistent, calm, and predictable in their responses.
- Use regular routines and clear expectations so the child feels safe and knows what to expect from the adult.
- Model responses to support language development.

Use positive, clear communication

- Give instructions in simple, clear language and check understanding.
- Pair verbal instructions with supportive non-verbal cues, gestures, visual prompts, objects of reference.

Strengthen the relationship through positive interactions

- Provide regular positive attention that is not solely task or behaviour focused. e.g. brief check-ins, shared interests.
- Acknowledge effort and positive responses immediately using specific praise.

Offer supported choices

- Give the child limited choices guided by the adult, e.g. **"Would you like to wear the red t-shirt or blue t-shirt?"** This helps the child feel respected and increases cooperation while still following adult direction.

Model and practice expected responses

- Adults consistently model polite listening, respectful language, and calm responses.
- Use role play or gentle rehearsal to practise responding appropriately to adult requests or feedback.

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3.2 **Engage and interact**

Try to get the attention of an adult they know

Teach and model appropriate attention-getting phrases

- Encourage the child to use simple, respectful phrases such as **“Excuse me,” “Can you help me please?” or “I’d like to tell you something.”**
- If non-speaking, model an alternative such as an agreed sign or signal.
- Model and practise these approaches regularly so the child can use them confidently.

Develop awareness of when an adult is available

- Support the child to recognise when an adult is busy and when it may be an appropriate time to approach.
- Use affirming language such as **“You noticed that I was talking and waited for a pause. That helped me listen to you.”**

Use visual or agreed communication signals

- Introduce strategies such as raising a hand, showing a help card, or using an agreed gesture to indicate that the child would like attention. This provides an accessible way for the child to communicate their needs.

Create opportunities for successful practice

- Build attention-seeking opportunities into everyday activities and positively reinforce attempts to initiate interaction with familiar adults, e.g. encourage the child to ask an adult for help, share information, or make a request.

Celebrate and reinforce communication attempts

- Respond positively whenever the child attempts to gain attention appropriately, regardless of whether they are fully successful.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **“You used my name to get my attention. That was a great way to let me know you wanted to talk.”**

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3.2 Engage and interact

Look at the same thing as an adult

Use pointing and descriptive language

- Point to the object, person, or activity you would like the child to notice and use simple language, e.g. **"Look at the dog running across the grass."** This provides both visual and verbal cues to support shared focus.

Position yourself alongside the child

- Sit or stand next to the child so they can easily follow your gaze and gestures. This makes it easier for the child to identify what you are looking at and promotes a shared experience.

Follow the child's interests first

- Notice what the child is already looking at and join their focus before gradually directing attention to something new, e.g. **"You're looking at the bubbles. I can see them too. Look at how high that bubble is floating!"**

Use encouraging comments and positive reinforcement

- Acknowledge the child's efforts with strengths-based feedback such as, **"You found what I was looking at,"** or **"We are both looking at the same picture now."** This helps build confidence and engagement.

Create opportunities for shared discovery

- Use books, toys, outdoor activities, or sensory experiences that naturally encourage looking at the same thing together.
- Comment on what you both see, hear, or notice to maintain shared attention and interaction.

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3.2 **Engage and interact**

Take turns with an adult

Model and narrate turn-taking

- Use simple language to demonstrate turns during play and everyday activities, e.g. **"It's my turn to roll the ball. Now it's your turn."** This helps the child understand the structure and predictability of turn-taking interactions.

Use motivating activities

- Choose activities the child enjoys, such as games, puzzles, bubbles, or building toys. When children are engaged and interested, they are more likely to participate in shared turn-taking experiences.

Provide visual and verbal cues

- Use gestures, visual supports, or simple phrases such as **"My turn,"** and **"Your turn."** These cues help the child recognise when a turn begins and ends.

Allow processing and waiting time

- Give the child sufficient time to respond and take their turn without rushing them.
- Use encouraging language such as **"I'm waiting for your turn,"** to support successful participation.

Celebrate all attempts at turn-taking

- Acknowledge and reinforce the child's efforts with specific praise, **"You waited for my turn and then took your turn. That helped us play together."** This builds confidence, cooperation, and positive social interaction.

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3.2 Engage and interact

Engage with an unknown person

Begin with trusted adult support

- Introduce new people while a familiar adult is present to provide reassurance and encouragement.
- Use affirming language such as **"This is Sam. Sam is looking forward to meeting you and hearing about what you enjoy."**

Prepare the child for new interactions

- Use photos, social stories, visual supports, or discussions to help the child know who they will meet and what to expect. This can reduce uncertainty and help the child feel more confident and included.

Encourage engagement through shared interests

- Identify activities, toys, topics, or experiences the child enjoys and use these as a focus for interaction. Shared interests can provide a natural and meaningful way to connect with a new person.

Model and practise simple social communication skills

- Support the child to use greetings, ask questions, make comments, or share information at their own pace, e.g. **"You could say hello," or "You could tell them about your favourite game if you'd like to."**

Recognise and celebrate all communication attempts

- Acknowledge the child's efforts, whether they engage through words, gestures, eye contact, signing, communication aids, or shared activities.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You showed them your drawing. That was a great way to share something important to you."**

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3.3 **Make requests**

Ask for something they want

Model clear and purposeful requests

- Demonstrate how to ask for desired items, activities, or support using language appropriate to the child's communication level, e.g. **"Can I have the ball, please?" or "I would like a turn."**
- Consistent modelling helps the child learn effective ways to communicate their wants and needs.

Create motivating opportunities to request

- Place favourite toys, snacks, or activities within sight but out of immediate reach, encouraging the child to communicate their request.
- Ensure the child experiences success when they attempt to ask for something.

Respond positively to all communication attempts

- Recognise requests made through speech, gestures, signs, symbols, communication aids, or other forms of communication.
- Use affirming feedback such as **"You let me know what you wanted. That was great communication."**

Offer choices to encourage decision-making

- Present two or more options and support the child to indicate their preference, e.g. **"Would you like the crayons or the paint?"** This helps the child understand that communicating their preferences can influence outcomes.

Expand and reinforce requests

- When the child makes a request, build on their communication by modelling the next step, e.g. if the child says **"Juice,"** respond with, **"Juice please,"** before providing it.
- This supports the development of more confident and detailed communication over time.

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3.3 **Make requests**

Say no to something

Model and teach appropriate ways to decline

- Demonstrate phrases such as **"No thank you," "I don't want that,"** or **"I'd like something different."** This helps the child learn that it is okay to express preferences and boundaries respectfully.

Give meaningful choices throughout the day

- Offer opportunities for the child to choose between activities, resources, or foods, e.g. **"Would you like to read a book or play a game?"**
- Regular choice-making helps children understand that their views and preferences are valued.

Respond positively when the child communicates refusal

- Acknowledge and respect appropriate expressions of **"no."** E.g. **"Thank you for telling me you don't want to do that right now."** This reinforces that communication is effective and worthwhile.

Support alternative ways to say "no"

- Recognise and encourage the child's preferred communication method, such as speech, signing, symbols, gestures, communication cards, or a communication device. This ensures all children can express consent, disagreement, and preferences in an accessible way.

Teach self-advocacy and boundary-setting

- Use role-play and everyday situations to practise expressing dislikes, refusals, and personal boundaries, e.g. **"You can say 'no thank you' if you don't want a hug and would prefer to wave instead."**
- This helps children develop confidence, autonomy, and personal safety skills.

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3.3 **Make requests**

Ask to keep going or stop

Model the language of choice and control

- Use and demonstrate phrases such as **"Can I keep going?"**, **"I'd like to do some more."**, **"Can I stop now?"** or **"I'd like a break."** This helps the child learn that they can communicate their preferences and needs clearly.

Provide regular opportunities to make decisions

- During activities, pause and ask questions such as **"Would you like to keep going or are you ready to stop?"** This reinforces that the child's views are valued and encourages active participation.

Use visual supports and communication aids

- Offer symbols, choice cards, signs, gestures, or communication devices that allow the child to indicate **"more"**, **"finished"**, **"stop"**, or **"continue"**. This ensures the child can communicate effectively using their preferred method.

Respond consistently to the child's communication

- When the child indicates they want to continue or stop, acknowledge and act on their message where possible, e.g. **"You told me you'd like to do more. Let's keep going,"** or **"You've let me know you need to stop. Thank you for telling me."** This helps the child understand that their communication has meaning and impact.

Celebrate self-advocacy

- Provide specific praise when the child communicates their wishes, e.g. **"You told me you needed a break. That was a great way to let me know what you needed."** or **"You asked for more time with the activity. That's excellent communication."** This builds confidence and encourages future self-advocacy.

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3.3 **Make requests**

Ask for help

1. Model and teach help-seeking language

- Regularly demonstrate phrases such as **"Can you help me, please?", "I need some help," or "Can you show me how to do this?"**
- Use language that empowers the child to recognise that asking for help is a positive and important skill.

2. Create natural opportunities to ask for help

- Plan activities where the child may need support, such as opening a container, reaching a resource, or completing a challenging task.
- Allow the child time to recognise the need for assistance and communicate it before stepping in.

3. Support all forms of communication

- Encourage the child to ask for help using their preferred communication method, including speech, signs, gestures, symbols, visual supports, or communication devices.
- Recognise and respond positively to all attempts to seek assistance.

4. Acknowledge and reinforce help-seeking

- Provide specific praise when the child asks for help, e.g. **"You recognised that you needed support and asked for help. That was great problem-solving."** This builds confidence and encourages future self-advocacy.

5. Use a graduated support approach

- Encourage the child to try independently first, while knowing help is available if needed, e.g. **"Have a go, and if it feels tricky, you can ask me for help."** This promotes both independence and confidence in seeking support when required.

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3.3 **Make requests**

Ask a question

Model curiosity and question-asking

- Regularly demonstrate asking questions during everyday activities, e.g. **“I wonder where that bird is going?”** or **“Can you tell me what happens next?”** This helps the child see that asking questions is a positive way to learn, understand, and connect with others.

Create opportunities for the child to ask questions

- Pause during activities, stories, or conversations and encourage the child to seek information.
- Use prompts such as **“What would you like to find out?”** or **“Is there anything you’d like to ask?”** This supports active participation and communication.

Provide question starters and visual supports

- Use question words such as who, what, where, when, why, and how alongside visual prompts or communication aids. These supports can help the child develop confidence in forming and asking questions.

Respond positively to all question attempts

- Acknowledge and value every effort to ask a question, regardless of how it is communicated, e.g. **“That’s a great question,”** or **“Thank you for asking. Let’s find out together.”** This reinforces that the child’s voice and curiosity are important.

Use shared interests to encourage questioning

- Build conversations around topics, activities, or objects the child enjoys, e.g. **“What would you like to know about the dinosaurs?”** Children are often more motivated to ask questions when they are interested and engaged.

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3.4 Communicate information/comment on events

Answer a question

Give the child time to process and respond

- After asking a question, allow sufficient thinking time before repeating or rephrasing it. This supports children who need longer to process information and demonstrates that their contribution is valued, e.g. **"Take your time. I'd love to hear what you think."**

Use questions that match the child's level of understanding

- Begin with simple, familiar questions and gradually increase complexity as confidence develops. This helps the child experience success and builds their willingness to participate in conversations.

Support responses through different communication methods

- Encourage the child to answer using speech, gestures, signs, pictures, symbols, communication aids, or by pointing.
- Recognise all forms of communication as meaningful and valid, e.g. **"You showed me the answer by pointing. Thank you for letting me know."**

Model and expand answers

- If the child gives a short response, gently build on it, e.g.
  – Adult: **"What is your favourite fruit?"**
  – Child: **"Apple."**
  – Adult: **"Apple is your favourite fruit. You like red apples."**
- This helps develop language and confidence without placing pressure on the child.

Celebrate all attempts to answer

- Acknowledge effort rather than focusing only on whether the answer is correct.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"Thank you for answering my question," "You thought carefully about that,"** or **"I like how you shared your idea."** This encourages participation and builds confidence in communicating with others.

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3.4 Communicate information/comment on events

Talk about the past or future

Use visual supports to represent time

- Use photographs, schedules, calendars, timelines, or visual symbols to help the child understand concepts such as yesterday, today, tomorrow, before, and later.
- Visual supports can make abstract ideas about time more meaningful and accessible.

Talk about shared experiences

- Regularly discuss events that have happened together, e.g. **"We went to the park this morning. What did you enjoy doing there?"**
- Shared experiences provide a concrete starting point for talking about the past.

Prepare for upcoming events

- Encourage conversations about future activities and routines, e.g. **"Tomorrow we're going swimming. What do you think you'll do first?"** This helps the child develop anticipation, planning, and language related to future events.

Use open-ended questions and prompts

- Support the child to expand their ideas with prompts such as **"What happened next?" "What was your favourite part?" or "What would you like to do when we get there?"**
- Gentle prompting can help develop sequencing, recall, and prediction skills.

Model and extend language about time

- Use time-related vocabulary naturally during conversations, e.g. **"Yesterday we baked cakes." "Now we're reading a story." "Later we'll go outside."**
- When the child contributes, build on their communication by modelling longer phrases and sentences.

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3.4 Communicate information/comment on events

Share their thoughts and feelings

Model emotional language

- Regularly talk about your own thoughts and feelings using simple, clear language, e.g. **"I feel happy because we're playing together,"** or **"I think that's a great idea."** This helps the child learn vocabulary to express their own experiences and emotions.

Create a safe and accepting environment

- Show genuine interest in what the child has to say and respond without judgement.
- Use affirming statements such as **"Thank you for sharing that with me,"** or **"Your feelings are important."** This helps the child feel valued, listened to, and confident in expressing themselves.

Use visual and communication supports

- Provide emotion cards, feelings scales, photographs, symbols, communication boards, or communication devices. These tools can help children identify and communicate their thoughts and feelings in ways that are meaningful and accessible to them.

Encourage discussion through stories, play, and everyday experiences

- Use books, role-play, small-world play, or real-life situations to explore emotions and opinions.
- Ask open-ended questions such as **"How do you think they felt?" "What do you think about that?" "How would you feel in that situation?"** This supports emotional understanding and self-expression.

Acknowledge and build on communication attempts

- Respond positively whenever the child shares an idea, opinion, or feeling, regardless of how it is communicated, e.g. **"You told me you were worried. That was really helpful,"** or **"I like how you shared your thoughts with me."** This reinforces that the child's voice matters and encourages future communication.

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3.4 Communicate information/comment on events

Tell someone how to do something

Model giving instructions during everyday activities

- Demonstrate simple instructions while completing familiar tasks, e.g. **"First, put the book on the shelf. Next, close the cupboard."** This helps the child learn the language and structure needed to explain a process to others.

Use practical, motivating activities

- Encourage the child to explain how to play a game, build a model, complete a puzzle, or make a snack.
- Using activities the child enjoys can increase confidence and engagement in giving instructions.

Provide visual supports and sequencing tools

- Use picture cards, photographs, checklists, or visual timetables to help the child organise their ideas.
- Visual supports can help children understand and communicate the order of steps more effectively.

Encourage turn-taking roles as the "teacher"

- Create opportunities for the child to take the lead and explain a task to an adult or peer.
- Use affirming language such as **"Can you show me how to do that?"** or **"I'**d like to learn from you." This promotes confidence, communication, and self-esteem.

Acknowledge and expand the child's explanations

- Celebrate the child's attempts to give instructions and gently model additional language where appropriate, e.g.
  – Child: **"Put it there."**
  – Adult: **"Yes, first put the block on top of the tower."**
- This supports the development of clearer, more detailed communication.

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3.4 Communicate information/comment on events

Talk about what happened

Use shared experiences as a starting point

- Talk about events the child has recently experienced, such as a trip, activity, or game.
- Use prompts such as, **"Tell me about what we did at the park today."**
- Shared experiences provide a meaningful and familiar context for conversation.

Support recall with visual aids

- Use photographs, drawings, objects, or visual timelines to help the child remember and sequence events.
- Visual supports can make it easier for the child to organise their thoughts and communicate what happened.

Ask open-ended questions

- Encourage the child to give more detailed information by asking questions such as **"What happened first?" "What did you do next?" "What was your favourite part?"**
- These prompts support the development of narrative and sequencing skills.

Model and extend language

- When the child shares information, build on their response by adding detail and time-related language, e.g.
  – Child: **"Went swimming."**
  – Adult: **"You went swimming this morning and practised kicking your legs."**
- This helps develop vocabulary and sentence structure.

Value and celebrate all communication attempts

- Acknowledge the child's efforts to share information, whether through speech, signs, symbols, gestures, drawings, or communication aids.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as: **"You told me all about your day." "I enjoyed hearing what happened." "You remembered lots of important details."**

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3.4 Communicate information/comment on events

Talk about or point out something

Follow the child's interests and comment on what they notice

- Join in with activities or objects that already interest the child and model talking about them, e.g. **"I can see the big red bus. What can you see?"** This encourages the child to share their observations and experiences with others.

Create opportunities for shared attention

- Use books, toys, pictures, or objects that naturally encourage the child to notice and point out things.
- Pause and wait to give the child an opportunity to indicate, point to, or comment on something that has caught their attention.

Model descriptive language

- Regularly describe things you can see, hear, or notice. E.g.: **"The bird is sitting on the fence,"** or **"That flower is bright yellow."** This provides the child with vocabulary they can use to share their own observations.

Respond positively to all communication attempts

- Acknowledge when the child points, looks towards, signs about, or talks about something, e.g. **"You noticed the aeroplane. Thank you for showing me,"** or **"You pointed to the dog. I can see it too."** This reinforces that sharing information is meaningful and valued.

Use open-ended prompts and questions

- Encourage the child to communicate what they have noticed by using prompts such as: **"What can you see?" "What have you found?" "Can you show me what you're looking at?"**
- These prompts support the child to initiate communication and share their ideas with others.

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3.4 Communicate information/comment on events

Explain rules clearly

Model clear and simple explanations

- Demonstrate how to explain rules using straightforward language and a logical sequence, e.g. **"The rule is that everyone waits for their turn before rolling the dice."** This helps the child learn how to communicate information in a way that others can understand.

Use familiar games and activities

- Encourage the child to explain the rules of a game, classroom activity, or favourite hobby to another person.
- Familiar activities reduce cognitive demand and allow the child to focus on communicating the rules.

Support sequencing and organisation

- Use visual prompts, pictures, or checklists to help the child explain rules step by step, e.g. **"First tell us what we need to do, then explain what happens if someone forgets the rule."** This helps the child organise their thoughts and communicate more clearly.

Encourage the child to take a leadership role

- Provide opportunities for the child to be the "expert" or "leader" who explains rules to peers or adults.
- Use affirming language such as **"Can you teach us how this game works?"** This builds confidence and develops communication skills.

Acknowledge and build on explanations

- Recognise the child's efforts and gently support them to add detail where needed, e.g.
  – Child: **"You have to wait."**
  – Adult: **"Yes, everyone waits for their turn so the game is fair."**
- This helps the child develop clearer and more detailed explanations over time.

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3.4 Communicate information/comment on events

Use jokes, sayings or slang

Model humour and everyday expressions in context

- Use simple jokes, idioms, sayings, and age-appropriate slang naturally during conversations, e.g. **"It's raining cats and dogs. That means it's raining very heavily!"** Explaining meanings helps the child understand that some phrases do not mean exactly what the words say.

Explore jokes and sayings through stories and media

- Read books, watch clips, or share cartoons that include humour, jokes, or common expressions.
- Pause to discuss why something is funny or what a saying means. This helps develop social understanding and flexible thinking.

Teach the meaning behind figurative language

- Explicitly explain common sayings, slang words, and jokes that the child may hear from others, e.g. "'Cool' can mean something is good or interesting, not just cold." **This supports the child**'s understanding of language used in different social situations.

Encourage playful language in a supportive environment

- Create opportunities for the child to tell jokes, share funny observations, or use new expressions during play and conversation.
- Respond positively and show interest in their attempts. This helps build confidence and communication skills.

Discuss when and where different language is appropriate

- Support the child to recognise that jokes, slang, and sayings may be used differently depending on the audience and situation, e.g. **"That joke might be great with friends, but we might choose different words when talking to a teacher."** This develops social communication skills and understanding of different contexts.

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3.4 Communicate information/comment on events

Use language to problem solve

Model thinking aloud or using communication tools

- Verbally explain your thought process when solving everyday problems, e.g. **"The glue has run out. I need to think about what I can use instead. Maybe I could use sticky tape."** This helps the child learn the language and steps involved in problem solving.
- Use picture cards, photographs, checklists, or visual timetables to help the child organise their ideas. Visual supports can help children understand and communicate the order of steps more effectively.

Ask open-ended problem-solving questions

- Encourage the child to think of solutions by asking questions such as **"What could we do?" "How can we fix this?" "What might happen if we try that?"**
- These prompts support the child to use language to explore ideas and make decisions.

Use real-life problem-solving opportunities

- Support the child to talk through challenges during play, learning, and daily routines, e.g. **"The tower keeps falling down. What do you think we could do to make it stronger?"**
- Meaningful situations help children see the value of using language to solve problems.

Encourage sharing and evaluating ideas

- Create opportunities for the child to suggest solutions and discuss which one might work best. Use affirming language such as **"That's an interesting idea. Let's think about whether it would solve the problem."** This develops reasoning, confidence, and flexible thinking.

Recognise and celebrate problem-solving communication

- Acknowledge when the child uses language to identify a problem, suggest a solution, ask for help, or evaluate an outcome, e.g. **"You explained the problem clearly." "You thought of a solution and told me your idea." "You used your words/ communication board to work out what to do next."** This reinforces the child's confidence in using language as a tool for problem solving.

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3.4 Communicate information/comment on events

Explain my choices

Model explaining choices in everyday situations

- Regularly explain your own decisions and encourage the child to hear the reasoning behind them, e.g. **"I chose the umbrella because it looks like it might rain."** This helps the child understand that choices can be linked to thoughts, preferences, and reasons.

Offer meaningful choices and ask "why?"

- Provide opportunities for the child to make decisions throughout the day, e.g. **"Would you like to use the paints or the crayons? What made you choose that?"** This encourages the child to reflect on and communicate their preferences.

Use visual supports and sentence starters

- Provide prompts such as: **"I chose ___ because..." "I like ___ because..." "I decided to ___ because..."**
- These supports can help children organise their thinking and express their reasoning more confidently.

Value all explanations and build on them

- Acknowledge the child's response and gently encourage further detail, e.g.
  – Child: **"I wanted the blue one."**
  – Adult: **"You chose the blue one because it's your favourite colour."**
- This helps develop language skills and confidence in explaining decisions.

Use stories, play, and problem-solving activities

- Discuss characters' choices in books or ask the child to explain decisions made during play. E.g.: **"Why do you think the character chose to help their friend?"** or **"Why did you decide to build your tower that way?"** These activities support reasoning, perspective-taking, and communication.

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3.5 **Listen and know about language**

React to sounds

Create opportunities to notice sounds in the environment

- Draw the child's attention to everyday sounds such as birds singing, a doorbell ringing, running water, or a vehicle passing by. Use comments such as **"I heard a dog barking. Can you hear it too?"** This helps the child become more aware of sounds around them.

Pair sounds with meaningful experiences

- Link sounds to enjoyable activities, objects, or routines, e.g. **"The music has started. It's time for dancing,"** or **"The timer is ringing, which means snack time."** This helps the child understand that sounds can provide important information.

Use games that encourage listening

- Play simple listening games such as sound matching, musical statues, sound hunts, or identifying environmental noises.
- These activities can make listening engaging and motivating while developing auditory awareness.

Respond positively when the child notices or reacts to sounds

- Acknowledge any response, such as looking towards a sound, pointing, smiling, covering ears, vocalising, or commenting, e.g. **"You turned to look when you heard the bell. You noticed that sound."** This reinforces the child's awareness and communication.

Respect individual sensory preferences and needs

- Some children may enjoy sounds, while others may find certain sounds overwhelming.
- Introduce new sounds gradually and provide choices, reassurance, or sensory supports when needed.
- Use affirming language such as **"That sound feels a bit loud for you. Let's find a way to make you more comfortable."**

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3.5 **Listen and know about language**

Know simple spoken words

Use simple, consistent language throughout the day

- Repeatedly use key words during everyday routines, play, and interactions, e.g. **“Cup,” “coat,” “ball,”** and **“shoes.”**
- Hearing words consistently in meaningful contexts helps the child learn and understand their meanings.

Pair spoken words with objects, actions, and gestures

- Say the word while showing the object, carrying out the action, or using a gesture, e.g. **“Drink”** while offering a drink or **“Wave”** while waving. This helps the child make connections between words and their meaning.

Follow the child’s interests

- Introduce and repeat words related to activities, toys, or topics the child enjoys.
- Children are often more motivated to learn words that are meaningful and relevant to them.

Use books, songs, and rhymes

- Share stories and songs that contain repetitive and familiar vocabulary.
- Pause to label pictures and emphasise key words.
- Repetition supports understanding and retention of new vocabulary.

Respond positively when the child shows understanding

- Acknowledge when the child responds to a spoken word by looking, pointing, finding an object, completing an action, or using a communication method, e.g. **“You gave me the ball when I asked for it. You understood that word.”** This reinforces learning and builds confidence.

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3.5 **Listen and know about language**

Understand simple sentences

Use clear, simple language

- Speak in short sentences that contain key information, e.g. **“Put your coat on,” or “The ball is under the chair.”**
- Using simple and consistent language helps the child focus on the meaning of what is being said.

Support spoken language with visual cues

- Use gestures, objects, pictures, signs, or demonstrations alongside spoken sentences, e.g. point to the coat while saying, **“Get your coat.”** This helps the child connect words with actions and meanings.

Embed language within everyday routines

- Use the same simple sentences during familiar activities such as snack time, getting ready, or tidying up.
- Repetition within meaningful contexts helps strengthen understanding.

Check understanding through action

- Encourage the child to respond to simple instructions rather than asking, **“Do you understand?” E.g. “Give me the book,” or “Sit on the mat.”**
- Observing the child’s response provides information about their understanding and allows for appropriate support.

Acknowledge and celebrate successful understanding

- Provide positive feedback when the child responds accurately to a simple sentence, e.g. **“You put the book away when I asked. You understood my instruction.” “You listened carefully and knew exactly what to do.”** This builds confidence and encourages engagement with spoken language.

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3.5 Listen and know about language

Follow instructions

Use clear, concise instructions

- Give one instruction at a time using simple language, e.g. **"Put your book on the table"** rather than giving multiple instructions together. This helps the child focus on the key information and reduces cognitive demand.

Support instructions with visual cues

- Use gestures, pictures, symbols, objects, or demonstrations alongside spoken instructions, e.g. point to the chair while saying, **"Sit on the chair."**
- Visual supports can make instructions more accessible and easier to understand.

Check understanding in a supportive way

- Encourage the child to show or tell you what they need to do next, e.g. **"Can you tell me what you're going to do first?"** This helps identify any misunderstandings and supports successful participation.

Build skills gradually

- Start with simple one-step instructions and gradually introduce two-step or more complex instructions as the child's confidence develops, e.g. one-step: **"Pick up the pencil."** Two-step: **"Pick up the pencil and put it in the pot."**
- This allows the child to experience success while developing their listening and memory skills.

Recognise and praise success

- Acknowledge when the child follows an instruction, focusing on their effort and achievement, e.g. **"You listened carefully and put your coat away." "You followed that instruction independently. Well done."** Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and motivation.

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3.5 **Listen and know about language**

Understand questions

Use clear and simple questions

- Start with straightforward questions that relate to familiar people, objects, and activities, e.g. **"Where is your coat?"** or **"Who is sitting next to you?"**
- Keeping questions short and clear helps the child focus on the key information being asked.

Use visual and contextual supports

- Support questions with pictures, objects, gestures, or by referring to things in the child's immediate environment, e.g. hold up two snacks and ask, **"Which one would you like?"**
- Visual cues can help the child understand what information is being requested.

Teach question words explicitly

- Introduce and practise common question words such as who, what, where, when, and how.
- Use examples and visual prompts to help the child understand the different meanings of each question type, e.g. **"'Where' questions ask about a place."**

Give processing time and repeat if needed

- Allow the child enough time to think about the question before expecting a response.
- If needed, repeat or simplify the question without changing its meaning.
- Use supportive language such as **"Take your time. Let's think about it together."**

Acknowledge and reinforce understanding

- Recognise the child's efforts when they show understanding by answering, pointing, choosing, or taking action, e.g. **"You found the book when I asked where it was." "You listened carefully and answered my question."** Positive feedback builds confidence and encourages future participation.

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3.5 Listen and know about language

Understand important information

Use clear, concise language

- Present important information using simple words and short sentences.
- Focus on the key message and avoid unnecessary details, e.g. **"We are leaving in five minutes. Please put your toys away."** This helps the child identify and understand the most important information.

Support information with visual aids

- Use photographs, symbols, visual timetables, written reminders, or objects to reinforce spoken messages.
- Visual supports can help the child process, remember, and refer to important information when needed.

Highlight and repeat key messages

- Emphasise important words and repeat essential information in a consistent way, e.g. **"Remember, tomorrow is swimming day. Tomorrow we will go swimming."** Repetition helps strengthen understanding and memory.

Check understanding in an inclusive way

- Encourage the child to explain, show, or demonstrate what they have understood, e.g. **"Can you tell me what we are doing next?"** or **"Show me what you need to take home."** This provides an opportunity to clarify information and ensure understanding.

Link information to familiar experiences and routines

- Connect new information to things the child already knows, e.g. **"After lunch, we're going to the library, just like we did last week."** Making connections to familiar experiences can help information feel more meaningful and easier to understand.

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3.5 **Listen and know about language**

Understand jokes and sayings

Explain the meaning behind jokes and sayings

- When a joke, idiom, or saying arises, take time to explain what it means, e.g. **"It's raining cats and dogs"** doesn't mean animals are falling from the sky. It means it's raining very heavily. This helps the child learn that some language has a different meaning from the actual words used.

Use visual supports and real-life examples

- Pair jokes and sayings with pictures, drawings, or acted-out scenarios.
- Comparing the literal and intended meanings can help the child understand abstract language more easily, e.g. show a picture of heavy rain alongside the saying **"It's raining cats and dogs."**

Explore humour through stories and games

- Read books, share comics, or play games that include simple jokes and funny language.
- Discuss why something is funny and what makes the joke work. This helps develop understanding of humour in a relaxed and enjoyable way.

Encourage discussion about different meanings

- Ask questions such as: **"What do you think that saying means?" "Do the words mean exactly what they say?"**
- Supporting the child to think about language flexibly can strengthen their understanding of figurative language.

Celebrate attempts to understand and use humour

- Acknowledge when the child recognises a joke, explains a saying, or tries to use humorous language.
- Use affirming feedback such as **"You worked out what that saying meant." "You understood the joke and shared a laugh with us." "That was a great guess about what the phrase meant."**
- Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages further learning.

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3.5 Listen and know about language

Understand everyday slang

Teach slang explicitly in context

- Introduce common slang words and phrases during everyday conversations and explain what they mean, e.g. **"'Cool' can mean something is good or interesting, not just cold."**
- Learning slang within real situations helps the child understand how and when it is used.

Compare literal and intended meanings

- Discuss how some slang words have a different meaning from their original definition, e.g. **"'Hang on' usually means wait for a moment, not physically hold onto something."** This supports flexible thinking and understanding of non-literal language.

Use visual supports and examples

- Create picture cards, social stories, or slang dictionaries with examples of commonly used phrases.
- Visual supports can make abstract language more concrete and accessible.

Practise through role-play and conversation

- Use games, role-play, and real-life scenarios to explore how slang might be used with friends, family, and other familiar people, e.g. practising responses to phrases such as **"No worries," "That's awesome,"** or **"Give me a shout."** This helps build confidence and social understanding.

Celebrate understanding and appropriate use

- Acknowledge when the child recognises or correctly interprets a slang word or phrase.
- Use affirming feedback such as **"You knew what 'chill out' meant. Great listening." "You worked out that 'piece of cake' meant something was easy." "You understood what your friend meant and joined the conversation."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages further development of social communication skills.

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3.5 Listen and know about language

Understand that words can have more than one meaning

Use everyday examples of words with multiple meanings

- Introduce common words that have different meanings depending on the context, e.g. **"Bat"** can mean an animal or a piece of sports equipment. **"Watch"** can mean a timepiece or the action of looking at something.
- Discussing these examples helps the child understand that the meaning of a word can change.

Use pictures and visual supports

- Show images representing the different meanings of the same word, e.g. display a picture of a walking boot and a car boot.
- Visual comparisons help make abstract language concepts more concrete and easier to understand.

Explore words through stories and conversations

- When reading books or talking together, pause to discuss words that have more than one meaning.
- Use prompts such as **"What do you think this word means here?" "Could this word mean something different in another sentence?"** This helps the child use context to work out meaning.

Play language and guessing games

- Use matching activities, riddles, or sorting games involving multiple-meaning words, e.g. **"I have a bark, but I'm not a dog. What am I?"**
- Fun activities encourage curiosity and flexible thinking about language.

Model thinking aloud about context

- Demonstrate how you work out which meaning of a word is being used, e.g. **"The sentence says 'He sat on the bank and watched the ducks.' I think 'bank' means the side of a river, not a place where money is kept."** This helps the child learn to use clues from the surrounding words and situation to understand meaning.

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3.5 Listen and know about language

Understand and follow longer, unfamiliar instructions

Break instructions into manageable parts

- Present longer instructions in smaller chunks, gradually increasing complexity as the child's confidence develops, e.g. first: **"Pick up your coat,"** then: **"Pick up your coat and put it on your peg."** This helps the child develop the skills needed to understand and follow more complex directions over time.

Use visual supports alongside spoken instructions

- Provide pictures, symbols, checklists, visual schedules, or demonstrations to support understanding.
- Visual supports can help the child remember each step and reduce the demands on their working memory.

Teach the child to identify key information

- Support the child to listen for important words such as actions, objects, places, and sequence words like first, next, and then.
- Use prompts such as: **"What's the first thing you need to do?"** This helps the child focus on the essential parts of an unfamiliar instruction.

Encourage active processing of instructions

- Ask the child to repeat, explain, or show what they need to do before starting, e.g. **"Can you tell me what you'll do first?" "Show me the items you need."** This helps confirm understanding and strengthens recall.

Recognise effort and celebrate success

- Acknowledge when the child successfully follows all or part of a longer instruction.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You remembered all three parts of that instruction." "You listened carefully and worked out what to do." "You kept going even when the instruction was new."** Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages perseverance.

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3.6 **Greet others**

Reply when greeted or spoken to

Model greetings and responses consistently

- Regularly demonstrate simple greetings and responses during everyday interactions, e.g.
  – Adult: **“Hello, Sam.”**
  – Adult model: **“Hello!”**
- Consistent modelling helps the child learn what is expected during social exchanges.

Create frequent opportunities for practice

- Build greeting opportunities into daily routines, such as arriving at school, meeting familiar people, or joining activities.
- Repeated practice in meaningful situations helps the child develop confidence and familiarity with responding.

Support communication using the child’s preferred method

- Encourage the child to respond using speech, signs, gestures, symbols, communication cards, or a communication device.
- Recognise that greetings can be communicated in different ways and that all forms of communication are valued.

Give processing time and gentle prompts

- Allow the child time to respond after being greeted or spoken to. If needed, provide supportive prompts such as **“Mum said hello. Would you like to say hello back?” “You can wave if you prefer.”** This reduces pressure and supports successful participation.

Acknowledge and celebrate all responses

- Provide positive, specific feedback when the child responds, e.g. **“You said hello back. That was a friendly way to greet someone.” “You waved when your teacher spoke to you. That helped them know you heard them.”**
- Celebrating successful interactions helps build confidence and social communication skills.

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3.6 **Greet others**

Say hello to others

Model greetings throughout the day

- Consistently demonstrate how to greet people in different situations, e.g. **"Hello, Mrs Jones," or "Good morning, Sam."**
- Regular modelling helps the child learn appropriate ways to initiate social interactions.

Create natural opportunities to practise greetings

- Encourage the child to greet familiar adults, family members, peers, and visitors during daily routines, e.g. saying hello when arriving at school or meeting someone in the community.
- Frequent practice helps build confidence and familiarity.

Use the child's preferred communication method

- Support the child to say hello through speech, signing, waving, pointing to a greeting symbol, using a communication device, or another preferred method. This ensures the child can participate successfully and authentically in social interactions.

Use role-play and social stories

- Practise greeting others through games, role-play activities, and social stories.
- Discuss who we might say hello to, what greetings sound like, and how people may respond. This helps the child understand the purpose and social value of greetings.

Recognise and celebrate greeting attempts

- Acknowledge all efforts to greet others, regardless of how the child communicates.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You said hello when you arrived. That was very friendly." "You waved to your friend. That helped them know you were pleased to see them."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the child to continue initiating social interactions.

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3.7 Conversations

Get someone's attention

Teach and model appropriate attention-getting phrases

- Demonstrate simple phrases such as **"Excuse me." "Can I talk to you?" "I need some help, please."**
- Regular modelling helps the child learn effective and respectful ways to gain another person's attention.

Encourage the child to use the person's name

- Teach the child to use a familiar person's name when they want to communicate, e.g. **"Sarah, can you help me?"**
- Using a name can help the child gain attention more successfully and supports social communication skills.

Support the child to move into the person's line of sight

- Encourage the child to position themselves where they can be seen before trying to communicate.
- Explain that people are more likely to notice them when they are visible and facing the other person. This is particularly helpful in busy environments.

Introduce alternative ways to gain attention

- Support the child to use their preferred communication method, such as raising a hand, waving, showing a help card, using a gesture, signing, or using a communication device. This promotes inclusive communication and ensures the child has accessible strategies available.

Acknowledge and reinforce successful attempts

- Respond positively whenever the child appropriately seeks someone's attention.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You said my name to get my attention. That worked really well." "You waited until I looked at you before speaking. That helped me listen." "You found a good way to let me know you needed something."**
- Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages future communication.

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3.7 Conversations

Start or lead a conversation

Model conversation starters

- Demonstrate simple ways to begin a conversation during everyday interactions, e.g. **“Hello, how are you?” “Can I tell you something?” “What are you playing?”**
- Modelling helps the child learn different ways to initiate communication with others.

