



Empowering Early Years Led by: Hannah O'Donnell – BA (Hons) Psych, E.Y.T., PG Dip (Early Years).

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Early Years Professional Workshop and CPD Training Synopsis.

Key Points.

- Please note that although general core training package topics are indicated here, all training is bespoke to requirements, in consultation with the Manager, in order to ensure maximisation of this CPD opportunity for Early Years staff.
- Associated costs are again bespoke as they depend on numbers, length of training and travel distance – however, all quotes are no obligation and are aimed to provide cost-effective and valuable CPD training opportunities for staff within the Early Years sector.
- Associated workshop and training materials will be provided for the attendees, along with a CPD certificate of attendance from Empowering Early years upon completion of the training.
- Training can also be split across several sessions, if there are key areas within the setting, key children or indeed training and reflective needs of the attendees which warrant this and thus several sessions allow for follow-up and more of a mentoring training approach.
- For any queries at all – please contact Empowering Early Years via email: empoweringearlyyears@gmail.com

What is Empowering Early Years?

As a new venture, it aims to provide relevant, practical, cost-effective high-quality CPD training in key areas of child development, play based learning and Early Years Education, through in-setting professional training and follow up mentoring/ planning support, as well as workshops for parents and practitioners. This course will incorporate recent psychological and scientific, as well as educational research and translate it into easy-to-understand concepts and application into enhanced excellent practice opportunities – positively improving outcomes for all children.

It is run by Early Years Teacher Hannah O'Donnell (EYT, PG Dip – Early Years (Dist), BA (Hons) – Psych), who has worked in a variety of Early Years settings, including an outstanding Foundation Unit as well as now working with schools, nurseries and Children's Services. Hannah is utterly passionate about play, child development and people, & wants to provide the very best CPD opportunities for Early Years practitioners, through de-mystifying complex research & key developmental areas, in order to develop further excellence in Early Years practice and empower practitioners working in the best job in the world – with young children!



Core topic Training opportunities offered - SUMMARY

(NB; Please note that aspects of these can be personalised to your training package and setting should you wish. Full details of course content is available under each core topic area within this document).

Gross Motor Skill Development: Enabling effective cognitive, physical and social functioning for young children as young learners through effective physical skill development opportunities in play and provision.

PSED and pedagogy: Attachment research- theory and new thinking, sensory processing, growth mindsets, child mental health and wellbeing, the role of executive functioning skills and resilience.

Fine Motor skills development. Physical skill development in play alongside cognitive functioning. Helping children to gain the necessary skills for writing, problem solving and as enthusiastic learners

Executive Functioning skills development in play and provision: Memory, attention and self-regulation. The role of Risk taking and Free play and the development of resilience.

Socio dramatic play and storytelling: Their importance in play and provision for PSED, Language and Communication skills and Emergent literacy skills.

Outdoor Play opportunities for skill development: Mud, motor skills and maths. *'100 ways to learn from a 'mud kitchen'!*

Emergent Literacy skills development. Increasing Language and communication, writing and social opportunities in play, provision and practice.

Early Mathematical development in play: Loose parts, investigations and block play.

Creative play and provision – letting children express themselves through creative play in a myriad of ways; Upcycling provision and practice for effective differentiated physical and social skill development in play.

Reflective and reflexive practice for provision and activity.

Understanding how children learn. The role of reflection, planning, child-led and interest led learning in excellent practice. The practitioner as a learner. What is reflection/ reflexive practice? What is active listening? What kind of learners are we trying to create and nurture? What do you bring to the role – stereotypes, standards, behaviours and expectations etc. how to develop an effective team pedagogy.

Real life skills, tools and young children: How children learn, inside versus outside, role of adult modelling (language and practice), supporting and developing multiple opportunities in play for cooking, growing, making etc for the successful physical and social development of children.



Background to the training approach.

- Child led and interest led play based practice.
- Continuous provision planning, upcycling and development – learning in the absence of an adult.
- Upcycling play provision and practice to reflect needs, interests and skill development.
- Reflective practice as individuals and a team upon provision, planning, the demands of the EYFS and the ‘teaching’ process.
- Basic biological and psychological understanding of how children learn, develop and process information.
- Children as all unique and individual.
- Relationships as key to learning – role of adults as observers and also learners.
- Role of the adult in interactions – professionals and supporting the family.
- Empowering parents.

