7 DAYS , MANY WAYS

WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD RESILIENCE THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS



nasen
EARLY YEARS
SEND RESOURCES

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INTRODUCTION

This resource has been specifically developed for young children who may have additional needs or SEND. It offers a collection of ideas to help these children build resilience, as they make their next steps into or back into early years settings, following the period of lockdown.

Dr Tina Rae describes resilience as 'the inter–related components that support an individual's positive development: the capacity of an individual to restore good mental and emotional health, following the onset of challenging and adverse situations.'

Resilience is built over time. Researchers consistently find it is developed within an environment of strong, supportive and responsive relationships.

The pandemic has brought new challenges for all of us, so resilience has a new relevance and importance for our children. The transitions which lie ahead for children and families can also be opportunities to build resilience. This resource helps family members and carers work together with early years practitioners, to help children take strong and successful next steps.

The focus of the first section of the resource (PART A) is the vital role that parents, siblings and extended families play, at all times, in a young child's learning and development. It offers ideas and suggestions about how to get the most out of this, informed by what we know about 'resilience'.

INTRODUCTION

The ideas and activities suggested provide shared experiences to help children build strong relationships with their parents, families and beyond.

The second section of the resource (PART B) is for practitioners to use in partnership with parents, families and their children. It uses the same 7 themes introduced in the first section (see page 4), so that the development of the personal qualities linked to resilience is extended into children's early years settings.

All ideas and activities are there as a starting point, and suggestions for adaptations are provided. The emphasis is on the experience rather than the activity. Not all suggestions will be appropriate for every child; parents and those who know the child well can choose what is likely to work best.

The aim is that discoveries about a child's unique abilities, through enjoyment of shared time together, are treasured, celebrated and communicated to others. This would include Portage Home Visitors, Speech and Language Therapists, Physiotherapists etc. who will then be able to offer other ideas to add to those contained in this resource.

WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

There are many definitions of resilience, which often refer to things such as ‘flexibility’, ‘bouncing back’, ‘sticking at it’, ‘not giving up, ‘problem solving’, ‘self-control’, or ‘overcoming obstacles’. These attributes are often thought to be internal to a person.

However, resilience is as much about external factors. These include relying on others around us, who we can use as models and call on for support.

It is important to remember that resilience is not something we either have or do not have. It is something that can be strengthened and supported throughout our lifetime.

Thinking about all young children, it is a priority to build resilience-boosting into everything we do with them. If we focus on resilience we will be contributing to each child’s well-being and life-long learning.

WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

The ideas for this resource have been developed using the '7 Cs' model of resilience. These have been adapted to be relevant for young children. These are the 7 pieces of a child's resilience jigsaw; each 'C' is connected to and related to the other 'Cs'. The activities and ideas that follow all offer opportunities for building a child's 7 Cs.

Competence	I can achieve and make progress
Confidence	I have a go and keep on trying
Connection	I feel safe and secure in my relationships; I know who will support me and who I can ask for help
Character	I have a unique personality, interests, and strengths
Contribution	I make a difference to my family, to my setting and to the things I do and play with, all of which makes me feel important and valued
Coping	When things are difficult, I can use my own ways of helping myself, as well as looking to others for support (I can also let you know what works and what doesn't)
Control	I have a range of ways that help me feel in control and feel things are predictable

PART A: PARENT RESOURCE

All of the ideas and activities in this resource can be:

- Built into relationships
- Fun
- Relevant
- Repeatable
- Memorable
- Flexible
- Playful
- Personalised

PART A: PARENT RESOURCE

Each day of the week has a theme, which supports the on-going development of resilience

- ‘Movement Mondays’
- ‘Turn-taking Tuesdays’
- ‘Well-being Wednesdays’
- ‘Thoughtful Thursdays’
- ‘First Time Fridays’
- ‘Sensory Saturdays’
- ‘Celebrate Sundays ‘

The daily ideas and suggestions are designed as a menu, not a to-do list; choose the best-fit items and adapt/personalise for your child.

PART A: PARENT RESOURCE

How to use this resource:

Although the ideas and activities are set out in a 'diary style', they can be done on any day of the week and repeated whenever works for you and your child. If an activity doesn't feel right, just go to something that does.

Doing a variety of the activities will help children grow their own foundations for resilience.

On each page there is space to write down any thoughts and also a symbol to circle, to record how that activity or experience went (thumbs up or thumbs down). Adding just a few comments (and maybe pictures too) about what you noticed will always be useful information for anyone your child spends time with, including their early years setting.

Here is an example of a diary with different activities selected.

Movement Monday	Turn-taking Tuesday	Well-being Wednesday	Thoughtful Thursday	First Time Friday	Sensory Saturday	Celebrate Sunday
Dance and move to music	Play a turn-taking game (e.g. rolling a ball)	Go on a walk and talk about what you see/hear/smell, etc.	Draw a picture about 'my family'	Try something new today (e.g. new snack, water play)	Explore your 'treasure' bag/box	Talk about your favourite activity from the week
Create an obstacle course	Take turns playing instruments	Practice a relaxation technique (e.g. stretching exercises for 2-5 minutes)	Make a gift for family/friends	Try a new challenge	'Messy' play day	Add a drawing/ photo to your scrapbook

This diary is blank so you can record new ideas based on your child's interests, new experiences you want to provide and new opportunities you want to try with your child.

Movement Monday	Turn-taking Tuesday	Well-being Wednesday	Thoughtful Thursday	First Time Friday	Sensory Saturday	Celebrate Sunday

MOVEMENT MONDAYS

Provide opportunities to move to music – Use a variety of music (your child's favourite songs, nursery rhymes, pop/classical music, or just turn on the radio). Move to the music together. You can hold your child and move side-to-side, turn around, sway or bounce gently up and down. Try modelling movement for your child to copy or support your child in any way that they need to make small movements.