Use the child’s interests as a motivation to communicate

- Encourage the child to talk about topics, activities, or objects they enjoy, e.g. **“You know a lot about dinosaurs. Would you like to tell me about your favourite one?”**
- Familiar topics can make it easier for the child to begin and maintain a conversation.

Teach and practise conversation skills through role-play

- Use role-play, social stories, or small-group activities to practise starting conversations and taking a lead in interactions. This provides a safe environment to develop confidence and communication skills.

Provide conversation prompts and visual supports

- Use prompt cards, photographs, topic boards, or sentence starters such as **“I’d like to talk about...” “Did you know...?” “Can I ask you something?”**
- These supports can help the child organise their thoughts and initiate interactions more independently.

Acknowledge and celebrate leadership in conversations

- Recognise when the child starts a conversation, introduces a topic, asks questions, or helps keep the conversation going.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **“You started that conversation confidently.” “You shared your ideas and helped the conversation continue.” “You showed great communication skills by introducing a new topic.”** Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages future participation.

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3.7 Conversations

Reply to another person

Model responsive communication

- Demonstrate how to respond when someone asks a question, makes a comment, or shares information, e.g.
  – Adult: **"I like your drawing."**
  – Adult model: **"Thank you." or "I enjoyed drawing it."**
- Modelling helps the child learn what a response can sound like in different situations.

Give the child time to process and respond

- Allow sufficient waiting time after someone speaks to the child and avoid answering for them too quickly.
- Use supportive language such as, **"Take your time. I'd like to hear what you think."** This helps the child develop confidence and participate more independently.

Use visual prompts and sentence starters

- Provide supports such as: **"Yes..." "No..." "I think..." "My favourite is..." "Thank you."**
- Visual prompts can help the child organise their thoughts and formulate a response.

Practise through structured conversations and play

- Use role-play, games, and everyday interactions to practise responding to comments, questions, and greetings.
- Begin with predictable exchanges and gradually introduce more varied conversations. This provides repeated opportunities for successful communication.

Acknowledge and celebrate all attempts to respond

- Recognise responses given through speech, gestures, signing, symbols, communication aids, or facial expressions.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You listened carefully and replied to my question." "You shared your idea when I spoke to you." "You found a way to let me know what you were thinking."** Positive reinforcement encourages the child to continue engaging in conversations.

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3.7 **Conversations**

Wait their turn

Use clear visual and verbal cues

- Help the child understand whose turn it is by using visual supports such as turn-taking cards, timers, objects, or symbols alongside phrases like **"My turn"**, **"Your turn"**, and **"Next turn."** This makes turn-taking more predictable and easier to understand.

Start with short waiting times

- Begin with activities that require only a brief wait and gradually increase the length of time the child is expected to wait.
- Supporting success in small steps helps build confidence and self-regulation skills.

Teach strategies for waiting

- Encourage the child to use simple waiting strategies such as holding a waiting card, counting, taking deep breaths, fidgeting with a sensory tool, or watching what others are doing.
- These strategies can help make waiting more manageable and positive.

Practise turn-taking through enjoyable activities

- Use games, conversations, group activities, and play experiences that naturally involve taking turns.
- Explain the process clearly and provide regular opportunities for the child to experience successful turn-taking with others.

Recognise and celebrate successful waiting

- Provide specific, strengths-based feedback when the child waits for their turn, e.g. **"You waited while Jack had his turn. That showed great patience." "You remembered to wait until it was your turn to speak." "You stayed calm while waiting. Well done."**
- Positive reinforcement helps develop confidence and encourages future success.

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3.7 **Conversations**

Keep a conversation going

Model back-and-forth conversations

- Demonstrate how conversations continue through listening, responding, and adding new information, e.g.
  – Adult: **"I went to the park today."**
  – Adult: **"Have you been to the park recently?"**
- This helps the child learn that conversations involve sharing and responding to ideas.

Teach and practise asking follow-up questions

- Encourage the child to use questions such as **"What happened next?" "Why did you like that?" "Can you tell me more?"**
- Asking questions helps the child show interest and keep the interaction going.

Use shared interests as conversation topics

- Start conversations around activities, toys, games, books, or topics the child enjoys.
- Familiar and motivating subjects can help the child feel more confident contributing to longer conversations.

Provide conversation prompts and visual supports

- Use prompt cards, conversation cue sheets, or visual reminders with ideas such as make a comment, ask a question, share an idea or take turns listening.
- These supports can help the child understand the different ways to maintain a conversation.

5. Recognise and celebrate successful conversational skills

- Give specific praise when the child contributes to an ongoing conversation, e.g. **"You asked a question to find out more." "You listened to what I said and added your own idea." "You helped keep our conversation going."**
- Positive feedback builds confidence and encourages future participation.

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3.7 Conversations

Understand a different point of view

Discuss thoughts and feelings during everyday situations

- Encourage the child to think about how other people might be feeling, thinking, or experiencing a situation. Use prompts such as **"How do you think Sam felt when that happened?" "Why do you think she chose to do that?"** This helps the child recognise that different people can have different perspectives.

Use stories, books, and videos to explore perspectives

- Discuss characters' thoughts, feelings, and motivations during shared reading or viewing activities.
- Ask questions such as: **"What does this character know that the other character doesn't?" "Would everyone feel the same way in this situation?"** This provides a safe way to explore different viewpoints.

Model perspective-taking in conversation

- Verbalise your own thinking about others' experiences, e.g. **"I think Jack might be upset because he was still using that toy." "Mia may see it differently because she likes something else."** This demonstrates how to consider another person's perspective.

Use role-play and real-life scenarios

- Act out situations where people have different wants, needs, or opinions.
- Support the child to consider each person's perspective and identify possible solutions. This helps develop empathy, social understanding, and flexible thinking.

Celebrate examples of perspective-taking

- Acknowledge when the child notices, considers, or responds to another person's viewpoint.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You thought about how your friend might feel. That was very thoughtful." "You listened to someone else's idea, even though it was different from yours." "You understood that people can think differently about the same situation."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the continued development of these important social skills.

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3.7 Conversations

Understand how to change their conversation depending on who they're talking to

Model different communication styles with different people

- Demonstrate how we may speak differently to friends, family members, teachers, visitors, or younger children, e.g. **"Hi mate!"** with a friend. **"Good morning, Mrs Jones"** with a teacher.
- This helps the child recognise that communication can vary depending on the person and situation.

Use role-play to practise different social situations

- Create opportunities for the child to practise conversations with different people in a safe and supportive environment, e.g. role-play talking to a friend, asking a teacher for help, or greeting a visitor. This helps the child develop flexibility and confidence in their communication.

Discuss the needs and expectations of different listeners

- Encourage the child to think about what the other person may already know and what information they might need. Use prompts such as **"Would your friend understand that?" "How might you explain that to someone who wasn't there?"** This supports perspective-taking and social understanding.

Use visual supports and social stories

- Create visual guides or social stories that show how conversations may differ across settings and relationships.
- Include examples of greetings, topics of conversation, levels of formality, and appropriate language for different situations. These supports can help make social expectations clearer and more predictable.

Recognise and celebrate successful communication adjustments

- Provide specific, strengths-based feedback when the child adapts their communication appropriately, e.g. **"You explained that really clearly to your younger friend." "You used polite language when speaking to the visitor." "You noticed that your teacher needed more information and explained it well."**
- Positive reinforcement helps the child understand the value of adapting their communication to different audiences.

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3.7 Conversations

Change communication style to fit the situation

Model different ways of communicating in different situations

- Demonstrate how communication may change depending on where you are and who you are talking to, e.g. use different language when speaking to a teacher, a friend, a younger child, or a shop assistant.
- Explain your thinking, e.g. **"I used polite words because I was asking someone I don't know for help."**

Use role-play to practise a range of situations

- Create opportunities for the child to rehearse conversations in different contexts, such as in school, at home, in the community, or with unfamiliar people.
- Discuss which words, tone of voice, and level of detail might be most appropriate in each situation. This helps build flexibility and confidence.

Explore social expectations through stories and discussions

- Use stories, videos, and real-life experiences to talk about how communication changes across situations. Ask questions such as **"Would you speak to your friend and your headteacher in the same way?" "What could you say in this situation?"** This develops social understanding and perspective-taking.

Provide visual prompts and frameworks

- Use visual supports to help the child think about who are they talking to? Where are they? What do they want to say? How can they say it?
- These prompts can support the child in adapting their communication more independently.

Recognise and celebrate successful adaptations

- Acknowledge when the child changes their communication appropriately to suit a situation.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You used clear, polite language when asking for help." "You explained that differently to your younger friend so they could understand." "You thought carefully about who you were talking to."**
- Positive reinforcement helps the child understand the benefits of adapting their communication.

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3.8 Communicating without words

Show that you have listened

Model active listening behaviours

- Demonstrate ways to show you are listening, such as looking towards the speaker, nodding, responding appropriately, or using gestures.
- Explain what you are doing, e.g. **"I'm nodding because I'm listening to what you're telling me."** This helps the child understand what listening can look like.

Teach simple response phrases

- Encourage the child to use phrases such as **"Okay." "I understand." "That's interesting." "You said..."**
- These responses help the child show that they have heard and understood what someone has said.

Encourage the child to repeat or summarise information

- After hearing a message, support the child to explain it in their own words, e.g. **"Can you tell me what you heard?"** or **"What do we need to do next?"** This helps develop understanding and demonstrates attentive listening.

Use turn-taking activities and conversations

- Engage the child in games, storytelling, and discussions that require listening before responding.
- Reinforce the idea that listening helps us know what to say or do next. This supports the development of reciprocal communication skills.

Recognise and praise listening behaviours

- Provide specific, strengths-based feedback when the child demonstrates that they have listened, e.g. **"You listened carefully and followed what I said." "You remembered the information I shared." "You responded to what your friend said, which showed you were listening."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the child to continue using these skills.

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3.8 Communicating without words

Understand body language/facial expressions

Model and name emotions during everyday interactions

- Use clear facial expressions and describe the associated emotion, e.g. **"I'm smiling because I feel happy." "I look surprised because I wasn't expecting that."** This helps the child make connections between facial expressions, body language, and feelings.

Use pictures, photographs, and videos

- Explore images of people showing different emotions and body language.
- Encourage the child to identify clues such as smiling, frowning, folded arms, or excited movements. Ask questions such as **"How do you think this person is feeling?" "What clues helped you work that out?"**

Practise through role-play and games

- Play games that involve acting out emotions and body language for others to guess, e.g. take turns pretending to be happy, worried, tired, excited, or confused. This provides a fun and engaging way to learn about non-verbal communication.

Talk about body language during stories and real-life situations

- Discuss how characters or people might be feeling based on their facial expressions and actions, e.g. **"The character is looking down and not talking much. How do you think they might be feeling?" "Your friend is smiling and laughing. What might that tell us?"** This helps develop social understanding and perspective-taking.

Recognise and celebrate the child's understanding

- Provide specific feedback when the child correctly interprets or responds to body language or facial expressions, e.g. **"You noticed that I looked confused and asked if I needed help." "You saw that your friend was upset and checked if they were okay." "You used the clues from their face to understand how they were feeling."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the child to continue developing these important social communication skills.

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4. Social understanding and relationships

Creating a good environment that promotes social understanding and positive relationships

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4. Social understanding and relationships

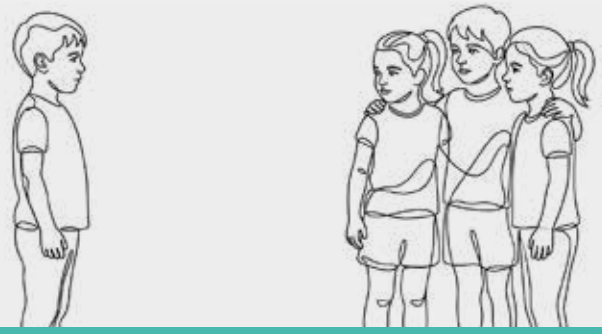
Creating an environment that promotes social understanding and positive relationships.

Within this section:

4.1 Social understanding and relationships



4.2 Be with others



4.3 Playing with others



4.4 Positive relationships with helpful adults



4.5 Positive relationships and friendships with other children



4.6 Manage in group activities



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4.1 Social understanding and relationships

Recommended strategies for an environment to support and develop social understanding and relationships:

Create a welcoming and inclusive environment

- Foster a culture where every child feels valued, respected, and included. Ensure children see themselves and others represented positively through books, displays, resources, and activities.
- Celebrate diversity, individual strengths, and different perspectives.
- Promote a sense of belonging and community.

Model positive social interactions

- Adults consistently demonstrate respectful communication, empathy, cooperation, and problem-solving.
- Model skills such as taking turns, listening to others, sharing ideas, respecting differences and resolving disagreements calmly.
- Children learn social behaviours through observation and experience.

Provide structured opportunities for social interaction

- Plan activities that encourage children to work, play, and learn together, e.g. partner work, team games, collaborative projects, circle time discussions and cooperative problem-solving activities.
- Structured experiences help children practise and develop relationship skills.

Support understanding of emotions and perspectives

- Use stories, role-play, social scenarios, and discussions to explore feelings, thoughts, and different viewpoints.
- Encourage children to consider **"How might that person feel?" "Why do you think they reacted that way?" "What could we do to help?"**
- This promotes empathy, emotional literacy, and social understanding.

Use visual supports to teach social concepts

- Provide visual reminders for turn-taking, sharing, personal space, friendship skills, group expectations and conflict resolution strategies.
- Visual supports can help children understand and remember social expectations.

Encourage shared interests and friendship opportunities

- Create opportunities for children with similar interests to spend time together.
- Offer clubs, group activities, and play opportunities that encourage natural relationship-building.
- Shared interests often provide a strong foundation for developing friendships.

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4.1 Social understanding and relationships

Teach problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills

- Support children to identify problems, consider solutions, and resolve disagreements respectfully.
- Use prompts such as **"What happened?" "How does each person feel?" "What could we do to make things better?"**
- Teaching these skills helps children build positive and lasting relationships.

Recognise and celebrate positive social behaviours

- Acknowledge when children demonstrate kindness, cooperation, empathy, flexibility, or friendship skills.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You included everyone in the game." "You listened carefully to your friend's idea." "You showed kindness when someone needed help." "You worked well as part of the team."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages children to repeat successful social interactions.

Provide safe spaces and support when needed

- Ensure children have access to trusted adults and calm spaces where they can seek support with social situations.
- Some children may need additional guidance to navigate friendships, emotions, or misunderstandings.
- A supportive environment promotes confidence and emotional wellbeing.

Promote consistency across adults and settings

- Ensure adults use consistent approaches, language, and expectations when supporting social understanding and relationships.
- Share successful strategies between home, school, and other settings.
- Consistency helps children generalise social skills and apply them across different environments.

These environmental strategies support the development of social understanding, empathy, emotional literacy, friendship skills, communication, cooperation, and positive relationships, helping children feel connected, included, and successful in their interactions with others.

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4.2 **Be with others**

Be okay with others nearby in a place I know

Start in familiar and comfortable environments

- Provide opportunities for the child to spend time near other people in places where they already feel safe and secure.
- Begin with brief periods of shared space and gradually increase the time as the child's confidence grows.
- Familiar environments can help reduce anxiety and support positive experiences of being around others.

Follow the child's pace and preferences

- Respect the child's comfort level and avoid placing pressure on them to interact.
- Use affirming language such as **"It's okay to be near other people in your own way."** This helps build trust and allows the child to develop confidence at a pace that feels manageable.

Engage in preferred activities alongside others

- Encourage the child to take part in activities they enjoy while other people are nearby, e.g. drawing, reading, building, or playing alongside others without expecting direct interaction.
- Shared activities can help the child become accustomed to the presence of others in a positive way.

Prepare the child for who will be present

- Use visual supports, photographs, schedules, or discussions to help the child know who they may see and what to expect.
- Predictability can help the child feel more comfortable and confident in shared spaces.

Recognise and celebrate successful experiences

- Acknowledge the child's efforts to remain comfortable when others are nearby.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You stayed in the room while other people were there." "You were comfortable sharing the space with others today." "You found a way to enjoy your activity while others were nearby."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and promotes a sense of belonging.

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4.2 **Be with others**

Join in a shared activity

Follow the child's interests

- Introduce shared activities that include toys, topics, or experiences the child already enjoys.
- Joining activities linked to the child's interests can increase motivation, confidence, and engagement, e.g. **"I can see you enjoy building with blocks. Shall we build a tower together?"**

Start with parallel participation

- Allow the child to take part alongside others before expecting direct interaction, e.g. the child may draw, build, or play next to another person while participating in the same activity.
- This can help the child become comfortable being involved in shared experiences at their own pace.

Use clear invitations and visual supports

- Offer simple, welcoming invitations such as **"Would you like to join us?" "There's space for you here."**
- Visual supports, photographs, or demonstrations can help the child understand what the activity involves and how to take part.

Provide a defined role within the activity

- Give the child a meaningful and achievable way to contribute, e.g. handing out resources, choosing the next game piece or turning pages during story time. Having a clear role can increase confidence and support successful participation.

Recognise and celebrate involvement

- Acknowledge all attempts to join, participate, or engage with others.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You joined the game and played alongside your friends." "You shared your ideas during the activity." "You found a way to be part of the group."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages future participation.

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4.2 **Be with others**

Regulate around others in public

Prepare the child for the environment and expectations

- Use visual schedules, photographs, social stories, or discussions to help the child understand where they are going, who might be there, and what to expect.
- Knowing what is likely to happen can reduce uncertainty and support emotional regulation, e.g. **"We're going to the supermarket. There may be lots of people and noise, and we can take a break if needed."**

Identify and use personalised regulation strategies

- Support the child to recognise what helps them feel calm, organised, and comfortable when they are around others. This might include sensory tools, movement breaks, breathing exercises, a favourite object, or access to a quiet space.
- Encourage the child to choose strategies that work for them.

Gradually increase exposure to public environments

- Begin with shorter visits or quieter settings and build up to busier environments as the child's confidence develops.
- Allow the child to experience success at each stage and adapt the level of challenge to their needs. This helps develop self-regulation skills in a positive and manageable way.

Recognise and respond to early signs of dysregulation

- Help the child identify their own signs of discomfort, stress, or overwhelm.
- Use supportive language such as **"You seem a bit uncomfortable. What might help right now?" "Would you like a break or some quiet time?"** This supports self-awareness and self-advocacy.

Celebrate successful regulation and self-advocacy

- Acknowledge the strategies the child uses to manage their feelings and behaviour in public settings.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You noticed you needed a break and asked for one." "You stayed calm when it got busy and used your breathing strategy." "You found a way to feel comfortable around lots of people."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence, resilience, and independence.

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4.3 **Playing with others**

Be okay with an adult nearby during play

Begin with the adult as a calm and non-intrusive presence

- Allow the adult to be nearby without directing or joining the play immediately.
- The adult can observe quietly and follow the child's lead. This helps the child become comfortable sharing their play space while maintaining a sense of control and independence.

Follow the child's interests

- Encourage the adult to show interest in what the child is doing without taking over the activity, e.g. **"I can see you've built a very tall tower."** This supports positive connections while respecting the child's play choices and autonomy.

Gradually increase interaction at the child's pace

- Start with the adult sitting nearby, then progress to commenting, sharing materials, or joining the play when the child is ready. This gradual approach helps build trust and confidence in the adult's presence.

Use predictable routines and familiar adults

- Consistent opportunities to play near familiar adults can help the child feel safe and secure.
- Predictability allows the child to know what to expect and can reduce any uncertainty about the adult's involvement.

Recognise and celebrate comfort with shared play space

- Acknowledge the child's successes using strengths-based feedback, e.g. **"You carried on enjoying your play while I sat nearby." "You seemed comfortable sharing your space with me today." "You let me watch what you were doing and showed me your ideas."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and supports the development of positive relationships.

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4.3 **Playing with others**

Play with an adult

Follow the child's interests and play preferences

- Join activities, toys, or topics that the child already enjoys and is motivated to engage with.
- Allow the child to lead the play initially, showing genuine interest in their ideas and actions, e.g. **"I can see you're building a train track. Can I help you add another piece?"**
- This helps build trust, engagement, and positive interactions.

Be responsive and playful

- Respond to the child's actions, communication, and ideas during play.
- Copying actions, taking turns, and commenting positively on what the child is doing can encourage shared engagement. This helps the child learn that play with another person can be enjoyable and rewarding.

Use simple turn-taking activities

- Introduce games and activities that naturally encourage interaction, such as rolling a ball, building together, taking turns with toys, or simple board games.
- Use language such as **"My turn"** and **"Your turn"** to support understanding of shared play.

Create a relaxed and predictable play environment

- Play in a familiar space with minimal distractions and clear expectations.
- Predictable routines help the child feel secure and confident when engaging with an adult during play. Keep interactions positive and avoid placing pressure on the child to play in a particular way.

Recognise and celebrate shared play experiences

- Acknowledge the child's efforts to engage, communicate, and play with an adult.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You played with me for a long time today." "We worked together to build that tower." "You shared your ideas during our game."** Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages future shared play experiences.

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4.3 **Playing with others**

Play with toys with an adult

Follow the child's lead during play

- Join in with toys and activities that the child has chosen and is interested in.
- Observe what the child is doing and respond to their ideas rather than directing the play, e.g. **"I can see you're driving the cars. Can I drive one too?"** This helps build trust and encourages positive engagement with the adult.

Use imitation to build connection

- Copy the child's actions with similar toys or materials, e.g. if the child stacks blocks, the adult can stack blocks too.
- Imitation shows interest in the child's play and can encourage shared attention and interaction.

Introduce simple turn-taking with toys

- Use toys that support taking turns, such as rolling a ball, building a tower together, or taking turns with vehicles or figures.
- Use clear language such as **"My turn"** and **"Your turn"** to support understanding of shared play.

Comment on the play rather than asking lots of questions

- Describe what the child is doing and add simple ideas to extend the play, e.g. **"The train is going very fast." "You've built a tall tower."** This supports communication while keeping the interaction enjoyable and relaxed.

Celebrate shared play experiences

- Acknowledge the child's efforts to engage and play alongside or with an adult.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"We played together with the cars today." "You shared your toys and ideas with me." "You enjoyed building together and working as a team."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages future shared play.

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4.3 **Playing with others**

Play with other children

Use shared interests and enjoyable activities

- Provide opportunities for the child to engage in activities they enjoy alongside other children.
- Activities such as construction, imaginative play, art, games, or outdoor play can create natural opportunities for interaction.
- Shared interests often make it easier for children to connect and play together.

Model and teach play skills

- Demonstrate skills such as sharing, taking turns, offering toys, making suggestions, and inviting others to join in.
- Use simple phrases such as **"Can I play too?" "Do you want to build this together?" "It's your turn now."** This helps the child learn how to participate successfully in play with peers.

Start with small, structured play opportunities

- Begin with one or two peers in activities with a clear purpose, rather than large, unstructured groups.
- Structured activities can reduce uncertainty and help the child focus on interacting with others. As confidence grows, gradually introduce more complex social situations.

Support peer interactions without taking over

- Offer gentle guidance when needed, while allowing children to lead their own play, e.g. **"I wonder if you could show Jack how your game works?" "Maybe you could ask Ava what she'd like to do next."** This helps develop independence and confidence in social interactions.

Recognise and celebrate positive play experiences

- Acknowledge the child's efforts to engage, communicate, cooperate, and have fun with other children.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as: **"You invited your friend to join your game." "You worked together to build that tower." "You listened to each other's ideas during play."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages continued social participation and relationship-building.

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4.4 Positive relationships with helpful adults

Have a positive relationship with a trusted adult

Create regular opportunities for positive interactions

- Ensure the child has frequent, predictable opportunities to spend time with a trusted adult through play, shared activities, conversations, or everyday routines.
- Consistent positive experiences help the child develop trust, familiarity, and a sense of security.

Follow the child's interests and strengths

- Encourage the adult to engage in activities that the child enjoys and values.
- Showing genuine interest in the child's ideas, hobbies, and achievements helps the child feel understood, respected, and important.

Respond sensitively and consistently

- Support the adult to respond calmly, warmly, and reliably to the child's communication, needs, and emotions.
- Consistent responses help the child learn that the adult is a safe and dependable source of support.

Encourage shared decision-making

- Provide opportunities for the child to express preferences, make choices, and contribute ideas during activities and interactions.
- Use affirming language such as **"I'd like to hear what you think,"** or **"Let's decide together."** This helps the child feel valued and promotes a sense of partnership.

Recognise and celebrate positive relationship-building

- Acknowledge moments when the child seeks support, shares experiences, accepts help, or enjoys spending time with the adult.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You shared your ideas with your key adult today." "You enjoyed working together and solving that problem." "You knew who to go to when you needed support."** Positive reinforcement encourages the development of trusting and supportive relationships.

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4.4 Positive relationships with helpful adults

Accept help from an adult

Build a trusting and positive relationship

- Spend time developing a warm, respectful, and consistent relationship with the child. Children are often more willing to accept support from adults they know and trust.
- Follow the child's interests, listen to their views, and respond sensitively to their needs.

Offer help in a supportive and non-pressurising way

- Use inclusive language such as **"I'm here if you'd like some help." "Would you like me to help, or would you like to try by yourself first?"** This promotes the child's autonomy and helps them feel in control of the support they receive.

Use a graduated approach to support

- Encourage the child to attempt tasks independently while knowing that help is available when needed, e.g. **"Let's try the first part together." "I'll help you get started, then you can carry on."** This builds confidence and reduces reliance on adult support.

Model help-seeking and accepting support

- Demonstrate that everyone sometimes needs help, e.g. **"I'm not sure how to do this. I'm going to ask someone to help me." "Thank you for helping me. That made the job easier."** This helps the child see accepting help as a positive and normal part of learning.

Recognise and celebrate when the child accepts support

- Acknowledge the child's willingness to accept help and the positive outcome it achieved.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You accepted some help and kept working on the task." "You let me support you when it became tricky." "You worked together with an adult to solve the problem."** Positive reinforcement helps build confidence in accepting support when needed.

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4.4 Positive relationships with helpful adults

Join activities with adult help

Use a trusted adult to introduce activities

- Encourage a familiar adult to join the activity first and provide reassurance, encouragement, and guidance.
- The adult can model participation and help the child understand what to do. This can increase the child's confidence and sense of security when approaching new or challenging activities.

Break activities into small, achievable steps

- Support the child to join in one part of the activity at a time, e.g. they might start by watching, then handling materials, and later actively participating.
- Small successes help build confidence and motivation to become more involved.

Follow the child's interests and strengths

- Select activities that reflect the child's interests, preferences, and existing skills. Interest-based activities are often more engaging and accessible.
- Adults can highlight the child's strengths by saying, **"You are really good at building. Let's use those skills in this activity."**

Provide prompts and scaffolding when needed

- Offer verbal prompts, visual supports, demonstrations, or physical guidance as appropriate.
- Gradually reduce support as the child's confidence and independence increase. This helps the child experience success while developing new skills.

Recognise and celebrate participation

- Acknowledge all attempts to join and take part, regardless of the level of involvement.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You joined the activity and gave it a try." "You worked with an adult to take part." "You showed confidence by joining in today."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages ongoing participation and engagement.

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4.4 Positive relationships with helpful adults

Ask an adult for support

Model and teach help-seeking language

- Demonstrate simple phrases the child can use when they need support, e.g. **"Can you help me, please?" "I need some help." "I'm finding this tricky."**
- Regular modelling helps the child develop confidence in communicating their needs.

Create safe opportunities to ask for support

- Build situations into everyday activities where the child may need assistance, such as opening a container, finding an item, or completing a task.
- Encourage the child to seek support rather than anticipating their needs immediately. This helps the child learn that asking for help is an effective way to solve problems.

Support all forms of communication

- Recognise and respond to requests for support made through speech, gestures, signing, symbols, communication cards, or communication devices.
- Use affirming language such as **"Thank you for letting me know you need help."** This ensures the child can access support using their preferred communication method.

Help the child identify trusted adults

- Support the child to recognise who they can approach when they need help in different situations.
- Use photographs, visual supports, or discussions about adults in school, at home, and in the community. This promotes confidence, safety, and independence.

Acknowledge and celebrate help-seeking

- Provide specific, strengths-based feedback when the child asks for support, e.g. **"You knew what you needed and asked for help." "You told me when something was difficult. That was good problem-solving." "You found the right person to help you."**
- Positive reinforcement helps the child see help-seeking as a valuable self-advocacy skill.

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4.5 Positive relationships and friendships with other children

Start talking or playing with a child

Teach and model ways to join in

- Demonstrate simple phrases the child can use to approach a peer, such as **"Can I play with you?" "What are you playing?" "Would you like to play with me?"**
- Role-play these interactions regularly to build confidence and familiarity.

Use shared interests as a starting point

- Encourage opportunities for the child to engage with peers who enjoy similar activities, toys, games, or topics.
- Shared interests provide a natural reason to start a conversation or join a play activity, e.g. **"I noticed you both enjoy building with blocks."**

Create structured opportunities for interaction

- Plan activities that encourage cooperation, such as turn-taking games, building projects, art activities, or treasure hunts.
- A shared goal can make it easier for children to approach and engage with one another.

Provide gentle support and prompts

- If needed, offer subtle prompts to help the child initiate interaction, e.g. **"You could ask if you can help build the tower." "Maybe you could tell them what you like about their game."**
- Gradually reduce support as the child's confidence and independence increase.

Recognise and celebrate successful interactions

- Acknowledge all attempts to start communication or join play, regardless of the outcome.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You asked to join the game. That was very confident." "You started a conversation by asking a question." "You found a friendly way to join in with the other children."** Positive reinforcement encourages the child to continue developing their social communication skills.

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4.5 Positive relationships and friendships with other children

Get on well with another child

Encourage shared interests and activities

- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities they both enjoy, such as construction, art, games, outdoor play, or imaginative play.
- Shared interests can create natural opportunities for positive interaction, cooperation, and friendship development, e.g. **"You both enjoy drawing. Perhaps you could create a picture together."**

Teach and model positive social skills

- Model skills such as sharing, taking turns, listening, giving compliments, and using kind words.
- Use role-play and real-life situations to practise these skills, e.g. **"You could ask if your friend would like a turn now."**

Support children to understand each other's perspectives

- Encourage children to think about how others might be feeling and what they might need.
- Use questions such as **"How do you think your friend felt when that happened?" "What could you do to help them feel included?"** This supports empathy and positive relationship-building.

Help children solve disagreements positively

- Teach simple problem-solving strategies such as talking about the problem, listening to each other's ideas, and finding a solution together.
- Use affirming language such as **"Let's work together to find a way that suits both of you." "What ideas do you each have?"** This helps children develop conflict resolution skills.

Recognise and celebrate positive friendships

- Acknowledge examples of cooperation, kindness, inclusion, and teamwork.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You worked together really well." "You listened to your friend's idea." "You showed kindness by helping your friend."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the child to continue developing strong peer relationships.

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4.5 Positive relationships and friendships with other children

Think about other people's feelings and needs

Talk about emotions during everyday experiences

- Help the child notice and label the feelings of others during daily activities.
- Use comments and questions such as **"Sam looks disappointed because his tower fell down." "How do you think she feels?"** This helps the child recognise that other people have feelings that may be different from their own.

Use stories, books, and videos to explore perspectives

- Discuss characters' thoughts, feelings, and motivations.
- Ask questions such as **"Why do you think the character was upset?" "What could someone do to help them?"** Stories provide safe opportunities to explore emotions, empathy, and understanding.

Model empathy and consideration for others

- Demonstrate thinking about other people's needs in everyday situations, e.g. **"I can see Grandma is carrying lots of bags. I'd like to help her." "Tom looks tired, so I'll speak quietly."**
- Modelling helps the child learn how to consider the experiences of others.

Encourage acts of kindness and helpfulness

- Create opportunities for the child to help, share, comfort, include, or support others. These experiences help develop empathy and social responsibility.
- Use prompts such as **"What could we do to help?" "Would your friend like to join in?"**

Recognise and celebrate thoughtful behaviour

- Acknowledge when the child notices or responds to another person's feelings or needs.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You noticed your friend was sad and asked if they were okay." "You shared your resources when someone needed them." "You thought about how that person might feel before you acted."** Positive reinforcement encourages the child to continue developing empathy and understanding.

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4.5 Positive relationships and friendships with other children

Know how to keep friendships going

Teach and model friendship skills

- Demonstrate skills that help maintain friendships, such as listening, taking turns, sharing ideas, showing kindness, and including others.
- Use role-play and real-life examples to practise these skills, e.g. **"When your friend is talking, you can show you're listening by looking at them and responding to what they say."**

Encourage regular positive interactions

- Provide opportunities for the child to spend time with friends through shared activities, games, clubs, or group projects.
- Regular enjoyable experiences help children build stronger connections and shared memories with their peers.

Support communication and problem-solving

- Help the child learn how to express their feelings, listen to others' viewpoints, and resolve disagreements respectfully.
- Use prompts such as **"How could you tell your friend how you feel?" "What could you do to solve this problem together?"** These skills help friendships remain positive during challenges.

Develop understanding of others' feelings and interests

- Encourage the child to show interest in what their friends enjoy and how they might be feeling, e.g. **"What does your friend like to play?" "How do you think they felt when you invited them to join in?"** This promotes empathy and positive relationship-building.

Recognise and celebrate positive friendship behaviours

- Acknowledge when the child demonstrates skills that help build and maintain friendships.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You remembered to ask your friend about their day." "You worked together to solve a problem." "You were kind and included your friend in the game."**
- Positive reinforcement helps the child understand what supports strong and lasting friendships.

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4.5 Positive relationships and friendships with other children

Notice bullying or unkind behaviour

Teach the difference between kind, unkind, and bullying behaviour

- Use clear, age-appropriate examples to help the child understand the differences.
- Discuss behaviours such as helping, sharing, excluding others, name-calling, teasing, or repeated unkind actions, e.g. **"Being unkind can happen once, but bullying is usually repeated and intended to hurt someone."** This helps the child recognise behaviours that may cause harm to others.

Use stories, videos, and real-life scenarios

- Explore situations involving friendships, conflict, kindness, and bullying through books, social stories, and discussions.
- Ask questions such as **"Was that kind or unkind?" "How do you think that person felt?" "What could someone do to help?"** This supports the child's ability to identify and understand social situations.

Develop awareness of others' feelings

- Encourage the child to notice emotional and behavioural clues such as facial expressions, body language, tone of voice, and changes in behaviour, e.g. **"He looks upset and has moved away from the group. I wonder how he is feeling?"** This helps build empathy and awareness of when someone may need support.

Role-play how to respond safely

- Practise what the child can do if they notice bullying or unkind behaviour, e.g. telling a trusted adult, supporting a peer to seek help, including someone who has been left out or walking away and getting support when needed
- This helps the child feel confident about taking appropriate action.

Recognise and celebrate positive social awareness

- Acknowledge when the child notices someone else's feelings, identifies unkind behaviour, or seeks support for themselves or others.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You noticed that your friend was being left out and invited them to join in." "You recognised that behaviour was unkind and told a trusted adult." "You showed kindness and concern for someone else's feelings."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the child to continue developing empathy, awareness, and positive relationships.

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4.6 Manage in group activities

Pay attention in a group

Prepare the child for group activities

- Use visual schedules, verbal reminders, or clear explanations to help the child understand what the group activity will involve.
- Knowing what to expect can reduce anxiety and support engagement, e.g. **"First we'll listen to the story, then we'll share our ideas."**

Position the child to support attention

- Seat the child where they can easily see and hear the group leader and minimise distractions where possible.
- Ensure important visual information is within the child's line of sight. This can help the child focus on the key information being shared.
- Remember that paying attention will look different for different children.

Use engaging and interactive activities

- Incorporate opportunities for participation, such as answering questions, using visual aids, handling resources, or joining in with actions.
- Active involvement helps maintain attention and encourages a sense of belonging within the group.

Provide prompts and positive reminders

- Use supportive prompts such as **"Let's listen to what is being said." "Can you see what the group is looking at?" "It's time to focus on the speaker."**
- Gentle reminders can help the child redirect their attention without drawing unnecessary attention to difficulties.

Recognise and celebrate attentive participation

- Acknowledge when the child listens, looks towards the speaker, follows the activity, or contributes appropriately.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You listened carefully during group time." "You noticed when it was your turn to join in." "You stayed focused and took part in the activity."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages continued engagement.

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4.6 Manage in group activities

Take part in a group activity

Prepare the child for what to expect

- Use visual schedules, photographs, social stories, or verbal explanations to help the child understand the activity, who will be involved, and what their role may be.
- Predictability can increase confidence and reduce uncertainty, e.g. **"First we'll sit together. Then we'll listen to the story. Then we'll join in with an activity."**

Provide a meaningful role within the group

- Give the child a specific and achievable responsibility, such as handing out resources, choosing a song, turning pages, or collecting equipment.
- Having a clear role can help the child feel valued and included within the group.

Use activities linked to the child's interests and strengths

- Incorporate topics, resources, or tasks that motivate the child and build on what they do well.
- This can increase engagement and encourage active participation, e.g. **"You know a lot about animals. Would you like to share your ideas with the group?"**

Offer supportive prompts and encouragement

- Use gentle verbal, visual, or physical prompts to help the child join in when needed, e.g. **"It's your turn to share an idea." "Can you help us with this part?" "Let's do it together first."**
- Gradually reduce support as the child's confidence grows.

Recognise and celebrate participation

- Acknowledge all attempts to engage with the group, no matter how small.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You joined in with the group discussion." "You listened and contributed your ideas." "You were an important part of the activity today."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages future participation.

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4.6 Manage in group activities

Know their role in a group

Clearly explain the child's role and responsibilities

- Use simple, accessible language to describe what the child is expected to do within the group, e.g. **"Your job is to hand out the materials," or "You are helping us keep track of whose turn it is."**
- Clear expectations help the child understand how they contribute to the group's success.

Use visual supports and role reminders

- Provide visual cues such as role cards, photographs, symbols, checklists, or job charts.
- These supports can help the child remember their responsibilities and participate more independently.

