

Trainer's 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

- Trainer introduction to highlight opportunities for early learning.
- Participative activity designed to show how everyday activities can provide learning opportunities.
- Opportunity to discuss links with the Curriculum for Excellence and particular issues arising with very young looked after children.

Resources required to deliver unit

- Parentzone Early Years Website: www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone/learningathome/earlyyears.asp
- Play, Talk, Read videos: www.youtube.com/user/PlayTalkRead
- Curriculum for Excellence video for parents and carers: www.educationscotland.gov.uk/video/c/video_tcm4500634.asp

Resources required to support this unit

- CELCIS website: www.celcis.org
- Every Day's a Learning Day (0-3)
- Every Day's a Learning Day (3-6)
- Curriculum for Excellence information for parents: www.educationscotland.gov.uk/earlyyears/curriculum/parentsandcarers.asp
- Play Talk Read website: www.playtalkread.org/
- Curriculum for Excellence Learning at the early level booklet
- Child Trauma Academy website: www.childtrauma.org

Introduction to trainer

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. This unit could also be adapted for use with parents of very young looked after children. This unit could be used in a course alongside Unit 1: An Introduction to Being Looked After, Unit 3: Corporate Parenting and Unit 6: Brain Development and Attachment. The unit can be adapted to suit different age groups, e.g. babies and toddlers (0-3) and early years (3-5). The unit is designed to last 1.5 hours but the resources suggested could be used to devise a longer session.

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

Trainer presentation (10 minutes)

Briefly outline the unit objectives (slide 1). Use slide 2 (Improve your child's learning by:...) as a stimulus to an icebreaking discussion. For example, course members could pair up, with each person choosing one of the bullet points and explaining to their partner things they do to engage in learning activity with a child.

A quick trainer summary may establish that people tend to underestimate the value of everyday activities as educationally rich experiences and should also reinforce parents' and carers' feelings of worth as educators.

Activity (60 minutes)

Arrange a participative activity on a topic that is suited to the needs of the group. For example, it could be an outdoor exploratory activity involving collecting twigs and leaves, a cooking activity, or a numeracy or literacy based activity. If you don't feel comfortable about doing this yourself, or if you would like to introduce the group to local resources, you could involve a specialist such as an early education practitioner, and children's librarian or story teller.

Ensure that there is time for discussion and questions, as well an opportunity to provide information about resources and groups available locally.

Trainer presentation / discussion (20 minutes)

Lead a discussion which introduces carers to the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence that guides the formal learning from age 3.

If you feel confident about explaining CfE, you will already have views about how best to make the link between informal learning opportunities and more formal learning in nurseries and school. Alternatively, you may decide to invite an early education specialist to make a short presentation and answer questions.

Another option is to use the short (8 min) video available on the Education Scotland website, or indeed another of the many similar video resources available on the website. You might like to recommend reading the booklet, *Curriculum for Excellence Learning at the early level* available as a PDF as part of these materials.

Participants may wish to raise specific issues about learning or attachment difficulties. You may feel able to provide reassurance and encouragement in relation to some issues raised, or alternatively you may suggest sources of additional advice / support. One source is the Child Trauma Academy website - www.childtrauma.org

Finish with a summary of the key messages and highlight the additional resources available.

Key messages (slide 3)

- 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.