You might want to try…

- For early stages of movement, **try laying** your child on their back (or tummy), **play music** or **sing** songs and **encourage movement**.
- Encourage your child to **play with their hands and feet** or **move them in imitation:** wiggle, wave, stretch, and sway.
- Try **gently rocking** your child to music and **observe** what they **enjoy** or **respond** to, **repeat** movements.
- Introduce action **songs** and **nursery rhymes** e.g. 'Heads, shoulders, knees and toes', 'Row the boat' Wheels on the Bus' etc. Do the **actions yourself** and allow time for them **to copy** you. You may need to **guide their hands** using yours.
- **Copy movements** or **sequences of movements**, sit or stand opposite your child and encourage them to copy the movements, such as hands on head, waving arms, bending, moving side to side.
- Try **making your own instruments**: you can use containers to make shakers with rice/lentils. You can use pots/pans and wooden spoons to play along to the music and encourage movement.
- Try **dancing on different surfaces** or **laying on different surfaces** so your child can experience the feel or hear different sounds. You could use a 'space'/foil blanket or material that rustles/makes sound so that your child is encouraged to move. Feeling the vibrations of music too might support your child to experience the music/movement activity.

NOTES - ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS, YOUR CHILD'S INTERESTS, KEEP A RECORD OF WHAT YOUR CHILD ENJOYS AND CELEBRATE WHAT GOES WELL.

HOW DID IT GO?



MOVEMENT MONDAYS

Create an obstacle course – thinking about your child's interests and abilities provides opportunities to navigate and move around, in, on, over and under a variety of objects. In a safe environment, support your child to explore a space (indoors or outdoors); use cushions, soft toys, pillows or cardboard boxes, play tunnels or tents to create your 'obstacle' course.

You might want to try…

- **Encourage** your child **to reach for** or **go towards** something they are really interested in e.g. **yourself** or a **noise making** toy, put it **just out of reach** to encourage your child to **reach**, **roll**, **shuffle** or **crawl** towards it.
- **Show** them how to **get over obstacles**, **through tunnels** or **into play tents** or **homemade 'dens'** - you could peg a piece of material or a sheet over 2 chairs and crawl 'under'.
- When your child begins to crawl, encourage them to go through tunnels. **Put things in the tunnel** your child likes to explore, move things from one end to the other, **play 'peek-a-boo'** games from the opposite end of the tunnel and encourage your child to go through the tunnel.
- Support your child to **move through**, **around**, **over obstacles**. You can lay your child on a blanket and pull them through a tunnel so that they can experience and explore the new environment.
- You can **place lights**, **music or toys** to explore **inside boxes, tents or 'dens'** to encourage your child to move through the space and explore the objects.
- You can use **tape** to **mark out** an **obstacle course** on the **floor** indoors or outside.

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HOW DID IT GO?



TURN-TAKING TUESDAY

Provide opportunities to take turns during play – sit opposite your child and support them to begin to take turns, anticipate what comes next in a game and copy your actions. Begin with simple 'peek-a-boo' games, hide behind your hands or use a transparent or see through piece of material so your child can still see you and can pull the material from your face. Try different facial expressions and encourage your child to imitate and take turns; and wait for their reactions.

You might want to try…

- **Sit opposite** your child (or support your child to sit opposite another family member) and **roll**, **pass or throw a ball** to each other. Balls can be large or small, made of foam, beach balls, textured balls or noisy with bells inside; you could even roll up a sock!
- **Push balloons** or **cars** to each other. Some children find it easier to track balloons because they move more slowly.
- **Praise** your child before they roll the ball back, **respond to any gesture** such as pointing, reaching out, or making sounds as they are showing you that they want you to return the ball. **Give your child time** to interact.
- **Introduce 'Ready, steady, go games'** when rolling balls or dropping balls through tubes e.g. from kitchen paper. Take turns to post things into containers; something that makes a noise is a good idea or drop them into a container of water (a good bath time game).
- **Encourage** your child using **prompts**, **gestures**, **and/or visual support**. Introduce language such as 'your turn' / 'daddy's turn' / '1,2,3, Go'. **Sand timers** can be useful for your child to watch the time passing.
- **Blow bubbles** and take turns to **'pop' or 'clap'** the bubbles.
- **Build a tower**: you can use cardboard boxes, different sized building blocks, fabric blocks or wooden blocks. **Take turns** to **knock** the tower over!

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HOW DID IT GO?



TURN-TAKING TUESDAY

Provide opportunities to experience making music and sound whilst taking turns – create sequences and patterns of sound and play musical instruments, encouraging your child to copy you and take turns.

You might want to try…

- Make different sounds and encourage your child to copy. If your child is using sounds, copy them and leave a pause for them to continue the sound-making.
- **Using pots, pans and wooden spoons as 'drums'**, demonstrate a beat (begin with one or two beats first) then **stop and wait**, allowing your child time to watch and then attempt to imitate. Give hand on hand support if needed to hold the spoon/utensil and practise banging movements. Slowly remove the support.
- Introduce **clapping to your child**: begin with your hand on theirs and slowly remove the support until your child will copy clapping. **Play turn-taking** with claps and slowly **increase the length and difficulty** of the rhythm.
- Give your child **verbal clues** or **physical gestures** to take their turn e.g. **'your turn'** or give them a gentle touch to the hand or elbow.
- Use **musical instruments** or **anything in the house** that can be used to make noise and take turns to **shake**, **bang** or **play** the 'instrument'. Encourage your child to **change how softly/loudly** they play; first **show them** this if you need to and take turns again.