Match roles to the child's strengths and interests

- Offer opportunities for the child to take on roles that build on their skills, interests, and preferences, e.g. **"You are great at organising things. Would you like to be responsible for collecting the equipment?"**
- This promotes confidence, engagement, and a sense of achievement.

Encourage reflection on group contributions

- Discuss how different people contribute to the group and why each role is important.
- Use questions such as **"What was your job in the group today?" "How did your role help the group?"** This helps the child understand their value within a team.

Recognise and celebrate successful participation

- Acknowledge when the child fulfils their role or contributes positively to the group.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You carried out your role really well today." "The group benefited from your help and ideas." "You understood what was expected of you and contributed successfully."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and a sense of belonging within group activities.

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4.6 Manage in group activities

Follow group rules

Make group rules clear, positive, and easy to understand

- Use simple language and phrase rules positively, e.g. **"Use kind words." "Listen when someone is speaking." "Keep hands and feet safe."**
- Clear expectations help the child understand what successful participation looks like.

Use visual reminders of group expectations

- Display rules using pictures, symbols, photographs, or visual posters.
- Refer to the visuals before and during group activities. Visual supports can help children remember and follow expectations independently.

Model and practise group rules regularly

- Demonstrate the behaviours expected within the group and provide opportunities to rehearse them through games, role-play, and everyday activities, e.g. **"Let's practise what good listening looks like during group time."**
- Repeated practice helps children develop familiarity and confidence.

Prepare the child before group activities

- Remind the child of the group rules and discuss what they might need to do to be successful, e.g. **"During the story, we will listen and wait for our turn to speak." "What do you think will help you remember the rules today?"**
- Preparation can increase understanding and reduce uncertainty.

Recognise and celebrate positive participation

- Acknowledge when the child follows group expectations and contributes positively.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You waited for your turn to speak." "You followed the group rules and helped the activity run smoothly." "You remembered to listen when others were talking."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages the child to continue using these skills.

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4.6 Manage in group activities

Join a group discussion

Prepare the child before the discussion

- Explain the purpose of the discussion, the topic being discussed, and how people take turns to contribute.
- Use visual supports, key questions, or discussion prompts to help the child feel prepared and confident, e.g. **"Today we're talking about our favourite books. You might like to think about your favourite story before we start."**

Teach and model ways to join in

- Demonstrate simple phrases the child can use to contribute to a discussion, such as **"I'd like to share an idea." "I agree because..." "I think..." "Can I add something?"**
- Modelling these phrases helps the child develop confidence in participating.

Provide supportive opportunities to contribute

- Give the child specific chances to share their ideas by asking open-ended questions or inviting them to comment, e.g. **"What do you think about that?" "Would you like to share your idea with the group?"** This can help reduce uncertainty and encourage participation.

Use visual and communication supports

- Provide sentence starters, discussion cue cards, talking tokens, or communication aids to support contribution.
- These tools can help the child organise their thoughts and know when and how to join the conversation.

Recognise and celebrate contributions

- Acknowledge all attempts to participate, whether through speech, signing, gestures, symbols, or communication devices.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You shared your idea with the group." "You listened carefully and added to the discussion." "Your contribution helped others think about the topic in a new way."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages future participation.

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5. Sensory needs

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5. **Sensory Needs**

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5.1 Sensory needs



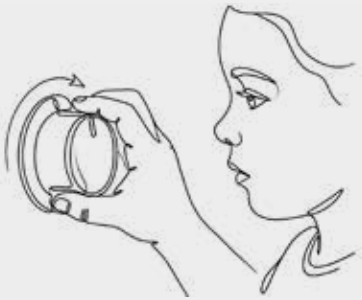
5.2 Understand and show own sensory preferences



5.3 Respond to sensory interventions



5.4 Developing confidence with sensory experiences



5.5 Managing own sensory preferences



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5.1 Sensory needs

Recommended strategies for an environment to support and develop sensory awareness:

Provide a range of sensory experiences

- Offer opportunities to explore different sensory inputs, including textures, sounds, smells, colours, movement, light and temperature.
- Include sensory-rich activities such as sand play, water play, messy play, music, cooking, and outdoor learning.
- A variety of experiences helps children become more aware of and understand sensory information.

Create a sensory-friendly environment

- Consider lighting, noise levels, smells, visual clutter, and seating arrangements. Reduce unnecessary sensory distractions where possible.
- Provide calm, predictable spaces alongside areas for active sensory exploration.
- A well-balanced environment helps children feel comfortable and able to engage in learning and play.

Use sensory language throughout the day

- Model descriptive words to help children understand and communicate sensory experiences, e.g. **“The playdough feels soft.” “The bell sounds loud.” “The water feels cold.” “The lemon smells strong.”**

- Developing sensory vocabulary helps children recognise and express their preferences and experiences.

Support individual sensory preferences and needs

- Recognise that children respond differently to sensory experiences.
- Provide choices and adaptations where appropriate, e.g. access to sensory tools, alternative seating, quiet spaces and/ or different textures or materials.
- Respecting sensory preferences helps children feel safe, regulated, and understood.

Provide opportunities for sensory exploration through play

- Encourage children to investigate, experiment, and discover using all their senses.
- Follow their interests and allow time for exploration.
- Sensory play supports curiosity, learning, and engagement with the environment.

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5.1 Sensory needs

Use visual supports to increase predictability

- Provide visual timetables, now-and-next boards, and preparation for sensory experiences that may be unfamiliar, e.g. **"We're going to the hall next. It might be noisy." "We will be using paint today, which may feel wet and sticky."**
- Predictability can help children prepare for sensory experiences and reduce anxiety.

Teach self-awareness of sensory responses

- Encourage children to notice and communicate how different sensory experiences affect them.
- Use prompts such as **"Do you like that sound?" "How does that texture feel?" "What helps you feel comfortable?"** This supports self-awareness and self-advocacy.

Include movement and sensory regulation opportunities

- Provide regular opportunities for movement and sensory breaks throughout the day.
- Activities might include stretching, jumping, carrying objects, dancing or outdoor play.
- These experiences can help children maintain attention, comfort, and emotional regulation.

Recognise and celebrate sensory awareness

- Acknowledge when children notice, explore, or communicate their sensory experiences.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as: **"You noticed that the music was getting louder." "You explored a new texture today." "You knew what helped you feel comfortable."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages confidence and self-understanding.

Ensure consistency between environments

- Share successful sensory strategies between home, school, and other settings.
- Use consistent approaches, language, and supports where possible.
- Consistency helps children understand and manage their sensory experiences across different environments.

These environmental strategies support the development of sensory awareness, self-regulation, communication, self-advocacy, emotional wellbeing, and engagement, helping children understand, respond to, and manage sensory experiences in a positive and meaningful way.

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5.2 Understand and show own sensory preferences

Express sensory likes/dislikes

Provide language to talk about sensory experiences

- Model simple words and phrases to describe sensory preferences, e.g. **"I like soft blankets." "That sound is too loud for me." "I don't like sticky textures."** This helps the child develop vocabulary to communicate their sensory experiences.

Use visual supports to identify preferences

- Provide sensory preference boards, symbols, photographs, emotion scales, or choice cards.
- Include options such as like, don't like, too loud, too bright, too hot, or need a break.
- Visual supports can make it easier for the child to express their views and needs.

Offer opportunities to explore different sensory experiences

- Introduce a range of sensory activities involving sounds, textures, smells, tastes, movement, and visual stimuli.
- Encourage the child to indicate what they enjoy and what they would prefer to avoid.
- Respecting the child's responses helps them develop confidence in expressing preferences.

Acknowledge and validate sensory preferences

- Respond positively when the child communicates a sensory like or dislike.
- Use affirming language such as **"Thank you for telling me that noise feels too loud." "I can see you enjoy playing with the water." "It's helpful to know that texture doesn't feel comfortable for you."** This helps the child understand that their sensory experiences are important and valued.

Encourage self-advocacy around sensory needs

- Support the child to communicate what would help them feel comfortable, e.g. **"Can you tell me if you'd like headphones?" "Would you prefer a quieter space?" "What could help you feel more comfortable?"** This promotes independence and empowers the child to express and manage their sensory needs.

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5.2 Understand and show own sensory preferences

Understand their own sensory preferences

Provide opportunities to explore different sensory experiences

- Offer a range of sensory activities involving textures, sounds, smells, tastes, movement, and visual experiences.
- Encourage the child to notice how different experiences make them feel, e.g. **"Do you like how the playdough feels, or do you prefer the sand?"** This helps the child identify what they enjoy and what they find uncomfortable.

Use sensory preference checklists and visual supports

- Use photographs, symbols, emotion scales, or sensory preference charts to help the child communicate their likes and dislikes, e.g. the child can sort activities into categories such as **"I like this," "I'm not sure," and "I don't like this."**
- Visual supports can help make sensory awareness more accessible.

Model thinking about sensory experiences

- Talk about your own sensory preferences and needs, e.g. **"I like listening to quiet music when I'm concentrating." "Bright lights can make my eyes feel uncomfortable."**
- This helps the child understand that everyone has different sensory preferences.

Encourage the child to reflect on their experiences

- After activities, discuss what the child enjoyed and what they found challenging.
- Use prompts such as **"What was your favourite part?" "Did anything feel too loud or too busy?" "What helped you feel comfortable?"**
- Reflection supports self-awareness and understanding of personal sensory needs.

Validate and celebrate the child's sensory preferences

- Acknowledge and respect the child's sensory experiences and choices.
- Use affirming language such as **"You've noticed that you prefer quieter spaces." "You know that soft textures help you feel calm." "It's great that you can tell us what helps you feel comfortable."**
- This helps the child develop confidence in recognising and communicating their sensory needs.

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5.3 Respond to sensory interventions

Respond to sensory supports in the environment

Introduce sensory supports gradually and positively

- Provide opportunities for the child to explore sensory supports such as ear defenders, wobble cushions, fidget tools, weighted items, visual timers, or quiet spaces in a relaxed and non-pressurised way.
- Allow the child to become familiar with each support at their own pace. This helps the child develop confidence and understanding of how supports can help them.

Explain the purpose of sensory supports

- Use simple, accessible language to help the child understand why a sensory support is available, e.g. **"These headphones can help if the room feels too noisy." "This quiet corner is here if you would like a calm space."**
- Understanding the purpose of a support can increase the likelihood that the child will use it effectively.

Model and practise using sensory supports

- Demonstrate how sensory supports can be used during everyday activities, e.g. show them how to use a visual timetable to understand the day. Demonstrate taking a movement break when feeling restless. This helps the child recognise when and how supports can meet their needs.

Encourage the child to notice how supports affect them

- Help the child reflect on their experiences before and after using a sensory support.
- Use prompts such as **"How does your body feel now?" "Did the headphones help with the noise?" "What helped you feel comfortable?"** This promotes self-awareness and helps the child identify which supports work best for them.

Recognise and celebrate independent use of sensory supports

- Acknowledge when the child chooses, accepts, or uses a sensory support appropriately.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You noticed the room was noisy and chose your headphones." "You used the quiet area to help yourself feel calm." "You recognised what you needed and used a strategy that worked for you."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages self-advocacy and independent self-regulation.

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5.3 Respond to sensory interventions

Respond to sensory input from a helpful adult

Pair sensory input with positive, predictable interactions

- Introduce sensory experiences through trusted adults during enjoyable activities and routines, e.g. a familiar adult might sing a favourite song, offer a calming object, or provide a movement activity.
- Consistent and positive experiences can help the child feel safe and comfortable responding to sensory input provided by others.

Follow the child's cues and preferences

- Observe how the child responds to different types of sensory input and adapt support accordingly.
- Respect signs that the child is enjoying, tolerating, or avoiding a particular sensory experience and support them accordingly.
- Use affirming language such as **"You've shown me that softer sounds feel more comfortable for you."**

Use clear communication before providing sensory input

- Let the child know what to expect before introducing sensory experiences, e.g. **"I'm going to roll the ball to you." "Would you like a gentle hand massage?" "Let's listen to some music together."**
- Predictability can help the child feel more in control and ready to respond.

Encourage the child to communicate their response

- Support the child to indicate whether they like, dislike, want more of, or want less of a sensory experience. This may be through speech, signs, gestures, symbols, facial expressions, or communication aids.
- Encourage self-advocacy with questions such as **"Would you like more?" "Is that comfortable?" "What would help you feel better?"**

Recognise and celebrate successful responses

- Acknowledge when the child responds to sensory input, communicates a preference, or engages with a sensory experience offered by an adult.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You showed me that you enjoyed the music." "You let me know when you wanted the activity to stop." "You worked out what felt comfortable for you today."**
- Positive reinforcement supports confidence, self-awareness, and participation.

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5.3 Respond to sensory interventions

Respond to input using sensory 'equipment/tools'

Introduce sensory equipment in a positive and meaningful way

- Provide opportunities for the child to explore sensory tools such as fidget items, wobble cushions, weighted products, chew tools, ear defenders, or sensory toys during enjoyable activities.
- Allow the child to investigate the equipment at their own pace without pressure. This helps build familiarity, confidence, and positive associations with the sensory support.

Model how and when to use sensory tools

- Demonstrate the purpose and use of the equipment in everyday situations, e.g. **"I'm using these headphones because the room is noisy." "Let's use the wobble cushion to help us stay comfortable while sitting."**
- Modelling helps the child understand how sensory tools can support participation and regulation.

Observe and respond to the child's preferences

- Offer a range of sensory tools and pay attention to how the child responds to each one.
- Recognise that different children benefit from different types of sensory support.
- Use affirming language such as **"You seem more comfortable when you're using the fidget tool."**

Support the child to communicate their response

- Encourage the child to indicate whether a sensory tool is helpful, uncomfortable, or not needed.
- Support communication through speech, gestures, symbols, choice boards, or communication devices, e.g. **"Would you like to keep using it or try something different?" "Does that help your body feel calm?"** This promotes self-awareness and self-advocacy.

Recognise and celebrate effective use of sensory supports

- Acknowledge when the child uses, tolerates, or independently selects sensory equipment to support their needs.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You chose the tool that helped you concentrate." "You noticed what your body needed and found something that helped." "You used your sensory support to stay comfortable during the activity."**
- Positive reinforcement helps the child develop confidence and independence in using sensory strategies.

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5.3 Respond to sensory interventions

Respond to regular sensory support

Build sensory supports into predictable daily routines

- Introduce sensory supports consistently at key points throughout the day, such as movement breaks, quiet time, use of a sensory tool, or access to a calming space.
- Predictable routines help the child understand when sensory support is available and how it can help them participate successfully, e.g. **"After group time, it's time for your movement break."**

Clearly explain and model the purpose of the support

- Use simple, positive language to help the child understand why a sensory strategy is being used, e.g. **"The fidget tool may help your hands stay busy while you listen." "The quiet area is here if you need some calm time."**
- Modelling can help the child learn how sensory supports can meet their needs.

Encourage the child to notice the impact of sensory supports

- Help the child reflect on how they feel before and after using a sensory strategy.
- Use prompts such as **"How does your body feel now?" "Did that help you feel calmer or more ready to learn?"** This supports the development of self-awareness and understanding of their own regulation needs.

Provide opportunities for choice and self-advocacy

- Offer a range of sensory supports and encourage the child to make choices about what works best for them, e.g. **"Would you like a movement break or time in the quiet area?" "Which tool helps you concentrate today?"** This promotes independence and ownership of sensory regulation strategies.

Recognise and celebrate positive engagement with sensory supports

- Acknowledge when the child uses, accepts, or benefits from regular sensory support.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You used your sensory strategy to help yourself stay focused." "You knew what your body needed and made a good choice." "You used your regular sensory support and were ready to join the activity."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages ongoing use of effective regulation strategies.

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5.4 Developing confidence with sensory experiences

Show increased confidence with sensory input

Introduce sensory experiences gradually

- Present sensory input in small, manageable amounts and increase exposure at the child's pace.
- Begin with sensory experiences that the child finds more comfortable before introducing less preferred experiences. This helps build confidence and reduces the likelihood of overwhelm.

Give the child choice and control

- Encourage the child to make decisions about sensory experiences whenever possible, e.g. **"Would you like to listen to the music quietly or a little louder?" "Would you like to touch the sand with your hands or use a scoop first?"**
- Having choice can help the child feel safe and more willing to engage with sensory input.

Pair sensory experiences with positive activities

- Introduce sensory input during enjoyable, motivating activities and alongside trusted adults, e.g. exploring different textures during a favourite game or listening to new sounds while engaging in a preferred activity.
- Positive associations can support greater tolerance over time.

Teach and use regulation strategies alongside sensory experiences

- Support the child to access strategies that help them feel comfortable, such as movement breaks, deep breathing, sensory tools, or quiet spaces.
- Help them learn that they can manage sensory challenges while remaining engaged. This promotes confidence and emotional regulation.

Recognise and celebrate progress

- Acknowledge all efforts to engage with sensory experiences, even if the steps are small.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You stayed with the activity for longer today." "You tried a new sensory experience and found a way to cope." "You told me what helped you feel comfortable."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build resilience and confidence.

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5.5 Managing own sensory preferences

Accept support to look after their own responses to sensory preferences

Build trust and understanding around sensory support

- Help the child understand that sensory supports are available to help them feel comfortable, calm and ready to participate.
- Use affirming language such as **"Everyone has things that help them feel comfortable." "It's okay to accept support when something feels too much."**
- A trusting relationship can make it easier for the child to accept help when needed.

Involve the child in choosing sensory strategies

- Offer a range of options, such as movement breaks, sensory tools, quiet spaces, ear defenders, or visual supports.
- Encourage the child to decide which strategies they would like to try. This promotes autonomy and helps the child feel ownership over their sensory regulation.

Model and practise using sensory supports together

- Demonstrate how sensory strategies can be used in everyday situations, e.g. **"Let's take a movement break together." "Shall we both use our calm breathing strategy?"**
- Shared practice can help the child feel more confident and comfortable accepting support.

Help the child recognise when support may be helpful

- Encourage the child to notice signs that they may need sensory support, such as feeling overwhelmed, distracted, uncomfortable, or restless.
- Use prompts such as **"What is your body telling you right now?" "What could help you feel more comfortable?"** This develops self-awareness and supports future independence.

Acknowledge and celebrate acceptance of support

- Provide specific, strengths-based feedback when the child accepts or uses support to manage their sensory needs, e.g. **"You recognised that the noise was difficult and chose your headphones." "You accepted help to find a quieter space." "You used a strategy that helped your body feel comfortable."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence in seeking and accepting support when needed.

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5.5 Managing own sensory preferences

Request help from others to look after their sensory preferences

Teach language for self-advocacy

- Model and practise phrases that help the child communicate their sensory needs, e.g. **"It's too loud for me." "Can I have my headphones, please?" "I need a quiet space." "Can I have a movement break?"** This helps the child develop confidence in expressing what they need to feel comfortable and regulated.

Use visual supports to communicate sensory needs

- Provide visual cards, symbols, communication boards, or choice charts that allow the child to request support, e.g. the child might point to symbols for break, headphones, quiet space, or help. This ensures the child has accessible ways to communicate, regardless of their preferred communication method.

Help the child identify trusted adults who can help

- Support the child to recognise who they can approach at home, school, and in the community when they need support with sensory challenges.
- Use photos, social stories, or discussions to reinforce who is available to help and how they can be approached.

Practise requesting help in real situations

- Create opportunities for the child to ask for support when sensory needs arise.
- Prompt and encourage the child to make the request themselves where appropriate, e.g. **"The hall is feeling noisy. Who could you ask for help?" "What could you say if you need a break?"**
- Repeated practice helps build independence and confidence.

Recognise and celebrate successful help-seeking

- Acknowledge when the child requests support or communicates a sensory need.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You noticed what your body needed and asked for help." "You told me the noise was too much for you. That was excellent self-advocacy." "You found the right person and asked for the support you needed."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the child to continue seeking support when required.

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5.5 Managing own sensory preferences

Take action to look after their own sensory preferences

Help the child identify their sensory needs

- Support the child to recognise what helps them feel comfortable, calm, alert, or focused, and what they find challenging.
- Use discussions, sensory preference checklists, emotion scales, or visual supports to build self-awareness, e.g. **"You seem to concentrate better when it's quiet," or "You've noticed that busy places can feel overwhelming."**

Teach the child to choose appropriate sensory strategies

- Introduce a range of sensory supports, such as movement breaks, ear defenders, fidget tools, quiet spaces, or calming activities.
- Encourage the child to select the strategy that best meets their needs in different situations. This promotes independence and self-regulation.

Create opportunities for independent use of sensory supports

- Ensure sensory tools and supports are accessible and encourage the child to use them without relying on adult prompts, e.g. taking a movement break when needed, choosing to sit in a quieter area or using headphones in a noisy environment. This helps the child develop confidence in managing their own sensory needs.

Encourage reflection and problem-solving

- Support the child to think about what worked well and what might help in future situations.
- Use prompts such as **"What helped you feel comfortable today?" "What could you do if it becomes too noisy?" "Which strategy worked best for you?"**
- Reflection helps develop self-awareness and informed decision-making.

Recognise and celebrate self-advocacy and independence

- Acknowledge when the child independently identifies a sensory need and takes action to support themselves.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You recognised that you needed a break and took one." "You chose the strategy that helped you stay calm." "You understood what your body needed and took action to help yourself."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the child to continue developing effective self-management skills.

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5.5 Managing own sensory preferences

Understand how their sensory preferences affect their behaviours

Help the child make connections between sensory experiences and behaviour

- Use simple discussions and observations to explore how different sensory experiences can influence feelings and actions, e.g. **"The hall was very noisy, and you found it difficult to concentrate." "You seemed calmer after your movement break."** This helps the child recognise the relationship between sensory input and their responses.

Use visual tools to support self-awareness

- Together with the child, create and introduce sensory preference checklists, body maps, emotion scales, or "What helps me" charts.
- Encourage the child to identify what they enjoy, what they avoid, and how different sensory experiences affect their mood, energy, attention, or behaviour.
- Visual supports can make these connections easier to understand.

Reflect on experiences together

- After activities or challenging situations, talk with the child about what happened and why.
- Use prompts such as **"How did your body feel in that busy room?" "What helped you feel calm?" "What do you think made it hard to focus?"**
- Reflection encourages the child to develop insight into their own needs and responses.

Model understanding of sensory needs

- Talk about your own sensory preferences and how they affect your behaviour, e.g. **"I find it easier to concentrate when it's quiet." "I like to stretch and move around when I've been sitting for a long time."** This helps the child understand that everyone has different sensory preferences that can influence how they feel and act.

Celebrate self-awareness and self-advocacy

- Acknowledge when the child identifies a sensory trigger, explains how it affects them, or uses a strategy to support themselves.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You noticed that the noise was making you feel overwhelmed." "You recognised that you needed a quiet space to help you concentrate." "You understood what your body needed and took positive action."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and independence.

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6. Coping with change

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6. **Coping with change**

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6.2 Cope with change



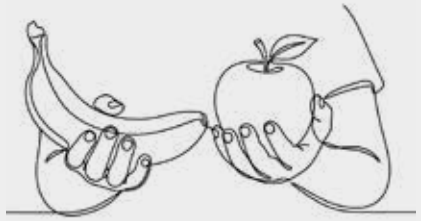
6.3 Transitions



6.4 Interests



6.5 Problem solving and thinking skills



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6.1 Managing changes, interests and problem solving

Recommended strategies for an environment to support and develop managing changes, interests and problem solving:

Provide predictable routines and prepare for change

- Use visual timetables, schedules, calendars, countdowns, and now-and-next boards to help children understand what is happening and what is coming next.
- Give advance warning of changes whenever possible. Explain changes clearly and positively to reduce uncertainty and anxiety.
- Predictable routines help children feel safe while developing flexibility when plans change.

Follow and build on children's interests

- Incorporate children's interests into learning activities, play opportunities, and discussions. Interest-based learning can increase confidence, curiosity, and resilience.
- Use preferred topics to motivate engagement, exploration, and problem-solving.
- Encourage children to share their interests with others and use them as a starting point for new learning experiences.

Create opportunities for problem-solving throughout the day

- Provide activities that encourage children to think, investigate, and find solutions. Examples include puzzles, construction activities, treasure hunts, science investigations or real-life challenges.
- Encourage children to try different approaches rather than immediately providing answers.

Encourage flexible thinking

- Support children to consider more than one solution or outcome.
- Use prompts such as **"What else could we try?" "Can you think of another way?" "What could we do if our first plan doesn't work?"**
- Developing flexible thinking helps children cope with change and adapt to new situations.

Use visual problem-solving supports

- Provide visual frameworks such as problem-solving steps, decision-making charts, choice boards or planning templates, e.g. What is the problem? What are my choices? What might happen? Which solution shall I try?
- Visual supports help children organise their thinking and work through challenges independently.

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6.1 Managing changes, interests and problem solving

Model positive responses to challenges and change

- Demonstrate how to remain calm and think through problems when unexpected situations occur.
- Use language such as **"That didn't go as planned, so I'll try a different way." "Let's think of another solution."**
- Children learn problem-solving and resilience by observing adults.

Provide opportunities to make choices and decisions

- Encourage children to make meaningful choices about activities, resources, learning, and routines.
- Support them to consider different options and potential outcomes.
- Making decisions helps develop independence, confidence, and planning skills.

Celebrate curiosity and persistence

- Acknowledge when children explore new interests, adapt to change, or continue trying to solve a problem.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You kept trying different ideas until you found a solution." "You adapted well when the plan changed." "You showed curiosity by wanting to learn more."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages resilience and a growth mindset.

Provide safe opportunities to learn from mistakes

- Create an environment where mistakes are seen as part of learning.
- Encourage reflection on what went well and what could be done differently next time.
- Help children understand that challenges can lead to new learning and success.

Ensure consistency between adults and settings

- Use consistent language, strategies, and expectations when supporting change management and problem-solving.
- Share successful approaches between home, school, and other settings.
- Consistency helps children apply skills across a range of situations and environments.

These environmental strategies support the development of flexibility, resilience, curiosity, problem-solving, decision-making, independence, confidence, and emotional regulation, helping children manage change successfully, pursue their interests, and develop effective ways of solving problems.

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6.2 Cope with change

Accept changes within familiar situations

Prepare the child for upcoming changes

- Use visual schedules, social stories, calendars, or verbal reminders to let the child know when a change is going to happen, e.g. **"Today we will have PE before lunch instead of after lunch."**
- Preparation can reduce uncertainty and help the child feel more confident about changes to familiar routines.

Introduce changes gradually where possible

- Make small adjustments to familiar routines before introducing larger changes, e.g. changing the order of one activity within a well-known routine.
- Gradual exposure helps the child build flexibility and learn that changes can be managed successfully.

Acknowledge feelings about change

- Recognise that changes can feel difficult and reassure the child that their feelings are understood.
- Use affirming language such as **"It can feel strange when things are different." "I'm here to help you through the change."** This helps the child feel supported and emotionally secure.

Teach coping and problem-solving strategies

- Support the child to use strategies such as deep breathing, asking questions, using a visual timetable, accessing a comfort item, or talking to a trusted adult.
- Encourage the child to think about what might help when plans change. This promotes resilience and self-regulation.

Recognise and celebrate successful adaptation

- Acknowledge when the child manages a change, even if they need support to do so.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You adapted to the new routine today." "You stayed calm when plans changed." "You found a way to cope with something different."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and increases the child's willingness to cope with future changes.

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6.2 Cope with change

Take action to cope with changes

Teach and practise coping strategies before changes occur

- Help the child learn strategies they can use when something unexpected happens, such as deep breathing, counting, using a calm space, positive self-talk, or talking to a trusted adult.
- Practise these strategies during calm moments so they are familiar and easier to use when needed, e.g. **"If plans change, you could take three deep breaths and then think about what happens next."**

Use visual supports to help manage change

- Provide visual schedules, first-then boards, change cards, or written reminders that show what has changed and what will happen next.
- Encourage the child to refer to these supports independently when routines are different. This helps the child feel more secure and in control.

Encourage problem-solving and flexible thinking

- Support the child to think about possible solutions when plans change. This helps develop resilience and adaptability.
- Use prompts such as **"What could we do instead?" "What might help us if this activity is cancelled?" "What's our new plan?"**

Support the child to recognise when they need help

- Encourage the child to identify signs that they are finding a change difficult and to use appropriate strategies or seek support, e.g. **"I need a break." "Can you help me understand the new plan?"** This promotes self-awareness and self-advocacy.

Recognise and celebrate positive coping

- Acknowledge when the child uses a strategy, adapts to a change, or perseveres when things are different.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You noticed the change and used your coping strategy." "You adapted to the new plan really well." "You found a solution when things didn't go as expected."**
- Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages future resilience.

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6.3 **Transitions**

Make successful transitions in everyday situations

Prepare the child in advance for transitions

- Use visual timetables, countdowns, timers, photographs, or verbal reminders to let the child know when a change of activity is coming. E.g.: **"In five minutes, we will tidy up and go outside."**
- Preparation helps reduce uncertainty and increases predictability.

Use consistent transition routines

- Develop familiar routines, songs, visual cues, or signals that are used each time a transition occurs, e.g. using the same tidy-up song or visual cue before moving to the next activity.
- Consistency helps the child understand what is happening and what is expected of them.

Support understanding of what comes next

- Clearly explain where the child is going, what they will be doing, and who will be there.
- Use language such as **"First we will finish our game, then we will have snack time." "After lunch we are going to the hall for PE."** Knowing what comes next can help the child feel more confident and secure.

Teach and practise coping strategies

- Support the child to use strategies that help them manage transitions, such as carrying a familiar object, using deep breathing, checking a visual timetable, or asking for help.
- Encourage the child to identify which strategies help them feel calm and ready for change.

Recognise and celebrate successful transitions

- Acknowledge the child's efforts to move between activities, locations, or routines.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You moved to the next activity when it was time." "You used your timetable to help you understand the change." "You managed that transition really well."**
- Positive reinforcement builds confidence and supports increasing independence.

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6.3 Transitions

Join in with preparations for transitions to a new setting

Involve the child in gathering information about the new setting

- Encourage the child to take part in activities such as looking at photographs, watching videos, exploring websites, or discussing the new setting.
- Use positive, reassuring language and provide opportunities for the child to ask questions.
- This helps the child feel informed, included, and more confident about the transition.

Create a personalised transition book or visual plan

- Work with the child to develop a book, scrapbook, photo album, or visual guide containing information about the new setting, key people, routines, and important areas.
- Encouraging the child to contribute helps them develop ownership and familiarity with the upcoming change.

Support participation in visits and preparation activities

- Involve the child in transition visits, meeting staff, exploring the environment, and practising new routines.
- Prepare the child in advance for what will happen during visits and encourage them to share their thoughts and observations afterwards. This can help reduce uncertainty and build confidence.

Encourage the child to identify questions, hopes, and worries

- Provide opportunities for the child to talk about what they are looking forward to and anything they may be unsure about.
- Use prompts such as **"What would you like to know about your new school?" "What are you excited about?" "Is there anything you would like help with?"** This supports self-advocacy and emotional wellbeing.

Recognise and celebrate involvement in the transition process

- Acknowledge the child's efforts to participate in transition activities and preparations.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You asked some really helpful questions about your new setting." "You joined in with the visit and explored the new environment." "You helped prepare for the transition and learned lots about what comes next."**
- Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages active participation.

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6.3 **Transitions**

Make successful transitions to an education setting

Provide opportunities to become familiar with the new setting

- Arrange visits to the setting, opportunities to meet key adults, and chances to explore important areas such as classrooms, entrances, toilets, dining areas, and outdoor spaces.
- Use photographs, videos, and maps to help the child build familiarity before they start. Familiarity can increase confidence and reduce uncertainty.

Create a personalised transition plan

- Develop a transition booklet, visual timetable, or social story that includes information about routines, staff, expectations, and daily activities.
- Involve the child in creating and reviewing the plan so they feel included and prepared. This supports understanding and predictability.

Build positive relationships with key adults

- Identify a trusted member of staff who can provide reassurance and consistent support during the transition period.
- Encourage opportunities for the child and key adult to spend time together before the transition takes place. Strong relationships help children feel safe, valued, and supported.

Share information between home and the education setting

- Work collaboratively with families and professionals to ensure important information about the child's strengths, interests, communication style, successful strategies, and support needs is shared.
- A consistent approach across environments can help the child feel secure and understood.

Recognise and celebrate progress throughout the transition

- Acknowledge the child's efforts and achievements, no matter how small.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You explored your new classroom today." "You met new people and asked questions." "You are becoming more confident in your new setting."**
- Celebrating success helps build confidence, resilience, and a positive attitude towards change.

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6.4 Interests

Join in activities which are interesting to them

Identify and build on the child's interests

- Observe what the child enjoys, talks about, chooses, or spends time doing.
- Use these interests to plan activities that are motivating and meaningful, e.g. **"You enjoy animals, so let's explore an animal-themed game together."**
- Activities linked to the child's interests are more likely to encourage engagement and participation.

Offer choice and control

- Provide opportunities for the child to choose activities, resources, or themes, e.g. **"Would you like to do drawing or building today?" "Which game would you like to join?"**
- Having choice helps the child feel valued and increases motivation to participate.

Make activities accessible and achievable

- Adapt activities to match the child's strengths, communication style, sensory needs, and developmental level.
- Breaking activities into manageable steps can help the child experience success and build confidence.

Use encouragement and shared participation

- Join the child in activities they enjoy and show genuine interest in their ideas and achievements.
- Offer supportive prompts when needed and celebrate their contributions. This helps develop confidence and promotes positive engagement.

Recognise and celebrate participation

- Acknowledge the child's efforts to join in and stay engaged with activities they enjoy.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You chose an activity you were interested in and joined in confidently." "You stayed involved and shared your ideas." "You found something you enjoy and took part enthusiastically."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages continued participation and enjoyment.

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6.4 Interests

Join in with a range of activities which aren't as interesting to them

Link less preferred activities to the child's interests

- Incorporate the child's favourite topics, characters, objects, or themes into activities that they may be less motivated to join, e.g. if a child enjoys cars, counting activities could involve toy vehicles.
- This can increase engagement and help the child approach new experiences with greater confidence.

Offer choice within the activity

- Give the child some control over how they participate, e.g. **"Would you like to use pens or pencils?" "Would you like to sit at the table or on the carpet?"**
- Having choices can increase motivation and help the child feel more involved.

Start with short periods of participation

- Encourage the child to engage for a manageable amount of time and gradually increase expectations as their confidence develops, e.g. **"Let's try this activity for five minutes and then we'll review how it went."**
- Small successes can build resilience and willingness to try new things.

Provide encouragement and support

- Offer reassurance, clear instructions, and appropriate scaffolding to help the child access the activity.
- Use affirming language such as **"You don't have to do it perfectly. We're just having a go." "I'll help you get started."**
- Supportive adults can help reduce anxiety and promote participation.

Recognise and celebrate effort and perseverance

- Acknowledge when the child joins in, remains engaged, or tries something new, regardless of how much they enjoy the activity.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You gave that activity a try even though it wasn't your favourite." "You kept going and showed resilience." "You joined in and learned something new today."**
- Positive reinforcement helps develop flexibility, confidence, and a growth mindset.

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6.5 Problem solving and thinking skills

Make a choice

Offer meaningful choices throughout the day

- Provide regular opportunities for the child to choose between two or more options during everyday activities, e.g. **"Would you like to play with the blocks or the cars?" "Would you like an apple or a banana?"**
- Frequent opportunities to make choices help the child understand that their preferences are valued.

Use visual supports to present options

- Use photographs, objects, symbols, choice boards, or communication aids to help the child understand the available options.
- Visual supports can make decision-making more accessible and support children who use different communication methods.

Start with motivating and familiar choices

- Begin with choices involving activities, toys, foods, or people that the child already knows and enjoys.
- Successful experiences with familiar options can build confidence in making decisions.

Allow time for thinking and responding

- Give the child sufficient time to consider their options and communicate their choice.
- Avoid rushing or choosing on their behalf.
- Use supportive language such as **"Take your time and decide what you would like." "I'm interested to know which one you prefer."** This encourages independence and self-expression.

Acknowledge and celebrate decision-making

- Recognise when the child makes a choice, regardless of how they communicate it.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You made a choice and let me know what you wanted." "You thought carefully about your options." "You chose what worked best for you."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages future decision-making.

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6.5 Problem solving and thinking skills

Use information available to make an appropriate choice

Present information in an accessible way

- Use photographs, symbols, objects, visuals, written information, demonstrations, or videos to help the child understand their options.
- Ensure information is presented in a way that matches the child's communication and learning needs. This helps the child make informed decisions rather than guessing or relying solely on others.

Teach the child to compare options

- Support the child to look at the differences between choices and consider the possible outcomes of each option.
- Use prompts such as **"What might happen if you choose this?" "Which option will help you reach your goal?"** This develops decision-making and problem-solving skills.

Encourage the child to think about their preferences and needs

- Help the child consider what they enjoy, what they need, and what might work best in a particular situation, e.g. **"Which activity do you think you will enjoy most?" "Which coat is best for today's weather?"** This promotes self-awareness and independent thinking.

Model decision-making processes

- Talk through your own choices and explain the information you are using, e.g. **"I'm choosing my umbrella because I can see it's raining outside." "I'm having a drink because it's a hot day."**
- Modelling helps the child learn how information can be used to make appropriate decisions.

Recognise and celebrate informed choices

- Acknowledge when the child uses available information to make a decision.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You looked at all the options before choosing." "You used the information to make a good decision." "You thought carefully about what would work best for you."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages confidence and independence in decision-making.

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6.5 Problem solving and thinking skills

Sort items into groups

Start with familiar and meaningful objects

- Use everyday items that the child recognises, such as toys, food items, clothes, or classroom resources.
- Begin by sorting objects into simple groups, such as cars and animals or red and blue items.
- Familiar materials help make sorting activities meaningful and engaging.

Model how to identify similarities and differences

- Talk through your thinking as you sort items, e.g. **"I'm putting these together because they are all animals." "These blocks go in this group because they are the same colour."**
- Modelling helps the child understand the reasons for grouping items.

Use visual supports and sorting mats

- Provide sorting trays, hoops, labelled containers, colour-coded boxes, or picture cues to help organise items into categories.
- Visual supports make the task clearer and help the child understand how different groups are formed.