What will each course allow for practitioners/ Managers/ Teachers?

- Gain a greater understanding of very recent complex psychology, biology and cognition research surrounding how babies and young children develop which allows opportunity for CPD as an excellent practitioner – focussing and reflecting/ incorporating current research and thinking into practice.
- Learn about the major links between mastery of key skills in core developmental areas, which then lead into the successful development of young writers, readers (and fulfilled human beings), thus improving outcomes for all children.
- Hear simplified explanations of major developmental concepts and begin to understand how these link to and can be applied into the 0-5 developmental journey through your current practice.
- Stimulate ideas for cost-effective and high impact enhancements to provision, practice and pedagogy in key areas which will improve outcomes for all children.
- Chance to develop own knowledge and reflect upon individual skills as well as how to apply learnings reflexively to positively benefit the setting, the team and the positive outcomes of the diversity of children.
- Develop a key understanding of your role as a practitioner or teacher through positioning within the current research surrounding the importance of attachment, high quality relationships with children, high level engagement in play for increased level learning potential and learning together as part of the overall process.
- The opportunity to strengthen team pedagogy and focus and apply this in a consistent and educationally sound manner to improve outcomes for all children.
- Opportunity to engage with practice based, academically supported, cost-effective training around key child-centred hot topics in early years education, which can be individually tailored to setting and staff team needs.
- An excellent CPD opportunity for the diverse spectrum of staff across a setting or school, which will allow for reflection, development of ideas and knowledge and strengthen confidence in judgements, as well as provide an excellent basis for understanding the way children learn and develop – which will ultimately impact positively upon the setting and the positive outcomes of the children who attend.



Gross Motor Skill Development: Enabling effective cognitive, physical and social functioning for young children as young learners through effective physical skill development opportunities in play and provision.

- Simplify concepts for GM linking to EYFS- what are they (basic biology and psychology) and what do they look like in the children.
- Extensive Gross motor and cognitive research (inc' Governmental recent data on writing skills gaps in 4 year olds/ needs for OTs with young children), demonstrating direct correlation (tracking for reading/ pen grip/dual task capabilities/ language) – why it's vital!
- Crossing the Midline, Proprioception, Bilateral Co-ordination, Strength/ Balance (going bare foot), Shoulder/ arm rotation etc - pen grip. Identifying skills gaps.
- How can the provision/ interventions/ overall practice support the development of gaps in this learning?
- Differentiation of child-led core provision areas for levels of skill development (done cheaply& easily for high impact and engagement) – in the absence of an adult. What does this look like in sand/water/malleables/outdoor etc.
- Easy interventions - Dough Gym, funky fingers, scissor work, tearing etc...
- Sensory learning and the brain processes involved for young children in neural networks/ cognition.
- Outdoors vs indoor and how provision can reflect different skills (speed/height/large scale movement for water for instance). Risk taking.
- Praise and process-led encouragement/ resilience.
- Supporting parents to support their child's physical development (pushchairs/ climbing/walking/sitting etc).



PSED and pedagogy: Attachment research- theory and new thinking, sensory processing, growth mindsets, child mental health and wellbeing, the role of executive functioning skills

- The socio-emotional and psycho- physiological development of babies and children.
- Role of natural world/outdoor play in developing healthy minds and bodies (GM skills)
- Sensory processing – what is it and how to accommodate sensory learning into provision and practice. The role of GM skills and physical activity to support sensory processing disorders/ interruptions in the developmental process.
- Relationships and Attachment – how this affects child (chronic stress) and the learning process – role for practitioners
- Growth mindsets (what are they? How to apply theories and learnings properly in practice – how they are mis-used). Process led praise.
- Mindfulness / coping strategies and behaviour
- Executive functioning skills- what are they (memory, decision making, self-regulation) and why are they vital to support for learning.
- Role of technology/ increased screen time in harming Self-regulation skill development for children (cognitive and biological research).
- Practitioner reflection on environment and own practice (ie' body language etc)
- Reward systems (intrinsic/ extrinsic) – what works?
- Child mental health research – importance of resilience/ self-reflection/confidence/happiness.