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HOW DID IT GO?



TURN-TAKING TUESDAY

Provide opportunities to experience making music and sound whilst taking turns – create sequences and patterns of sound and play musical instruments, encouraging your child to copy you and take turns.

You might want to try…

- Use **bells attached to wristbands** or **ribbons** and put them onto your child's **wrists or ankles**. Show your child how to shake their arms and legs. You can play **stop and go** games with support.
- **Hang sound makers** above or to the side of your child's chair, seat or a play frame so that they can push or knock them. Show them first and take turns to make some noise!
- Try **following your child's** lead when they **show interest in making sounds themselves**, copy the same beats or introduce different patterns of sound and numbers of beats.

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HOW DID IT GO?



WELL-BEING WEDNESDAY

Go out on an adventure and take a 'mindful' walk – go out to the park, walk down the street, walk to the shops/market or by a park and encourage and support your child to experience, listen, look, smell, touch and communicate about their environment. Notice all the small things, stop along the way and take a moment to notice the birds, smell the flowers, touch the pebbles, feel the grass with their toes or listen to the leaves blowing in the wind.

You might want to try…

- **Listen** to what you can hear and support your child to listen and **name** what they hear too. Use **books**, **pictures** or **choice cards** to support your child to **choose** or **point** to what they can hear.
- **Point and name** (or **sign**) anything you see. Encourage your child to **imitate** and **make sounds**.
- **Stop and sit** or take time to lie on a blanket. **Look** at the surroundings: the sky, clouds, birds, trees.
- **Notice** the tiny **minibeasts**, the **traffic** or the **birds singing**.
- **Choose a specific group** of things to look for: flowers, trees, pets being walked, people with hats on! How many do you notice? Lots? Some? None? Can you count them?
- **Stop** and **collect** objects that your child finds interesting. **Explore** the different objects. The rustle and crunch of leaves, the bark on trees, grass between your toes, sand under your feet. **Splash** in puddles along the way!
- Use **different words** to describe the experiences and objects to encourage language development. Try putting an **emphasis** on the **new ways of describing things** e.g. its ssslimey!
- **Explore** the garden or **notice** what is outside your window (stop and smell the plants and flowers, crunch the leaves or hear the birds).
- **Move** across, over or through different surfaces (e.g. go over bumpy ground in the pushchair, walk on different surfaces. Is the ground soft or smooth, noisy crunchy like gravel)?

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HOW DID IT GO?



WELL-BEING WEDNESDAY

Provide opportunities to experience different ways to relax and feel calm – there are many different ways that are well-known to help with relaxation. These include things like breathing exercises, mindfulness activities and being in the moment, using Yoga positions, stretching and balancing. Everyone is different; think about what is relaxing and calming for your child. Spend time relaxing together and support your child to try different activities by modelling them. Start with a few minutes and gradually increase the time.

You might want to try…

- Find **comfortable places** and positions and **create calming** spaces for your child. Where does your child like to be? Inside or outside? A light place or a darker place? A quiet place? Having background sound?
- Try **breathing exercises** such as taking in a deep breath and **blowing a windmill** or **a feather**, or a **cotton wool ball**. Show your child how to **breathe in through their nose** and **out through their mouth**, give them something they like **to smell** followed by **a candle to blow out**! Bubbles are great too!
- **'Take Five' breathing;** use a finger on one hand to track up and down the fingers of the other hand, , **breathing in whilst moving up** and **breathing out whilst moving down**. Great to do hand in hand with your child.
- Make a **'glitter bottle'** - use a plastic bottle and put water in it leaving at least a quarter empty, **add food colouring**, **clear glue** and **glitter**. Put the lid on and seal it. **Shake it up** and watch the **glitter settle**.
- Make a **stress ball** - use a **balloon**, fill it with **dry lentils or rice! Squeeze it, stretch it,** slowly, quickly, **pass it from hand to hand**.
- Use a **shoebox**, decorate it, **and fill it** with things that help your child to feel **calm** and **relaxed**.
- Offer your child a **hand or foot massage**; you could use some lotion. Discover what your child likes.

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HOW DID IT GO?



THOUGHTFUL THURSDAY

Provide opportunities for your child to think about others in the household and family – support your child to create a 'book', collage or 'treasure' box about themselves or a family member. Think about people who are important to your child: those that make them laugh or smile. Don't forget the pets. Use pictures, photographs, drawings and objects (or anything else the child has collected or wants to use) to create something personal.

You might want to try…

- Start by **making something personal** to your child, such as an 'All about me' book. **Talk** about what they would like to **include**, or **give choices** (using pictures or photographs, or real objects).
- **Keep a record** of what your child has **enjoyed**, as well as their **favourite foods, music, places, toys, games, activities, books**, etc. and collect representations of your child's interests to support creating a personalised book, poster, collage or box of items.
- **Make hand and footprints** on large pieces of paper and add information/pictures 'about me' to the creation.
- Follow similar steps to think about other family members and create pictures 'about mummy/daddy', 'about my sister/brother', 'my dog'. For example, 'my brother plays football, he likes chocolate', etc.
- **Create and play matching games using photographs**, images cut from magazines, objects or pictures in a book. For example, use a photograph of Grandma/Grandad and match to something that reminds you of them/that they enjoy (e.g. baking cakes, gardening, swimming, cuddles, etc.) or something about them that the child remembers (e.g . 'Auntie Emma drives a yellow car.)'
- **Create a 'family portrait'** through different art materials for example, painting, drawing, and using playdough, chalk, collage, and photographs.
- **Look through photographs** on your phone/camera to remind your child about who you are thinking about during conversations too.
- **Make a book or a picture** about 'favourites'; think of a theme such as colours, vehicles, animals, food, and support your child to communicate with family members to extend this experience.