Encourage the child to explain their sorting decisions

- Ask open-ended questions such as **"Why did you put these together?" "What is the same about these items?" "Can you think of another way to sort them?"** This develops language, reasoning, and problem-solving skills.

Recognise and celebrate successful sorting

- Acknowledge the child's efforts to identify patterns, categories, and relationships between items.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You noticed that all those objects were the same colour." "You found a good way to organise the items into groups." "You explained your thinking really clearly."** Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages further learning.

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6.5 Problem solving and thinking skills

Use information to plan and predict

Talk through planning and prediction during everyday activities

- Model how to use information to think ahead and make decisions, e.g. **"The clouds are dark, so I think it might rain. I'll take my coat." "We have PE today, so we'll need our trainers."** This helps the child understand how information can be used to anticipate what might happen next.

Use visual supports to help organise thinking

- Provide visual timetables, calendars, checklists, sequencing cards, or planning boards. Visual aids can make planning and prediction more concrete and accessible.
- Encourage the child to refer to these supports to identify what is happening now and what is likely to happen next.

Ask questions that encourage thinking ahead

- Use prompts such as **"What do you think will happen next?" "What will you need for this activity?" "What should we do first?" "How can we get ready?"**
- These questions help the child develop reasoning and prediction skills.

Use stories, games, and real-life situations

- Encourage the child to predict outcomes in books, films, experiments, and everyday routines, e.g. **"What do you think the character will do next?" "What might happen if we forget our umbrella?"** This supports flexible thinking and helps the child learn to use available information to make informed predictions.

Recognise and celebrate successful planning and predicting

- Acknowledge when the child uses information to prepare, make decisions, or anticipate outcomes.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You thought ahead and brought everything you needed." "You used the clues to predict what would happen next." "You made a plan and followed it successfully."**
- Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages independent thinking.

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6.5 Problem solving and thinking skills

Make deductions based on the information they have

Model thinking aloud

- Demonstrate how to use clues and information to work something out, e.g. **"The ground is wet and there are puddles outside, so I think it has been raining." "The lights are off and the door is locked, so the building may be closed."** This helps the child understand the process of making deductions.

Ask questions that encourage reasoning

- Use prompts that require the child to think beyond what they can immediately see, e.g. **"What makes you think that?" "How do you know?" "What clues can you find?"**
- These questions encourage the child to use available information to draw conclusions.

Use stories, pictures, and real-life situations

- Explore books, photographs, and everyday events together.
- Ask the child to identify clues and work out what might be happening, e.g. **"The boy is holding an umbrella and wearing wellington boots. What might the weather be like?"** This helps develop inference and reasoning skills in meaningful contexts.

Teach the child to look for evidence

- Encourage them to identify the information they used to reach a conclusion.
- Use prompts such as **"Which clues helped you decide that?" "What information do we already know?"** This supports logical thinking and helps the child understand how conclusions are reached.

Recognise and celebrate deductive thinking

- Acknowledge when the child uses information successfully to work something out.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You used the clues to work out what had happened." "You thought carefully about the information you had." "You explained how you reached your conclusion."**
- Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages further problem-solving and reasoning.

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6.5 Problem solving and thinking skills

Notice and take action to solve problems

Model problem-solving during everyday situations

- Think aloud when faced with a problem and explain the steps you are taking to solve it, e.g. **"The glue has run out. I need to think of another way to stick this together." "I can't find my keys, so I'll think about where I used them last."** This helps the child learn a structured approach to identifying and solving problems.

Encourage the child to recognise when a problem has occurred

- Help the child identify situations where something is not working as expected.
- Use prompts such as **"What is the problem?" "What is making this difficult?" "What do you need to happen?"**
- Developing awareness of problems is the first step towards solving them independently.

Support the child to generate possible solutions

- Encourage the child to think of different ways to address a problem, e.g. **"What could you try?" "Can you think of another way?" "Which idea do you think might work best?"** This develops flexible thinking and confidence in making decisions.

Use real-life and play-based problem-solving opportunities

- Provide opportunities to solve problems during play, learning, and daily routines, e.g. building a tower that keeps falling down, working out how to share resources or finding a missing item.
- Meaningful experiences help children practise problem-solving in a practical way.

Recognise and celebrate problem-solving efforts

- Acknowledge when the child notices a problem, suggests a solution, asks for support, or perseveres through a challenge.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You noticed something wasn't working and tried a different approach." "You thought carefully about how to solve that problem." "You kept trying until you found a solution."**
- Positive reinforcement builds resilience, confidence, and independence.

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6.5 Problem solving and thinking skills

Reflect on problems that happen and strategies I've used

Create regular opportunities for reflection

- After activities, social situations, or challenges, encourage the child to talk about what happened and how they responded.
- Use simple prompts such as **"What was the problem?" "What did you do?" "What happened next?"** Regular reflection helps the child become more aware of their own thinking and actions.

Use visual tools to support reflection

- Provide problem-solving sheets, emotion scales, comic strip conversations, or visual reflection boards.
- These tools can help the child identify the problem, how they felt, what strategy they used and whether it was helpful.
- Visual supports make reflection more structured and accessible.

Model reflective thinking

- Talk aloud about your own experiences of solving problems, e.g. **"I couldn't find my keys, so I retraced my steps. That helped me solve the problem." "I felt frustrated, so I took a deep breath before trying again."** This demonstrates how to evaluate strategies and learn from experiences.

Encourage evaluation of different strategies

- Support the child to consider what worked well and what they might do differently next time. This helps develop flexible thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Ask questions such as **"Which strategy helped the most?" "Would you use that idea again?" "What could you try next time?"**

Recognise and celebrate reflective thinking

- Acknowledge when the child can identify a problem, describe a strategy, or evaluate the outcome.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You thought carefully about what helped you solve the problem." "You recognised which strategy worked best for you." "You learned something that will help you next time."**
- Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages ongoing self-reflection.

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7. Emotional understanding

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7. Emotional Understanding and Self-Awareness

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7.2 Know and show own emotions



7.3 Manage emotions and reactions



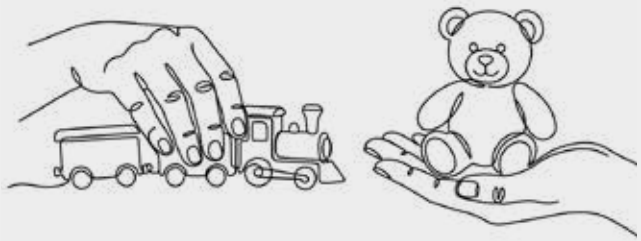
7.4 Know others' emotions and intentions



7.5 Self-awareness



7.6 Developing confidence and self esteem



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7.1 Emotional understanding and self-awareness

Recommended strategies for an environment to support and develop emotional understanding and self-awareness:

Create an emotionally safe and supportive environment

- Develop a nurturing atmosphere where children feel valued, listened to, and respected.
- Ensure children know that all emotions are acceptable and can be expressed safely and appropriately.
- Respond calmly and consistently to children's feelings and behaviours.
- A safe environment helps children develop confidence in understanding and expressing their emotions.

Promote the use of emotional language

- Use a wide range of vocabulary to describe feelings, emotions, and emotional experiences, e.g. happy, excited, frustrated, nervous, disappointed or proud.
- Model this language throughout the day to help children identify and communicate their feelings more effectively.

Provide visual supports for emotional awareness

- Use feelings charts, emotion scales, mood meters, zones of regulation, and visual prompts to support emotional identification.
- Encourage children to use these tools to communicate how they are feeling.
- Visual supports can make emotions easier to recognise, understand, and discuss.

Encourage regular reflection and self-awareness

- Create opportunities for children to think about their emotions, strengths, challenges, and experiences.
- Use prompts such as **"How are you feeling today?" "What made you feel proud?" "What helped when you felt worried?" "What are you really good at?"**
- Reflection helps children better understand themselves and their emotional responses.

Use stories, role-play, and discussions

- Explore emotions and behaviour through books, social stories, role-play activities, and everyday situations.
- Discuss how characters feel, why they may feel that way and how they managed their emotions.
- These activities help children understand emotions in themselves and others.

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7.1 Emotional understanding and self-awareness

Model emotional awareness and regulation

- Adults should demonstrate healthy ways of recognising and managing emotions.
- Use statements such as **"I'm feeling frustrated, so I'm going to take a moment to calm down." "I feel proud because I worked hard."**
- Modelling teaches children that emotions are normal and manageable.

Provide opportunities to identify strengths and achievements

- Encourage children to recognise their own interests, skills, successes, and personal qualities.
- Use displays, learning journals, achievement books, and positive discussions.
- Developing awareness of strengths contributes to positive self-esteem and self-confidence.

Offer strategies for emotional regulation

- Provide access to calming tools and self-regulation strategies such as breathing exercises, sensory resources, quiet spaces, mindfulness activities and/ or movement breaks.
- Help children identify which strategies work best for them. This promotes self-awareness and emotional independence.

Recognise and celebrate emotional understanding

- Acknowledge when children identify emotions, communicate their feelings, reflect on experiences, or use regulation strategies.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You recognised that you were feeling worried and asked for help." "You explained your feelings clearly." "You knew what strategy would help you feel calm." "You reflected thoughtfully on your experience."**
- Positive reinforcement helps develop emotional literacy and self-awareness.

Ensure consistency across adults and settings

- Use consistent emotional language, visual supports, and approaches across home, school, and other environments.
- Share successful strategies between adults supporting the child.
- Consistent approaches help children generalise emotional understanding and self-awareness skills across different situations.

These environmental strategies support the development of emotional literacy, self-awareness, self-esteem, confidence, resilience, self-regulation, and wellbeing, helping children understand their emotions, recognise their strengths and needs, and develop positive strategies for managing their feelings and experiences.

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7.2 Know and show own emotions

Show a range of emotions

Model and name emotions throughout the day

- Use everyday situations to demonstrate and label a variety of emotions such as happiness, excitement, frustration, disappointment, worry, pride, and calmness, e.g. **"I feel excited because we're going on a trip." "I'm disappointed because it started raining."** This helps the child build an emotional vocabulary and understand that people experience many different feelings.

Use stories, pictures, and role-play to explore emotions

- Read books, look at photographs, or engage in role-play activities that include a range of emotional experiences.
- Discuss how characters might be feeling and why. This helps the child recognise and become comfortable with a variety of emotions in themselves and others.

Create a safe environment for emotional expression

- Encourage the child to communicate feelings without fear of judgement.
- Use affirming language such as **"It's okay to feel upset." "All feelings are important." "Thank you for telling me how you feel."** This helps the child understand that a wide range of emotions are natural and acceptable.

Use visual supports and emotion tools

- Introduce emotion cards, feelings charts, colour scales, or emotion thermometers to help the child identify and express different feelings.
- Visual supports can help children recognise emotions that may be difficult to describe using words alone.

Recognise and celebrate emotional expression

- Acknowledge when the child identifies, communicates, or appropriately expresses a feeling.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You told me you were feeling worried. That was helpful." "You shared your excitement about your achievement." "You recognised that you were frustrated and let me know."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages emotional awareness and self-expression.

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7.2 Know and show own emotions

Know my own emotions

Help the child identify and name emotions

- Regularly label emotions during everyday experiences and encourage the child to do the same, e.g. **"You look excited about going to the park." "I wonder if you're feeling disappointed because the game has finished."** This helps the child build an emotional vocabulary and recognise different feelings.

Use visual supports to explore emotions

- Introduce feelings charts, emotion cards, mood meters, or emotion thermometers. Visual supports can make emotions easier to recognise and discuss.
- Encourage the child to use these tools to identify how they are feeling throughout the day.

Connect emotions with physical sensations

- Help the child notice what happens in their body when they experience different emotions, e.g. **"When you're worried, do you notice your tummy feels different?" "When you're excited, does your body feel full of energy?"**
- Understanding body signals can increase emotional self-awareness.

Reflect on experiences and feelings together

- Discuss situations after they happen and encourage the child to think about how they felt.
- Use prompts such as **"How were you feeling when that happened?" "What made you feel proud?" "What helped when you were upset?"**
- Reflection supports the development of emotional understanding and self-awareness.

Recognise and celebrate emotional awareness

- Acknowledge when the child identifies, describes, or communicates their feelings.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You recognised that you were feeling frustrated." "You told me that you were nervous and asked for help." "You understood how you were feeling and shared it with me."**
- Positive reinforcement helps the child develop confidence in recognising and expressing emotions.

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7.2 Know and show own emotions

Know the cause of their emotions

Help the child link feelings to events and experiences

- Support the child to identify what happened before they experienced a particular emotion.
- Use prompts such as **"What happened just before you felt upset?" "What made you feel excited?" "What do you think caused that feeling?"** This helps the child understand that emotions often have identifiable triggers.

Use visual supports and emotion maps

- Create simple charts that connect situations, feelings, and reactions, e.g. What happened? How did I feel? What did I do?
- Visual supports can help the child recognise patterns between events and emotions.

Reflect on emotions during and after experiences

- Talk with the child about their feelings when they are calm and ready to reflect, e.g. **"You seemed frustrated when the tower fell down. Was that what you were feeling?" "You looked proud after finishing your drawing. What made you feel proud?"**
- Reflection helps develop emotional awareness and understanding.

Use stories, books, and real-life examples

- Discuss why characters or people might be feeling certain emotions.
- Ask questions such as **"Why do you think the character felt worried?" "What happened that made them feel happy?"**
- Exploring emotions in others can help the child recognise similar patterns in themselves.

Recognise and celebrate emotional insight

- Acknowledge when the child identifies the cause of their feelings.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You worked out that the noise was making you feel overwhelmed." "You recognised that you felt disappointed because the plan changed." "You understood what caused that feeling and explained it clearly."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the child to continue developing self-awareness and emotional understanding.

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7.3 Manage emotions and reactions

Respond to calming strategies from other helpful people

Introduce calming strategies during calm, positive moments

- Teach and practise calming strategies when the child is feeling regulated and comfortable, rather than only during times of distress, e.g. practise deep breathing, using a sensory tool, or taking a movement break during enjoyable activities.
- Familiarity can help the child feel more comfortable accepting support when they need it.

Use consistent approaches across trusted adults

- Ensure that helpful adults use similar calming strategies and language where possible, e.g. **"Let's take three slow breaths together." "Would some time in the quiet area help?"**
- Consistency helps the child recognise and trust the strategies being offered.

Respect the child's communication and preferences

- Observe and respond to how the child shows comfort or discomfort with different calming approaches.
- Offer choices where appropriate, such as **"Would you like a movement break or some quiet time?" "Would you like me to sit with you or give you some space?"** This promotes autonomy and helps the child feel safe and understood.

Model and practise co-regulation

- Adults can calmly demonstrate strategies alongside the child, e.g. **"I'm going to take some deep breaths to help myself feel calm." "Let's squeeze the stress ball together."**
- Co-regulation helps the child learn that support from others can be helpful when emotions become overwhelming.

Recognise and celebrate when the child accepts support

- Acknowledge when the child responds positively to a calming strategy offered by an adult.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You let me help you calm your body." "You used the breathing strategy when I suggested it." "You accepted support and found a way to feel more comfortable."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages the child to access support in the future.

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7.3 Manage emotions and reactions

Use my own strategies to manage stress

Help the child identify what stress feels like for them

- Support the child to recognise their own signs of stress, such as changes in body sensations, emotions, thoughts, or behaviour.
- Use prompts such as **"How does your body feel when you're worried?" "What tells you that you need a break?"**
- Developing self-awareness is the first step towards independent stress management.

Teach a range of calming and coping strategies

- Introduce strategies such as deep breathing, movement breaks, mindfulness activities, sensory tools, listening to music, drawing, or spending time in a quiet space.
- Encourage the child to explore different options and identify which strategies work best for them.

Create opportunities to practise strategies regularly

- Encourage the child to use coping strategies during everyday situations, not just when they are highly stressed.
- Regular practice helps the child become familiar with the strategy and more likely to use it independently when needed.

Support the child to develop a personal stress-management plan

- Work with the child to create a simple plan showing how they know they are becoming stressed, what strategies help them and who they can go to for support if needed.
- Visual reminders can help the child access their plan independently.

Recognise and celebrate independent use of strategies

- Acknowledge when the child identifies stress and chooses a strategy to help themselves.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You noticed you were feeling overwhelmed and took a break." "You used your breathing strategy to help yourself feel calmer." "You recognised what you needed and took positive action."**
- Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages independence.

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7.3 Manage emotions and reactions

Take part in planning and preparing strategies to look after their own emotions and reactions

Involve the child in identifying their emotions and triggers

- Support the child to recognise situations, events, or experiences that may affect how they feel.
- Use prompts such as **"What helps you feel worried?" "What makes you feel calm and happy?" "How do you know when you're becoming frustrated?"**
- This helps the child develop self-awareness and understand their emotional experiences.

Work together to create a personalised emotional regulation plan

- Collaboratively develop a simple plan that includes how the child feels when emotions are becoming difficult to manage, strategies that help them and people they can ask for support.
- Use visual supports, photographs, symbols, or written prompts to make the plan accessible and meaningful.

Encourage the child to choose preferred coping strategies

- Offer a range of regulation strategies such as deep breathing, movement breaks, sensory supports, quiet spaces, drawing, talking to someone, or mindfulness activities.
- Encourage the child to identify which strategies work best for them. This promotes choice, ownership, and self-advocacy.

Review and reflect on strategies regularly

- After challenging or successful situations, discuss which strategies were helpful and whether any changes are needed.
- Use questions such as **"What helped you today?" "Would you use that strategy again?" "Is there something different we could try next time?"** This supports problem-solving and helps the child refine their emotional regulation toolkit.

Recognise and celebrate active participation in planning

- Acknowledge when the child contributes ideas, identifies helpful strategies, or helps update their support plan.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You knew what would help you feel calm and included it in your plan." "You shared some really helpful ideas about managing your feelings." "You took an active role in planning how to support yourself."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages confidence, independence, and ongoing self-reflection.

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7.3 Manage emotions and reactions

Use strategies I've been taught to look after their emotions and reactions

Practise strategies regularly during calm times

- Provide frequent opportunities for the child to practise emotional regulation strategies when they are calm and ready to learn, e.g. rehearse deep breathing, positive self-talk, using sensory tools, or taking a movement break during everyday activities.
- Regular practice helps the child become more confident and able to use strategies when they need them.

Use reminders and visual prompts

- Provide accessible reminders such as feelings charts, coping strategy cards, visual cue cards, or personalised regulation plans.
- These supports can help the child independently remember which strategies are available and when to use them, e.g. **"Let's check your feelings chart. Which strategy might help right now?"**

Prompt the child to choose a strategy

- When the child begins to experience strong emotions, gently encourage them to access a strategy they have already learned.
- Use prompts such as **"What has helped you before?" "Which strategy would you like to try?" "What does your plan suggest?"** This promotes independence and self-regulation.

Reflect on how well strategies worked

- After the situation has passed, discuss the effectiveness of the strategy used.
- Ask questions such as **"Did that help you feel calmer?" "Would you use that strategy again?" "Is there something else that might help next time?"**
- Reflection helps the child develop self-awareness and build an effective toolkit of coping strategies.

Recognise and celebrate successful use of strategies

- Acknowledge when the child independently or with support uses a strategy to manage their emotions or reactions.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You noticed you were becoming frustrated and used your breathing strategy." "You remembered what helps you stay calm." "You used a strategy to manage a difficult feeling and stayed in control."**
- Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages continued use of emotional regulation strategies.

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7.3 Manage emotions and reactions

Reflect on how I behave when I feel an emotion

Help the child identify links between feelings and behaviour

- Encourage the child to think about what they do when they experience different emotions.
- Use prompts such as **"What do you do when you feel worried?" "How do you behave when you're excited?" "What happened when you felt frustrated?"** This helps the child recognise the connection between emotions and actions.

Use visual supports to explore emotions and reactions

- Introduce emotion scales, feelings charts, comic strip conversations, or behaviour maps, e.g. What happened? → How did I feel? → What did I do?
- Visual tools can help the child reflect on experiences in a structured and accessible way.

Reflect on situations when the child is calm

- Discuss emotional experiences after the event, when the child feels regulated and ready to think about what happened.
- Use supportive, non-judgemental language such as **"Let's think together about what happened." "What do you think your feelings were telling you?"** This promotes self-awareness without creating feelings of blame or shame.

Explore alternative responses

- Support the child to consider what helped and what they could do differently next time.
- Ask questions such as **"What worked well?" "What could help if you felt that way again?" "What strategy might you try next time?"** This helps develop emotional regulation and problem-solving skills.

Recognise and celebrate self-reflection

- Acknowledge when the child can talk about their emotions, actions, and learning from a situation.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You thought carefully about how you responded when you felt upset." "You recognised what happened and what might help next time." "You showed great self-awareness by reflecting on your feelings and behaviour."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the child to continue developing insight into their emotions and reactions.

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7.4 Know others' emotions and intentions

Reflect on how I behave when I feel an emotion

Talk about emotions during everyday interactions

- Help the child notice and name the emotions of others in real-life situations.
- Use comments such as **"Jacob is smiling. He looks happy." "Ella is crying. I wonder if she is feeling upset."** This helps the child learn to recognise emotional cues in the people around them.

Use stories, pictures, and videos to explore feelings

- Discuss how characters might be feeling and what clues help us know.
- Ask questions such as **"How do you think this person feels?" "What can you see that tells you that?" "What might help them?"** This develops emotional understanding and perspective-taking skills.

Teach the child to notice facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice

- Draw attention to non-verbal communication cues, e.g. **"His shoulders are slumped and he's looking down." "Her voice sounds excited."**
- Learning to recognise these cues helps the child understand how others may be feeling.

Model caring and empathetic responses

- Demonstrate ways to respond when someone is experiencing an emotion, e.g. **"You seem sad. Would you like some help?" "Well done, you look really proud of your work."**
- Modelling helps the child learn appropriate and supportive responses to different emotions.

Recognise and celebrate empathy and emotional awareness

- Acknowledge when the child notices or responds to another person's feelings.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You noticed your friend was upset and checked if they were okay." "You recognised that someone needed help and offered support." "You thought about how another person was feeling."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the development of empathy and social understanding.

Go to the next page

7.4 Know others' emotions and intentions

Know causes of emotions in others

Talk about emotions and their causes during everyday experiences

- Help the child link other people's feelings to events and experiences.
- Use comments and questions such as **"Ben looks disappointed because his game has ended." "Why do you think Mum looks happy today?"** This helps the child understand that emotions often happen for a reason.

Use stories, pictures, and videos to explore feelings

- Discuss how characters might be feeling and what has caused those emotions.
- Ask questions such as **"Why is the character feeling worried?" "What happened that made her feel excited?" "How would you feel if that happened to you?"** This supports the development of empathy and perspective-taking.

Teach the child to look for clues

- Encourage the child to notice facial expressions, body language, tone of voice, and events happening around a person, e.g. **"His face is smiling and people are clapping. Why do you think he feels proud?"**
- Learning to identify clues helps children understand what may have caused an emotion.

Use role-play and real-life situations

- Act out different scenarios and discuss how each person might feel and why, e.g. finding a lost toy, receiving a gift or being left out of a game.
- This helps the child understand that different situations can lead to different emotions.

Recognise and celebrate emotional understanding

- Acknowledge when the child correctly identifies why someone may be feeling a certain way.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as: **"You worked out that your friend was upset because they lost their turn." "You noticed why your sister was excited." "You thought carefully about what caused that feeling."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the child to continue developing empathy and social understanding.

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7.4 Know others' emotions and intentions

Be curious about other people's behaviour to help to understand it

Encourage the child to wonder about why people behave in different ways

- Use open-ended questions to promote curiosity and reflection, e.g. **"I wonder why Sam moved away from the noisy group?" "What do you think made her choose to do that?"**
- This helps the child learn that behaviour often has a reason behind it.

Explore behaviour through stories, videos, and real-life situations

- Discuss characters' actions and the possible thoughts, feelings, or circumstances that may have influenced their behaviour.
- Ask questions such as **"Why do you think the character reacted that way?" "What might they have been feeling?"** This supports perspective-taking and social understanding.

Model curiosity rather than judgement

- Use respectful, non-judgemental language when talking about behaviour, e.g. **"I wonder what happened to make him feel upset?" "There may be something we don't know about that situation."** This helps the child learn to seek understanding rather than make assumptions.

Teach the child to look for clues

- Encourage them to consider facial expressions, body language, tone of voice, and what is happening in the environment, e.g. **"What clues can you see that might help us understand why she is behaving like that?"** This develops observation skills and helps the child gather information before reaching conclusions.

Recognise and celebrate thoughtful curiosity about others

- Acknowledge when the child shows interest in understanding another person's actions, thoughts, or feelings.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You thought carefully about why your friend behaved that way." "You were curious and tried to understand another person's perspective." "You looked for clues before making a judgement."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages empathy, understanding, and respectful relationships.

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7.4 Know others' emotions and intentions

Be aware of risks within situations

Discuss risks and safety during everyday activities

- Use real-life situations to help the child identify potential risks and consider safe choices, e.g. **"What do we need to think about before crossing the road?" "What could happen if we run near the swimming pool?"** This helps the child develop awareness of hazards in familiar environments.

Use stories, videos, and role-play to explore risk

- Discuss scenarios that involve making safe decisions and recognising potential dangers.
- Ask questions such as **"What could go wrong here?" "What would be the safest thing to do?" "Who could help if there was a problem?"** This provides opportunities to practise identifying risks in a safe and supportive way.

Teach the child to stop, think, and decide

- Introduce a simple problem-solving approach such as 'Stop → Think → Choose'.
- Encourage the child to pause and consider possible consequences before acting. This supports the development of safe and independent decision-making.

Help the child identify trusted adults and sources of support

- Support the child to understand who they can go to if they are unsure, worried, or need help managing a risk. This promotes confidence and safety awareness.
- Use photographs, visual supports, or discussions about safe adults at home, school, and in the community.

Recognise and celebrate safe decision-making

- Acknowledge when the child notices a risk, asks for help, follows safety guidance, or makes a safe choice.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You noticed that the floor was wet and walked carefully." "You asked for help when you weren't sure what to do." "You thought about the risks and made a safe decision."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages ongoing awareness of safety.

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7.4 Know others' emotions and intentions

Be aware of differences with 'reading' others emotions and/or intentions

Teach that people can experience and express emotions differently

- Discuss how different people may show the same emotion in different ways, e.g. **"Some people smile when they are happy, while others may stay quiet." "Someone might look angry but could actually be feeling worried."** This helps the child understand that emotions and intentions are not always obvious.

Explore multiple possible explanations for behaviour

- Encourage the child to consider different reasons why someone may have acted in a particular way.
- Use prompts such as **"What are some reasons they might have done that?" "Could there be another explanation?"** This supports flexible thinking and reduces assumptions about other people's intentions.

Use stories, videos, and real-life situations to discuss perspectives

- Talk about what different characters or people might be thinking, feeling, or intending in the same situation, e.g. **"Why do you think the character said that?" "Do you think everyone would see this situation in the same way?"** This helps develop perspective-taking skills.

Teach the child to look for multiple social clues

- Encourage them to consider facial expressions, body language, tone of voice, words, and the surrounding situation when trying to understand someone, e.g. **"What clues can you see?" "What was happening just before that?"** This supports a more accurate understanding of emotions and intentions.

Recognise and celebrate thoughtful interpretation of others

- Acknowledge when the child considers another person's perspective or recognises that they may not know exactly what someone is thinking or feeling.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You thought about different reasons why that person behaved that way." "You looked at lots of clues before deciding how someone felt." "You understood that people can express emotions differently."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages empathy, curiosity, and social understanding.

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7.5 Self-awareness

Know their own characteristics

Help the child identify their strengths and interests

- Provide opportunities for the child to talk about what they enjoy, what they are good at, and what makes them unique.
- Use prompts such as **"What are you proud of?" "What do you enjoy doing?" "What do other people ask you to help with?"** This helps the child develop a positive understanding of themselves.

Use strengths-based language

- Regularly recognise and describe the child's positive qualities, skills, and achievements, e.g. **"You are very creative." "You are a kind friend." "You are determined when things are difficult."**
- Hearing positive descriptions helps the child build an accurate and confident sense of identity.

Encourage self-reflection

- Create opportunities for the child to think about their preferences, abilities, and experiences.
- Ask questions such as **"What do you find easy?" "What would you like to learn more about?" "What helps you do your best?"**
- Reflection supports self-awareness and personal growth.

Use activities that celebrate individuality

- Encourage activities such as "All About Me" books, personal profiles, collages, drawings, or discussions about family, culture, interests, and achievements.
- These activities help the child recognise and value their own characteristics and experiences.

Recognise and celebrate self-awareness

- Acknowledge when the child talks about their strengths, preferences, needs, or personal qualities.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You know what you're good at and can explain it clearly." "You recognised what helps you learn best." "You shared something important about yourself."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the child to continue developing a strong and positive sense of self.

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7.5 Self-awareness

Know their own interests and strengths

Provide opportunities to explore a range of activities

- Encourage the child to take part in different activities, such as creative arts, sports, construction, problem-solving, music, technology, outdoor learning, or imaginative play.
- Discuss which activities they enjoy most and which feel more challenging. This helps the child discover their interests, preferences, and strengths.

Use strengths-based conversations

- Regularly talk with the child about what they do well and what they enjoy.
- Use prompts such as **"What are you most proud of?" "What activities make you feel happy?" "What do you think you're really good at?"** This encourages self-reflection and positive self-awareness.

Highlight strengths during everyday experiences

- Provide specific feedback about the child's skills and qualities, e.g. **"You showed great creativity when making that model." "You were very determined when solving that problem." "You are kind and helpful when working with others."**
- Specific praise helps the child recognise and understand their own strengths.

Create opportunities for the child to share their talents and interests

- Encourage the child to talk about, demonstrate, or teach others about something they enjoy or are skilled at. This helps build confidence and reinforces a positive sense of identity, e.g. sharing a hobby, leading part of an activity, or explaining how to play a favourite game.

Develop a personal strengths and interests profile

- Support the child to create an "All About Me" book, poster, scrapbook, or profile that includes things they enjoy, things they are good at, achievements they are proud of and/or goals they would like to work towards.
- Reviewing and updating this regularly helps the child develop an increasing awareness of their strengths and interests over time.

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7.5 Self-awareness

Know their own differences

Celebrate individuality and diversity

- Help the child understand that everyone has their own strengths, interests, preferences, ways of learning, and ways of experiencing the world.
- Use positive language such as **"Everyone is different, and that's what makes people interesting." "We all have things we're good at and things we find challenging."** This helps the child develop a positive view of their unique characteristics.

Encourage self-reflection

- Provide opportunities for the child to think about what makes them unique.
- Use prompts such as **"What do you enjoy that might be different from other people?" "What helps you learn best?" "What makes you, you?"**
- Reflection supports self-awareness and self-understanding.

Explore similarities and differences in a positive way

- Use discussions, books, activities, and real-life experiences to explore how people can be similar and different, e.g. discuss different hobbies, cultures, communication styles, learning preferences, and sensory needs. This helps the child understand that differences are a natural part of being human.

Help the child identify their own strengths, needs, and preferences

- Support the child to recognise what they do well, what they find difficult, and what helps them succeed, e.g. **"You concentrate better when you have a quiet space." "You are very creative when solving problems." "You enjoy learning through practical activities."**
- Understanding their own profile helps the child develop confidence and self-advocacy skills.

Recognise and celebrate self-awareness

- Acknowledge when the child talks about their own characteristics, preferences, needs, or differences.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You understand what helps you do your best." "You recognised that you learn differently from some of your friends." "You can explain what makes you unique."**
- Positive reinforcement helps the child build a strong and positive sense of identity.

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7.5 Self-awareness

Know their own difficulties

Use strengths-based conversations about learning and development

- Help the child understand that everyone has strengths and areas they find more challenging.
- Use positive, affirming language such as **"Everyone finds some things easy and some things difficult." "Knowing what you find tricky can help you learn new skills."** This supports self-awareness without affecting self-esteem.

Encourage reflection on tasks and experiences

- After activities, invite the child to think about what went well and what felt difficult.
- Use prompts such as **"What was the easiest part?" "What did you need help with?" "What would make that task easier next time?"** This helps the child identify challenges in a safe and supportive way.

Help the child recognise what support they need

- Encourage the child to identify strategies, resources, or people that help them succeed, e.g. **"A visual timetable helps me remember what comes next." "I learn better when I can see an example first."** This develops self-advocacy and problem-solving skills.

Use personalised profiles or 'All About Me' documents

- Create a profile that includes things I am good at, things I find difficult, what helps me and their goals.
- Reviewing this regularly helps the child develop a balanced understanding of themselves and their needs.

Recognise and celebrate self-awareness

- Acknowledge when the child identifies a challenge, asks for support, or explains what they find difficult.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You recognised that you needed help with that task." "You were able to explain what you found difficult." "You understood what support would help you succeed."**
- Positive reinforcement helps the child view self-awareness as a strength.

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7.5 Self-awareness

Be aware of how changes affect them

Help the child identify their feelings about change

- Encourage the child to talk about or communicate how they feel when something changes.
- Use prompts such as **"How did you feel when the routine changed?" "What was that like for you?" "Did anything make you feel worried, excited, frustrated, or happy?"** This helps the child recognise their emotional responses to change.

Use visual tools to explore the impact of change

- Introduce feelings scales, emotion charts, body maps, or simple reflection sheets, e.g. What changed? How did I feel? What happened next?
- These supports can help the child make connections between changes and their reactions.

Reflect on experiences after changes occur

- When the child is calm, discuss how a change affected them.
- Use questions such as **"What was easy about that change?" "What was difficult?" "What helped you cope?"**
- Reflection helps develop self-awareness and understanding of personal needs.

Notice physical and behavioural signs together

- Help the child recognise how their body and behaviour may change when they experience change, e.g. **"You seemed quieter than usual when the plan changed." "I noticed you needed some extra movement when the classroom was different today."** This supports the child to identify their own signs of stress, excitement, worry, or uncertainty.

Recognise and celebrate self-awareness

- Acknowledge when the child identifies how a change has affected them or communicates what they need.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You noticed that changes to the routine make you feel nervous." "You explained how the change affected you." "You understood what helped you manage the situation."**
- Positive reinforcement helps the child develop confidence in understanding and expressing their experiences.

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7.5 Self-awareness

Participate in planning for their own future

Encourage the child to share their hopes, interests, and goals

- Create regular opportunities for the child to talk about what is important to them, what they enjoy, and what they would like to achieve.
- Use prompts such as **"What would you like to learn next?" "What are you looking forward to?" "What would you like to be able to do in the future?"** This helps the child understand that their views and aspirations are valued.

Use person-centred planning tools

- Support the child to contribute to visual profiles, one-page profiles, aspirations boards, or "All About Me" documents. Include information about what is important to them, what they are good at, what support helps them and their future goals.
- These tools help the child actively participate in planning discussions.

Offer meaningful choices and decision-making opportunities

- Encourage the child to make decisions about activities, learning opportunities, support strategies, and future plans wherever possible, e.g. **"Which club would you like to join?" "What would you like to work towards this term?"**
- Making choices helps develop confidence and self-determination.

Prepare the child to contribute to meetings and discussions

- Before planning meetings, help the child think about what they would like to share, ask, or achieve.
- Use visual supports, communication aids, photographs, or written prompts if helpful. This ensures the child can participate in a way that is meaningful and accessible to them.

Recognise and celebrate the child's contributions

- Acknowledge when the child shares their views, makes decisions, sets goals, or contributes to future planning.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You shared what is important to you." "You helped make decisions about your future." "Your ideas helped shape the plan."**
- Positive reinforcement helps the child develop confidence, self-advocacy, and a sense of ownership over their future.

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7.6 Developing confidence and self esteem

Show preferences

Provide regular opportunities to make choices

- Offer meaningful choices throughout the day, such as selecting activities, toys, foods, books, or places to sit, e.g. **"Would you like to play with the blocks or the playdough?" "Which story would you like to read?"**
- Frequent opportunities to choose help the child understand that their preferences matter.

Support communication in the child's preferred way

- Encourage the child to show preferences using speech, gestures, pointing, signing, symbols, photographs, objects of reference, or communication devices.
- Recognise all forms of communication as valid ways of expressing likes and dislikes. This ensures the child can share their preferences successfully.

Observe and respond to the child's interests

- Notice what the child chooses, approaches, avoids, or spends time engaging with.
- Comment on their choices, e.g. **"You chose the painting activity today." "I can see you really enjoy playing with the cars."** This helps the child become more aware of their own preferences.

Model language about likes and dislikes

- Demonstrate how to express preferences during everyday activities, e.g. **"I like listening to music." "I don't enjoy very spicy food."**
- Encourage the child to use similar language to communicate their own preferences.

Recognise and celebrate expressions of preference

- Acknowledge when the child communicates a choice, preference, or opinion.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You let me know what you wanted." "You made a clear choice. "You told me what you liked and didn't like."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages self-advocacy.

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7.6 Developing confidence and self esteem

Show opinions or ideas

Create regular opportunities to share thoughts and views

- Ask open-ended questions that encourage the child to express their ideas and opinions, e.g. **"What do you think about this story?" "How would you like to do this activity?" "Which idea do you think would work best?"** This helps the child understand that their thoughts and opinions are important and valued.

Provide supportive communication tools

- Use visual supports, choice boards, sentence starters, symbols, photographs, or communication devices to help the child express their views.
- Useful sentence starters might include: **"I think..." "My idea is..." "I would prefer..."**
- These supports can build confidence and make sharing ideas more accessible.

Model expressing opinions respectfully

- Demonstrate how to share different views and ideas during everyday conversations, e.g. **"I think this book is interesting because..." "My favourite colour is blue because..."**
- Modelling shows the child how opinions can be expressed clearly and respectfully.

Encourage participation in discussions and decision-making

- Involve the child in conversations, planning activities, solving problems, and making decisions, e.g. **"What do you think we should do next?" "Do you have any ideas for our project?"** This provides meaningful opportunities to develop and share their thinking.

Recognise and celebrate the child's contributions

- Acknowledge when the child shares an opinion, suggestion, or idea, regardless of how they communicate it.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You shared your idea clearly." "I like how you explained your opinion." "Your suggestion helped us think about something differently."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages confidence and continued participation.

