

A Strong Child Being Acknowledged and Affirmed

Focuses on

→ Experiencing and seeking closeness

Including:

- Needing recognition, acceptance and comfort
- Being able to contribute to secure relationships
- Understanding that s/he can be valued by and important to someone
- Exploring emotional boundaries



"While infants and toddlers are powerfully self motivated to learn with their whole body and all their senses and to communicate what they know, they depend on the affirmation and warmth of trusting relationships to be able to do so."

Post & Hohmann (2000)

Development matters



Young babies seek to be looked at, approved of and find comfort in touch and in the human face.



Babies seek to gain attention in a variety of ways.



Young children strive for responses from others, which confirm, contribute to, or challenge their understanding of themselves.



Children need to feel others are positive towards them, and to experience realistic expectations in order to become competent, assertive and self-assured.

Effective practice

- Be aware of the importance of your facial expressions and body language.
- Actively listen and give your full attention when babies communicate with you.
- Tell, as well as read, stories, looking at and interacting with young children as a way of letting them know that you think they are important and valued.
- Encourage all children to participate in making any rules and help them to understand expectations and boundaries.

Look, listen, note

- Observe how young babies respond to your attention, noting whether they make eye contact or vocalise.
- Note whether babies are able to be physically close and enjoy being with you.
- Note when, where, how and why you praise and appreciate young children and how they respond.
- Note how you ensure that each child is recognised as a valuable contributor to the group, and how you celebrate cultural, religious and ethnic experiences.

Play and practical support

- Find time to play, have fun, sing and laugh with young babies.
- When communicating with babies, crouch down to their level and establish and maintain contact with eye, voice or light touch.
- Use different voices to tell stories and get young children to join in wherever possible, sometimes using puppets, soft toys or real objects as 'props'.
- Provide dressing up clothes and materials that help children find out what it feels like to be someone else.



Planning and resourcing

- Plan specific opportunities for all the children in your care to build secure relationships with you.
- Plan additional time to spend with children who need more attention than others, without neglecting other children.
- Collect stories for, and make books about, children in the group.
- Discuss with staff/parents how each child responds to activities/adults/peers and build on this to plan future activities and experiences for each child.

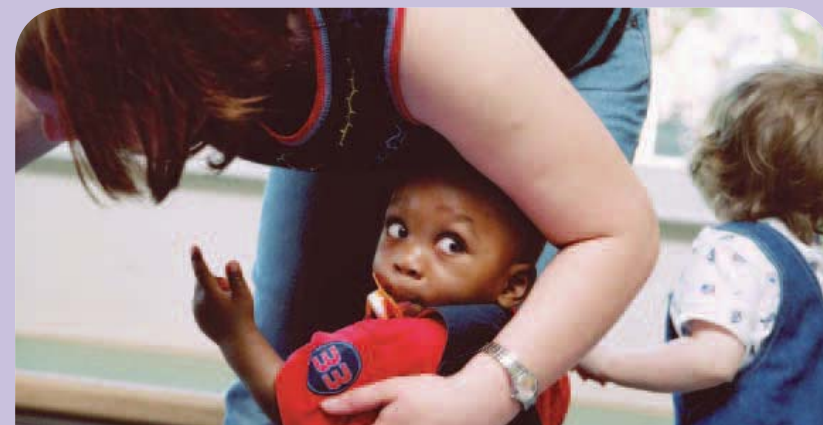
Meeting diverse needs

- Although their responses may differ, children with disabilities or learning difficulties are entitled to the same range of experiences as others.
- An inclusive environment is one which involves parents and the local community in ensuring that resources and activities are respectful of and reflect diversity.
- Linking up with other childminders, going to the local toddler group or visiting the park creates opportunities for children and carers to be with others.



Challenges and dilemmas

- Respond positively to children who constantly seek attention or are disruptive, without reprimanding or dismissing them.
- Decide what you would do if another practitioner constantly dismisses a particular child.
- How to convey to a child behaving inappropriately that you disapprove of the behaviour, not him or her; for example by saying "I'm sorry Chloe made you angry when she took your car, but smacking is wrong because it hurts".
- Consider how you would respond to challenges such as: a child who never answers even direct questions; a child who persistently pours water onto the floor; a child who makes fun of another child.



The aims of a carer are to provide comfort and reassurance and create a secure attachment between the child and caregiver.