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HOW DID IT GO?



THOUGHTFUL THURSDAY

Provide experiences to share with others and make a gift - make a card or cake for family or friends. Support your child to think about others, give them choices to help them think about what that person might like. Support your child to be involved in making the gift, card or cake, choosing ingredients or materials and giving the gift to the loved one.

You might want to try…

- Try making a card or **picture for a family member or friend**. Give **choices, use photographs, hand/footprints, finger painting or printing with objects/stamps/cars using paint**, to create a personalised card.
- **Look at pictures** of cakes (offer a small choice) and **choose together** or **think about** and **talk about flavours, colours and decorations**. Use this opportunity to **talk about the person** you are making the cake for and **encourage your child to think** about what they might like, or why you are making the cake.
- Go on a **shopping trip** to **choose the ingredients**.
- At each stage of making a cake (or biscuits, cupcakes, etc.) **show your child a choice of ingredients**, encourage them to **taste, smell or touch** and to think about what the person might like (e.g. raisins, chocolate, blueberries, strawberries, ice cream, lemon, etc.)
- **Involve your child** in making the cake and at each stage support them to **pour, mix, add and explore the ingredients**. **Talk about the person**, family and friend whilst doing so.
- Make other **food to share** with friends or family: you could have a **picnic or eat in the garden**.

NOTES - ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS, YOUR CHILD'S INTERESTS, KEEP A RECORD OF WHAT YOUR CHILD ENJOYS AND CELEBRATE WHAT GOES WELL.

HOW DID IT GO?



FIRST TIME FRIDAYS

Provide opportunities to experience something new or extend an activity that has been successful previously – meal/snack times, or other daily routines your child experiences regularly can provide lots of opportunities to practice new skills in different situations, or to build on a skill step by step. This 'new' activity or experience might appear challenging at first, but repetition will support your child and increase their confidence to try new things that they have initially found challenging.

You might want to try…

- **Slowly introducing** new foods. Consider introducing a **small amount** to try or begin by exploring the new food **with hands or fingers** if needed. Use foods according to your child's feeding routine, likes/dislikes or level of weaning, etc.
- **Vary** the **environment**, for example **make a picnic** to **eat in the garden** or out in the park, **move your child's table and chair** outside or to another part of the room/kitchen, etc.
- **Vary** plates/bowls or cups, from the colour or type usually used, to introduce something new to the mealtime.
- Give a **choice of 2 new foods** e.g. something similar to what they normally eat and something very different.
- If, you have been practicing a new skill, or using a new piece of equipment (e.g. posting activity) or toy (e.g. building blocks) try presenting **variations of the same activity**, or **practising the game/skill in a different place** perhaps at a **relative** or **friend's** house, at nursery or in the bath. Give your child support if needed in the new environment and support them to **practise and use their new skills in lots of different ways**.
- **Taking activities outside** or **changing the environment and experience** slightly (e.g. the blanket your child is lying on or the surface they are sitting on).
- Work towards trying **2 or 3 new things as your child gains confidence**, talk about 'which **was best**' or 'what was **their favourite?**' Try **repeating the same activity next week** and **notice if there are any changes.**

NOTES - ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS, YOUR CHILD'S INTERESTS, KEEP A RECORD OF WHAT YOUR CHILD ENJOYS AND CELEBRATE WHAT GOES WELL.

HOW DID IT GO?



FIRST TIME FRIDAYS

Provide opportunities to take part in new activities based on your child's interests – extend your child's play and introduce a new experience following observations you have made of your child and what they have shown interest in or enjoyed. Tuning in to your child's interests is a good way to support the introduction of something new, taking new 'risks' or going to a new place. For example, if your child likes a particular type of play or has a favourite character from a book/TV programme, use these themes during any new experience to develop the interest further.

You might want to try…

- Set up **activities with a small amount of risk** and support your child to do them. Think about something that your child will **succeed with** and **build on the skills** you have already noticed so that they gain confidence. Slowly **increase the level of risk taking** over time; this might be weeks, months, or longer. Take it at your **child's pace**.
- Support your child to **prepare for a new experience**. This might be using small steps or using something like a **'photo sequence' or role-play**. Practise the skills needed to take part in the new activity, **one step at a time**.
- Think of activities that challenge and have an element of risk. This could be using play equipment at the park, or building the highest tower before it falls down – 'how tall do you think we can build a tower?'
- Give **choices when trying new things**, for example if your child enjoys music, play 3 new pieces of music and find a favourite.
- Introduce simple games with an element of competition.

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HOW DID IT GO?



SENSORY SATURDAYS

Provide opportunities to explore different sensory experiences – create a sensory box, 'treasure basket' or homemade book for your child to explore through their senses. Think about different textures, smells or materials you want to use and encourage your child to explore. Use everyday objects you find in the home, garden or on a nature walk. Collect things that provide different experiences, so there are potential surprises with each new exploration of each thing.