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7.6 Developing confidence and self esteem

Show confidence within activities

Provide opportunities for success

- Plan activities that match the child's current skills and interests while offering an achievable level of challenge. Success helps the child develop a positive belief in their own abilities.
- Breaking tasks into manageable steps can help the child experience success and build confidence.

Focus on strengths and effort

- Use strengths-based language to recognise what the child does well and the effort they put into activities, e.g. **"You worked really hard on that task." "You used a great idea to solve that problem." "You kept trying even when it was difficult."**
- This encourages a growth mindset and resilience.

Encourage choice and independence

- Offer opportunities for the child to make decisions about activities, resources, or how they complete a task, e.g. **"Which activity would you like to start with?" "How would you like to present your work?"**
- Having ownership over their learning and play can increase confidence and engagement.

Model positive self-belief and problem-solving

- Demonstrate positive attitudes towards challenges and mistakes.
- Use language such as **"I haven't worked it out yet, but I'll keep trying." "Mistakes help us learn."**
- This helps the child understand that confidence develops through practice and perseverance.

Recognise and celebrate participation and achievement

- Acknowledge when the child joins in, shares an idea, takes a risk, or completes an activity.
- Use specific feedback such as **"You joined in with confidence today." "You shared your ideas with the group." "You felt unsure at first but gave it a try."**
- Positive reinforcement helps the child build self-esteem and feel proud of their achievements.

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7.6 Developing confidence and self esteem

Self advocate for what they need/ want

Teach the child language to express their needs and preferences

- Model and practise phrases that help the child communicate what they need, want, like, or dislike, e.g. **"I need some help." "I'd like a break." "Can I have a turn?" "That is too loud for me."** This helps the child develop confidence in communicating their views and needs.

Provide regular opportunities to make choices and decisions

- Encourage the child to make meaningful choices throughout the day about activities, resources, support, and routines, e.g. **"Which activity would you like to do first?" "How would you like to complete this task?"**
- Making choices helps the child understand that their opinions matter and can influence outcomes.

Support the child to identify what helps them

- Encourage the child to recognise their strengths, needs, preferences, and helpful strategies.
- Use questions such as **"What would help you right now?" "How do you learn best?" "What do you need to feel comfortable?"** This develops self-awareness and the ability to communicate support needs.

Create a safe environment where the child's voice is valued

- Listen carefully to the child's views and respond positively when they express opinions, requests, or concerns.
- Use affirming language such as **"Thank you for telling me what you need." "Your ideas are important." "I'm glad you shared that with me."** This helps the child feel confident and respected when speaking up for themselves.

Recognise and celebrate self-advocacy

- Acknowledge when the child communicates a need, asks for support, expresses a preference, or explains what will help them.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You clearly explained what you needed." "You spoke up and made your choice known." "You recognised what would help you and asked for it."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages independence and future self-advocacy.

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8. Learning and engagement

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8. Learning and Engagement

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8.1 Learning and engagement

Recommended strategies for an environment to support and develop learning and engagement:

Create a welcoming and inclusive learning environment

- Ensure all children feel safe, valued, and able to participate.
- Provide accessible resources that reflect different abilities, interests, cultures, and learning styles.
- Establish clear expectations and positive relationships between adults and children.
- A sense of belonging helps children feel confident to engage in learning.

Use visual supports to promote understanding and independence

- Provide visual timetables, checklists, task boards, working walls, symbols, and visual instructions.
- Clearly display routines, expectations, and learning objectives.
- Visual supports help children understand what is expected, reduce anxiety, and increase engagement.

Build learning around children's interests

- Use children's interests, strengths, and motivations as a starting point for activities and learning experiences.
- Provide opportunities for choice and personalisation within tasks.
- Interest-led learning can increase curiosity, participation, and sustained attention.

Ensure activities are appropriately challenging

- Provide learning opportunities that are achievable while offering an appropriate level of challenge.
- Differentiate tasks and resources to meet individual needs.
- Children are more likely to remain engaged when activities are neither too easy nor too difficult.

Reduce unnecessary distractions

- Consider noise levels, visual clutter, seating arrangements, and sensory demands within the environment.
- Create spaces that support concentration and focused learning.
- Some children may benefit from quiet work areas or sensory supports to maximise engagement.

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8.1 Learning and engagement

Encourage active and hands-on learning

- Provide practical experiences that allow children to explore, investigate, create, and problem-solve.
- Include opportunities for exploration, experimentation, discussion, investigation and play-based learning.
- Active learning promotes motivation and deeper understanding.

Promote independence and ownership of learning

- Encourage children to make choices, set goals, select resources, and monitor their own progress.
- Provide accessible equipment and organised resources that children can use independently.
- Supporting autonomy helps build confidence and engagement.

Use positive reinforcement and strengths-based feedback

- Acknowledge effort, perseverance, participation, and achievement.
- Use feedback such as **"You stayed focused on that task." "You worked hard to solve that problem." "You showed resilience when something was challenging."**
- Positive reinforcement helps develop motivation and a growth mindset.

Provide opportunities for collaboration and discussion

- Create experiences where children can learn with and from others through partner work, group projects, shared problem-solving and discussion activities.
- Social learning opportunities can increase engagement and develop communication skills.

Encourage reflection and celebration of learning

- Provide opportunities for children to review what they have learned, what helped them succeed, and what they would like to learn next.
- Use learning journals, reflection activities, target setting, and celebrations of achievement.
- Reflection helps children develop self-awareness, confidence, and ownership of their learning.

These environmental strategies support the development of engagement, motivation, independence, confidence, curiosity, resilience, problem-solving, and lifelong learning, helping children participate actively and successfully in a wide range of learning experiences.

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8.2 Learn through play

Explore toys/objects/materials

Provide a range of interesting and accessible resources

- Offer a variety of toys, objects, and materials with different colours, textures, sounds, shapes, and functions.
- Include items that match the child's interests as well as new experiences to encourage curiosity.
- A varied environment can motivate the child to explore and discover new ways of interacting with objects.

Follow the child's lead and interests

- Observe what attracts the child's attention and join in with their exploration.
- Comment on what they are doing, e.g. **"You're squeezing the playdough." "You've found a shiny object."**
- Following the child's interests helps maintain engagement and builds confidence.

Model different ways to explore materials

- Demonstrate actions such as shaking, stacking, pouring, rolling, opening, closing, pressing, or sorting.
- Allow the child to watch and then try the action themselves. This introduces new ideas while encouraging independent exploration.

Create a safe environment for investigation

- Ensure the child has opportunities to handle, manipulate, and investigate objects safely without fear of getting things wrong.
- Encourage curiosity by using language such as **"I wonder what happens if..." "Let's find out together."** This promotes confidence, problem-solving, and experimentation.

Recognise and celebrate exploration

- Acknowledge the child's curiosity, persistence, and discoveries.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You explored lots of different ways to use that object." "You were curious and tried something new." "You discovered what happens when you press that button."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages further exploration and learning.

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8.2 Learn through play

Understand what toys/play items are for

Model how to use toys during play

- Demonstrate the intended use of toys and play materials through shared play experiences, e.g. roll a car along the floor, feed a doll with a toy spoon or build a tower with blocks.
- Narrate your actions using simple language to help the child make connections between the toy and its purpose.

Follow the child's interests and join their play

- Observe how the child chooses to explore toys and gently introduce new ways of using them, e.g. **"You're holding the car. Let's see if it can drive along the road."**
- Following the child's lead helps maintain engagement while developing understanding of play functions.

Use visual demonstrations and imitation games

- Encourage the child to watch and copy actions with toys, e.g. adult builds a small tower and the child copies, or adult pushes a train around a track and encourages the child to do the same. Imitation supports learning through observation.

Provide a range of meaningful and motivating play experiences

- Offer different types of toys, such as cause-and-effect toys, construction toys, pretend play resources, puzzles, and vehicles.
- Support the child to explore what each toy can do and how it can be used. This broadens their understanding of play and object function.

Recognise and celebrate purposeful play

- Acknowledge when the child uses a toy in a functional or intended way.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You rolled the car along the road." "You used the spoon to feed the doll." "You worked out what the puzzle pieces were for."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages exploration, learning, and confidence.

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8.2 Learn through play

Join in with cause and effect play

Use highly motivating cause-and-effect toys and activities

- Introduce toys and activities that provide an immediate and enjoyable response to the child's actions, e.g. pressing a button to make music play, popping bubbles, turning on a light-up toy or dropping a ball down a ramp.
- Immediate feedback helps the child understand that their actions can make something happen.

Model actions and wait for the child to have a turn

- Demonstrate how an action causes an effect and then pause to allow the child to try, e.g. **"Watch what happens when I press the button... now it's your turn."**
- Modelling supports understanding and encourages active participation.

Use simple language to describe what is happening

- Narrate the child's actions and the resulting effect, e.g. **"You pressed the switch and the music started." "You pushed the car and it rolled away."**
- Linking actions and outcomes through language helps build understanding and communication.

Repeat activities to reinforce learning

- Offer repeated opportunities to explore the same cause-and-effect experiences.
- Repetition helps the child learn that their actions consistently produce a particular outcome.
- This builds confidence, anticipation, and problem-solving skills.

Recognise and celebrate the child's exploration and success

- Acknowledge when the child intentionally acts to create an effect.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You worked out how to make the toy light up." "You pressed the button and waited for the music." "You discovered what happens when you push the ball."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages curiosity, persistence, and continued engagement.

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8.2 Learn through play

Join in with pretend/symbolic play

Model simple pretend play actions

- Demonstrate everyday pretend play activities using toys and objects, e.g. feeding a doll, driving a toy car to the shops or putting a teddy to bed.
- Narrate the play using simple language such as **"Teddy is hungry. Let's feed him."**
- This helps the child understand how objects can represent real-life experiences.

Follow the child's interests and join their play

- Observe what the child enjoys and build pretend play around their interests, e.g. if the child likes animals, pretend a toy farm is a real farm or that animal figures are looking for food.
- Using motivating themes can increase engagement and enjoyment.

Use real-life experiences as a foundation

- Encourage pretend play based on familiar routines and experiences, such as shopping, cooking, visiting the doctor, or going to school.
- Familiar experiences help children make connections between real-world events and symbolic play.

Provide a variety of open-ended resources

- Offer dolls, figures, toy food, dressing-up clothes, boxes, fabric, vehicles, and household items that can be used in different ways.
- Open-ended resources encourage imagination and help children learn that one object can represent something else.

Recognise and celebrate imaginative play

- Acknowledge when the child uses objects symbolically or creates a pretend scenario.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You pretended the block was a phone." "You looked after your doll just like a real baby." "You used your imagination to create a story."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages creativity, communication, and confidence.

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8.2 Learn through play

Act out and role play scenarios

Model simple role-play scenarios

- Demonstrate familiar pretend situations such as going to the shop, visiting the doctor, cooking a meal, or taking a pet to the vet.
- Use simple language and actions to show how people behave in different situations.
- This helps the child understand how role play can represent real-life experiences.

Use the child's interests to motivate participation

- Build role-play opportunities around topics, characters, or activities the child enjoys, e.g. acting as superheroes, running a toy animal rescue centre or playing train drivers or shopkeepers.
- Familiar and motivating themes can encourage greater engagement and creativity.

Provide props and real-life objects

- Offer dressing-up clothes, toy telephones, play food, cash registers, puppets, boxes, and other open-ended resources.
- Props can help children understand their role within a scenario and support imaginative thinking.

Join the play and gently extend ideas

- Follow the child's lead while introducing new characters, problems, or events to develop the story, e.g. **"The customer has forgotten their purse. What could we do?" "The teddy is feeling poorly. How can we help?"** This supports communication, problem-solving, and imaginative play.

Recognise and celebrate imaginative role play

- Acknowledge when the child takes on a role, acts out a scenario, or contributes ideas to the story.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You stayed in character throughout the game." "You used your imagination to create a story." "You thought carefully about what your character would do next."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages further imaginative play.

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8.3 Motivation and joining in

Respond to sensory features of items or activities

Provide opportunities to explore a variety of sensory experiences

- Offer activities with different sensory features, such as textures, sounds, smells, colours, movement, and light.
- Encourage the child to notice and respond to what they see, hear, feel, smell, or experience, e.g. **"How does the sand feel?"** or **"Can you hear the sound the shaker makes?"** This helps the child become more aware of sensory information in their environment.

Model sensory language

- Use descriptive words to talk about sensory features during play and everyday activities, e.g. **"The water feels cold." "That music sounds loud." "The playdough feels soft and squishy."** This helps the child develop vocabulary to understand and communicate their sensory experiences.

Follow the child's sensory preferences

- Notice which sensory experiences the child seeks out, enjoys, avoids, or finds uncomfortable.
- Provide opportunities to engage with preferred sensory activities while gently introducing new experiences at the child's pace. This supports positive engagement and sensory awareness.

Encourage the child to communicate their responses

- Support the child to express whether they like, dislike, want more of, or want less of a sensory experience.
- This may be through speech, gestures, signs, symbols, facial expressions, or communication aids.
- Use prompts such as **"Do you like that texture?" "Would you like more or finished?"** This develops self-awareness and self-advocacy.

Recognise and celebrate sensory awareness

- Acknowledge when the child responds to, notices, or communicates about sensory features.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You noticed that the music was getting louder." "You told me that you liked the soft fabric." "You explored a new texture and shared how it felt."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages curiosity, communication, and confidence.

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8.3 Motivation and joining in

Respond to my environment

Draw attention to important features in the environment

- Help the child notice people, objects, sounds, changes, and events around them.
- Use comments such as **"I can hear the bell ringing." "Look, the lights have been turned off." "The rain has started outside."** This supports the child's awareness of what is happening around them and encourages engagement with their surroundings.

Create opportunities for the child to react and participate

- Encourage the child to respond to environmental cues during everyday activities, e.g. tidying up when the tidy-up song starts, putting on a coat when preparing to go outside or looking towards a sound or event of interest.
- Meaningful experiences help the child understand how to respond appropriately to different situations.

Use visual and verbal supports

- Provide visual prompts, signs, symbols, gestures, or simple verbal cues to help the child understand what is happening and what they might do next, e.g. **"The timetable shows it's lunchtime next." "The green light means it's time to go."**
- These supports can increase understanding and confidence.

Encourage the child to notice and talk about changes

- Support the child to identify when something in the environment is different.
- Use questions such as **"What has changed?" "What do you notice?" "Why do you think that happened?"** This helps develop observation, thinking, and problem-solving skills.

Recognise and celebrate environmental awareness

- Acknowledge when the child notices, understands, or responds to something in their environment.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You noticed that it was time to stop and listen." "You responded when you heard your name being called." "You saw that the activity had changed and adapted really well."**
- Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages active participation.

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8.3 Motivation and joining in

Respond to interaction from helpful adult or peer

Follow the child's interests to encourage engagement

- Join activities that the child already enjoys and build interactions around them.
- When a trusted adult or peer comments, plays alongside, or shares an interest, the child may be more motivated to respond, e.g. **"I can see you're building a tower. Shall we build one together?"**
- Shared interests can provide a natural foundation for interaction.

Model and practise simple responses

- Demonstrate ways the child can respond during everyday interactions, e.g. responding to a greeting with **"Hello"**, answering a question or nodding, smiling, or using a gesture
- Modelling helps the child learn different ways to acknowledge and engage with others.

Give the child time to process and respond

- Allow sufficient time for the child to understand what has been said or done before expecting a response.
- Avoid rushing or answering on the child's behalf.
- Use supportive language such as **"Take your time." "I'm interested to hear what you think."** This helps build confidence and participation.

Support responses through the child's preferred communication method

- Encourage the child to respond using speech, signing, gestures, symbols, facial expressions, communication aids, or actions.
- Recognise that all forms of communication are meaningful and valid. This promotes inclusion and successful participation in interactions.

Recognise and celebrate all attempts to respond

- Acknowledge when the child reacts to, communicates with, or engages with an adult or peer.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You listened and answered your friend's question." "You smiled when your teacher greeted you." "You found a way to respond and join the interaction."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages future social engagement.

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8.3 Motivation and joining in

Predict what will happen next

Use everyday routines to encourage prediction

- Pause during familiar routines and ask the child what they think will happen next, e.g. **"We've washed our hands. What do we do next?" "The timer has gone off. What usually happens now?"**
- Predictable routines help children learn to use past experiences to anticipate future events.

Read stories and make predictions together

- Pause at key points in stories and encourage the child to think about what might happen next.
- Ask questions such as **"What do you think the character will do?" "How do you think the story will end?"** This helps develop reasoning, comprehension, and imagination.

Encourage the child to look for clues

- Support the child to identify information that can help them make predictions, e.g. **"The sky is getting dark. What do you think might happen?" "The child is putting on their coat. Where do you think they might be going?"**
- Learning to use clues helps develop critical thinking skills.

Use games, experiments, and problem-solving activities

- Provide opportunities for the child to guess outcomes before they happen, e.g. **"What do you think will happen if we add water?" "Which ramp do you think the car will go down fastest?"**
- These activities help children understand cause and effect and test their ideas.

Recognise and celebrate prediction skills

- Acknowledge when the child makes a prediction, regardless of whether it is correct.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You used the clues to make a good prediction." "You thought carefully about what might happen next." "You shared your ideas and explained your thinking."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages curiosity, reasoning, and confidence.

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8.3 Motivation and joining in

Show interest in items/activity/topic

Follow the child's interests and motivations

- Observe what naturally captures the child's attention and use these interests as a starting point for learning and play.
- Introduce activities, resources, and discussions linked to topics they already enjoy.
- When children engage with something meaningful to them, they are more likely to show curiosity and sustained interest.

Present activities in an engaging and accessible way

- Use appealing resources, hands-on experiences, visual supports, and sensory elements to make activities inviting.
- Ensure tasks are appropriately matched to the child's developmental level and learning needs. Activities that feel achievable are more likely to encourage participation and interest.

Model enthusiasm and curiosity

- Demonstrate excitement, wonder, and interest when exploring an item, activity, or topic.
- Use language such as **"I wonder how this works?" "That's really interesting." "Let's find out more together."**
- Adult enthusiasm can encourage children to become curious and engaged.

Encourage exploration and questions

- Give the child opportunities to investigate, experiment, and share their thoughts.
- Use open-ended prompts such as **"What do you notice?" "What do you think will happen?" "What would you like to find out?"** This helps develop curiosity, confidence, and active engagement.

Recognise and celebrate signs of interest

- Acknowledge when the child notices, explores, talks about, or spends time engaging with an item, activity, or topic.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You were really interested in finding out how that worked." "You spent a long time exploring that activity." "You asked lots of thoughtful questions."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages continued curiosity and participation.

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8.3 Motivation and joining in

Explore items or activities

Provide a variety of motivating and accessible experiences

- Offer a range of toys, materials, games, and activities that appeal to different interests and abilities.
- Include opportunities for sensory exploration, creative activities, construction, outdoor play, and problem-solving. A rich and varied environment encourages curiosity and discovery.

Follow the child's interests and choices

- Observe what the child is drawn to and build opportunities around their interests.
- Join in with their exploration and comment on what they are doing, e.g. **"I can see you're interested in how the magnets stick together."**
- Following the child's lead can increase confidence and engagement.

Model curiosity and exploration

- Demonstrate ways to investigate and interact with items or activities.
- Use language such as **"I wonder what happens if we try this?" "Let's see what this can do." "How could we use this differently?"**
- Modelling curiosity encourages the child to experiment and discover new possibilities.

Allow time for independent investigation

- Give the child sufficient time to explore without rushing them or directing the activity too quickly.
- Encourage them to test ideas, make discoveries, and learn through trial and error. This helps develop confidence, problem-solving skills, and independence.

Recognise and celebrate exploration

- Acknowledge when the child shows curiosity, tries something new, or investigates an item or activity.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You explored lots of different ways to use that resource." "You were curious and wanted to find out more." "You tried something new and discovered what happened."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages continued exploration and a willingness to learn.

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8.3 Motivation and joining in

Discover new knowledge or understanding

Encourage curiosity and questioning

- Create opportunities for the child to ask questions about the world around them.
- Use prompts such as **"What do you think?" "Why do you think that happened?" "What would you like to find out?"**
- Valuing questions helps children develop curiosity and a desire to learn new things.

Provide hands-on learning experiences

- Offer practical activities that allow the child to explore, investigate, and experiment.
- E.g. science investigations, construction activities, cooking, outdoor exploration, or creative projects. Active participation helps children develop a deeper understanding of concepts and ideas.

Model a love of learning

- Demonstrate curiosity and enthusiasm when learning something new.
- Use language such as **"I wonder how that works." "Let's find out together." "That's something new I've learned today."** Children are often motivated by the attitudes and behaviours of the adults around them.

Support reflection and discussion

- Encourage the child to talk about what they have discovered, noticed, or learned.
- Ask questions such as **"What did you find out?" "How did you work that out?" "What surprised you?"** Reflection helps children consolidate new learning and build understanding.

Recognise and celebrate learning and discovery

- Acknowledge when the child discovers something new, solves a problem, or develops a new understanding.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You found out something new by exploring and investigating." "You worked really hard to understand how that worked." "You asked questions that helped you learn more."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages confidence, curiosity, and a lifelong interest in learning.

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8.3 Motivation and joining in

Attend to a task or activity

Use activities that are meaningful and motivating

- Choose tasks and activities that reflect the child's interests, strengths, and preferences.
- Children are often more likely to sustain attention when they find an activity enjoyable and relevant, e.g. **"Let's use your favourite animals in this counting activity."**

Reduce distractions in the environment

- Create a learning space that supports concentration by minimising unnecessary noise, visual distractions, or interruptions.
- Consider seating arrangements, sensory needs, and the amount of equipment available at one time. This can help the child focus on the task more successfully.

Break tasks into smaller, manageable steps

- Present activities in achievable chunks rather than all at once.
- Use simple instructions and celebrate completion of each step. This helps prevent the child from feeling overwhelmed and supports sustained engagement.

Use visual supports and clear expectations

- Provide visual timetables, checklists, now-and-next boards, timers, or task cards to help the child understand what they are expected to do.
- Knowing the purpose, sequence, and end point of an activity can improve focus and participation.

Recognise and celebrate attention and engagement

- Acknowledge when the child remains focused, returns to a task after distraction, or completes part of an activity.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You stayed focused on that activity for a long time." "You kept working even when it became challenging." "You paid careful attention to what you were doing."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages continued engagement.

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8.3 Motivation and joining in

Keep trying with an activity

Break activities into small, achievable steps

- Divide tasks into manageable parts so the child can experience success along the way.
- Focus on completing one step at a time rather than the whole activity at once. This can help reduce feelings of being overwhelmed and encourage persistence.

Praise effort rather than outcomes

- Acknowledge the child's determination, perseverance, and willingness to keep going.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You kept trying even when it was difficult." "I noticed how hard you worked on that task." "You didn't give up when it became challenging."** This helps the child develop confidence and resilience.

Model positive problem-solving and perseverance

- Demonstrate how to respond when something is difficult, e.g. **"This is tricky, but I'm going to try a different way." "I haven't managed it yet, so I'll keep practising."**
- Modelling helps the child learn that challenges are a normal part of learning.

Teach strategies for overcoming difficulties

- Encourage the child to use helpful strategies when a task becomes challenging, such as asking for help, taking a short break, trying a different approach or using visual prompts or reminders.
- Having practical strategies can help the child continue rather than giving up.

Celebrate progress and perseverance

- Recognise small achievements and improvements, not just task completion.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You stayed with the activity for longer today." "You tried several different ideas before finding one that worked." "Your persistence helped you make progress."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build a growth mindset and encourages future perseverance.

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8.3 Motivation and joining in

Shift attention to another task/activity/request

Give advance warning of changes

- Let the child know that a change is coming before expecting them to move on to a new activity.
- Use countdowns, timers, visual schedules, or verbal reminders, e.g. **"In five minutes we will finish drawing and start story time." "When the timer rings, it will be time for maths."**
- Advance warning helps the child prepare and reduces the difficulty of switching attention.

Use visual supports to guide transitions

- Provide visual timetables, now-and-next boards, checklists, or photographs to show what is happening now and what is coming next.
- Visual supports can help the child understand expectations and make changes more predictable. This reduces uncertainty and supports successful shifts in attention.

Gain the child's attention before giving instructions

- Ensure the child is ready to listen before introducing a new task or request.
- Use their name, a visual cue, a gesture, or a pause in the activity, e.g. **"Olivia, can I show you what's next?"** This helps the child focus on the new information being presented.

Keep requests clear and achievable

- Use concise language and provide one instruction at a time when introducing a new activity, e.g. **"Put the pencils away." "Now come and sit on the carpet."**
- Clear expectations help the child understand what they need to do when changing their focus.

Recognise and celebrate flexible attention

- Acknowledge when the child successfully moves from one activity to another or responds to a new request.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You stopped your game and joined the group when it was time." "You listened to the new instruction and changed tasks successfully." "You adapted really well when the activity changed."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build flexibility, confidence, and independence.

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8.3 Motivation and joining in

Start/make request for an activity

Create motivating opportunities to request activities

- Offer a range of appealing activities and keep some resources visible but not immediately accessible.
- Encourage the child to let you know what they would like to do, e.g. **"What would you like to play?" "Which activity would you like to choose?"** This helps the child learn that communication can be used to access preferred activities.

Model language for making requests

- Demonstrate simple phrases that the child can use to ask for an activity, e.g. **"Can I play with the blocks?" "I'd like to do some painting." "Can we play a game?"**
- Modelling provides the child with the language needed to initiate requests independently.

Support all methods of communication

- Encourage the child to request activities using their preferred communication method, including speech, signs, gestures, symbols, photographs, choice boards, or communication devices.
- Respond consistently to all attempts to communicate. This ensures the child can successfully express their interests and choices.

Provide choices and visual supports

- Use activity choice boards, photos, symbols, or objects to help the child identify and select activities they would like to do.
- Visual supports can make decision-making and requesting easier and more accessible, e.g. **"Show me which activity you would like next."**

Recognise and celebrate independent requests

- Acknowledge when the child initiates or requests an activity.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You told me what you wanted to do." "You asked for your favourite activity independently." "You used your communication skills to make a choice."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages confidence, communication, and self-advocacy.

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8.3 Motivation and joining in

Join in in tasks that someone else is asking me to do

Give clear, simple, and achievable instructions

- Use short, specific instructions that focus on what the child needs to do, e.g. **“Please put the books on the shelf.” “Come and sit on the carpet.”**
- Breaking tasks into small steps can help the child understand expectations and feel more confident about participating.

Use visual supports and demonstrations

- Support verbal instructions with pictures, symbols, checklists, visual schedules, or modelling.
- Showing the child what is expected can make tasks easier to understand and follow, e.g. demonstrate how to tidy away materials before asking the child to do the same.

Connect tasks to the child’s interests and strengths

- Where possible, link activities to things the child enjoys or is good at, e.g. **“You’re great at organising. Can you help sort these resources?” “Can you help us find the animal pictures?”** This can increase motivation and engagement.

Offer encouragement and support to get started

- Some children find beginning a task harder than completing it.
- Use prompts such as **“Let’s do the first part together.” “I’ll help you get started.” “You’re ready to begin.”**
- Gradually reduce support as the child’s confidence grows.

Recognise and celebrate participation

- Acknowledge when the child joins in, follows a request, or completes part of a task.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **“You joined in when you were asked.” “You listened carefully and started the task.” “You worked hard and completed what was asked of you.”**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages future participation.

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8.4 Organisation and independent learning

Organise my own belongings/resources

Create clear and consistent storage systems

- Use labelled containers, trays, drawers, pegs, or shelves so the child knows where items belong. Consistent organisation makes it easier for the child to find and put away their belongings independently.
- Labels can include photographs, symbols, pictures, or words to match the child's level of understanding.

Teach organisation skills through modelling and practice

- Demonstrate how to organise resources and belongings step by step, e.g. **"First put the pencils in the pot, then place the books on the shelf."**
- Regular opportunities to practise help the child develop confidence and independence.

Use visual supports and checklists

- Provide visual reminders showing what needs to be organised and where items should go, e.g. a picture checklist for packing a school bag or tidying a work area.
- Visual supports can help the child remember routines and complete tasks successfully.

Build organisation into daily routines

- Encourage the child to take responsibility for organising resources at regular points during the day, e.g. tidying away toys after play, packing their bag before going home or organising materials before starting a task.
- Repeated routines help develop habits and independence.

Recognise and celebrate organisational skills

- Acknowledge when the child successfully looks after, finds, or puts away their belongings and resources.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You put all your resources away independently." "You knew exactly where to find what you needed." "You organised your belongings really carefully today."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages continued responsibility.

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8.4 Organisation and independent learning

Use timetables/planners

Introduce visual timetables and planners that are easy to understand

- Use photographs, symbols, pictures, colours, or simple written words to match the child's developmental level and communication needs. Visual supports can help the child understand routines and develop independence.
- Ensure the timetable clearly shows what is happening now and what will happen next.

Refer to the timetable regularly throughout the day

- Make the timetable a meaningful part of daily routines by checking it together before transitions and activities.
- Use phrases such as **"Let's see what's next on your timetable." "What does your planner say we are doing after lunch?"**
- Regular use helps the child learn how timetables provide useful information.

Involve the child in updating and using the timetable

- Encourage the child to move symbols, tick off completed activities, or help create their daily plan.
- Active involvement helps the child develop ownership and understanding of how planning tools work.

Use planners to support organisation and preparation

- Teach the child to use a planner, checklist, or schedule to remember important tasks, equipment, homework, or upcoming events, e.g. checking what needs to go into their school bag, preparing resources for an activity, or planning the order of tasks to complete. This develops organisational and self-management skills.

Recognise and celebrate successful use of timetables and planners

- Acknowledge when the child uses a timetable or planner to understand routines, prepare for activities, or manage transitions.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You checked your timetable independently." "You used your planner to remember what you needed." "You knew what was happening next because you looked at your schedule."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages independent use.

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8.4 Organisation and independent learning

Show awareness of time to help planning

Use visual supports to make time more concrete

- Introduce visual timetables, calendars, countdowns, timers, and clock faces to help the child understand when events will happen.
- Refer to these supports regularly throughout the day, e.g. **"When the timer finishes, it will be time to tidy up." "Let's look at the timetable to see what happens after lunch."**
- Visual supports help children link the passage of time to daily activities and routines.

Teach time-related vocabulary through everyday routines

- Use words such as first, next, later, before, after, today, tomorrow, and yesterday consistently, e.g. **"First we'll complete our work, then we'll go outside." "Tomorrow we are visiting the library."**
- This supports the child's understanding of sequencing and planning.

Encourage preparation for future activities

- Help the child think ahead about what they will need for upcoming events.
- Ask questions such as **"What do we need to pack for swimming tomorrow?" "What should we do first to get ready for home time?"**
- Thinking ahead helps the child use their awareness of time to plan effectively.

Involve the child in using planners and schedules

- Encourage the child to check their timetable, planner, or checklist to organise tasks and prepare for transitions.
- Support them to tick off completed activities and identify what is coming next. This helps develop independence and an understanding of how time can be used to organise daily routines.

Recognise and celebrate planning skills

- Acknowledge when the child uses time-related information to prepare, organise, or make decisions.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You remembered to bring your PE kit because you knew PE was today." "You checked the timetable and got ready for the next activity." "You planned ahead and had everything you needed."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the child to continue developing time awareness and planning skills.

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8.4 Organisation and independent learning

Work by myself

Provide clear instructions and expectations

- Explain the task in simple, manageable steps before the child begins.
- Use visual supports, checklists, or examples to show what success looks like.
- Knowing exactly what is expected can help the child feel more confident about working independently.

Break tasks into achievable sections

- Divide activities into smaller parts and encourage the child to complete one step at a time, e.g. **"First complete the picture, then write the labels."**
- Completing smaller steps successfully can reduce anxiety and increase motivation.

Gradually reduce adult support

- Start by completing tasks together, then move to prompting, and finally encourage the child to work independently.
- Offer reassurance that support is available if needed while promoting independence. This helps the child build confidence in their own abilities.

Provide tools to support independent working

- Use visual schedules, task cards, planners, timers, checklists, or organisational tools to help the child manage their work.
- These supports can help the child stay focused and know what to do next without relying on an adult.

Recognise and celebrate independent effort

- Acknowledge when the child starts, continues, or completes a task independently.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You completed that task by yourself." "You worked independently and stayed focused." "You solved that problem without needing help."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence, resilience, and a sense of achievement.

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8.4 Organisation and independent learning

Take part in planning my own learning

Encourage the child to identify their interests and goals

- Provide opportunities for the child to talk about what they enjoy learning, what they are good at, and what they would like to improve.
- Use prompts such as **"What would you like to learn more about?" "What are you proud of?" "What is your next goal?"** This helps the child become actively involved in their learning journey.

Involve the child in setting achievable targets

- Work together to agree small, meaningful learning goals.
- Ensure targets are clear, achievable, and connected to the child's interests and needs. This helps the child develop ownership of their learning and understand what they are working towards.

Offer choices within learning activities

- Allow the child to make decisions about how they learn, demonstrate understanding, or complete tasks, e.g. **"Would you like to write, draw, or make a model to show what you know?" "Which topic would you like to research first?"**
- Offering choice promotes engagement, independence, and self-motivation.

Encourage reflection on learning

- Regularly discuss what the child has learned, what they found challenging, and what helped them succeed.
- Use questions such as **"What did you learn today?" "What helped you understand that?" "What would you like to learn next?"** Reflection helps the child develop self-awareness and understand how they learn best.

Recognise and celebrate contributions to learning plans

- Acknowledge when the child shares ideas, sets goals, evaluates progress, or makes decisions about their learning.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You helped decide what you wanted to learn." "You identified a goal and worked towards it." "You shared your ideas about how you learn best."**
- Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages active participation in future planning.

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8.4 Organisation and independent learning

Plan how to carry out a task

Break tasks into clear, manageable steps

- Support the child to identify the individual steps needed to complete a task.
- Use prompts such as **"What do you need to do first?" "What comes next?" "How will you know when you have finished?"**
- Breaking tasks into smaller parts helps the child understand the process and feel more confident about getting started.

Use visual planning tools

- Provide checklists, sequencing cards, flow charts, planners, or visual task boards.
- Encourage the child to refer to these tools while planning and completing the task.
- Visual supports can help organise thoughts, reduce memory demands, and promote independence.

Model the planning process

- Think aloud when completing everyday tasks and explain how you plan what to do, e.g. **"First I'll gather the materials I need, then I'll decide what to do in each step." "I need to check that I have everything before I start."**
- Modelling helps the child learn practical planning skills.

Encourage the child to identify resources and support needed

- Help the child think about what equipment, information, time, or help they might need before they begin.
- Use questions such as **"What will you need to complete this task?" "Do you need any help to get started?"** This develops organisational skills and independent problem-solving.

Recognise and celebrate successful planning

- Acknowledge when the child creates a plan, follows steps, or adapts their plan when needed.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You thought carefully about how to complete the task." "You made a plan and followed it successfully." "You organised everything you needed before you started."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence, independence, and effective planning skills.

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8.4 Organisation and independent learning

Carry out research into a topic

Start with the child's interests and questions

- Encourage the child to choose a topic they are curious about and help them think of questions they would like answered.
- Use prompts such as **"What would you like to find out?" "What do you already know about this topic?" "What are you curious about?"**
- Interest-led research can increase motivation, engagement, and enjoyment.

Teach simple research skills

- Model how to find information using books, websites, videos, photographs, fact sheets, or interviews with knowledgeable people.
- Demonstrate how to look for key information and identify answers to specific questions. This helps the child develop the skills needed to gather information independently.

Use planning and organisation tools

- Support the child to organise their research using mind maps, question sheets, note-taking templates, graphic organisers, or checklists.
- Breaking the task into smaller steps can make research feel more manageable and less overwhelming, e.g. choose a topic, find information, record key facts then share findings.

Encourage evaluation and discussion of information

- Support the child to think about what they have discovered and whether it answers their original questions.
- Ask questions such as **"What did you learn?" "Which facts were most interesting?" "What information helped answer your question?"** This helps develop critical thinking and understanding.

Recognise and celebrate research skills

- Acknowledge when the child asks questions, finds information, records ideas, or shares what they have learned.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You found information from several sources." "You asked thoughtful questions and found the answers." "You worked independently to learn more about your topic."**
- Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages curiosity and independent learning.

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8.4 Organisation and independent learning

Ask for help

Model how to ask for help

- Demonstrate appropriate ways to seek support during everyday activities.
- Use phrases such as **"Can you help me, please?" "I'm not sure what to do." "Could you show me how?"**
- Modelling helps the child learn that asking for help is a positive and useful skill.

Teach and practise help-seeking language

- Provide simple phrases, sentence starters, or visual prompts that the child can use when they need support, e.g. **"I need help." "Can you help me with this?" "I'm finding this difficult."**
- Regular practice helps build confidence and independence.

Create safe opportunities to request help

- Design activities where the child may need support to succeed, such as opening a container, reaching a resource, or completing a challenging task.
- Encourage them to ask for assistance rather than immediately stepping in to help. This helps the child learn when and how to seek support.

Recognise all methods of communication

- Encourage the child to ask for help using their preferred communication method, including speech, signs, gestures, symbols, communication boards, or communication devices.
- Respond positively to all attempts to communicate a need for support. This ensures the child can access help in a way that works for them.

Acknowledge and celebrate help-seeking

- Praise the child when they recognise they need support and seek it appropriately.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You knew when you needed help and asked for it." "You found the right person to support you." "You asked for help instead of giving up."**
- Positive reinforcement helps the child understand that asking for help is a strength and an important part of learning.

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8.5 Know and following rules, routines and expectations

Find their way around their learning space

Use clear visual cues and labels

- Label important areas, resources, and rooms with photographs, symbols, pictures, or words that are meaningful to the child, e.g. use visual labels for the reading corner, toilets, coat area, and resource shelves.
- Visual cues can help the child navigate the learning environment more independently.

Provide guided opportunities to explore the environment

- Spend time walking around the learning space with the child and identifying key areas and resources.
- Encourage the child to practise finding different locations and discuss what they are used for.
- Regular exploration helps build familiarity and confidence.