Fine Motor skills development. Physical skill development in play alongside cognitive functioning. Helping children to gain the necessary skills for writing, problem solving and as enthusiastic learners

- Simplify concepts of FM development – what is it? Basic biology, physiology and psychology – link to basics of GM development (ie without developed core strength, grip strength/ shoulder rotation -can't hold a pen effectively.)
- Extensive fine motor (and GM research), as well as national education data on lack of physical skill development in young children as they enter school, demonstrating direct correlation between FM skills and later achievement, therefore why it's vital to support.
- What is Mark Making – what does it look like? Link to emergent literacy.
- Developmental Stages of children as emergent mark makers and writers - what do they look like in the children?
- How can the provision/ interventions/ overall practice support the development of mark making and plug learning gaps in this physical and cognitively linked developmental process.
- Role of outside/ natural materials in FM skills development and effects of screen time.
- Dough Gym (Daily – differentiation of dough) funky fingers (timed) scissor work, tearing etc...
INTEREST LED
- Sensory learning and the brain processes involved for young children – using their bodies and hands.
- What does FM skill development look like in planning for provision for sand/ water/ malleables/ creative (levels of gluing!)/ outdoor areas etc?
- Loose parts play – what is it and its important play potential for FM development.
- Practitioner role in modelling skills/ interventions etc.
- Engaging Boys in FM development!



Executive Functioning skills development in play and provision: Memory, attention and self-regulation.

The role of Risk taking and Free play

- Executive functioning skills- what are they (memory, decision making, self-regulation etc) and why are they vital to support for learning (research).
- Ideas for provision, play interventions, provocations and games to develop executive functioning skills.
- Skill development in provision – levels of skill differentiation/ provocations/ areas of interest.
- What is this as non-directed play? Why is risk-taking important (height/ speed etc)?
- Gross Motor Physical skill development - scope with outdoor and risky play; development of self-regulation/ attention and memory.
- How free/ regulated is your child-led play?
- Role of technology/ screens in harming Self-regulation development (cognitive and biological research).
- Large scale loose-parts, outdoor large scale play and free play/ risk taking behaviours.
- Practitioner reflection – what are your boundaries? Active listening’ – limits of EYFS.
- Empowering children – ‘being safe’, taking risks, making judgements. Role of child-input rules/ boundaries for behaviour and play in setting (shared pedagogy)
- Weapon and superhero play – why important for boys – key research. How to upcycle the learning.

Socio dramatic play and storytelling: Their importance in play and provision for PSED, Language and Communication skills and Emergent literacy skills.

- What do these terms mean? What does this look like in provision and practice?
- Basics of emergent literacy - Rhyme, rhythm, phonemic awareness, book-talk, repetition, role of memory, song and the brain.
- Traditional Storytelling and acting out/ puppets/story maps and emergent literacy/ innovation/ characterisation etc.
- Text, literacy-rich environment – what does this look like? Linking to opportunities to write.
- Why role play is important in many areas of development, C&L (esp’ EAL) – imagination as vital part of emergent literacy and PSED. EAL and sociodramatic play.
- Dramatic play research/ how children learn from real-life or peers - role of practitioner to develop this (‘guided play and stories as benchmarks for play’).
- Weapon and superhero play – why important for boys – key research. How to upcycle the learning.
- Deconstructed role play – what is it? Enhancements/ themed or interest led – opps for further extension of learning and broad child led play (ie MM/PSED etc)
- Use of real-life/natural feel materials/ items and relevant scenarios, why these are vital - it’s not just a plastic kitchen! (how to extend this)- role of sensory learning.
- Storytelling – role of different sorts of books in the setting/ reading aloud stories – more than think per day.
- Traditional Storytelling and acting out/ puppets/story maps – talk for writing and emergent literacy/ innovation/ characterisation etc.



Outdoor Play opportunities for skill development: Mud, motor skills and maths. *'100 things to learn from a 'mud kitchen/area'!*

- Importance of nature, sensory learning, environment as third teacher using natural resources/ light/ weather and doing it cheaply.
- What is outdoor learning – outdoor vs indoor (risk taking/ different physical development/ seasons etc). It's not taking provision outdoors.
- Sensory learning (basic brain studies)/ nature deficit/ psycho-physiological benefits for children.
- Natural items – relevant, sensory and exploratory, sense of wonder.
- What is the learning potential of a mud kitchen?)
- Mathematical concepts outdoors different opps/ loose parts/ seasons etc.
- Outdoor play skills – physical skill development (FM and GM - barefoot) – how does this relate to sand/ water/ malleables/ mud kitchens and differentiated skill provision in the absence of adult intervention.
- Outdoor Creativity area – natural materials/ FM development – using tools / clay/light/water/paints/mud –sensory, freedom to use whole body/ risk/ GM development – different from indoor opportunities.
- Upcycling the trikes etc – adding in games/ mark making/additional skills.