You might want to try…

- Providing a **variety of materials**, for example silky, woolly, fluffy, soft, scratchy, crinkly (e.g. tissue paper).
- Use **everyday items from the kitchen** such as a pastry brush, whisk, spoon, scouring sponge, or items from the bathroom such as cotton wool, sponge, flannel, or **anything from around the house**. Some things will feel 'cold' like keys or **spoons**. Think about things that vary in **colour, weight, sound or texture** for example '**heavy**' coins or '**light**' feathers.
- Collect **natural objects** when out on a walk, in the garden, at the beach or anywhere you go. Seashells are great to look at, touch and listen to.
- You can use **objects or toys** that **spin**, **wind up, light up or make a noise** to provide different experiences.
- Put **small items into boxes or plastic containers** that children can **find, take out and explore**. This can be **exciting and interesting**. **Unscrewing** containers and **taking lids off** pots to **'look inside'** can be fun!
- Use **containers** with different objects in them, for example , pasta, feathers, buttons, coins. Listen to the noise they make when they are shaken: you could play a **guessing game** about **what might be inside** (once they have become more familiar with the game or had experience of exploring the objects previously).
- Use a variety of things to encourage your child to use their **sense of smell**. For example, you can use a drop of **food** or essential oil (use with caution) on cotton wool and place inside a small bag/old sock.
- Exploring **'touch and feel' books**. Consider making your **own texture book** using different kinds of paper such as tissue, gift wrapping, sandpaper, foil, wallpaper, fabrics, cardboard, or bubble wrap. Turn the pages together and spend time exploring and describing the textures.

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HOW DID IT GO?



SENSORY SATURDAYS

Provide opportunities for 'messy play' – support your child to experience a variety of wet and dry materials, which can stimulate all their senses through play. The sense of touch is vitally important in young children's development. It is often referred to as the 'tactile' sense.

You might want to try…

- **Using different textures**; for example, wet paint, cornflour and water, jelly, ice cream, and dry materials such as porridge oats, dried lentils, pasta, shredded paper, or sticky materials such as play dough.
- Putting your **hand on top** of your child's hand to guide them, or your hand under your child's hand so that your child can **explore without touching** the materials at first. Gradually reduce the level of support when your child is ready.
- **Creating patterns** in different materials such as sand, paint, sugar, flour. **Guide** your child to use their **fingers and hands**, or to use **different sized brushes, sticks, wooden spoons or cooking utensils** if they prefer to explore at a distance.
- **Exploring paint** through a plastic zip-locked bag, or place **cling film over paint on a tray** so that your child can **explore and push** the paint around without touching it. Some children might like to wear a glove when exploring different textures.
- **Encouraging water play** using a **bowl or container**, add **bubbles or food colouring**. **Find opportunities at bath time**, **washing up**, **washing hands** and **being outdoors in puddles is great fun too**. You can use jugs, cups, buckets and different containers to **pour and carry water**.
- **Playing with ice** to experience cold. **Freeze cubes** or trays (try **freezing play figures/animals** in the ice to encourage exploration).
- **Introducing sensory stories**; use **real objects** (things that are mentioned in the story), smells, sounds and different textures/materials to encourage your child to get involved in their favourite stories or rhymes.

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HOW DID IT GO?



CELEBRATE SUNDAYS

Take time to think about the week and celebrate your child's successes – talk about or repeat an activity that went well or that your child showed interest in during the week. Use photographs or objects to prompt memories and the discussion or exchange with your child.

You might want to try…

- Support your child to remember something that made them **feel successful, happy, calm, loved, and confident**.
- Make a **'Memorable Moments'** jar – use an empty see through container, **each time** you and your child have **fun, enjoy, laugh, relax, play, share, show an interest** in something, use a piece of paper, a sticky note or even a used birthday card and write on it what it was. Keep your jar and **keep filling it up**.
- **Praise** your child for something they have achieved, talk about something they succeeded at (the **smallest step** can be **celebrated**, what success looks like for each individual child will be different).
- **Share** your child's achievements or celebrate with another family member (you might choose to telephone/video call someone for your child to share good news or talk about what your child has enjoyed that week). Support your child to share photographs or objects, or even demonstrate a new skill (consider how they will communicate and share experiences).
- Spend **time** doing something you **enjoy** as a **family**.
- **Follow** your child's interests through play - you might have noticed your child showing more interest than usual in some of the week's activities or **noticed progress** in an area your child **tends to find difficult**.

NOTES - ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS, YOUR CHILD'S INTERESTS, KEEP A RECORD OF WHAT YOUR CHILD ENJOYS AND CELEBRATE WHAT GOES WELL.

HOW DID IT GO?



CELEBRATE SUNDAYS

Create a 'scrapbook' or homemade book (throughout the week or over time) – keep a record of experiences in whatever way works for you, your child and your family. Collect objects, photographs, pictures and drawings. Look back over the week(s) and your child's achievements, reflect on happy times, what has gone well and what your child has enjoyed or experienced.

You might want to try…

- Take **photos**, of your child **taking part in an activity** or new experience, practising skills. It might be stirring cake mixture, building a tower, splashing in the water or showing interest in something. Take photos of what you do when you go out.
- **Create a photo album** that you can **look back at and talk about activities**, offer simple comments and leave time for your child to respond.
- **Look at a book** about a **place you visited** or plan to **visit again** and what your child would like to do.
- **Draw/paint** a picture about your child's favourite thing, place or activity from the week. Give choices, if needed, to remind them about what you have done that week.
- **Extend your** child's play, for example, if they have shown interest in minibeasts, things that roll or spin, dolls, trains or dinosaurs. Build on this and **repeat what they have done that week**, skills they have developed, new language or sounds and take the opportunity to **celebrate and praise** your child.
- **Collect objects or pictures** in a cloth bag and **explore these objects** at a quiet time, talk about what they might remind the child about. Remind your child to think about their **achievements, recall** everything you have **enjoyed as a family** or the things they have liked.

NOTES - ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS, YOUR CHILD'S INTERESTS, KEEP A RECORD OF WHAT YOUR CHILD ENJOYS AND CELEBRATE WHAT GOES WELL.

HOW DID IT GO?