Create simple maps or visual guides

- Use photographs, floor plans, or visual maps showing important areas within the learning environment. This supports spatial awareness and organisational skills.
- Refer to the map when helping the child find places or plan where they need to go next.

Establish consistent routines and locations

- Keep resources, equipment, and activity areas organised and in predictable places wherever possible.
- Consistency helps the child learn where things belong and reduces confusion when moving around the learning space.
- Encourage the child to return items to the correct location after use.

Recognise and celebrate independent navigation

- Acknowledge when the child successfully finds a location, collects resources, or moves independently around their learning environment.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **“You found the art area by yourself.” “You knew exactly where to put your belongings.” “You moved around the classroom independently and confidently.”**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and independence.

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8.5 Know and following rules, routines and expectations

Be able to queue/line up

Teach and model what queuing looks like

- Demonstrate how to stand in line, wait behind others, and move forward when it is their turn. Be aware of sensory preferences and provide appropriate support.
- Use visual demonstrations, role-play, and real-life examples, e.g. **"We stand behind the person in front and wait for our turn."**
- Clear modelling helps the child understand the expectations of queuing.

Use visual supports and markers

- Provide visual cues such as floor spots, footprints, cones, or line-up cards to show where the child should stand. This can make lining up more predictable and easier to follow.
- Visual supports can help the child understand personal space and where they fit within the queue.

Practise queuing during enjoyable activities

- Create opportunities for the child to practise queuing in fun and meaningful situations, such as lining up for a game, choosing a resource, or taking turns during a group activity.
- Frequent practice helps develop familiarity and confidence.

Teach waiting strategies

- Support the child to use strategies while waiting, such as looking at a visual cue, holding a waiting card, counting quietly, taking deep breaths or keeping hands occupied appropriately
- These strategies can help the child remain calm and regulated while queuing.

Recognise and celebrate successful queuing

- Acknowledge when the child joins a line, waits appropriately, or follows queuing expectations.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You lined up independently." "You waited patiently for your turn." "You remembered where to stand in the queue."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages confidence and continued success.

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8.5 Know and following rules, routines and expectations

Know how to get attention in a suitable way

Teach and model appropriate attention-getting phrases

- Demonstrate simple and respectful ways to gain someone's attention, e.g. **"Excuse me." "Can I talk to you?" "I need some help, please."**
- Regular modelling helps the child learn effective ways to start interactions and have their needs recognised.

Practise attention-getting skills through role-play

- Use games and role-play activities to practise different scenarios, such as getting a teacher's attention, asking a friend for help, or speaking to a family member.
- Discuss when and how to use different strategies in different situations. This helps build confidence and understanding of social expectations.

Teach alternative ways of getting attention

- Support the child to use appropriate methods such as raising a hand, waving, using a person's name, showing a help card or communication symbol or using a communication device. This ensures the child has suitable ways to gain attention that match their communication needs.

Reinforce waiting and timing skills

- Help the child recognise when someone is busy and how to wait appropriately before seeking attention. This supports social awareness and self-regulation.
- Use prompts such as **"Let's wait until they've finished speaking." "When the teacher looks at you, you can ask your question."**

Recognise and celebrate appropriate attention-seeking

- Acknowledge when the child uses a suitable strategy to gain someone's attention.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You said, 'excuse me' and waited for me to listen." "You raised your hand to ask for help." "You found a polite way to get my attention."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the child to continue using effective communication skills.

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8.5 Know and following rules, routines and expectations

Follow agreed strategies for movement within learning space

Teach and model movement expectations clearly

- Demonstrate what the agreed movement strategies look like in practice, e.g. walking calmly between areas, following designated routes, keeping to agreed boundaries or using walking feet indoors.
- Modelling helps the child understand what is expected and why these strategies are important.

Use visual supports and environmental cues

- Provide visual reminders such as photographs, symbols, arrows, footprints, coloured lines, or classroom maps.
- Visual cues can help the child remember where to go and how to move safely and appropriately around the learning space. This supports independence and reduces the need for verbal reminders.

Practise movement routines regularly

- Create opportunities to practise moving around the learning environment during everyday transitions and activities.
- Rehearse routines such as entering the classroom, moving to group areas, collecting resources, and lining up. Repetition helps the child develop confidence and familiarity with agreed expectations.

Give prompts and positive reminders

- Use clear, supportive language before and during transitions, e.g. **“Remember to follow the arrows to the reading area.” “Let’s use our walking feet indoors.” “Check the visual cue to see where you need to go next.”**
- Gentle reminders can help the child apply strategies successfully.

Recognise and celebrate successful movement around the learning space

- Acknowledge when the child follows agreed movement strategies independently or with minimal support.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **“You followed the classroom route independently.” “You moved safely and calmly to the next activity.” “You remembered the agreed expectation and followed it successfully.”**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages continued success.

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8.5 Know and following rules, routines and expectations

Follow routines in the classroom

Use clear and consistent classroom routines

- Establish predictable routines for key parts of the day, such as arriving in class, group time, transitions, tidying up, and home time.
- Keep routines as consistent as possible and explain any changes in advance. Predictability helps the child understand expectations and feel more confident within the classroom environment.

Provide visual supports

- Use visual timetables, now-and-next boards, checklists, photographs, or symbols to show the sequence of activities throughout the day.
- Refer to these supports regularly and encourage the child to check them independently. Visual cues can help the child remember and follow routines more successfully.

Teach and practise routines explicitly

- Demonstrate classroom routines and provide opportunities to rehearse them, e.g. practise how to enter the classroom, put away belongings, collect resources, or move to the carpet area.
- Repetition helps the child become familiar with expectations and develop independence.

Use prompts and reminders when needed

- Offer gentle verbal, visual, or physical prompts to support the child in following routines, e.g. **“What does the timetable say we do next?” “It’s time to put your coat on your peg. “Let’s check the next step together.”**
- Gradually reduce prompts as the child’s confidence increases.

Recognise and celebrate successful participation in routines

- Acknowledge when the child follows a classroom routine independently or with support.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **“You followed the morning routine independently.” “You knew exactly what to do when the lesson finished.” “You checked the timetable and got ready for the next activity.”**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages continued success.

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8.5 Know and following rules, routines and expectations

Follow routines in unstructured time, e.g. play/break time

Use visual supports to show the routine

- Provide visual timetables, photographs, symbols, or simple checklists showing what happens during playtime or break time, e.g. going outside, choosing an activity, playing, tidying up or lining up.
- Visual supports can help make less structured times more predictable and easier to understand.

Teach and practise playground and break-time expectations

- Explicitly teach routines such as where to go, how to access equipment, how to ask to join a game, what to do when the bell rings, and where to line up.
- Practise these routines through role-play and real-life opportunities. This helps the child become familiar with expectations and build confidence.

Provide planned activity choices

- Offer ideas or visual choices for activities available during unstructured times, e.g. ball games, drawing, construction activities, social games or quiet activities.
- Having clear options can help the child engage successfully and reduce uncertainty.

Identify supportive adults and peers

- Help the child know who they can go to if they need help, are unsure what to do, or need support during playtime.
- Use photographs, social stories, or discussions to reinforce who can help and where they can be found. This can increase the child's sense of security and independence.

Recognise and celebrate successful participation

- Acknowledge when the child follows break-time routines, joins activities, or responds appropriately to transitions.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You followed the playground routine independently." "You knew what to do when the bell rang." "You chose an activity and joined in confidently."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages successful participation during less structured parts of the day.

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8.5 Know and following rules, routines and expectations

Show increased acceptance and understanding of expectations

Make expectations clear and consistent

- Use simple, positive language to explain what is expected in different situations, e.g. **"Use walking feet indoors." "Put your hand up if you would like to speak."**
- Consistent expectations across adults and environments help the child understand what is required of them.

Use visual supports and reminders

- Display expectations using pictures, symbols, photographs, social stories, or classroom rules.
- Refer to these supports regularly before and during activities.
- Visual reminders can help the child understand and remember expectations independently.

Explain the reasons behind expectations

- Help the child understand why expectations exist and how they help everyone, e.g. **"We walk indoors to keep everyone safe." "We take turns speaking so everyone gets a chance to share their ideas."**
- Understanding the purpose of expectations can increase acceptance and cooperation.

Provide opportunities to practise and discuss expectations

- Use role-play, games, stories, and real-life situations to explore what different expectations look like.
- Encourage discussion using questions such as **"What should we do in this situation?" "Why is that an important rule?"**
- Practice helps children develop understanding and confidence in meeting expectations.

Recognise and celebrate positive responses to expectations

- Acknowledge when the child follows, understands, or independently remembers an expectation.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You remembered what was expected and followed it independently." "You understood the classroom rule and acted responsibly." "You showed great understanding of what needed to happen."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages continued acceptance and application of expectations.

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8.6 Evaluating own learning

Evaluate their own learning

Encourage regular reflection on learning experiences

- Provide opportunities for the child to think about what they have learned, what they enjoyed, and what they found challenging.
- Use questions such as **"What did you learn today?" "What was the easiest part?" "What did you find difficult?"**
- Regular reflection helps the child become more aware of their own learning process.

Use visual self-assessment tools

- Introduce tools such as traffic lights, smiley faces, rating scales, learning ladders, or reflection sheets, e.g. Green = I understood this well, Amber = I need a little more help or Red = I found this difficult
- Visual tools can help children evaluate their learning in an accessible and structured way.

Help the child identify what helped them succeed

- Encourage discussion about the strategies, resources, or support that contributed to their learning.
- Ask questions such as **"What helped you complete that task?" "Which strategy worked best for you?" "What would you do again next time?"** This develops self-awareness and independent learning skills.

Support the child to set next steps and goals

- After evaluating their learning, help the child identify what they would like to improve or learn next, e.g. **"What would you like to practise more?" "What is your next goal?"**
- This helps the child see learning as an ongoing process and encourages a growth mindset.

Recognise and celebrate honest self-evaluation

- Acknowledge when the child reflects thoughtfully on their achievements and challenges.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You thought carefully about what helped you learn." "You recognised what you found challenging and what you can do next." "You were able to explain your learning clearly."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages confidence, self-awareness, and active involvement in learning.

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8.6 Evaluating own learning

Apply their own learning

Provide opportunities to use skills in different situations

- Encourage the child to use knowledge and skills they have learned across a range of activities, environments, and subjects, e.g. using counting skills during shopping role-play or applying reading skills to follow instructions in a game. This helps the child recognise that learning can be useful in many different contexts.

Encourage the child to make connections between past and new learning

- Ask questions that help the child link what they already know to new experiences, e.g. **"Have you learned something like this before?" "How could you use that skill here?" "What do you already know that can help you?"**
- Making connections strengthens understanding and promotes independent thinking.

Support problem-solving and independent decision-making

- Encourage the child to think about which skills, strategies, or knowledge they could use when faced with a task or challenge.
- Use prompts such as **"What could you try?" "Which strategy has helped you before?" "How could you solve this problem?"** This helps the child learn to transfer knowledge from one situation to another.

Provide opportunities for reflection

- Discuss how the child used their learning and what impact it had.
- Ask questions such as **"How did your learning help you today?" "What skill did you use?" "Would that strategy work again in a different situation?"**
- Reflection helps the child become more aware of their own learning processes.

Recognise and celebrate successful application of learning

- Acknowledge when the child independently applies a skill, strategy, or piece of knowledge.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You remembered what you learned and used it in a new situation." "You applied that strategy independently." "You used your previous learning to solve a problem."**
- Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages the child to continue transferring their learning to new experiences.

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8.6 Evaluating own learning

Know and apply their strengths

Help the child identify their strengths

- Provide opportunities for the child to recognise what they do well, enjoy, and feel confident doing.
- Use prompts such as **"What are you most proud of?" "What do you find easy?" "What do other people ask you to help with?"**
- Helping the child identify their strengths builds self-awareness and confidence.

Use strengths-based feedback

- Regularly acknowledge the child's skills, talents, and positive qualities, e.g. **"You are very creative when solving problems." "You are kind and supportive to others." "You are determined and keep trying when things are difficult."**
- Specific feedback helps the child understand and value their strengths.

Create opportunities to use strengths in everyday activities

- Encourage the child to apply their strengths during learning, play, and social situations, e.g. a child who enjoys organising could help prepare resources or a child who enjoys drawing could use pictures to share ideas.
- Applying strengths helps the child experience success and develop confidence.

Encourage the child to use strengths to overcome challenges

- Support the child to think about how their strengths can help them when tasks become difficult.
- Use questions such as **"What are you good at that could help here?" "How could you use your creativity to solve this problem?" "What has helped you succeed in the past?"**
- This develops resilience, problem-solving, and self-belief.

Recognise and celebrate when strengths are applied

- Acknowledge when the child uses their strengths effectively in different situations.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You used your excellent listening skills to understand the task." "Your creativity helped you come up with a great solution." "You used your determination to keep going and achieve your goal."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the child to continue drawing on their strengths.

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8.6 Evaluating own learning

Recognise their differences and challenges

Help the child identify their strengths

- Provide opportunities for the child to recognise what they do well, enjoy, and feel confident doing.
- Use prompts such as **"What are you most proud of?" "What do you find easy?" "What do other people ask you to help with?"**
- Helping the child identify their strengths builds self-awareness and confidence.

Use strengths-based feedback

- Regularly acknowledge the child's skills, talents, and positive qualities, e.g. **"You are very creative when solving problems." "You are kind and supportive to others." "You are determined and keep trying when things are difficult."**
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Create opportunities to use strengths in everyday activities

- Encourage the child to apply their strengths during learning, play, and social situations, e.g. a child who enjoys organising could help prepare resources or a child who enjoys drawing could use pictures to share ideas.
- Applying strengths helps the child experience success and develop confidence.

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Recognise and celebrate when strengths are applied

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- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You used your excellent listening skills to understand the task." "Your creativity helped you come up with a great solution." "You used your determination to keep going and achieve your goal."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the child to continue drawing on their strengths.

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8.6 Evaluating own learning

Recognise their differences and challenges

Talk openly about strengths and areas of difficulty

- Help the child understand that everyone has things they find easy and things they find more challenging.
- Use positive, supportive language such as **"Everyone learns differently." "We all have strengths and things we need to practise."**
- This helps the child develop a balanced and positive understanding of themselves.

Encourage self-reflection

- Provide opportunities for the child to think about their experiences, learning, and everyday activities.
- Use prompts such as **"What do you find easy?" "What do you find difficult?" "What helps you when something is challenging?"**
- Reflection supports self-awareness and understanding of individual needs.

Use personalised profiles or 'All About Me' activities

- Create a profile, poster, or book that highlights strengths and interests, areas that are more challenging, helpful strategies or personal goals.
- Reviewing these regularly helps the child develop a realistic and positive understanding of themselves.

Help the child identify supports and strategies that work for them

- Encourage the child to recognise what helps them succeed when they face difficulties, e.g. using visual supports, having extra thinking time, asking for help or using sensory strategies
- Understanding helpful supports promotes independence and self-advocacy.

Recognise and celebrate self-awareness

- Acknowledge when the child identifies a challenge, explains a difference, or recognises what helps them.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You recognised that task was difficult and found a way to manage it." "You understand what helps you learn best." "You were able to explain your strengths and challenges clearly."**
- Positive reinforcement helps the child develop confidence, resilience, and a positive sense of identity.

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8.6 Evaluating own learning

Set their own learning goals

Encourage the child to reflect on their learning

- Regularly discuss what the child enjoys, what they are proud of, and what they would like to improve.
- Use prompts such as **"What would you like to get better at?" "What are you proud of achieving?" "What would you like to learn next?"**
- Reflection helps the child develop self-awareness and identify meaningful goals.

Teach the child how to set achievable goals

- Model how to create goals that are clear, specific, and realistic.
- Break larger goals into smaller, manageable steps, e.g. **"I want to read a longer book independently." "I want to remember to put my hand up before speaking."** This helps the child understand how to work towards success.

Use visual goal-setting tools

- Provide goal-setting sheets, target cards, learning journals, or visual planning boards. Include sections such as my goal, how I will achieve it, who can help me and how I will know I have succeeded.
- Visual supports make goal-setting more accessible and meaningful.

Review progress regularly

- Schedule opportunities to discuss how the child is progressing towards their goals.
- Ask questions such as **"What has gone well?" "What has helped you?" "Do we need to change anything?"**
- Regular reviews help the child stay motivated and develop ownership of their learning.

Recognise and celebrate goal-setting and achievement

- Acknowledge when the child sets a goal, works towards it, or achieves it.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You chose a goal that was important to you." "You worked hard towards achieving your target." "You reflected on your progress and made a plan for what to do next."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence, motivation, and independent learning skills.

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8.6 Evaluating own learning

Know the consequences of their own choices and actions

Talk through cause and effect in everyday situations

- Help the child make links between their actions and what happens as a result.
- Use simple language such as **"You put your coat on, so you stayed warm outside." "You forgot your water bottle, so you felt thirsty later."**
- Regular discussions help the child understand that actions often lead to predictable outcomes.

Use real-life experiences as learning opportunities

- When appropriate and safe, allow the child to experience the natural consequences of their choices.
- Support them to reflect on what happened and what they might do differently next time. This helps develop responsibility and understanding of how choices affect outcomes.

Use stories, role-play, and scenarios

- Explore the consequences of different choices through books, social stories, games, and role-play activities.
- Ask questions such as **"What happened because of that choice?" "What might happen next?" "What could they do differently?"** This provides a safe way to practise thinking about cause and effect.

Encourage reflection and problem-solving

- After an event or activity, support the child to think about the choices they made and the outcomes that followed.
- Use prompts such as **"What was your choice?" "What happened because of that?" "Would you make the same choice again?"**
- Reflection helps develop self-awareness and decision-making skills.

Recognise and celebrate positive decision-making

- Acknowledge when the child makes choices that lead to positive outcomes.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You thought about the consequences before making your decision." "Your choice helped the activity go well." "You learned from what happened and made a different choice next time."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages responsibility and thoughtful decision-making.

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8.6 Evaluating own learning

Notice their own achievements

Encourage regular reflection on successes

- Provide opportunities for the child to think about what they have done well throughout the day.
- Use prompts such as **"What are you proud of today?" "What is something you achieved?" "What did you find easier than before?"**
- Regular reflection helps the child become more aware of their own progress and accomplishments.

Use visual records of achievement

- Create achievement books, learning journals, certificates, photo albums, or display boards to record successes. Include examples of work, photographs, comments from others, and personal reflections.
- Reviewing achievements over time helps the child recognise their growth and development.

Provide specific and meaningful feedback

- Focus feedback on the child's effort, progress, skills, and achievements rather than general praise, e.g. **"You worked hard to complete that task independently." "You spent time practising and your reading has improved." "You showed kindness by helping your friend."**
- Specific feedback helps the child understand exactly what they have achieved.

Encourage the child to share their successes

- Provide opportunities for the child to talk about their achievements with peers, family members, or trusted adults, e.g. sharing work with the class, showing a completed project or discussing a personal goal they have achieved. This helps build confidence and reinforces recognition of their accomplishments.

Recognise and celebrate progress of all sizes

- Acknowledge both major achievements and small steps forward.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as: **"You noticed how much progress you've made." "You achieved something that was difficult for you before." "You worked towards your goal and succeeded."**
- Celebrating progress encourages positive self-esteem, motivation, and resilience.

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9. Healthy living

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9. **Healthy Living**

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9.2 Keeping healthy



9.3 Personal care



9.4 Relationships and sex education



9.5 Physical needs



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9.1 Healthy living

Recommended strategies for an environment to support and develop healthy living:

Promote healthy eating and drinking

- Provide access to healthy food and drink choices throughout the day.
- Display visual prompts and educational resources about balanced diets, hydration, and healthy food choices.
- Encourage children to make informed choices about snacks, meals, and drinks.
- Create opportunities to learn about nutrition through practical activities such as cooking, food tasting, and gardening.

Encourage regular physical activity

- Provide opportunities for movement throughout the day, including outdoor play, sports, dance, active games or movement breaks
- Ensure children have access to resources and spaces that encourage active participation.
- Promote physical activity as an enjoyable part of everyday life.

Support good personal hygiene practices

- Ensure handwashing facilities, tissues, soap, and hygiene resources are easily accessible.
- Display visual reminders for routines such as handwashing, tooth brushing, using tissues and personal care.
- Incorporate hygiene routines consistently into the daily environment.

Promote emotional wellbeing and self-care

- Create a supportive environment where children feel safe to express emotions and seek support.
- Provide quiet spaces, calming resources, and opportunities for relaxation and self-regulation.
- Encourage discussions about feelings, wellbeing, healthy relationships, and self-care strategies.
- Promote resilience, confidence, and positive self-esteem.

Teach healthy lifestyle habits through everyday experiences

- Embed learning about health into daily routines and activities.
- Discuss topics such as healthy eating, exercise, sleep, personal safety, mental wellbeing and making healthy choices.
- Use real-life examples to help children understand how healthy habits support their wellbeing.

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9.1 **Healthy living**

Encourage independence in health-related routines

- Support children to take increasing responsibility for drinking water regularly, managing personal hygiene, choosing healthy foods, participating in physical activity and recognising when they need rest or support.
- Accessible resources and visual prompts can help promote independence.

Provide opportunities for health education through play and exploration

- Use role-play, stories, games, investigations, and practical activities to explore healthy living concepts, e.g. pretend doctor's surgeries, food preparation activities, exercise challenge or wellbeing discussions.
- Active participation helps children develop understanding and practical skills.

Model healthy behaviours

- Adults should demonstrate healthy lifestyle choices and positive attitudes towards wellbeing, e.g. drinking water, being physically active, managing emotions positively and following hygiene routines.
- Children learn important habits through observation and modelling.

Recognise and celebrate healthy choices

- Acknowledge when children make decisions that support their health and wellbeing.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You chose a healthy snack today." "You remembered to wash your hands independently." "You were active and looked after your body." "You recognised when you needed a break to feel calm."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages healthy habits and self-awareness.

Ensure consistency across environments

- Promote consistent messages about healthy living across home, school, and other settings.
- Share successful strategies and routines between adults supporting the child.
- Consistency helps children develop and maintain healthy habits in different environments.

These environmental strategies support the development of health awareness, self-care, independence, emotional wellbeing, physical wellbeing, resilience, and positive lifestyle choices, helping children develop the knowledge, skills, and habits needed to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

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9.2 Keeping healthy

Know their own health needs

Teach the child about their body and wellbeing

- Help the child learn about basic health needs such as eating, drinking, sleeping, exercise, hygiene, medication, and rest.
- Use age-appropriate language and visual supports to explain how these things help keep them healthy, e.g. **“Drinking water helps your body stay healthy.” “Sleep helps your body and brain recharge.”**
- This supports the child’s understanding of what helps them feel well.

Encourage the child to recognise how they feel

- Help the child identify physical sensations and signs that may indicate a health need.
- Use prompts such as **“How does your body feel right now?” “Do you feel hungry, thirsty, tired, or unwell?” “What happens when you need a break?”**
- This develops self-awareness and understanding of personal health needs.

Use visual supports and routines

- Provide visual reminders for health-related activities such as drinking water, washing hands, brushing teeth, taking medication (where appropriate), eating meals, and physical activity.
- Consistent routines help the child understand and remember healthy habits.

Support the child to communicate their health needs

- Teach the child how to express when they need something to support their health and wellbeing, e.g. **“I need a drink.” “I feel tired.” “My head hurts.” “I need my medication.”**
- Support communication through speech, signs, symbols, communication aids, or visual cards as appropriate.

Recognise and celebrate self-awareness of health needs

- Acknowledge when the child identifies, communicates, or responds appropriately to a health need.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **“You noticed you were thirsty and got a drink.” “You recognised that you needed a rest.” “You told an adult that you weren’t feeling well.”**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence, independence, and self-advocacy.

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9.2 Keeping healthy

Coping with medical appointments

Prepare the child in advance

- Use stories, photographs, videos, visual schedules, or discussions to explain what will happen during the appointment.
- Include details about: where they will go, who they might meet, what equipment they might see, and what will happen first, next, and last.
- Preparation can reduce uncertainty and help the child feel more confident.

Use familiar coping and regulation strategies

- Encourage the child to access strategies that help them feel calm and comfortable, e.g. deep breathing, sensory tools, a favourite toy or comfort item, listening to music and/ or a visual timetable.
- Familiar strategies can support emotional regulation during potentially stressful situations.

Encourage the child to ask questions and express concerns

- Provide opportunities for the child to talk about any worries, fears, or questions before the appointment.
- Use prompts such as **"What would you like to know?" "Is there anything you're worried about?" "What might help you feel comfortable?"** This helps the child feel listened to and involved in the process.

Offer choices where possible

- Give the child some control by offering appropriate choices, e.g. **"Would you like to sit on the chair or next to me?" "Would you like to hold your fidget toy or your book?" "Would you like me to explain what is happening first?"**
- Having choices can increase confidence and reduce anxiety.

Recognise and celebrate successful participation

- Acknowledge the child's efforts before, during, and after the appointment.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You were very brave and attended your appointment." "You used your strategies to help yourself stay calm." "You asked questions when you were unsure." "You coped well with something that felt difficult."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence for future appointments.

Medical check-ups support prevention and early identification

- Promote regular dental, vision and hearing checks.
- Dental check-ups support oral health.
- Eye tests identify vision needs early.
- Hearing checks identify hearing needs early.

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9.2 Keeping healthy

Know the benefits and risks of medicines

Use simple, age-appropriate explanations about medicines

- Teach the child that medicines are used to help people stay healthy, manage symptoms, or recover from illness.
- Explain that medicines can be helpful when taken correctly but may be harmful if used incorrectly, e.g. **"This medicine helps your breathing." "Medicines should only be taken when a trusted adult says it is safe."** This helps the child develop a basic understanding of why medicines are used.

Discuss the benefits of medicines in everyday situations

- Help the child recognise how medicines can support health and wellbeing, e.g. reducing pain, helping people breathe more easily, managing allergies or treating infections.
- Linking medicines to positive outcomes helps the child understand their purpose.

Teach safety rules around medicines

- Reinforce clear safety messages such as medicines should only be taken as prescribed or directed, they should never be shared with others, they should only be handled with permission from a trusted adult, and unknown tablets or medicines should never be taken.
- Consistent messages help the child understand potential risks.

Use stories, role-play, and visual supports

- Explore situations involving medicines through books, social stories, photographs, or role-play.
- Discuss questions such as **"Who can help with medicines?" "Why is it important to follow instructions?" "What could happen if medicine is used incorrectly?"**
- These activities can help make learning about medicine safety more meaningful and accessible.

Recognise and celebrate understanding of medicine safety

- Acknowledge when the child demonstrates understanding of the benefits and risks of medicines.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You remembered to ask an adult before taking medicine." "You understood why that medicine helps you stay healthy." "You knew that medicines should only be taken safely and correctly."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages safe decision-making.

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9.2 **Keeping healthy**

Know how to limit spread of infection (e.g. coughs and colds)

Teach good handwashing routines

- Show the child when and how to wash their hands effectively, such as before eating, after using the toilet, after coughing, sneezing, or blowing their nose and after outdoor play.
- Use songs, visual guides, or demonstrations to make handwashing engaging and memorable.
- Regular practice helps the child understand that clean hands can help stop germs spreading.

Teach good respiratory hygiene

- Model and practise covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of the elbow.
- Encourage the child to put used tissues in the bin straight away and wash their hands afterwards. This helps reduce the spread of infections.
- Use simple reminders such as **"Catch it, bin it, kill it." "Cover your cough to help protect others."**

Use stories, visuals, and role-play

- Explore books, social stories, posters, and role-play activities about germs, illness, and healthy habits.
- Discuss how infections can spread and what children can do to help keep themselves and others healthy.
- Visual and practical activities can make health messages easier to understand.

Encourage awareness of personal hygiene routines

- Support the child to develop habits such as using tissues when needed, avoiding touching their face unnecessarily, and keeping personal items such as water bottles for their own use.
- Consistent routines help children develop independence and responsibility for their own health.

Recognise and celebrate healthy habits

- Acknowledge when the child uses strategies that help reduce the spread of infection.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You remembered to wash your hands before lunch." "You covered your cough really well." "You used a tissue and put it straight in the bin."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the child to continue using healthy habits independently.

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9.2 **Keeping healthy**

Make healthy choices in relation to food/drink

Teach the child about healthy foods and drinks

- Use age-appropriate discussions, pictures, books, and activities to explore different food groups and the benefits they provide.
- Explain how food and drink help the body grow, stay healthy, and have energy for learning and play, e.g. **"Fruit and vegetables help our bodies stay healthy." "Water helps keep us hydrated."**
- This helps the child understand why healthy choices are important.

Offer healthy choices and involve the child in decision-making

- Provide opportunities for the child to choose between healthy options, e.g. **"Would you like an apple or a banana?" "Would you like water or milk to drink?"**
- Having choices encourages independence while promoting healthy habits.

Model positive eating and drinking habits

- Demonstrate healthy food and drink choices during meals, snacks, and social situations.
- Talk positively about a variety of foods and the importance of balanced eating.
- Children are more likely to develop healthy habits when they see them modelled by trusted adults.

Involve the child in food preparation and planning

- Encourage the child to help with shopping, preparing snacks, selecting ingredients, or planning meals, e.g. Washing fruit, choosing healthy lunch items or helping to make a sandwich or salad.
- Participation can increase interest in healthy foods and improve understanding of nutrition.

Recognise and celebrate healthy choices

- Acknowledge when the child makes positive decisions about food and drink.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You chose water when you were thirsty." "You tried a new fruit today." "You made a healthy choice for your snack."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages healthy decision-making.

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9.2 Keeping healthy

Show increasing acceptance of a range of foods

Introduce new foods gradually and without pressure

- Offer small amounts of new foods alongside foods the child already knows and enjoys.
- Encourage exploration without expecting the child to eat the food immediately.
- Repeated exposure can help increase familiarity and reduce anxiety about trying something new, e.g. **"You don't have to eat it today, but you can look at it, smell it, or touch it if you'd like to."**

Encourage sensory exploration of foods

- Provide opportunities for the child to explore foods through looking, touching, smelling, preparing, and tasting.
- Discuss different colours, textures, temperatures, and smells. This can help the child become more comfortable with unfamiliar foods and develop positive experiences around food.

Involve the child in food preparation

- Encourage participation in activities such as shopping, washing fruit and vegetables, mixing ingredients, setting the table, or helping to prepare meals.
- Being involved can increase curiosity and willingness to engage with different foods. It also gives the child a sense of ownership and achievement.

Model positive attitudes towards a variety of foods

- Adults and peers can demonstrate trying and enjoying a range of foods.
- Use positive, neutral language such as **"This carrot is crunchy." "I like trying different foods to see what they taste like."**
- Avoid pressure, rewards, or negative comments about food choices.

Recognise and celebrate small steps

- Acknowledge progress at every stage, whether the child looks at, touches, smells, tastes, or eats a new food.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You were brave and tried something new today." "You explored that food with your senses." "You took a small taste and found out what it was like."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages ongoing food exploration.

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9.2 Keeping healthy

Make healthy choices about exercise

Help the child understand the benefits of physical activity

- Talk about how exercise helps the body and mind.
- Use simple explanations such as **"Exercise helps your muscles grow strong." "Moving your body can help you feel happy and energetic." "Being active helps keep your heart healthy."**
- Understanding the purpose of exercise can encourage positive attitudes towards being active.

Offer a variety of enjoyable physical activities

- Provide opportunities to try different forms of exercise, such as walking, cycling, dancing, swimming, ball games or playground activities.
- Giving the child a range of options helps them discover activities they enjoy and are more likely to choose independently.

Involve the child in choosing activities

- Encourage the child to make decisions about how they would like to be active, e.g. **"Would you like to go for a bike ride or play football?" "What active game would you like to play today?"**
- Choice promotes independence and motivation.

Model active and healthy lifestyles

- Demonstrate positive attitudes towards exercise and physical activity.
- Join in with activities and show enjoyment in movement.
- Children are often more likely to make healthy choices when they see trusted adults enjoying active lifestyles.

Recognise and celebrate healthy choices

- Acknowledge when the child chooses to be active or tries a new form of exercise.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You chose to play outside and keep active." "You tried a new activity today and gave it your best effort." "You made a healthy choice by being active."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages ongoing participation in physical activity.

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9.2 Keeping healthy

Make healthy choices about sleep

Teach the importance of sleep for health and wellbeing

- Help the child understand how sleep helps their body and brain.
- Use simple explanations such as **"Sleep helps you grow." "Sleep gives your brain energy for learning." "A good night's sleep can help you feel happier and ready for the day."**
- Understanding the benefits of sleep can encourage positive attitudes towards healthy sleep habits.

Establish consistent bedtime and wake-up routines

- Support the child to follow a predictable routine before bed and wake up at similar times each day where possible.
- Include calming activities such as reading a story, having a bath/ shower, listening to quiet music and/ or preparing clothes for the next day
- Consistent routines help the child recognise when it is time to sleep.
- Some children may need more energetic activities before moving onto calming ones.

Help the child identify habits that support good sleep

- Discuss choices that can help prepare the body for rest, such as having a comfortable sleep environment, meeting sensory needs before bedtime, being careful with stimulating activities, following calming evening routines and avoiding large amounts of sugary foods and drinks before bed. Be curious about what might be happening earlier in the day to prevent good sleep. This helps the child develop an understanding of healthy sleep behaviours.

Encourage the child to recognise signs of tiredness

- Support the child to notice when they feel tired and how lack of sleep can affect them.
- Use prompts such as **"How does your body feel when you are tired?" "Do you find it harder to concentrate when you haven't slept well?"**
- Developing self-awareness can help the child understand why sleep is important.

Recognise and celebrate healthy sleep choices

- Acknowledge when the child follows routines and makes choices that support good sleep.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You followed your bedtime routine really well." "You chose a calming activity before bed." "You understood what your body needed to help you rest."**
- Positive reinforcement helps encourage healthy sleep habits and independence.

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9.2 Keeping healthy

Know the health risks of smoking and alcohol

Use age-appropriate discussions about health

- Talk openly and honestly about smoking and alcohol, use language that matches the child's age and level of understanding.
- Explain that some substances can harm the body and affect how people think, feel and behave, e.g. **"Smoking can damage a person's lungs and make it harder to breathe." "Drinking alcohol can affect how a person thinks and makes decisions."** This helps the child develop a basic understanding of health risks.

Use stories, videos, and educational resources

- Explore books, videos, and activities that explain the effects of smoking and alcohol on health.
- Discuss the information together and encourage the child to ask questions.
- Learning through engaging resources can help make complex health concepts easier to understand.

Encourage critical thinking and discussion

- Use questions and real-life scenarios to help the child think about healthy and unhealthy choices, e.g. **"Why do you think people are advised not to smoke?" "How could alcohol affect someone's ability to stay safe?"** This supports informed decision-making and understanding of consequences.

Promote healthy lifestyle choices

- Encourage the child to identify positive ways to look after their body, such as eating a balanced diet, being physically active, getting enough sleep and looking after their emotional wellbeing.
- Linking smoking and alcohol discussions to overall health helps the child understand the importance of healthy choices.

Recognise and celebrate understanding of health and safety

- Acknowledge when the child demonstrates knowledge about healthy choices or the risks associated with smoking and alcohol.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You explained why smoking can be harmful to health." "You understood the importance of making safe choices." "You thought carefully about how to keep yourself healthy."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the child to continue developing health awareness and informed decision-making.

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9.2 Keeping healthy

Know the law about drugs, alcohol and smoking

Provide clear, age-appropriate information

- Explain the laws relating to drugs, alcohol, vaping, and smoking using language the child can understand, e.g. some substances can only be used by adults, some drugs are illegal because they can be harmful and unsafe and there are laws about buying tobacco, vapes, and alcohol. This helps the child develop a basic understanding of rules that keep people safe.

Use stories, scenarios, and real-life examples

- Explore situations through books, videos, discussions, or role-play.
- Ask questions such as **"Why do you think there are laws about these substances?" "How do these laws help keep people safe?"** This helps the child understand the reasons behind laws and regulations.

Teach the difference between legal and illegal substances

- Discuss that medicines can help people to stay healthy or feel better if they are unwell if used correctly.
- Discuss that some things that go into or onto bodies can be harmful and how we might know if something is harmful, unsafe or illegal.
- Help the child understand that laws help protect individuals and communities. This promotes informed and responsible decision-making.

Encourage questions and open discussion

- Create a safe space where the child can ask questions about drugs, alcohol, smoking, and vaping without judgement. Open conversations help the child build knowledge and confidence in seeking information from trusted adults.
- Correct misunderstandings and provide factual information.

Recognise and celebrate understanding of safety and responsibility

- Acknowledge when the child demonstrates understanding of laws, safety, and healthy choices.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You understood why there are laws about these substances." "You asked thoughtful questions about staying safe." "You recognised that laws help protect people and their health."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages responsible thinking and informed choices.

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9.3 **Personal care**

Use toilet by myself in a familiar setting

Establish a consistent toileting routine

- Encourage the child to use the toilet at regular and predictable times throughout the day, e.g. before leaving home, before and after meals or before going outside.
- Consistent routines can help the child develop confidence and independence with toileting.

Use visual supports and step-by-step reminders

- Provide visual sequences or picture cards showing the toileting process, e.g. go to the toilet, pull clothing down, use the toilet, wipe, flush, pull clothes up then wash hands.
- Visual aids can help the child remember each step and reduce reliance on adult support.

Ensure the environment is familiar and accessible

- Make sure the child knows where the toilet is and can access it easily. A familiar environment can help the child feel safe and confident.
- Where appropriate, use equipment such as step stools, toilet seats, or visual signs to support independence.

Encourage the child to recognise and respond to toileting needs

- Support the child to notice bodily signals that indicate they need the toilet.
- Use prompts such as **"How does your body feel?" "Do you think you might need the toilet?"**
- Over time, encourage the child to initiate going to the toilet independently.

Recognise and celebrate increasing independence

- Acknowledge when the child completes part or all of the toileting routine independently.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You recognised that you needed the toilet and went by yourself." "You followed all the toileting steps independently." "You remembered to wash your hands after using the toilet."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence, independence, and self-care skills.