Emergent Literacy skills development. Increasing Language and communication, writing and social opportunities in play, provision and practice.

- What is 'Emergent Literacy' skill development in young children - as the Pre-cursor for reading, speaking, communication and writing?
- 100 languages of the child (Malaguzzi & The Reggio Emilia approach) – how children express themselves.
- What are the aspects of communication and language (de-mystify terms) which all come together to afford children language/ expression and communication skills – physical processes, cognitive processes and limits of the EYFS ref development research evidence (ie boys and phonemic awareness).
- Role of executive functioning skills in memory/ attention skills – link to language and communication. Research on auditory development and phonemic awareness in boys.
- Basics of emergent literacy in terms of language - Rhyme, rhythm, phonemic awareness, book-talk, repetition, role of memory, song and the brain.
- Imagination and opportunities for real-life play and enhancing this as language develops.
- What is a Communication Friendly Space? What does this mean and what can it look like/ theory behind it.
- Communication friendly environments – what are they? (CFS), different types of communication and opportunities in the environment – peer/peer, adult/child, group etc - Auditing own practice and provision using CFE toolkit.
- Non-verbal communication – what is it? Understanding children when doing observations and looking for something/ active listening...what are you missing?
- Practitioner reflection on language/ communication – repetition, eye contact, on a level, time to process, body language, NVB, role of process led praise,
- Growth mindsets and enabling effective learning through meaningful communication.
- Noise levels - What sort of children are we trying to create, engaged busy learners (ie loud at times) or sitting down crossed legged (is this developmentally appropriate?) etc... Qs for reflective thought.
- Different media in the setting to support Communication and Language development.
- Parental support in reading, talking and playing games – giving them ideas and supportive communication development strategies (ie don't negatively auto correct – repeat response back corrected, use pausing waiting for responses, eye contact etc) for engaging their child day to day.



Early Mathematical development in play: Loose parts, investigations and block play.

- What is early mathematical development (mastery of ideas)?
- Concepts of Mathematical understanding – volume, shape, space, measurement, number, subitising, quantity, how things work etc.
- Babies as early physicists – ability to predict.
- STEM – what is this as part of Mathematical skill development? How to apply into setting.
- How children learn – relevant, engaging, fascination, innate -don't limit maths to just number!
- Practitioner language- modelling mathematical concepts from the snack area to sand and repeating in play- can children apply any taught skills? How are you asking them?
- Research supporting number knowledge as of LEAST benefit to children in the mastery of mathematical skills – visual recognition processing and understanding of number, very different.
- Child-led interests as provocations, enhancements and learning opps for mathematical concepts (rockets, cars, dinosaurs, everything!)
- Loose parts and natural materials and maths opps -mirrors/ creativity/ grouping, colours, counting, subitising etc.
- Reggio concepts- light play and why important as opportunity for maths skill development
- Block play – Research to support ref Guided play and development/ construction opps/ different ways to use blocks as an engaging learning tool. Engaging girls in block play.
- Investigations – what are they? Provision needed and how to engage with tolls/ opps.
- Mathematical enhancements to areas of core provision – sand/ water/ malleables, what do these look like?
- Outdoor maths opps – natural world – wonder of nature/ sensory learning.



Creative play and provision – letting children express themselves through creative play in a myriad of ways; Upcycling provision and practice for effective differentiated physical and social skill development in play.