PART B: Practitioner resources

Ideas, activities and how to use this resource in partnership with parents.

This resource aims to help early years practitioners build and strengthen relationships with parents and families of young children. It will help children through the wide variety of transitions they are making, into every sort of early years setting. It will also help practitioners take a pro-active role in reaching out to parents, especially those parents of young children with additional needs or SEND.

In recent months, families and their children have been confined to their homes for extended periods of time. Most settings and practitioners have been contacting and supporting families and their children during lockdown. Families are now starting to think about their child going back to their setting or starting a new setting. The more settings are able to work closely with families to make sure this is a positive experience, the more successful these transitions will be. Children can later use these positive transition experiences to help them through future transitions.

PART B: Practitioner resources

Opportunity for shared experiences and conversations

Because every family's experiences will be different, a personalised approach to building resilience is needed to reflect that individuality. Each child's unique experiences, as well as their developmental and learning needs, should inform their next steps as they settle into your setting.

You will already have thought about how to adapt your approach to transition and settling-in post-lockdown. This resource will help you to tailor this to each child. It offers a shared and positive focus before, during and after transitions. It offers a starting point for richer conversations with families about their children's experiences and activities, so you will know what children really like and what works for them.

About the activities and experiences

The activities and experiences can be used alongside your existing plans. They can help develop a new or renewed understanding of each child in the 'here and now'. They provide opportunities to promote each child's social and emotional well-being, alongside their learning and development more generally.

PART B: Practitioner resources

The suggested activities and ideas are designed to help you share and celebrate a child's successes with their family members. The activities intentionally avoid reference to ages or stages. They can be individualised to suit children's needs: there is no right or wrong way to use the activities, though be guided by the principles set out at the beginning of this resource.

When carrying out the activities pay careful attention to make sure that any resources you use are safe, with lids tightly secured, avoiding objects that may be swallowed or substances that could be ingested. These activities are meant to be carried out alongside the child.

How to use this resource

You are encouraged to use the diary format to make commentsand add photos to deepen your shared understanding of the child.

Be creative about how you use this to support and work with parents. The more fun it is, the more likely it is to have a lasting and positive impact on the child and their family. One of the things that builds resilience is creating shared memories which have a positive emotional impact. This happens when the child wants to repeat, repeat, repeat!

PART B: Practitioner resources

Resilience is already central to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in ways that are not necessarily obvious until you start to look. For example, resilience-building is very much in harmony with these 'Characteristics of Effective Learning':

- **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements
- **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

If you look back to the 7Cs of resilience, the overlap is clear: this fits perfectly with EYFS Expectations.

Now, more than ever, your setting will be emphasising the creation of a welcoming and inclusive environment for all children: those returning as well as those joining. A resilience focus will be critical to achieving this. All settings will need to work towards best practice in:

"bridging the child's two worlds.... [i.e.] the setting, nursery managers and workers have to make a conscious effort to build a bridge between the centre and each child's home and family over which information can flow freely both ways, and people, too, can cross from one side to the other so that there is as much consistency and continuity as possible for the child." [Goldschmied, E. Jackson, S. (2004), 'People under three; young children in day care.' Routledge.]

MOVEMENT MONDAY

Provide opportunities to move to music and increase body awareness – build on the movement activities that children have been doing at home into the daily routine of your setting. Use music, rhymes and stories that the child is familiar with and gradually introduce new ones. Body awareness is developed over time through receiving information from our skin, muscles, tendons and joints. This helps the child to know the position of their body. This is sometimes referred to as proprioception. When children engage in a range of movement experiences, they become more confident, physically stronger, flexible and increase their own personal range of movements. This has a direct influence on their physical and mental well-being and their physical resilience.

You might want to try…

- Use activities that **build** on children's early stages of **movement**. This can be done **using action songs** and **nursery rhymes**, for example 'Wind the Bobbin', 'If You're Happy and You Know it,' 'Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes'. The adult models the actions for the child to copy, offering physical, verbal or visual prompts where needed. It's a good idea to keep copies of songs so parents can use them too. You could even record them.
- **Increase the range** of activities; this helps the child to develop their **body awareness**, for example encourage children to 'bob up and down', move arms and legs, finger movements, sway from side to side. Equipment such as wobble boards, small gym balls and trampettes are great to have indoors or out. Make sure you refer to the child's Physiotherapist or Occupational Therapist for specific guidance.
- Some children enjoy being **held or rocked** (try gently swinging in a blanket whilst singing 'Row the Boat' with 2 adults holding each end of the blanket).
- Introduce activities that encourage children to **move or dance** in a more specific way, for example **Animal walks**: rabbit hops (deep knee bends), bear walk (with bottom high), move like a butterfly (floating arms) or jump like a frog. You can use simple picture cues or play a specific sound!

NOTES - ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS, YOUR CHILD'S INTERESTS, KEEP A RECORD OF WHAT YOUR CHILD ENJOYS AND CELEBRATE WHAT GOES WELL.

HOW DID IT GO?



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You might want to try…

- Encourage **upper body and arm** movements. Attach ribbons and scarves to children's wrists or onto a wooden stick and encourage big movements to music.
- Play **musical statues** or play music and encourage children to listen and respond by stopping and starting or moving slow or fast. Games such as **'Simon Says'** or **'Follow the Leader'** can be introduced and played in a small group (2-3) of other children.
- **Creating space and an environment** for **movement indoors and outdoors** where the children can experience the extra space. Take time to discover the appropriate level of support the child needs to move around and negotiate the space, increasing **confidence alongside taking risks**.

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HOW DID IT GO?