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9.3 **Personal care**

Use a public toilet

Prepare the child for what to expect

- Use photographs, social stories, videos, or discussions to explain what a public toilet may look, sound, and feel like.
- Talk about features such as hand dryers, automatic flushing toilets, cubicles, and queues.
- Preparing the child in advance can reduce anxiety and increase confidence when using unfamiliar facilities.

Gradually introduce different public toilets

- Begin by visiting quieter, familiar public toilets before progressing to busier environments.
- Allow the child to explore the space and become comfortable with different layouts and features at their own pace.
- Gradual exposure helps build familiarity and confidence.

Use visual supports and routines

- Provide a visual sequence showing the steps involved in using a public toilet: enter the toilet, choose a cubicle, use the toilet, flush, wash hands, dry hands then leave the toilet.
- Consistent routines help the child know what to do, even in unfamiliar places.

Teach strategies to manage sensory differences

- Public toilets can contain unfamiliar sounds, smells, and lighting.
- Support the child to use strategies that help them feel comfortable, such as covering ears during loud hand dryers, using quieter alternatives if available, taking extra time to adjust to the environment. This can help the child feel more secure and willing to use public facilities.

Recognise and celebrate increasing independence

- Acknowledge when the child successfully enters, uses, or follows the routine in a public toilet.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **“You used the public toilet confidently today.” “You remembered all the steps independently.” “You coped well with a new environment.”**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages continued independence.

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9.3 Personal care

Keep their hands clean

Teach effective handwashing routines

- Demonstrate how to wash hands thoroughly using soap and water.
- Teach the steps in a simple sequence: wet hands, apply soap, rub all areas of the hands, rinse then dry thoroughly.
- Use songs, rhymes, or timers to encourage washing for an appropriate length of time.

Build handwashing into daily routines

- Encourage handwashing at consistent times throughout the day, such as before eating, after using the toilet, after outdoor play and after coughing, sneezing, or blowing their nose.
- Regular routines help make hand hygiene a habit.

Use visual prompts and reminders

- Display visual handwashing guides near sinks using pictures, symbols, or photographs.
- Use cue cards or posters to remind the child when and how to wash their hands.
- Visual supports can increase independence and understanding.

Make handwashing engaging and meaningful

- Use activities such as glitter, paint, or educational games to demonstrate how germs can spread and why handwashing is important.
- Explain in simple terms how clean hands help keep ourselves and others healthy.
- Understanding the purpose can increase motivation to participate.

Recognise and celebrate good hand hygiene

- Acknowledge when the child remembers to wash their hands independently or follows the handwashing routine successfully.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **“You remembered to wash your hands before lunch.” “You followed all the handwashing steps by yourself.” “You helped keep yourself and others healthy by cleaning your hands.”**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the development of independent hygiene habits.

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9.3 Personal care

Keep my body clean

Teach personal hygiene routines step by step

- Break hygiene tasks into simple, manageable steps and teach them through modelling and practice, e.g. washing hands, brushing teeth, bathing or showering, washing hair and/ or using deodorant when appropriate.
- Clear routines help the child understand what they need to do to keep their body clean.
- Be aware of sensory preferences to support the child.

Use visual supports and reminders

- Provide visual schedules, checklists, picture sequences, or symbols showing personal hygiene routines.
- These can help the child remember each step and complete tasks more independently, e.g. a visual sequence for brushing teeth or showering.

Establish consistent daily routines

- Build personal hygiene activities into predictable parts of the day, such as brushing teeth in the morning and before bed, bathing or showering regularly and changing into clean clothes
- Consistent routines help hygiene habits become automatic over time.

Explain why keeping clean is important

- Help the child understand how personal hygiene supports health, comfort, and wellbeing.
- Use simple explanations such as **"Washing removes dirt and germs." "Brushing your teeth helps keep them healthy." "Clean clothes help us feel fresh and comfortable."**
- Understanding the purpose can increase motivation and independence.

Recognise and celebrate independence with personal care

- Acknowledge when the child completes hygiene tasks independently or remembers routines without reminders.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You remembered to brush your teeth this morning." "You followed your washing routine independently." "You took responsibility for keeping yourself clean and healthy."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages lifelong self-care habits.

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9.3 Personal care

Take an interest in their appearance

Encourage independence in personal care routines

- Support the child to take part in age-appropriate self-care activities such as brushing their hair, washing their face, choosing clothes, and checking their appearance.
- Break tasks into manageable steps and provide visual supports if needed.
- Developing independence can increase awareness of personal appearance and self-care.
- Be aware of sensory preferences to support the child.

Offer choices about clothing and personal style

- Provide opportunities for the child to choose between suitable clothing, hairstyles, accessories, or personal care items, e.g. **"Which top would you like to wear today?" "Would you like to wear your blue or red jumper?"**
- Making choices helps the child develop a sense of identity and ownership.

Use mirrors and positive discussions about appearance

- Encourage the child to look in a mirror when getting ready and talk positively about looking after themselves, e.g. **"Let's check that your hair is how you would like it." "You chose an outfit that makes you feel comfortable."**
- This promotes self-awareness and confidence.

Teach the link between appearance, comfort, and wellbeing

- Help the child understand why looking after their appearance is important.
- Discuss how clean clothes, personal hygiene, and appropriate clothing can help them feel comfortable, confident, and ready for different activities.
- This helps the child see appearance as part of self-care rather than simply appearance for its own sake.

Recognise and celebrate positive self-care choices

- Acknowledge when the child takes responsibility for their appearance or makes choices about how they would like to present themselves.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You took care when getting ready today." "You chose clothes that were right for the weather." "You showed independence by looking after your appearance."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages ongoing self-care.

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9.3 Personal care

Know and look after their sensory preferences with my clothing and keeping clean

Help the child identify and communicate sensory preferences

- Support the child to recognise which clothing, fabrics, hygiene products, temperatures, smells, or personal care activities they find comfortable or uncomfortable.
- Use prompts such as **"Does this fabric feel comfortable?" "Do you prefer warm or cool water?" "Which shampoo do you like best?"**
- Encouraging awareness of preferences helps the child understand their sensory needs.

Offer appropriate choices in clothing and personal care

- Provide a range of suitable options that meet the child's sensory preferences where possible, e.g. choosing between different fabric types, selecting preferred toiletries or choosing between a bath or shower.
- Offering choices promotes independence and self-advocacy while respecting sensory differences.

Use visual supports and routines for self-care

- Create visual checklists or schedules for personal hygiene routines such as washing, brushing teeth, changing clothes, and hair care.
- Include any sensory strategies that help, such as using a preferred flannel, towel, or unscented products.
- Predictable routines can make self-care activities feel more manageable and comfortable.

Teach strategies for managing sensory challenges

- Help the child develop practical ways to cope with sensory discomfort while maintaining personal care, e.g. wearing seamless clothing, removing clothing labels, using preferred water temperatures or taking sensory breaks during grooming activities.
- This helps the child balance sensory needs with personal hygiene and self-care.

Recognise and celebrate self-awareness and independence

- Acknowledge when the child identifies a sensory need, communicates a preference, or takes action to meet it appropriately.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You recognised which clothes felt most comfortable for you." "You chose a strategy that helped make washing easier." "You understood what you needed and looked after yourself independently."**
- Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages ongoing self-awareness and self-care.

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9.3 Personal care

Dress themself

Break dressing tasks into small, manageable steps

- Teach dressing skills one step at a time, such as putting arms into sleeves, pulling up trousers, fastening buttons or zips or putting on socks and shoes.
- Use visual sequences or simple instructions to support understanding.
- Learning one skill at a time can help build confidence and independence.

Provide opportunities for regular practice

- Encourage the child to participate in dressing routines every day, even if they need support initially.
- Allow extra time so the child can practise without feeling rushed. Consistent practice helps develop skills, coordination, and confidence.

Choose clothing that promotes success

- Start with clothing that is easier to manage, such as: elasticated waistbands, velcro fastenings, larger buttons or loose-fitting garments.
- Adaptive or easier-to-fasten clothing can help the child experience success and develop dressing skills gradually.

Use visual supports, modelling, and prompts

- Demonstrate dressing skills and encourage the child to copy what they see.
- Use mirrors, dressing cards, photographs, or visual checklists to support learning.
- Gradually reduce prompts as the child's independence increases.

Recognise and celebrate increasing independence

- Acknowledge all efforts and progress, even when the child only completes part of the task independently.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You put your coat on by yourself." "You remembered how to fasten your zip." "You kept trying and completed another step independently."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence, resilience, and motivation.

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9.4 Relationships and sex education

Know their personal characteristics

Encourage self-reflection through discussion

- Create opportunities for the child to talk about themselves, their interests, preferences, strengths, and experiences.
- Use questions such as **"What do you enjoy doing?" "What makes you unique?" "What are you proud of?"**
- These conversations help the child build a clearer understanding of who they are.

Use strengths-based language

- Regularly identify and describe the child's positive qualities, skills, and attributes, e.g. **"You are very thoughtful." "You are persistent when things are challenging." "You have a great sense of humour."**
- Specific feedback helps the child recognise and value their personal characteristics.

Create an 'All About Me' profile

- Support the child to develop a profile, scrapbook, poster, or booklet including things they like, things they are good at, important people in their life, what helps them and their goals and aspirations.
- Reviewing and updating this regularly encourages self-awareness and a positive sense of identity.

Explore similarities and differences with others

- Encourage discussions about how people can be similar and different in their personalities, interests, cultures, abilities, and preferences.
- Help the child recognise their own characteristics while appreciating the uniqueness of others. This promotes self-understanding, confidence, and inclusion.

Recognise and celebrate self-awareness

- Acknowledge when the child identifies, describes, or reflects on their own characteristics.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You know what is important to you." "You were able to explain your strengths clearly." "You recognised something that makes you unique."**
- Positive reinforcement helps the child develop confidence and a strong sense of self.

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9.4 Relationships and sex education

Notice and accept differences between people

Celebrate diversity through everyday experiences

- Provide opportunities for the child to learn about different cultures, languages, families, traditions, abilities, interests, and ways of living.
- Use books, stories, toys, images, and activities that represent a diverse range of people.
- This helps the child understand that differences are a natural and valued part of society.

Encourage discussions about similarities and differences

- Talk positively about how people can be alike and different.
- Use questions such as **"What is the same about us?" "What is different?" "How do our differences make us unique?"**
- These conversations help the child develop respect and understanding for others.

Model inclusive and respectful attitudes

- Demonstrate acceptance, kindness, and curiosity when talking about people who may have different experiences, backgrounds, or needs.
- Use positive language such as **"Everyone has different strengths and talents." "People can do things in different ways."**
- Children learn acceptance by observing the attitudes and behaviours of trusted adults.

Provide opportunities to interact with a wide range of people

- Encourage participation in activities where the child can build relationships with people who have different interests, abilities, cultures, and perspectives.
- Positive experiences with diverse individuals help reduce assumptions and build understanding and empathy.

Recognise and celebrate acceptance and inclusion

- Acknowledge when the child shows respect, curiosity, kindness, or acceptance towards others.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You listened carefully to someone else's experience." "You included everyone in the activity." "You recognised that people can be different and treated them with kindness and respect."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages inclusive attitudes and behaviours.

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9.4 Relationships and sex education

Know and accept changes that occur during puberty

Provide clear, age-appropriate information about puberty

- Talk openly and honestly about the physical, emotional, and social changes that can occur during puberty.
- Use books, visual resources, social stories, or educational materials that match the child's level of understanding.
- Explain that puberty is a normal part of growing up and that everyone experiences it in their own way and at their own pace.
- This helps reduce anxiety and increases understanding.

Encourage questions and open discussion

- Create a safe, non-judgemental environment where the child feels comfortable asking questions about their body and emotions.
- Use prompts such as **"Is there anything you would like to know?" "How are you feeling about these changes?" "Do you have any worries about growing up?"**
- Open communication can help the child feel supported and reassured.

Teach practical self-care skills

- Support the child to develop personal care routines linked to puberty, such as washing regularly, using deodorant, managing periods, shaving (when appropriate) and changing clothes and maintaining personal hygiene.
- Practising these skills helps the child feel confident and prepared.

Help the child understand emotional changes

- Discuss how hormones can affect emotions and that it is normal to experience a wider range of feelings during puberty.
- Teach strategies to manage emotions, such as talking to a trusted adult, using calming techniques, keeping a journal or taking part in enjoyable activities.
- This helps the child develop emotional awareness and resilience.

Recognise and celebrate growing independence

- Acknowledge when the child demonstrates understanding, asks questions, uses self-care routines, or adapts to pubertal changes.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You are learning how to look after your changing body." "You asked an important question about growing up." "You are becoming more confident in managing these changes."**
- Positive reinforcement helps the child develop self-esteem and a positive attitude towards puberty.

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9.4 Relationships and sex education

Know about personal space

Teach the concept of personal space explicitly

- Explain that everyone has a personal space or "bubble" around their body and that different people may feel comfortable with different amounts of space.
- Use simple language such as **"Personal space is the area around our body that belongs to us." "We should check that people are comfortable before standing very close or touching them."**
- Clear explanations help the child understand this social concept.

Use visual supports and practical demonstrations

- Demonstrate personal space using hula hoops, floor markers, arm-length measurements, social stories, or pictures, e.g. **"An arm's length away is often a good amount of space when talking to someone."**
- Visual and practical activities can make personal space easier to understand.

Practise through role-play and games

- Use games and role-play to explore different social situations such as queuing, talking to friends, sitting in groups, or greeting people.
- Discuss how people might feel if someone stands too close or too far away.
- Practising in a safe environment helps build understanding and confidence.

Encourage awareness of other people's reactions

- Help the child notice social cues that may indicate whether someone feels comfortable or uncomfortable, e.g. moving away, stepping back, looking uncomfortable or asking for more space.
- Use prompts such as **"What is that person's body language telling us?" "Do you think they would like a little more space?"** This supports empathy and social awareness.

Recognise and celebrate appropriate use of personal space

- Acknowledge when the child respects personal boundaries and uses appropriate spacing with others.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You remembered to give your friend enough space." "You noticed that someone needed more room and moved back." "You respected another person's personal space."**
- Positive reinforcement helps the child develop confidence and positive social skills.

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9.4 Relationships and sex education

Know the difference between 'public' and 'private'

Explicitly teach the meaning of public and private

- Use clear, simple language to explain the difference between things that are public and things that are private, e.g. **"Public means something we do or talk about where other people can see or hear us." "Private means something that is personal and should only happen in certain places or with trusted people."**
- Consistent teaching helps the child develop an understanding of appropriate boundaries.

Use visual supports and social stories

- Create social stories, sorting activities, photographs, or visual charts showing examples of public and private places, behaviours, conversations, and body parts, e.g. public places can include the classroom, playground, supermarket and private places such as the toilet, bathroom, bedroom when changing clothes.
- Visual supports can help make abstract concepts easier to understand.

Practise identifying public and private situations

- Use role-play, scenarios, and discussion activities to help the child decide whether something is public or private.
- Ask questions such as **"Is this something we do in public or private?" "Where would be the best place for this activity?" "Who is it okay to talk to about this?"**
- Practice helps the child apply their understanding in everyday situations.

Teach who are trusted people

- Help the child understand that some private information, feelings, or concerns can be shared with trusted adults when support is needed. This helps the child understand that **"private"** does not mean keeping worries or safety concerns secret.
- Discuss who these trusted people are at home, school, and in the community.

Recognise and celebrate appropriate understanding of boundaries

- Acknowledge when the child correctly identifies public and private situations or makes appropriate choices.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You understood that the conversation needed to happen in a private space." "You recognised the difference between a public and private activity." "You made a safe and respectful choice."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and understanding.

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9.4 Relationships and sex education

Know about different types of relationships

Teach about different relationships in everyday life

Discuss the different people who are important in the child's life and the roles they have, e.g. family members, friends, teachers, neighbours or community members.

- Help the child understand that relationships can have different purposes and expectations.
- This develops social understanding and awareness of the people around them.

Use stories, books, and real-life examples

Explore stories and scenarios that include a variety of relationships.

- Discuss questions such as **"How are these people connected?" "What makes them good friends?" "How is a teacher's role different from a family member's role?"**
- Stories help children understand different relationship dynamics in a safe and meaningful way.

Teach the characteristics of healthy relationships

- Help the child understand that positive relationships often include kindness, respect, trust, honesty and cooperation.
- Discuss how people can show these qualities in different relationships. This supports the development of healthy social skills and expectations.

Encourage discussions about similarities and differences between relationships

- Support the child to compare different relationships in their life.
- Use prompts such as **"How is a friend different from a teacher?" "Who do you go to for help when you are worried?" "Who do you spend time with for fun?"**
- Understanding these differences helps children recognise appropriate boundaries and roles.

Recognise and celebrate positive relationship skills

- Acknowledge when the child demonstrates understanding of different relationships or interacts appropriately with others.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You understood how to speak respectfully to your teacher." "You showed kindness to your friend." "You recognised who could help you with that problem."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the development of healthy and respectful relationships.

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9.4 Relationships and sex education

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9.4 Relationships and sex education

Understand that behaviour change with different relationships

Teach the different roles people have in the child's life

- Help the child identify the different people they interact with, such as family members, friends, teachers, neighbours, and community members.
- Discuss how people may behave differently depending on their relationship with someone, e.g. **"You might play differently with a friend than you would with your teacher." "We talk to family members differently than we do to a shop assistant."** This helps the child understand that relationships influence behaviour and communication.

Use stories, videos, and real-life examples

- Explore situations where characters interact with different people and discuss how their behaviour changes.
- Ask questions such as **"Why did the character speak differently to their teacher than to their friend?" "How would you behave in that situation?"**
- These discussions help children recognise social expectations across different relationships.

Practise through role-play

- Act out scenarios involving different relationships, such as talking to a friend, asking a teacher for help, greeting a family member, or speaking to a doctor.
- Discuss the behaviours that are appropriate in each situation. This provides a safe way to explore social rules and expectations.

Encourage reflection on social interactions

- After interactions, discuss what happened and why certain behaviours were appropriate.
- Use prompts such as **"How did you speak to your friend?" "Would you speak to your teacher in the same way?" "Why might the behaviour be different?"**
- Reflection helps develop social awareness and understanding of relationship boundaries.

Recognise and celebrate appropriate social behaviour

- Acknowledge when the child adapts their behaviour appropriately for different people and situations.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You spoke respectfully to your teacher." "You used a friendly tone when talking with your friends." "You understood that different situations call for different behaviours."**
- Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages the child to apply this understanding independently.

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9.4 Relationships and sex education

Know laws about consent in relationships

Teach the foundations of consent through everyday interactions

- Help the child understand concepts such as choice, permission, personal space, and respecting boundaries.
- Use everyday situations to practise asking for and giving permission, e.g. **"May I borrow your pencil?" "It's okay to say no if you don't want a hug."**
- Understanding boundaries and permission provides the foundation for learning about consent.

Use age-appropriate explanations about consent and the law

- Explain that there are laws designed to protect children, young people, and adults and to ensure everyone is treated safely and respectfully. Use language appropriate to the child's age, understanding and experiences.
- Emphasise that consent means giving permission freely and that some activities require legal age and capacity to consent.

Use stories, social scenarios, and role-play

- Explore situations involving consent, boundaries, and personal choice through stories, role-play, and discussions.
- Ask questions such as **"Did that person ask permission?" "How could they show respect for someone's choice?" "What should happen if someone says no?"**
- Practical examples help children understand how consent applies in real-life situations.

Teach about trusted adults and help-seeking

- Help the child understand that if they feel uncomfortable, unsafe, pressured, or confused about a relationship, they should speak to a trusted adult.
- Identify trusted people at home, school, and in the community.
- Reinforce that laws and safeguarding measures exist to keep people safe.

Recognise and celebrate respectful behaviour and understanding

- Acknowledge when the child respects another person's choices, asks permission, or demonstrates an understanding of boundaries.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You respected your friend's decision." "You asked permission before joining the game." "You understood that everyone has the right to make choices about themselves."**
- Positive reinforcement helps develop respect, responsibility, and understanding of consent and healthy relationships.

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9.4 Relationships and sex education

Keeping safe in relationships

Teach the characteristics of healthy relationships

- Help the child understand that healthy relationships are based on kindness, respect, trust, honesty and feeling safe.
- Use everyday examples, stories, and discussions to explore what positive relationships look like. This helps the child recognise safe and supportive relationships.

Teach personal boundaries and consent

- Support the child to understand that they have the right to make choices about their own body, belongings, and personal space.
- Teach them that it is okay to say **"no"** if they feel uncomfortable and that they should respect the boundaries of others.
- Role-play situations where the child can practise giving or not giving permission.

Help the child identify trusted adults

- Work with the child to identify people they can go to for help, advice, or support.
- Create a visual list or network of trusted adults at home, school, and in the community.
- Reinforce that they should talk to a trusted adult if they feel worried, unsafe, pressured, or confused about a relationship.

Practise recognising safe and unsafe situations

- Use stories, social scenarios, role-play, and discussions to explore different relationship situations.
- Ask questions such as **"Does that feel safe and respectful?" "What would you do if someone made you feel uncomfortable?" "Who could you go to for help?"** This helps develop decision-making skills and safety awareness.

Recognise and celebrate safe relationship choices

- Acknowledge when the child demonstrates understanding of boundaries, seeks help appropriately, or makes safe choices within relationships.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You recognised that you needed support and asked for help." "You respected your friend's boundaries." "You made a safe decision when something didn't feel right."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages continued safe behaviour.

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9.4 Relationships and sex education

Know where to seek advice or help

Teach the characteristics of healthy relationships

- Help the child understand that healthy relationships are based on kindness, respect, trust, honesty and feeling safe.
- Use everyday examples, stories, and discussions to explore what positive relationships look like. This helps the child recognise safe and supportive relationships.

Teach personal boundaries and consent

- Support the child to understand that they have the right to make choices about their own body, belongings, and personal space.
- Teach them that it is okay to say "no" if they feel uncomfortable and that they should respect the boundaries of others.
- Role-play situations where the child can practise giving or not giving permission.

Help the child identify trusted adults

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- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages continued safe behaviour.

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9.5 **Physical needs**

Recommended strategies for an environment to support vision needs:

Optimise lighting

- Ensure rooms are well lit without glare or harsh shadows.
- Position the child to make the best use of natural and artificial light.
- Allow individual adjustments where children have specific lighting preferences.

Maintain consistent room layouts

- Keep furniture and resources in predictable locations.
- Inform child of any changes to the environment before they move around the space.
- Ensure walkways remain clear and free from obstacles.

Provide accessible learning materials

- Use large print, high-contrast text, and clear fonts.
- Provide electronic versions of resources where appropriate.
- Offer tactile materials, diagrams, and real objects to support understanding.

Use effective verbal communication

- Identify yourself when speaking.
- Read aloud information written on whiteboards, displays, or presentations.
- Give clear verbal descriptions of visual content, demonstrations, and activities.

Reduce visual clutter

- Keep environments organised and relevant.
- Avoid overcrowded worksheets or presentation slides.
- Use simple layouts with adequate spacing between text and images.

Support independent mobility

- Encourage child to learn routes around regularly used spaces.
- Ensure stairs, doors, and hazards are clearly marked.
- Work with mobility specialists where appropriate.

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9.5 **Physical needs**

Use appropriate technology

- Provide access to assistive technology such as screen readers, magnification software, electronic magnifiers, and audio resources.
- Ensure digital resources are compatible with accessibility tools.

Consider seating carefully

- Position child according to their individual visual needs.
- Ensure a clear line of sight to focus areas, demonstrations, and discussion groups.
- Review seating arrangements regularly.

Facilitate social inclusion

- Encourage peers to use inclusive communication strategies.
- Support participation in group work, social activities, and extracurricular opportunities.
- Promote understanding and awareness of vision impairment among peers.

Use multi-sensory teaching approaches

- Combine visual, auditory, tactile, and practical learning experiences.
- Provide opportunities for hands-on exploration and learning.
- Reinforce key concepts through multiple methods.

Allow additional processing and access time

- Provide extra time to locate information, read resources, or move around the environment.
- Share materials in advance where possible.
- Avoid rushing transitions between activities.
- Be aware of vision fatigue and provide rest breaks.

Work in partnership with specialists and families

- Follow advice from Qualified Teachers of Children and Young People with Vision Impairment (QTVIs) and other professionals.
- Regularly review support strategies.
- Communicate with families to ensure consistency between home and school.

Promote independence and self-advocacy

- Encourage pupils to communicate their access needs.
- Teach skills for managing equipment and accessing information independently.
- Foster confidence in seeking support when required.
- Ensure Safety and Wellbeing
- Conduct regular environmental risk assessments.
- Clearly communicate emergency procedures.
- Monitor emotional wellbeing and address any barriers to participation.
- Review Accessibility Regularly
- Gather feedback from the child and relevant professionals.
- Monitor the effectiveness of adjustments.
- Adapt strategies as needs and environments change.

The most effective environments for pupils with visual impairments are predictable, accessible, inclusive, and designed to promote both independence and full participation in learning and life.

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9.5 **Physical needs**

Recommended strategies for an environment to support hearing needs:

Optimise the listening environment

- Reduce background noise wherever possible.
- Close doors and windows when appropriate.
- Use carpets, curtains, display boards, and acoustic panels to reduce echo and reverberation.
- Minimise unnecessary noise from equipment and activities.

Ensure good seating arrangements

- Seat children where they can clearly see the teacher and other speakers.
- Be aware some students may be lip-reading.
- Consider individual hearing needs when deciding classroom positions.
- Arrange seating to support participation in discussions and group work.

Gain attention before speaking

- Gain the pupil's attention before giving instructions.
- Use visual cues, gestures, or agreed signals.
- Ensure the pupil is looking towards the speaker when important information is shared.

Support speech reading

- Face pupils when speaking.
- Keep your mouth visible and avoid covering your face.
- Maintain good lighting on your face.
- Avoid talking while writing on the board or moving around excessively.

Use clear communication

- Speak naturally and clearly without exaggerating lip movements.
- Use short, concise instructions.
- Break complex information into manageable chunks.
- Check understanding regularly.

Supplement verbal information with visual supports

- Use visual timetables, diagrams, pictures, demonstrations, and written instructions.
- Display key vocabulary and learning objectives.
- Provide copies of notes, slides, or instructions where appropriate.

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9.5 **Physical needs**

Encourage inclusive classroom discussion

- Establish turn-taking routines during discussions.
- Identify who is speaking before contributions begin.
- Repeat or summarise comments from other pupils when needed.
- Encourage all pupils to speak one at a time.

Use assistive technology effectively

- Ensure hearing aids, cochlear implants, radio aids, or soundfield systems are functioning correctly.
- Complete daily equipment checks where required.
- Support pupils to use and manage their equipment confidently.

Reduce cognitive load

- Pre-teach key vocabulary and concepts.
- Provide information in multiple formats.
- Allow processing time following verbal instructions and discussions.
- Reinforce important messages through repetition and visual prompts.
- Plan listening breaks to reduce fatigue.

Promote language development

- Encourage rich conversations and discussions.
- Teach new vocabulary explicitly.
- Model accurate language and communication skills.
- Provide opportunities for structured speaking and listening activities.

Support social inclusion

- Facilitate positive peer interactions.
- Raise awareness and understanding of hearing needs among classmates.
- Encourage inclusive communication practices within friendship groups and collaborative activities.

Adapt group work and learning activities

- Use smaller groups where appropriate.
- Ensure all participants can see one another.
- Provide clear expectations for communication during collaborative tasks.
- Monitor participation to ensure pupils are fully included.

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9.5 **Physical needs**

Provide accessible instructions and feedback

- Give instructions both verbally and visually.
- Check understanding privately where needed.
- Provide feedback in a clear, structured manner.
- Summarise key learning points at the end of lessons.

Work closely with families and specialists

- Liaise regularly with parents, carers, Teachers of the Deaf, audiologists, and other professionals.
- Implement recommended strategies consistently.
- Review support plans and adjustments regularly.

Foster independence and self-advocacy

- Encourage pupils to identify and communicate their hearing needs.
- Support confidence in requesting clarification or adjustments.
- Teach pupils how to manage and monitor their hearing technology.
- Promote independence in accessing learning and social opportunities.

Monitor wellbeing and inclusion

- Be aware that listening can be tiring and may affect concentration.
- Provide opportunities for rest breaks when needed.
- Monitor emotional wellbeing, confidence, and engagement.
- Ensure pupils feel valued, included, and able to participate fully in school life.

An effective environment for pupils with hearing needs is one that maximises access to spoken language, reduces listening barriers, promotes communication, and supports full participation, independence, and achievement.

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9.5 **Physical needs**

Recommended strategies for an environment to support physical needs:

Ensure physical accessibility

- Provide step-free access wherever possible.
- Ensure doorways, corridors, and learning spaces are wide enough for mobility equipment.
- Keep routes clear of obstacles and clutter.
- Make sure essential resources can be reached independently.

Provide appropriate seating and positioning

- Use specialist seating or supportive furniture where recommended.
- Ensure desks and workstations are appropriately adjusted for comfort and access.
- Regularly review positioning to support participation, posture, and wellbeing.
- Follow clinical advice from physiotherapists and occupational therapists.

Create a safe learning environment

- Conduct regular risk assessments.
- Minimise trip hazards such as loose cables, bags, and uneven surfaces.
- Clearly identify emergency evacuation procedures and required support arrangements.
- Ensure equipment is maintained and used safely.

Promote independence

- Encourage pupils to complete tasks independently where possible.
- Provide adaptations that enable access without creating unnecessary dependence.
- Allow pupils to make choices and develop self-help skills.
- Support pupils to advocate for their own needs.
- Allow reasonable adjustments to school uniform as appropriate i.e. jogging bottoms, Velcro fastenings

Allow flexible movement and positioning

- Recognise that some pupils may need to change position regularly.
- Build movement breaks into the school day.
- Allow standing, alternative seating, or movement aids as appropriate.
- Avoid expecting pupils to remain in one position for extended periods.
- Ensure training is available to support safe moving and handling.
- Follow advice from PI Teacher and moving and handling advisor in conjunction with therapists to ensure appropriate management of safe position changes and timetabling therapy needs within the school day.

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9.5 **Physical needs**

Adapt the learning environment

- Arrange furniture to maximise accessibility and ease of movement.
- Ensure specialist equipment can be used effectively within the classroom.
- Position resources strategically to reduce unnecessary physical demands.
- Consider accessibility in all areas of the school, including outdoor spaces.

Use assistive equipment and technology

- Ensure specialist equipment is available, maintained, and used correctly.
- Provide access to devices that support recording, writing, communication, or physical access.
- Train staff and pupils in the safe and effective use of equipment.
- Review equipment needs regularly.

Adapt learning activities

- Modify tasks so pupils can participate alongside their peers.
- Focus on learning outcomes rather than the method of completion.
- Offer alternative ways to record work, such as using technology, verbal responses, or practical demonstrations.
- Plan activities that maximise inclusion and participation.

Support fine and gross motor development

- Provide opportunities to develop physical skills through structured activities.
- Ensure staff receive appropriate training to support with the development of physical skills.
- Use resources that strengthen hand function, coordination, and dexterity when appropriate.
- Adapt equipment to improve access and success.
- Celebrate progress and achievements.

Manage fatigue effectively

- Recognise that physical effort may affect concentration and stamina.
- Allow rest breaks when needed.
- Consider the timing of demanding activities.
- Monitor signs of tiredness and adjust expectations accordingly.
- Careful consideration of daily timetable particularly in Secondary school to reduce movement and distance travelled through the school day.

Facilitate participation in physical education and play

- Adapt PE activities to ensure safe and meaningful participation.
- Promote inclusion during breaktimes, sports, and extracurricular activities.
- Use specialised equipment where appropriate.
- Encourage peer support and cooperative activities.

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9.5 **Physical needs**

Use clear communication and planning

- Explain routines, transitions, and expectations clearly.
- Provide advance notice of changes to activities or environments.
- Ensure all staff understand the pupil's physical needs and support strategies.
- Share information consistently across the school team.
- Off site visits to be planned well in advance and risk assessed thoroughly with support from PI Teacher and moving and handling advisor.

Promote social inclusion

- Encourage positive peer relationships and understanding.
- Ensure pupils can participate fully in group activities and social opportunities.
- Challenge any barriers to inclusion.
- Foster a culture of respect, acceptance, and belonging.

Work in partnership with families and professionals

- Follow advice from physiotherapists, occupational therapists, healthcare professionals, moving and handling advisor and specialist teachers.
- Involve families in planning and reviewing support.
- Maintain clear communication regarding progress and changing needs.
- Review strategies regularly to ensure effectiveness.

Support personal care and dignity

- Ensure personal care arrangements respect privacy and dignity.
- Promote independence in personal care wherever possible.
- Follow agreed care plans consistently.
- Ensure all staff understand safeguarding and medical procedures.

Develop confidence and self-advocacy

- Encourage pupils to communicate their needs and preferences.
- Celebrate strengths and achievements.
- Involve pupils in decision-making about support and adaptations.
- Build confidence to access learning and social opportunities independently.

An effective environment for pupils with physical needs is accessible, safe, flexible, inclusive, and empowering, enabling them to participate fully in learning, develop independence, and achieve their potential alongside their peers.

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10. Independence and community

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10. Independence and community

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10.2 Independent living



10.3 Personal safety



10.4 Road safety and travel



10.5 Leisure



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10.1 Independence and community participation

Recommended strategies for an environment to support and develop independence and community participation:

Create opportunities for choice and decision-making

- Provide regular opportunities for children to make meaningful choices throughout the day, e.g. choosing activities, selecting resources, deciding the order of task or choosing leisure activities.
- Encouraging decision-making helps children develop confidence, self-awareness, and independence.

Ensure resources are accessible and organised

- Arrange the environment so children can independently access the resources they need.
- Use clear labels, photographs, symbols, and designated storage areas.
- Easy access to materials encourages children to take responsibility for their own learning and daily routines.

Use visual supports to promote independence

- Provide visual timetables, checklists, planners, maps, and step-by-step guides to support everyday tasks.
- Visual supports can help children to follow routines, complete tasks independently, navigate environments or prepare for activities.
- This reduces reliance on adult prompts and increases confidence.

Teach and practise real-life skills

- Create opportunities for children to develop practical skills needed for community participation, such as shopping, using money, ordering food, preparing simple meals, using public facilities, asking for help and travelling safely.
- Practising these skills in meaningful contexts helps children prepare for everyday life.

Encourage problem-solving and initiative

- Support children to think for themselves before seeking adult assistance.
- Use prompts such as **“What could you do next?” “Who could help you?” “What are your options?”**
- Encouraging problem-solving helps build resilience and independence.

Provide opportunities to access the local community

- Encourage participation in community-based activities such as library visits, shopping trips, sports clubs, community events, public transport experiences.
- Real-world experiences help children develop confidence and familiarity with community settings.

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10.1 Independence and community participation

Promote self-advocacy skills

- Encourage children to express preferences, opinions, needs, goals or concerns.
- Ensure their views are listened to and acted upon where appropriate.
- Self-advocacy is an important foundation for independence and community participation.

Foster understanding of community roles and supports

- Help children learn about the people who contribute to their community and who can provide support.
- E.g. shop staff, librarians, healthcare professionals, police officers or transport staff.
- Understanding community roles helps children feel more confident accessing support when needed.

Recognise and celebrate independence

- Acknowledge when children complete tasks, solve problems, make choices, or participate in community activities independently.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You organised that task by yourself." "You found the information you needed independently." "You made a confident choice in the community." "You showed responsibility and independence."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages continued growth and self-confidence.

Ensure consistency across settings

- Share successful independence strategies between home, school, and other settings.
- Use consistent expectations, visual supports, and language where possible.
- Consistency helps children generalise their skills and apply them confidently in a variety of environments.

These environmental strategies support the development of independence, self-advocacy, confidence, problem-solving, responsibility, life skills, and community participation, helping children become active, capable, and engaged members of their school, home, and wider community.

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10.2 Independent living

Look after own time/routines

Use visual timetables and schedules

- Provide visual timetables, planners, calendars, or checklists that clearly show the child's daily routine.
- Encourage the child to refer to these independently throughout the day.
- Visual supports help the child understand what needs to happen, when it needs to happen, and what is coming next.

Teach time awareness skills

- Use clocks, timers, countdowns, and time-related language to help the child understand the passage of time, e.g. **"You have ten minutes left to complete your task." "When the timer finishes, it will be time to tidy up."**
- Developing time awareness supports planning and self-management.

Encourage the child to prepare for upcoming activities

- Support the child to think ahead about what they will need and what they need to do before an activity or event.
- Use prompts such as **"What do you need to get ready for PE?" "What do you need to do before bedtime?"**
- Planning ahead helps the child take responsibility for their routines.

Gradually increase independence within routines

- Encourage the child to complete routine tasks with decreasing levels of adult support, e.g. packing their own bag, following a morning routine or preparing resources for learning.
- Gradually reducing prompts helps build confidence and independence.

Recognise and celebrate successful self-management

- Acknowledge when the child follows a routine, manages their time well, or remembers tasks independently.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You followed your routine without any reminders." "You managed your time well and were ready for the next activity." "You planned ahead and remembered everything you needed."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages responsibility and continued independence.

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10.2 Independent living

Prepare a simple snack

Teach the steps of snack preparation

- Break the task into clear, manageable stages, e.g. wash hands, gather ingredients and equipment, prepare the snack, eat safely then tidy away afterwards.
- Use demonstrations and simple instructions to help the child learn each step and build confidence.

Use visual recipes and checklists

- Provide picture recipes, symbol-supported instructions, or step-by-step checklists.
- Visual supports can help the child follow the process independently and remember what to do next. This promotes organisation and reduces reliance on adult prompts.

Offer opportunities to practise food preparation skills

- Encourage the child to take part in simple tasks such as spreading butter on toast, washing fruit, pouring drinks, making a sandwich or preparing a healthy snack plate.
- Regular practise helps develop fine motor skills and independence.

Teach food hygiene and safety

- Support the child to understand safe food preparation routines, including washing hands before handling food, cleaning preparation surfaces, using equipment safely and storing food appropriately.
- This helps the child develop safe habits and understand the importance of hygiene.