- 100 languages of the child – Malaguzzi – how children express themselves.
- It's not the product – but the process which is the learning. How young children learn.
- Embracing the chaos (temporary creative mess) and the ethos of 'no limits' (ie own access to tape etc.)
- Changing mindsets for parents on mass produced artwork.
- Children as sensory learners – what is sensory learning – how does the brain work?
- Reggio Emilia concept of Atelier areas, use of colour, shadow, light, using nature and the environment (different creative opps outdoors.)
- Gross motor development and opportunities in creativity – music, dance, malleables, vertical/horizontal surfaces/materials (brushes/ rollers/chalks/ etc.)
- Differentiated skill provision – what is it? Levels of gluing (pritt stick to toothpicks)/ scissors (guided to own)/ Malleables (soft playdoh to clay/tools etc (fist grip – pincer grip/novel items – staplers/ hole punches/ tape etc – physical development.
- Ideas for upcycling creative 'areas' & engaging children - storytelling, materials, tools etc – interests/ themes (natural world – relate to real world), provocations.
- Adult modelling of processes/ core skills – supporting young children to learn& getting them to then take on role of modelling and teaching others – so can later apply same skills when want to make something again.
- Engaging boys in the creative area – gross motor development and bridging the gap for boys as early writers/ mark makers.
- Exploring independence skills - Self-service tape/ paint/ playdoh etc and continuous provision.
- Process/modelling 'how to make' skills – learning independence, team work and taking responsibility for own learning and empowering others (with support).



Reflective and reflexive practice for Early Years and Nursery staff in provision and activity.

Understanding how children really learn. The role of planning, child-led and interest led learning in excellent practice – the duality of the learning process.

- What is reflection/ reflexive practice?
- What do we know about how young children learn/ brain development? Sensory learning, hierarchy of needs, attachment and parenting styles, emotional relationships and cortisol (chronic stress), physical development alongside cognition. Outside factors – Diet, sleep, personal circumstances, access to technology, attachment etc – how to counteract these and create good habits/ support parents and carers.
- What is active listening? Its role in observations – what learning are we missing when looking for a particular skill?
- What is child-led learning? Different ways children learn – role of NVB, peers, modelling, adult intervention.
- Negatives of a deficit system in the EYFS – being mindful of judgements, labelling children, relationships with parents etc.
- All children are amazing and unique – how to follow their interests, develop relationships and nurture their learning and development effectively on an individual basis in provision/ practice.
- What kind of learners are we trying to create and nurture? Pedagogy of the team/ setting/ individual.
- What do you bring to the role – stereotypes, standards, behaviours and expectations etc.
- Role of documentation and children re-visiting the learning process (either through looking at ipad pictures, learning journeys etc) to embed key skills and extend the learning.
- Growth mindsets and helping children to understand their strengths and learning through feedback and language.
- Displays and the setting – less is more. Switching it up- 3d and interactive displays/ documented learning – who is it for?



Real life skills, tools and young children: the important role of adult modelling, supporting and developing opportunities in play for cooking, growing, making etc for the physical and social development of children.

- How children learn – complexity of the neural processes simplified!
- Sensory learning and the brain processes – being outside for PD and the vestibular system/ nature deficit.
- Physical development (GM and FM) and learning key skills to extend play opportunities and cognition.
- Real life play – trust, tools and the importance of how it feels for increased depth of learning (ie less plastic! Real life china for role play, hammers, natural wood items etc)
- Empowering children to be safe, take risks and take responsibility for their own learning through engagement in play.
- Opportunities for skill development – Physical skills (cooking/ gardening, creative), PSED, SLC – linking to mark making, mathematical concepts, language development (understanding instructions/ being able to explain something to a friend etc).
- Cooking – modelling, opportunities for mark making, PD - GM, SLC (instructions / recipes etc), Maths – quantity/ volume / measurement/ predictions (what might happen if we add this?), sensory elements – using real life tools, understanding being ‘healthy’/ where food comes from/ STEM – how eggs change through cooking etc, PSED – team work, sharing, helping each other, independence & risk taking.
- Gardening and growing - modelling, opportunities for mark making, PD – large GM skill development outside (digging/ raking/ wheeling etc) – whole body learning, Maths – quantity/ volume / measurement/ predictions (what might happen if we add this?), sensory elements – using real life tools, understanding where food comes from (& cooking it later!), processes and STEM (growing/ weather etc), PSED – team work, sharing, helping each other, independence & risk taking.
- Making – creative area/ ideas : – malleables & tools or outside (clay/ wood/ water based powder paint/sticks/ leaves and natural materials), provocations – paint/ craft items/ different materials and tools.
- Role of modelling skills (book making/ stapling/ hole punching/ sticking etc...) Opportunities for independent play and expression - SLC, PD – core skills, sensory learning, mathematics (measurement/ judgement of quantity/ predictions etc), language etc.

Thank you for your interest shown in Empowering Early Years.