MOVEMENT MONDAY

Create an obstacle course – provide opportunities indoors and outdoors for children to experience and explore the environment. Build an obstacle course that gives opportunities for children to change their body position and use different ways of moving, climbing, crawling, rolling, and balancing. All children need opportunities for movement and experiences, which support their balance, co-ordination, muscle tone and posture. This is sometimes referred to as the vestibular sensory system. All children are different in terms of the range of activities and frequency of the opportunities for movement. Taking the lead from the child will help you to recognise what the child needs.

You might want to try…

- Take the **obstacle course outside** and use the **play equipment** available to create new experiences. Use a **slide** as part of the course, **a swing**, **a trampette, climbing frames** or **steps**.
- Have a variety of equipment available that encourages children to **hold, bang, roll, shake, throw**, as well as softer play equipment to encourage **crawling, climbing, exploring a**nd **risk-taking**.
- You could **pile large cushions, beanbag chairs or soft mats in a corner**. Encourage the child to **dive in, jump, roll, stretch and burrow** in the cushions.
- Encourage children to **move from one place to another**, use cones to weave in and out of or move between rows, jump in and out of hoops and across gym mats. They could be challenged to **transport objects** from one end of the room to the other.
- Providing opportunities to **practise balance**: you could draw lines or use tape to create a route to follow, use logs, planks or ropes to walk along or side-step.
- Create **'races'** and use props (e.g. dressing up/hats) or equipment where children have to **stop** and use their hands to **pick up, throw or unwrap** something.

NOTES - ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS, YOUR CHILD'S INTERESTS, KEEP A RECORD OF WHAT YOUR CHILD ENJOYS AND CELEBRATE WHAT GOES WELL.

HOW DID IT GO?



TURN-TAKING TUESDAY

Provide opportunities to experience making instruments to use in a variety of situations – use a range of readily-available materials to make sound-makers and instruments. Encourage children to make choices and demonstrate their preferences about the sounds they make. Create sequences and patterns of sound and play musical instruments, encouraging children to imitate and take turns with others. Remember to let the child initiate the sound-making and follow them. You can create a 'to and fro' 'conversation' using the sound-makers or instruments.

You might want to try…

- Start by **talking to parents** about any turn-taking games that have gone well at home.
- Provide as **many opportunities** for turn-taking **throughout the day as possible**, for example, junk modelling, using the slide, pouring the water, pulling funny faces, making a rail track, piling things up.
- Gradually **introduce activities** with **one other** child with an **adult** there to **prompt** and **guide**. Keep each turn short and use visual cues. Things like sand timers or a coloured card to show 'my turn' can support children to predict their turn.
- Extend the **range of joint activities** with friends and support opportunities to develop **social** and **emotional** skills. Support children to experience success, overcome challenges and support them to understand disappointment during games. This helps to **build resilience**.
- Supporting children to develop skills linked to **waiting, problem solving together** and **negotiating through turn-taking activities**. Remember each child develops these skills at a different rate.
- Introduce **more children** if it seems appropriate. Children can be **in pairs** initially and each **'team'** can take turns kicking/throwing a ball into a bucket or have relay races to transfer bean bags from one basket to another.

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You might want to try…

» **Take turns at circle time**, for example, **choose an object from a story bag** or play games like **'pass the movement'** where one child might cross their arms and the next child copies – so passing the movement around the circle or giving an object or toy to another child when saying or signing their name.

» **Take turns** to **count** and **hide** when outside or take turns to **hide objects** and **others look** for the **'treasure'**.

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HOW DID IT GO?



TURN-TAKING TUESDAY

Provide opportunities to take turns with peers - build on the child's early turn taking experiences and support them to begin to share and take turns in the setting environment. The skills involved in turn-taking and sharing are more complicated than most adults consider. Often children who are not able to take turns 'yet' are viewed as having behaviour issues. However, there is a very specific set of neural pathways that need to be developed to create a set of skills called 'Executive Functions.' These functions include 'Working Memory,' 'Cognitive Flexibility' and 'Inhibitory Control'. These skills continue to develop across a lifetime and it is important to remember with young children that these are at a really early stage and what we expect of them should be developmentally appropriate.

You might want to try…

- Making **instruments from recycled materials**: encourage the children to experiment with different things inside the shakers and choose which sound they like. Watch children's **facial expressions** and **body language** to gauge how they are responding.
- Provide opportunities for children to use the **instruments to play with, take turns** and **listen to** the noises they make. **Ideas for making** instruments include cardboard tubes to make trumpets, pots and pans or empty tins for drums, plastic bottles or containers for shakers.
- Introducing a **variety of instruments** (those in your setting or homemade) and encourage children to **imitate patterns or beats**. Play **stop and start** with the instruments, **playing quietly** or **loudly**, **fast** or **slow**.
- Think about opportunities for children to do things **in pairs** and, if possible, **gradually moving** to small groups, introducing one child at a time with adult support as appropriate.

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You might want to try…

» **Demonstrate patterns** or **sequences of beats** and give children **time to repeat** (this can be done in pairs or smaller groups, where children can be encouraged to play in turn).

» Take **instruments outside** and consider **making a music area** or **'sound garden'** for children to **explore** at varying heights (e.g. hang different items that make sound from trees or fences and encourage children to bang, swipe, move, etc.) Children can take turns to make different sounds with metal, wooden or plastic items and create music together.

» Use **language and new words** which help to **describe the sounds** children make and encourage them to lead making sounds which are loud/louder, soft/softer, fast/faster sounds for others to follow.

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HOW DID IT GO?