Recognise and celebrate success and independence

- Acknowledge when the child takes part in preparing a snack or completes steps independently.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **“You followed the recipe carefully.” “You prepared your snack independently.” “You remembered to wash your hands before you started.” “You showed great responsibility when preparing your food.”**
- Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages further independence.

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10.2 Independent living

Make a drink for themself and/or others

Break the task into simple steps

- Teach the process of making a drink using a clear sequence, e.g. wash hands, collect a cup, choose the drink, pour water or add ingredients, stir if needed then serve the drink safely.
- Breaking the task into manageable steps helps the child develop confidence and independence.

Use visual instructions and prompts

- Provide picture recipes, visual checklists, or step-by-step guides showing how to make different drinks.
- Visual supports can help the child remember the sequence and complete the task with less adult support. Encourage the child to refer to the visual guide independently.

Teach safe use of equipment

- Support the child to learn how to use cups, jugs, taps, kettles (where appropriate and supervised), spoons, and other equipment safely.
- Discuss potential hazards such as hot liquids and how to stay safe when preparing drinks. Building safety awareness helps the child develop responsible independence.

Create regular opportunities for practise

- Encourage the child to make drinks during everyday routines at home, school, or community activities.
- Start with simple drinks such as water or squash before progressing to more complex tasks.
- Opportunities to prepare drinks for themselves and others helps develop confidence and practical life skills.

Recognise and celebrate growing independence

- Acknowledge when the child completes part or all of the task independently.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **“You remembered all the steps to make your drink.” “You prepared a drink safely and independently.” “You showed kindness by making a drink for someone else.” “You took responsibility and completed the task successfully.”**
- Positive reinforcement encourages continued independence and skill development.

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10.2 Independent living

Prepare to make a meal

Teach the steps involved in meal preparation

- Help the child understand the stages involved in preparing a meal, e.g. choose a meal, check ingredients, collect equipment, wash hands, prepare food then cook and serve safely.
- Breaking the process into manageable steps helps the child develop planning and organisational skills.

Use visual recipes and planning tools

- Provide picture recipes, shopping lists, ingredient checklists, or visual planners.
- Encourage the child to check what they need before starting.
- Visual supports can help the child remember tasks and become more independent when preparing meals.

Involve the child in gathering ingredients and equipment

- Encourage the child to identify and collect the items needed for a meal, e.g. finding ingredients in the cupboard or fridge, collecting bowls, utensils, and cooking equipment or checking quantities against a recipe.
- This develops organisation, preparation, and problem-solving skills.

Teach food hygiene and safety routines

- Support the child to prepare safely by practising: washing hands before handling food, cleaning preparation surfaces, tying back long hair and using equipment appropriately.
- Understanding these routines helps the child develop safe and responsible cooking habits.

Recognise and celebrate successful preparation

- Acknowledge when the child plans ahead, gathers resources, or prepares effectively for making a meal.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You checked that you had all the ingredients before you started." "You organised your equipment really well." "You followed the preparation steps independently." "You took responsibility for getting everything ready."**
- Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages increasing independence.

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10.2 Independent living

Take part in meal time with others

Establish predictable mealtime routines

- Create consistent routines for mealtimes, such as sitting at the table, waiting for others to be ready, eating together, and helping to tidy up afterwards. Be aware of the child's sensory preferences and adapt accordingly.
- Predictable routines help the child understand what to expect and feel more confident participating with others.
- Use visual schedules if needed to support understanding.

Create positive opportunities for shared meals

- Encourage the child to join family, school, or group mealtimes regularly.
- Keep mealtimes relaxed and enjoyable, focusing on social interaction as well as eating.
- Shared experiences help the child develop confidence and a sense of belonging.
- Be aware of sensory preferences and provide support.

Model and teach mealtime social skills

- Demonstrate skills such as: taking turns in conversation, listening to others, asking for items politely, saying **"please"** and **"thank you"** and waiting while others are speaking.
- Practising these skills helps the child participate more successfully in group mealtimes.

Support communication and participation

- Encourage the child to contribute to conversations and communicate their needs during mealtimes.
- Use prompts such as **"Would you like to tell us about your day?" "Can you ask for the water, please?"**
- Support communication through speech, signs, symbols, or communication aids as appropriate.

Recognise and celebrate successful participation

- Acknowledge when the child joins others for a meal, engages in conversation, or follows mealtime expectations.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You sat with everyone for the whole meal." "You joined in the conversation and shared your ideas." "You asked politely for what you needed." "You were a positive part of the group at mealtime."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages continued participation.

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10.2 Independent living

Order a meal

Practise choosing from a menu

- Provide opportunities to look at menus and discuss the available options.
- Start with simple menus containing pictures and a limited number of choices.
- Encourage the child to identify what they would like and explain their choice.
- This helps develop decision-making skills and confidence in selecting food.

Teach and model ordering language

- Demonstrate phrases that can be used when ordering a meal, e.g. **"I would like..." "Can I have..." "I'd like the chicken and rice, please."**
- Role-play conversations to help the child become familiar with the process.

Use role-play and real-life practise

- Create opportunities to practise ordering food through pretend cafés, restaurants, or snack bars.
- Gradually introduce real-life experiences such as ordering in a school café, restaurant, or takeaway. Practising in different situations helps build confidence and independence.

Support understanding of the ordering process

- Teach the steps involved in ordering a meal, such as choosing a meal, waiting for a turn, speaking to the server, paying if required and waiting for the food to arrive.
- Visual sequences or checklists can help the child understand and remember the process.

Recognise and celebrate successful ordering

- Acknowledge when the child makes a choice, communicates their order, or completes part of the process independently.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You chose your meal independently." "You spoke clearly when placing your order." "You followed all the steps to order your food." "You showed confidence when talking to the server."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build communication skills, independence, and self-confidence.

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10.2 Independent living

Prepare to go shopping

Involve the child in making a shopping list

- Encourage the child to help identify what items are needed before going shopping.
- Use written lists, pictures, symbols, or photographs depending on the child's needs.
- Discuss questions such as **"What do we need to buy?" "What has run out?" "What ingredients do we need for dinner?"** This helps develop planning, organisation, and decision-making skills.

Help the child plan what they will need for the trip

- Support the child to think about what they should take with them, such as shopping bags, money or a payment card, the shopping list and/ or a coat or other weather-appropriate clothing.
- Thinking ahead helps the child develop independence and preparation skills.

Use visual supports to explain the shopping process

- Create a visual schedule or simple sequence showing make a list, travel to the shop, find the items, pay for the items then pack and return home.
- Visual supports help the child understand what will happen and reduce uncertainty.

Encourage the child to estimate and make choices

- Discuss quantities, preferences, and priorities before shopping, e.g. **"How many apples do we need?" "Which fruit would you like to buy this week?" "What is most important on our list today?"** This supports planning, reasoning, and problem-solving skills.

Recognise and celebrate successful preparation

- Acknowledge when the child contributes to planning and preparing for the shopping trip.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You helped make the shopping list." "You remembered everything we needed to take." "You planned ahead and were ready to go shopping." "You thought carefully about what we needed to buy."**
- Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages increasing independence.

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10.2 Independent living

Shop for items

Teach the child how to use a shopping list

- Encourage the child to use a written list, picture list, or symbol-supported shopping list when shopping.
- Help them identify items on the list and tick them off as they find them. This supports organisation, independence, and memory skills.

Practise finding items in different areas of a shop

- Support the child to locate products by looking at signs, labels, aisles, and displays.
- Use prompts such as **"Where do you think we might find the milk?" "Which aisle should we look in for bread?"** This helps develop problem-solving, navigation, and observation skills.

Involve the child in making choices

- Encourage the child to compare products and make appropriate choices, e.g. choosing between different fruits, selecting the correct size or quantity or comparing brands or prices.
- This helps develop decision-making and independence.
- Teach money and payment skills.
- Give opportunities for the child to practise paying for items where appropriate.
- This may include recognising coins and notes, using a payment card, handing money to a cashier or collecting a receipt.
- Developing these skills supports confidence and participation in everyday community activities.

Recognise and celebrate successful shopping skills

- Acknowledge when the child finds items, follows a shopping list, makes choices, or completes part of the shopping process independently.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You found everything on the shopping list." "You made a thoughtful choice about what to buy." "You paid for your item confidently." "You showed great independence while shopping today."**
- Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages increasing independence.

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10.2 Independent living

Pay for items in a shop

Teach money recognition skills

- Help the child recognise and name coins and notes and understand their value.
- Use real money, toy money, matching games, and everyday shopping opportunities to build familiarity.
- Start with simple amounts before progressing to more complex transactions. This helps develop confidence and understanding of money.

Practise paying in role-play situations

- Create pretend shops, cafés, or market stalls where the child can practise giving money and receiving items.
- Model simple phrases such as **"I'd like to buy this, please." "Here is my money." "Thank you."**
- Role-play provides a safe environment to practise payment skills before using them in real-life settings.

Use visual supports and step-by-step guidance

- Provide a visual sequence showing the process of paying for an item: choose the item, go to the checkout, listen to the amount, give the money or use a card then collect the item and receipt.
- Visual supports can help the child remember the steps and increase independence.

Provide real-life opportunities to make purchases

- Encourage the child to pay for small items during shopping trips, with support as needed.
- Gradually increase responsibility as confidence develops. This helps the child apply their skills in meaningful, everyday situations and learn how transactions work.

Recognise and celebrate successful payment skills

- Acknowledge when the child participates in paying for items, handles money appropriately, or completes part of the transaction independently.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You paid for your item independently." "You knew how much money to give." "You followed all the steps at the checkout." "You were confident when buying your item."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence, independence, and practical life skills.

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10.2 Independent living

Carry out household tasks

Break tasks into simple, manageable steps

- Teach household tasks one step at a time and provide clear instructions, e.g. when tidying a room: put toys away, put books on the shelf and put dirty clothes in the laundry basket.
- Breaking tasks into smaller parts helps the child understand what is expected and increases the likelihood of success.

Use visual supports and routines

- Provide checklists, chore charts, photographs, or visual sequences to show how to complete a task, e.g. a visual guide for: making a bed, setting the table, feeding a pet or emptying a bin.
- Visual supports encourage independence and reduce reliance on adult reminders.

Give the child meaningful responsibilities

- Assign age-appropriate household tasks that contribute to family life.
- Examples include tidying toys, setting the table, watering plants, sorting laundry or putting shopping away.
- Having responsibilities helps the child feel valued and capable.

Model and practise household skills together

- Demonstrate how to complete tasks and work alongside the child initially.
- Use encouragement and guidance while gradually reducing support as confidence and competence develop. This helps the child learn practical skills in a supportive environment.

Recognise and celebrate effort and achievement

- Acknowledge when the child completes a task, follows instructions, or takes responsibility around the home.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **“You completed your chore independently.” “You took responsibility for helping around the house.” “You worked carefully to finish the task.” “You helped make our home tidy and organised.”**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence, motivation, and independence.

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10.2 Independent living

Look after their own money

Teach basic money recognition and understanding

- Help the child recognise coins, notes, and their values.
- Use real money, toy money, matching activities, and everyday opportunities to build understanding.
- Discuss simple concepts such as spending, saving, and making choices. This helps the child develop confidence and awareness when managing money.

Provide opportunities to manage small amounts of money

- Encourage the child to take responsibility for a small amount of money, such as pocket money, savings, or money for a specific purchase.
- Support them to make simple decisions about how they would like to use it.
- Practical experience helps develop independence and responsibility.

Teach simple budgeting and saving skills

- Help the child set goals for saving money for something they would like.
- Use saving jars, money boxes, or visual trackers to show progress.
- Discuss choices such as **"If you save today, you will have enough for your goal later." "Do you want to spend some now or save it?"**
- This helps develop planning and decision-making skills.

Involve the child in real-life shopping experiences

- Encourage the child to compare prices, check costs, and pay for items where appropriate.
- Support them to think about value for money and whether they can afford an item.
- Ask questions such as **"How much does it cost?" "Do you have enough money?" "Is this what you want to spend your money on?"**
- These experiences help make money management meaningful and practical.

Recognise and celebrate responsible money management

- Acknowledge when the child saves money, makes thoughtful spending decisions, or takes responsibility for their belongings and purchases.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You saved your money to buy something important to you." "You made a careful decision about how to spend your money." "You took responsibility for managing your money." "You thought ahead and planned for your goal."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages financial responsibility.

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10.2 Independent living

Use a phone to communicate

Teach the basic functions of a phone

- Support the child to learn how to: answer a call, make a call, end a call, use contacts or send a simple message (if appropriate).
- Demonstrate each step and provide opportunities for practise in a safe and familiar environment. This helps build confidence and independence when using a phone.

Use visual supports and step-by-step guides

- Create simple visual instructions showing how to use the phone for common tasks, e.g. open contacts, select a name, press call, speak clearly then end the call.
- Visual reminders can support memory and reduce anxiety when learning new skills.

Practise phone conversations through role-play

- Role-play different situations where the child may need to use a phone, e.g. calling a family member, asking for help, leaving a simple message or answering a call politely.
- Practising these scenarios helps the child develop confidence and communication skills.

Teach phone safety and appropriate use

- Support the child to understand who they can call, when it is appropriate to use a phone, how to protect personal information and who to contact in an emergency.
- Discuss safe and responsible use of phones in different situations.

Recognise and celebrate successful communication

- Acknowledge when the child uses a phone to communicate independently or appropriately.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **“You made that call independently.” “You spoke clearly and confidently on the phone.” “You remembered how to contact the right person.” “You used your phone responsibly to communicate.”**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages further development of communication skills.

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10.2 Independent living

Plan for the future

Encourage the child to think about their goals and aspirations

- Provide regular opportunities for the child to talk about what they would like to achieve, learn, or do in the future.
- Use prompts such as **"What would you like to be able to do next year?" "What are you looking forward to?" "What would you like to achieve?"** This helps the child develop a sense of direction and purpose.
- Support the child to set and review meaningful goals.

Use visual planning tools

- Support the child to use planners, calendars, goal charts, timelines, or vision boards.
- Visual tools can help them see the steps needed to work towards a future goal. Breaking long-term goals into smaller stages can make planning more manageable and achievable.
- Use person-centred planning tools, including vocational profiling, to identify strengths, interests and next steps for the future.

Teach the child to break goals into smaller steps

- Help the child identify what needs to happen first, next, and later to achieve a goal, e.g. If the goal is to learn to ride a bike, the steps would be to practise balancing, steering, pedalling, and stopping safely. This develops planning, organisation, and problem-solving skills.

Encourage reflection and review

- Regularly discuss progress towards goals and future plans.
- Ask questions such as **"What have you achieved so far?" "What is the next step?" "Do you need to change your plan?"**
- Reflection helps the child evaluate progress and adapt plans when needed.
- Develop problem-solving and resilience when plans do not go as expected.

Recognise and celebrate planning and achievement

- Acknowledge when the child sets goals, makes plans, or takes steps towards their future aspirations.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You thought carefully about what you want to achieve." "You made a clear plan and followed it." "You worked steadily towards your goal." "You showed determination and forward thinking."**
- Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages continued engagement in planning for the future.

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10.3 Personal safety

Keep safe in their home

Teach home safety rules clearly and consistently

- Explain simple safety rules that are relevant to the child's age and understanding, e.g. **"Do not touch hot appliances." "Ask an adult before using sharp objects." "Keep medicines where only adults can access them."**
- Repeating and reinforcing these rules helps the child understand how to stay safe at home.

Use visual supports and reminders

- Display visual prompts, safety symbols, photographs, or checklists around the home, e.g. handwashing reminders, safety rules for the kitchen and emergency contact information.
- Visual supports can help the child remember important safety information independently.

Practise safety routines

- Regularly rehearse routines such as what to do in an emergency, how to call a trusted adult, safe ways to use household equipment and fire safety procedures.
- Practising routines helps the child feel more confident and prepared.

Help the child identify trusted adults and sources of support

- Ensure the child knows who they can go to if they feel worried, unsafe, hurt, or need help.
- Discuss trusted adults both within and outside the home.
- Use prompts such as **"Who could you call if you needed help?" "Who can help you if you're worried about something?"** This supports personal safety and help-seeking skills.

Recognise and celebrate safe choices

- Acknowledge when the child follows safety rules, seeks help appropriately, or makes safe decisions at home.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You remembered to ask before using that appliance." "You made a safe choice when you noticed a hazard." "You knew who to go to when you needed help." "You took responsibility for keeping yourself safe."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the child to continue making safe and responsible choices.

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10.3 Personal safety

Keep safe in my education setting

Teach the child about safety rules and expectations

- Clearly explain the rules that help keep everyone safe in the education setting, e.g. walking indoors, using equipment safely, staying within agreed boundaries or following adult instructions during emergencies.
- Regular reminders and discussions help the child understand why these rules are important.

Help the child identify trusted adults

- Support the child to recognise the adults they can go to if they need help, feel worried, or feel unsafe.
- Use photographs, visual displays, or trusted adult cards to reinforce who can support them.
- Ensure the child knows how and when to seek help.

Use visual supports and social stories

- Provide visual prompts, maps, social stories, and safety guides to explain routines and expectations.
- Topics might include fire drills, playground safety, safe movement around the setting or reporting worries or concerns.
- Visual supports help make safety information easier to understand and remember.

Practise responding to different situations

- Use role-play, scenarios, and discussions to help the child learn how to respond safely, e.g. what to do if they get lost, how to ask for help, what to do if someone is hurt or how to respond during an evacuation or lockdown.
- Practising these skills can build confidence and preparedness.

Recognise and celebrate safe choice

- Acknowledge when the child follows safety expectations, seeks help appropriately, or acts responsibly.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **“You followed the safety rules really well.” “You knew who to ask when you needed help.” “You made a safe choice during playtime.” “You showed responsibility by helping to keep yourself and others safe.”**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the child to continue making safe and sensible decisions.

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10.3 **Personal safety**

Keep safe when they're out in their community

Teach community safety rules

- Help the child learn and practise basic safety rules for different community settings, e.g. staying with a trusted adult, stopping at the kerb before crossing the road, being aware of traffic or following instructions in public places.
- Regular discussion and practise can help the child understand how to stay safe in a variety of environments.

Help the child identify trusted people

- Teach the child who they can approach if they need help when they are out in the community, e.g. parents or carers, teachers or support staff, police officers, shop staff or other identified safe adults.
- Discuss when it is appropriate to seek help and what information they may need to share.

Practise community safety skills through real-life experiences

- Take opportunities to practise skills such as crossing roads safely, using pedestrian crossings, staying aware of surroundings and following safety signs.
- Supported practise helps the child develop confidence and independence in real-world situations.

Use visual supports, social stories, and role-play

- Create social stories or visual guides to explain how to stay safe in places such as shops, parks, public transport, and busy streets.
- Role-play situations such as getting separated from a group, asking for help or following safety instructions.
- These activities help the child prepare for a range of situations they may encounter.

Recognise and celebrate safe behaviour

- Acknowledge when the child follows safety rules, seeks help appropriately, or makes safe decisions in the community.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You remembered to stop and look before crossing the road." "You stayed with the group and followed instructions." "You knew who to ask when you needed help." "You made a safe choice in a busy place."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages continued safe behaviour.

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10.3 **Personal safety**

Know how to get help in the community

Help the child identify safe and trusted people in the community

- Teach the child who they can approach if they need help when they are out and about, e.g. police officers, community support officers, shop staff, librarians, transport staff or a trusted adult accompanying them.
- Use photographs, role-play, or community visits to help the child recognise these people.

Teach the child how to ask for help

- Model and practise simple phrases the child can use when they need support, e.g. **"Can you help me, please?" "I am lost." "I need to contact my parent/carer." "I don't feel safe."**
- Regular practise helps the child feel more confident seeking assistance.

Use role-play and real-life scenarios

- Practise what to do in different situations, such as: becoming separated from a group, feeling unwell, not knowing where to go or needing help crossing the road.
- Discuss who they could approach and what they could say.
- This helps the child develop problem-solving and safety skills.

Teach important personal information

- Help the child learn or carry important information, such as their name, parent/carer contact details, home address (where appropriate) and emergency contact information.
- Use cards, phones, communication aids, or identification tools if needed.
- This can help others provide appropriate support when required.

Recognise and celebrate appropriate help-seeking

- Acknowledge when the child identifies a suitable person for help or uses help-seeking skills effectively.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You knew exactly who to ask for help." "You spoke clearly when you needed support." "You made a safe choice by finding a trusted adult." "You knew what to do when you weren't sure."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages future help-seeking.

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10.3 **Personal safety**

Keep safe online (e-safety)

Teach basic online safety rules

- Help the child understand simple online safety rules, such as not sharing personal information, keeping passwords private, only communicating with people they know and trust or asking an adult before downloading apps or clicking unfamiliar links.
- Use clear, age-appropriate language and revisit these messages regularly.
- This helps the child develop safe habits when using technology.

Use stories, videos, and role-play to explore online situations

- Discuss realistic scenarios involving online communication, gaming, social media, and internet use.
- Ask questions such as **"What would you do if someone asked for your personal information?" "What should you do if something online makes you feel worried?"**
- Practical examples help children understand potential risks and how to respond safely.

Teach the child to recognise trusted adults who can help

- Make sure the child knows who they can talk to if they see, hear, or experience something online that makes them uncomfortable.
- Encourage them to seek support from parents, carers, teachers, or other trusted adults.
- Reinforce the message that they will be listened to and supported if they report concerns.

Encourage safe and responsible online behaviour

- Discuss the importance of being kind, respectful, and responsible when communicating online. This supports the development of positive digital citizenship skills.
- Teach the child to think before posting, sharing, or commenting.
- Explain that information shared online can sometimes be difficult to remove.

Recognise and celebrate safe online choices

- Acknowledge when the child follows online safety rules, seeks help appropriately, or makes responsible decisions online.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You made a safe choice by asking before sharing that information." "You told a trusted adult when something didn't feel right." "You used the internet responsibly and safely." "You thought carefully before making that online decision."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages ongoing safe behaviour.

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10.4 Road safety and travel

Walk safely by the side of a road

Teach clear road safety rules

- Explain simple safety rules such as walking on the pavement where available, staying away from the edge of the kerb, holding an adult's hand when needed and stopping at driveways and road crossings.
- Regularly discuss why these rules help keep people safe. This helps the child develop an understanding of safe behaviour near roads.

Model safe behaviour during walks

- Demonstrate safe road use whenever you are out together.
- Narrate safety actions such as **"I'm walking away from the kerb." "We're stopping and looking for traffic before we cross." "We're staying together on the pavement."**
- Children learn important safety skills by watching trusted adults.

Practise road safety in real-life situations

- Provide repeated opportunities to walk safely alongside roads in a variety of environments.
- Gradually support the child to identify hazards, stay aware of their surroundings, and follow safety routines.
- Regular practise helps build confidence and awareness.

Use visual supports, social stories, and role-play

- Create visual reminders or social stories about walking safely near roads.
- Practise scenarios such as walking on a pavement, passing driveways, responding to distractions or staying with a group.
- These activities help reinforce road safety expectations.

Recognise and celebrate safe road behaviour

- Acknowledge when the child follows road safety rules and makes safe choices.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You stayed safely on the pavement." "You remembered to stop at the kerb." "You stayed aware of the traffic around you." "You walked safely and responsibly."**
- Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages continued safe behaviour.

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10.4 Road safety and travel

Cross the road safely

Teach a simple road-crossing routine

- Introduce a consistent road safety sequence such as stop, look, listen, think then cross when safe while continuing to look and listen.
- Practise the routine regularly and encourage the child to verbalise the steps.
- Repetition helps the child develop safe habits and awareness of potential dangers.

Model safe road-crossing behaviour

- Demonstrate how to cross roads safely and explain your thinking aloud, e.g. **"I'm stopping at the kerb." "I'm looking both ways for traffic." "The road is clear, so it's safe to cross now."**
- Children can learn important safety skills through observation and modelling.

Practise in real-life situations

- Provide regular opportunities to practise crossing different types of roads with adult support.
- Start with quiet roads and gradually introduce more complex environments as skills develop.
- Encourage the child to identify safe crossing points and hazards in the environment.

Use visual supports, social stories, and role-play

- Create visual guides, road safety posters, social stories, or role-play activities to reinforce learning.
- Use toy cars, road mats, and pedestrian crossings to practise road-crossing skills in a safe environment.
- These activities help children understand what to do before applying the skill in real situations.

Recognise and celebrate safe road-crossing skills

- Acknowledge when the child follows road safety routines and makes safe decisions.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You remembered to stop and look before crossing." "You noticed the traffic and waited safely." "You used excellent road safety skills today." "You crossed the road carefully and responsibly."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages ongoing safe behaviour.

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10.4 Road safety and travel

Find a way or follow directions

Teach and practise directional language

- Help the child understand and use words such as left, right, forwards, backwards, next to, behind and through.
- Use these terms during everyday activities and games, e.g. **"Turn left at the door." "Walk past the library and then stop."** This helps the child develop the vocabulary needed to understand and follow directions.

Use visual supports and maps

- Provide simple maps, photographs, symbols, or visual routes to support navigation.
- Use visual cues to show important landmarks and destinations.
- Visual supports can help the child learn how to find their way independently and increase confidence in unfamiliar environments.

Practise following directions during everyday activities

- Give the child simple directions and gradually increase complexity as their skills develop, e.g. **"Walk to the table." "Go through the door, turn right, and sit on the carpet."**
- Regular practise helps develop listening, memory, and navigation skills.

Encourage problem-solving and route planning

- Support the child to think about how to reach a destination.
- Ask questions such as **"How can we get to the playground?" "What landmark can help us find our way?" "What should we do if we're not sure where to go?"** This helps the child develop independence and confidence when navigating different environments.

Recognise and celebrate successful navigation

- Acknowledge when the child follows directions or finds their way successfully.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You followed all the directions carefully." "You found your way independently." "You used the signs and landmarks to help you." "You showed excellent problem-solving when finding the route."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages further development of navigation skills.

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10.4 Road safety and travel

Plan a journey or day out

Involve the child in choosing the destination and activities

- Encourage the child to contribute ideas about where they would like to go and what they would like to do.
- Use prompts such as **"Where would you like to visit?" "What would you like to do when we get there?" "What do we need to include in our plan?"**
- Being involved in decision-making helps the child develop ownership and planning skills.

Use visual planning tools

- Create a simple itinerary, timetable, checklist, map, or picture schedule showing the stages of the journey or day out.
- Include key information such as where you are going, how you will get there, what you will do and when you will return.
- Visual supports can help the child understand and organise the plan.

Teach the child to think about what is needed

- Encourage the child to consider what they will need to take and prepare. E.g. appropriate clothing, food and drinks, money or tickets, and medication or comfort items.
- Ask questions such as **"What should we pack?" "What might we need if it rains?"**
- This develops planning, organisation, and problem-solving skills.

Encourage consideration of travel and safety

- Support the child to think about how they will get to their destination and how to stay safe.
- Discuss transport options, meeting points, road safety or who to ask for help if needed.
- This helps build independence and awareness of practical considerations.

Recognise and celebrate successful planning

- Acknowledge when the child contributes ideas, prepares what is needed, or helps organise the journey.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You thought carefully about what we needed for the trip." "You helped create a really good plan." "You remembered important things to take with us." "You showed excellent planning skills."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages confidence and continued development of planning skills.

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10.4 Road safety and travel

Prepare to use public transport

Explain the journey in advance

- Help the child understand where they are going, how they will travel, and what will happen during the journey.
- Use photographs, maps, visual schedules, or stories to show the type of transport being used, where they will get on and off and what they can expect during the journey.
- Preparation can reduce anxiety and help the child feel more confident about using public transport.

Teach the steps involved in travelling

- Break the journey into clear, manageable stages, e.g. check the route, gather belongings, travel to the stop or station, wait safely, board the vehicle, find a seat then leave at the correct stop.
- Learning one step at a time helps the child understand the process and develop independence.

Help the child prepare what they need

- Encourage the child to think about and gather items required for the journey, such as travel tickets or passes, money, a phone, medication or a timetable or route information.
- Using a checklist can help develop organisation and planning skills.

Practise transport and safety skills

- Teach and rehearse skills such as waiting safely at a stop or station, reading signs and timetables, asking for help if needed, knowing what to do if plans change and staying aware of personal belongings.
- Role-play and supported real-life experiences can help build confidence and safety awareness.

Recognise and celebrate successful preparation

- Acknowledge when the child contributes to planning and preparing for a journey.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You remembered everything you needed for the journey." "You checked the route before we left." "You planned ahead and were ready to travel. "You showed great independence when preparing for public transport."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages confidence and continued development of travel skills.

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10.4 Road safety and travel

Use public transport

Teach the different stages of a journey

- Help the child understand the steps involved in using public transport, such as finding the correct stop or station, waiting safely, boarding the vehicle, finding a seat and knowing when to get off.
- Use visual schedules, photographs, or maps to support understanding.
- Breaking the journey into smaller steps can make travel feel more manageable.

Practise using public transport with support

- Provide opportunities for the child to travel on buses, trains, or trams with a trusted adult.
- Gradually encourage the child to take on more responsibility, such as identifying the correct stop, carrying a ticket, or recognising landmarks.
- Supported practise helps build confidence and independence.

Teach travel safety skills

- Support the child to learn how to wait safely away from the edge of the road or platform, stay aware of their belongings, follow transport rules and instructions and know what to do if they feel worried or lost.
- Discuss who they can approach for help if needed, such as transport staff or other identified safe adults.

Develop communication and problem-solving skills

- Practise skills such as asking for information, showing a ticket or travel pass, reading signs and timetables and responding if there is a delay or change to the journey.
- Use role-play and real-life scenarios to help the child feel prepared for different situations.

Recognise and celebrate successful travel skills

- Acknowledge when the child successfully uses part or all of a public transport journey.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You found the correct bus stop independently." "You remembered how to use your travel pass." "You followed the travel safety rules carefully." "You showed confidence and independence during the journey."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build confidence and encourages further development of independent travel skills.

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10.4 Road safety and travel

Solve problems that may occur when travelling

Teach the child to identify potential travel problems

- Discuss common situations that might occur when travelling, such as missing a bus, taking a wrong turn, not recognising a landmark, unexpected delays and changes to plans.
- Use questions such as **"What could we do if the bus is late?" "Who could help if we get lost?"**
- Thinking about possible challenges in advance helps the child develop problem-solving skills.

Practise problem-solving through role-play and scenarios

- Use role-play to explore different travel situations and possible solutions, e.g. asking for help, checking a timetable, contacting a trusted adult or finding a safe place to wait.
- Practising responses in a safe environment can increase confidence and preparedness.

Teach the child to use available resources

- Support the child to access tools that can help when travelling, such as timetables, maps, travel apps, emergency contact cards or signage and information boards.
- Understanding how to use these resources promotes independence and confidence.

Help the child identify who can help

- Teach the child who they can approach if they experience a problem while travelling, e.g. transport staff, police officers, community support staff and trusted adults.
- Encourage the child to practise asking for help and explaining what they need.

Recognise and celebrate successful problem-solving

- Acknowledge when the child identifies a problem, considers solutions, or seeks appropriate support.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You worked out what to do when the plan changed." "You found the right person to help you." "You stayed calm and solved the problem safely." "You thought carefully about your options and made a good decision."**
- Positive reinforcement helps build resilience and confidence when facing new situations.

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10.5 Leisure

Show preferences for particular leisure activities

Provide opportunities to experience a range of leisure activities

- Introduce the child to a variety of activities such as sports, arts and crafts, music, reading, technology, outdoor play or clubs and community groups.
- Experiencing different activities helps the child discover what they enjoy and develop personal interests.

Offer meaningful choices

- Regularly provide opportunities for the child to choose between leisure activities, e.g. **"Would you like to draw or play football?" "Would you prefer listening to music or reading a book?"**
- Making choices helps the child recognise and communicate their preferences.

Observe and discuss interests

- Notice which activities the child chooses, returns to frequently, or spends the most time enjoying.
- Use comments and questions such as **"You seem to really enjoy building with Lego." "What do you like about swimming?" "Which activity would you like to do again?"** This helps the child become more aware of their own interests and preferences.

Support the child to communicate their preferences

- Encourage the child to express likes, dislikes, and opinions using their preferred communication method, e.g. **"My favourite activity is..." "I would rather..." "I don't enjoy that as much."** This builds confidence, self-awareness, and self-advocacy.

Recognise and celebrate the child's choices and interests

- Acknowledge when the child identifies, communicates, or pursues activities they enjoy.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You knew exactly which activity you wanted to do." "You shared your interests confidently." "You chose an activity that you really enjoy." "You understand what makes your free time enjoyable."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the child to develop a strong sense of identity and personal choice.

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10.5 Leisure

Plan their own leisure activity

Help the child identify their interests and preferences

- Encourage the child to think about activities they enjoy and would like to do in their free time.
- Use prompts such as **"What do you enjoy doing?" "What would you like to do this weekend?" "Which activities make you feel happy and relaxed?"**
- Understanding their interests helps the child make meaningful choices when planning leisure activities.

Teach the steps involved in planning an activity

- Support the child to think about what they want to do, where the activity will take place, what equipment or resources are needed, who will take part and when it will happen.
- Breaking planning into clear steps helps develop organisational and problem-solving skills.

Use visual planners and checklists

- Provide calendars, planners, activity schedules, or checklists to help the child organise their ideas.
- Encourage them to record important information and tick off tasks as they prepare.
- Visual supports can help make planning more manageable and increase independence.

Encourage decision-making and problem-solving

- Ask questions that help the child think ahead and resolve potential challenges, e.g. **"What will you need for that activity?" "What could you do if the weather changes?" "How will you get there?"** This helps the child develop confidence in making plans and adapting them when necessary.

Recognise and celebrate successful planning

- Acknowledge when the child makes decisions, organises resources, or follows through with their plans.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You planned that activity all by yourself." "You thought ahead and organised everything you needed." "You made a great plan and carried it out successfully." "You showed independence when organising your free time."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages confidence and motivates the child to take increasing responsibility for planning their own leisure activities.

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10.5 Leisure

Join in a social exchange within a leisure activity

Choose activities that match the child's interests

- Encourage participation in leisure activities that the child finds enjoyable and motivating.
- Shared interests can create natural opportunities for interaction with others, e.g. board games, sports, arts and crafts, construction activities or gaming clubs.
- Children are often more willing to engage socially when they are interested in the activity.

Model and teach social communication skills

- Demonstrate simple ways to interact during activities, such as greeting others, asking questions, making comments, taking turns in conversation and responding to what others say.
- Use prompts such as **"What could you ask your friend about their model?" "Can you tell them what you like about their drawing?"**
- This helps the child develop confidence within social exchanges.

Structure opportunities for interaction

- Plan activities that naturally encourage communication and cooperation, e.g. team games, partner activities, collaborative projects or turn-taking games.
- Structured interactions can help the child understand how to participate socially within leisure activities.

Support turn-taking and active listening

- Encourage the child to listen to others, wait for their turn, and respond appropriately during activities.
- Use visual reminders or prompts if needed, e.g. **"Let's listen to what your friend is saying first." "Now it's your turn to share your idea."** These skills help build positive social connections.

Recognise and celebrate positive social interactions

- Acknowledge when the child joins conversations, responds to others, shares ideas, or works cooperatively during leisure activities.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You had a great conversation with your friend while playing." "You listened carefully and responded thoughtfully." "You joined in and shared your ideas confidently." "You worked really well with others during the activity."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages continued participation and social confidence.

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10.5 Leisure

Take account of others within leisure activities

Teach turn-taking and sharing skills

- Provide opportunities for the child to practise sharing resources, waiting for their turn, and taking turns during games and activities.
- Use clear language such as **"It's your turn now, then it will be Sam's turn." "Let's share the equipment so everyone can join in."**
- Learning these skills helps the child understand the needs and rights of others.

Encourage perspective-taking

- Support the child to think about how others might feel during leisure activities.
- Use questions such as **"How do you think your friend feels if they don't get a turn?" "What could you do to help everyone enjoy the game?"** This helps develop empathy and social awareness.

Promote cooperative activities

- Provide opportunities for the child to take part in team games, group projects, and collaborative play where success depends on working together.
- Encourage children to listen to others' ideas and contribute their own.
- Cooperative experiences help children understand the importance of considering others.

Model respectful and inclusive behaviour

- Demonstrate how to include others, listen to different opinions, and respond respectfully during activities, e.g. **"Let's ask everyone what they would like to play." "That's a good idea from your friend. How can we include it?"**
- Children learn social skills by observing positive role models.

Recognise and celebrate consideration for others

- Acknowledge when the child shows kindness, cooperation, flexibility, or awareness of others during leisure activities.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You made sure everyone had a turn." "You listened carefully to your friend's idea." "You changed your plan so everyone could join in." "You showed great teamwork and consideration for others."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the child to continue developing positive social behaviours.

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10.5 Leisure

Accepts and applies guidance within leisure activities

Give clear and positive instructions

- Provide simple, specific guidance about what the child needs to do during the activity.
- Use positive language such as **"Keep the ball below shoulder height." "Wait until everyone is ready before starting."**
- Clear instructions help the child understand expectations and feel more confident participating.

Model the expected behaviour or skill

- Demonstrate the activity, rule, or skill before asking the child to try it, e.g. show how to take turns, follow the rules of a game, or use equipment safely.
- Seeing guidance put into practice can make it easier for the child to understand and apply it.

Use visual reminders and prompts

- Support verbal guidance with visual aids such as rules cards, photographs, symbols, or step-by-step instructions.
- Visual supports can help the child remember guidance throughout the activity and become more independent.

Provide encouragement and constructive feedback

- Offer immediate and supportive feedback when the child follows guidance or attempts to apply it, e.g. **"You listened carefully and followed the instructions." "You changed what you were doing after the reminder."**
- Positive feedback helps reinforce learning and increases motivation.

Recognise and celebrate successful application of guidance

- Acknowledge when the child accepts support, follows advice, or adapts their actions based on guidance received.
- Use strengths-based feedback such as **"You listened to the instructions and joined in successfully." "You used the guidance to improve your skills." "You showed flexibility by changing your approach when someone helped you." "You followed the rules and helped the activity run smoothly."**
- Positive reinforcement encourages the child to remain open to guidance and apply it in future activities.

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