

Supportive Learning Environments

- Positive task engagement - the ECEC setting needs to be set up so children can explore and experiment independently and learn to make choices
- Quality adult-child relationships
- Sensitive responsive caregiving and individualised teaching
- Scaffolding to help young children practice emerging skills – with decreasing adult supervision over time (opportunity for leadership)
- Effective support of early emotion regulation
- Promotion of sustained shared thinking



Sustained Shared Thinking:

An episode in which two or more individuals “work together” in an intellectual way to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate activities, extend a narrative etc. Both parties must contribute to the thinking and it must develop and extend.



The Light-Up Shoes: Adult-child interaction (Lillian Katz)

A few four-year-olds were sitting together. Three of the children were wearing sneakers that would light up when they stepped down on them.

Teacher: Wow! Look at your shoes! That is so cool. They light up when you step down.

Child 1: Yes, they do this. [Jumps up and down several times]

Teacher: How does that happen? How does it light up?

Child 1: Because they are new.

Teacher: Um. Mine are new too but they don't light up.

Child 2: No, because they light up when you step down on them. [Steps down hard several times]

Teacher: [Steps down hard several times] That's funny. Mine don't light up when I step down.

Child 3: No, no, no, you have to have these holes [points to the holes]

Teacher: [Pointing to the holes in her own shoe] But I have holes and mine still don't light up, and Josh has holes in his trainers too and his do not light up either. I wonder why?

Child 4: I think you need batteries. Kids, you need batteries.

Child 1: Yeah, you need batteries to make them work. [Thinks for a while]. But I did not see batteries when I put my toes in.

Child 4: I think they are under the toes.

Child 2: I can't feel the batteries under my toes.

Teacher: I wonder how we can find out about this?



Quality: Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years (REPEY) study

- Adults have warm, responsive relationships with children.
- High quality interactions including SST.
- Setting has clear educational goals and planning.
- Staff have recognised early years qualifications.
- Trained teachers are amongst the staff.
- Parents are supported in involvement in children's learning.

Siraj-Blatchford et al. 2002



Encouragement vs Praise

1. **Observe, play alongside and then participate in children's play**
2. **Encourage children to describe their ideas, efforts and activities** (using open ended questions and genuine questions that relate directly to what the children have done or are doing)
3. **Acknowledge children's ideas by making non-judgemental statements and describing what is seen** (talk about fact and what the children are doing rather than the children themselves and avoid evaluating what they are doing. This will also support language development)



Encouragement Activity



What does the research tell us?

- "Extrinsic incentives can, by undermining self-perceived altruism, decrease intrinsic motivation to help others," one group of researchers concluded on the basis of several studies.
- "A person's kindness, it seems, cannot be bought." The same applies to a person's sense of responsibility, fairness, perseverance, and so on. The lesson a child learns from Skinnerian tactics is that the point of being good is to get rewards.
- Children who are frequently rewarded – or children who receive positive reinforcement for caring, sharing, and helping - are less likely than other children to keep doing those things (*Using rewards see Fabes et al 1989 and Grusec 1991*)



Intentional Teaching Strategies

Intentional teaching strategies are important for the development of self-regulation:

- **Individual and group activities** designed to increase children's capacity to retain and use information, focus and resist distractions; plan actions and revise plans
- Self-regulation skills are best taught to begin with in a **small group setting** (and include clear expectations)



Additional Strategies and Activities

Discrete skills and activities that have a defined start and end point such as puzzles, construction tasks, mazes, and dot to dots.

Narrowly focused tasks like sorting, organising and categorising activities (e.g. card games such as Uno, Snap; classification).

Visual schedules these allow child to see and understand what is going to happen next. Schedules also help children to organise themselves and to plan ahead.

Timers help with transitions as they tell the child how long and when they are going to have to do an activity. Timers also allow us to “pre-warn”



Conducting an Orchestra

Give every child a musical instrument. The teacher (or another child) becomes the band conductor. When the conductor waves the baton, children play their instruments. When the conductor puts the baton down, the children stop. Tell the children to play their instruments quickly when the baton moves quickly and slowly when the baton moves slowly. You can make this more challenging by asking children to respond to opposite cues. For example, when the conductor waves the baton, children stopped playing their instruments and when the conductor sets the baton down, children play their instruments.



Effective Teaching Strategies

Intentional teaching strategies that are important for the development of self-regulation:

- **Modelling and Communication** of language and pro-social skills, social problem-solving skills, understanding and expression of emotions, control impulsive behaviours



‘Teaching young children self-regulation first requires strong teacher self-regulation. Children learn to regulate thoughts, feelings, behavior, and emotion by watching and responding to adults’ self-regulation. Referring to motivational regulation, Galinsky notes, “Adults foster children’s motivation by being motivated themselves”’ (2010, 11).



Children regulating others ...

- **Getting the children to identify your mistakes: Putting resources in the wrong places, leaving resources out, getting things wrong e.g. in counting, telling a story, holding a book upside down etc**
- **Making children who find tasks difficult special monitors for a while e.g. supervising tidying up.**
- **Using external mediators as reminders e.g. tidy up time, song, clapping a rhythm or bell for attention. And getting the children to start this off.**