

# Self-study notes

## Unit No. 6a: Developing readiness to learn in the under 5s

### Unit objectives

- To highlight the carer's responsibilities in relation to early learning
- To reflect on the opportunities for learning in everyday experiences
- To highlight the importance of health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy for the child's confidence and successful learning
- To reflect on the implications for your own work context and professional responsibilities.

### Outline of Unit

- Opportunities for early learning.
- Everyday activities can provide learning opportunities.
- Links with the Curriculum for Excellence and particular issues arising with very young looked after children.

### Introduction

This unit is aimed at residential, foster and kinship carers of very young children and others concerned with the educational needs of under 5s who are looked after. Parents of very young looked after children may also find this unit beneficial. This unit could be studied alongside Unit 1: An Introduction to Being Looked After, Unit 3: Corporate Parenting and Unit 6: Brain Development and Attachment.

The unit is based around two excellent publications, both provided with these materials, and also downloadable from the Early Years pages of the Parentzone website. These are: Every Days's a Learning Day (0-3 and 3-6 versions).

### Study Notes

Whatever age the young child in your care is, there will be good opportunities for you to think about turning everyday activities into opportunities for learning. With babies and very young children, these opportunities will present through all the normal care-giving activities such as feeding, changing and moving around.

The following list highlights a range of ways in which parents and carers' engagement with young children help to stimulate their early learning behaviours.

- Including your child in everyday tasks and making them fun.
- Getting into the habit of talking, listening and playing together as you go about daily life.

- Caring about and showing an interest in your child's learning, reactions and communications.
- Using new and familiar words to extend and enrich your child's vocabulary, knowledge, awareness of sounds and language development.
- Showing your child how to play, share, take turns, make friends and develop positive relationships.
- Remembering that your child will learn lots by imitating you ... so be aware of what you do and say!

As you read this list, no doubt you were recalling examples drawn from your own experience with a young child. Creative use of everyday activities offers amazing educationally rich experiences.

### **Website and Reading Activity**

This activity involves looking at the information provided on the Parentzone Early Years website. Choose one of the videos (e.g. responsive care) to view and then download and read one, or both, of the *Every Day's a Learning Day* booklets (i.e. the 0-3 or the 3-6 version), most appropriate to the age of child you care for.

The link is

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone/learningathome/earlyyears.asp>.

Perhaps you will have an opportunity to discuss the booklet and ideas presented within it with other carers. If not, you will no doubt be reflecting on the ways in which you engage with the young child you care for and how these experiences can be educational in the broadest sense.

### **Study Notes**

Informal learning opportunities, at home and in leisure activities, will continue to be important to the growing child, but when formal learning is introduced gradually from nursery through primary and secondary schooling, it is the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) that guides that learning.

Follow the link to watch the short (8 min) video available on the Education Scotland website which explains briefly CfE for parents and carers. The link is [http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/video/c/video\\_tcm4500634.asp](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/video/c/video_tcm4500634.asp).

Now download and read the booklet, Curriculum for Excellence: Learning at the Early Level, which is included in the resource materials and is also available on the Parentzone website

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone/cfe/earlyyears/index.asp>. You may also wish to view the short video, Learning through Play, filmed at Lochgelly Sunflower Nursery. One of the features of the new curriculum identified by one of the staff interviewed in the film is the involvement in children in the planning and

preparation of their learning, engagement which are valued as learning opportunities.

As you have been reading, reviewing and reflecting, you may have thoughts about the effects of early trauma on the readiness to learn of very young looked after children. You will find more useful background information on the Child Trauma Academy <http://www.childtrauma.org/>.

### **Key messages**

- Everyday activities (cooking, washing, shopping etc.) provide excellent learning opportunities but some creativity and planning may be needed for a child to be involved.
- It is important that learning is associated with good feelings. Parents and carers naturally make learning opportunities fun.
- Involving a child, safely, in everyday activities helps to develop confidence and skills in problem solving, literacy and numeracy.
- Mutual enjoyment in learning between adult and child helps with the development of trust and attachment.

### **Additional Resources**

- Play Talk Read website [www.playtalkread.org](http://www.playtalkread.org)
- Dolly Parton Information Library: <http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/dolly-partons-imagination-library>