WELL-BEING WEDNESDAY

Go out on an adventure and take a 'mindful' walk and discover the enjoyment of nature and being outside – go into the garden or your setting's outside space and encourage and support children to experience, listen, look, smell, touch and communicate about their environment. Notice all the small things, look for minibeasts, touch the leaves, listen to the birds or smell the herbs and flowers. Engage children through their senses, support them to explore and engage with the environment, increasing confidence. Encouraging regular mindfulness practice benefits children's well-being.

You might want to try…

- Plan outings to the park, visit a pond, and go to a beach or a walk along the river/in woodland or any other green spaces. Be close to nature, choose a spot to sit and encourage children to tune into their surroundings/make quiet observations. Encourage reflection on the importance of nature and having respect for everything in it!
- Take **blankets and beanbags outside** and encourage children to **sit or lie** and look at the sky, up at the trees and experience their surroundings in different ways. Introduce 'I spy' games when looking at one specific area.
- Look for **minibeasts** using **magnifying glasses** or provide a **visual 'treasure' hunt** for children to find natural objects; you could give them an object such as a stick, a leaf, a flower or a pebble and ask them to find something else that looks, feels, smells like it. You could also use pictures or photos of the items to find.
- Include activities like **planting, growing, digging** and gardening. Give children the **responsibility of caring** for what they are growing; you could include edible plants and those with scents, such as lavender and popular herbs. **Take photos** or **draw pictures** of the stages of growth. Find time to **share and talk** about what the children observe or experience.

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You might want to try…

- Set up a **'window watch station'** for observing birds, the weather or anything that grabs the child's interest. You can provide **binoculars**, **magnifying glasses**, **pictures** to point to and things for children to draw what they see. Encourage children to use magazines, books, and websites to extend the activity and look up what they see.
- **Go outside** in **all weather.** When it is raining, splash in puddles, feel the rain drops on hands and face, listen to the rain on umbrellas or the roof of the playhouse or a tent.
- **Support children** by pointing, and using pictures, symbols or choice boards to enable them to tell you and show you what they can see, hear, touch and smell.

NOTES - ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS, YOUR CHILD'S INTERESTS, KEEP A RECORD OF WHAT YOUR CHILD ENJOYS AND CELEBRATE WHAT GOES WELL.

HOW DID IT GO?



WELL-BEING WEDNESDAY

Provide opportunities to experience relaxation techniques and to develop emotional self-regulation through co–regulation from adults – introduce regular opportunities for children to experience the way their body feels when they are calm and relaxing. Focus on ensuring that adults are tuning into children's cues of changes in their emotions and offer children empathy, proximity and acceptance, followed by helping them to recognise that their feelings are natural and they can start to do something which will prevent them from becoming overwhelmed. Over time this will develop into improved emotional self-regulation.

You might want to try…

- **Think about the room** and create a **calming environment** for children; think about de-cluttering, using soft colours, natural shades of walls, displays, use of plants and adjustable lighting.
- **Provide alternative spaces** and **places** for children to use when they want to **feel calm**, away from the group and think about what individual children might need. Consider **flexible** spaces that **can be changed** easily for different children.
- **Use all** opportunities to **'name to tame'** children's emotions. **Model acceptance** and support children to recognise, **label and express** their emotions. Observe how children's bodies, faces and expressions change to gain a **better understanding** of **how emotions** affect them. Children really respond to adults when they **mirror and respond** to emotions. Use **words, signs,** and **symbols** to reflect back to them.
- When children are **regulated and feeling safe**, use the opportunity to **teach about emotions** using visual props, puppets, teddies, characters from their favourite TV or film. There are lots of very good books and stories to explore emotions.
- Practise **'mindfulness'** activities with children: start by **modelling this to one child** at a time, then **exploring what helps them to do this**. You could **build this into the start of the day or end of a session**. Re-visit your **daily routine** and think about how you might **fit these activities** into your planning.
- Practising **yoga poses** together can support children's self-esteem and confidence, as well as balance and coordination. Practise 'animal yoga poses' or breathing exercises to support children to be calm.

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You might want to try…

- Different **breathing exercises** (e.g. model stretching arms up when breathing in and arms down as they breath out).
- Introducing gentle hand or foot massage or games such as 'pizza massage'. Involve families and share techniques so that parents can try them at home.
- Creating a **calm 'toolbox'** together: fill with things that remind children of good times or activities they find relaxing (photos/pictures of family or things that calm children can be used). Talk to children and support them to recognise when they might need to use their toolbox.

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HOW DID IT GO?



THOUGHTFUL THURSDAY

Provide opportunities for children to think about others in their family and to build relationships with other children and adults beyond their home. Encourage parents and family members to share things they have made together such as a 'scrapbook', collage or 'treasure box' relating to them. Create a wall display that all children contribute to, enhancing and supporting children to feel connected to others. Promote developing relationships and connections between children, families and staff. The key person model is a good model to extend, develop and deepen in terms of each child's emotional well-being and safety. Promote the ethos of adults providing a secure base to explore from and a safe haven to retreat to.

You might want to try…

- When planning any **transition**, start by **establishing a sensitive and responsive** relationship with the children's parents. If your setting uses **home visits**, or **virtual equivalents**, make sure that parents **feel comfortable** and give them time to lead the discussion about their child. You could use this opportunity to **introduce this resource** and how you will be working in partnership with them.
- **Invite parents** and children to **visit the setting** or provide them with **a virtual tour**. Include an **introduction to the child's key person**. Some settings use staff **one-page profiles** and give these to the parents to familiarise them with staff.
- Offer an **opportunity** to meet in a local park or safe place **with other families of children** who are due to make the **transition at the same time**. Starting to connect families as soon as possible contributes to the relationships and resilience network for the families. Remember this must be **optional** so families do not feel uncomfortable.
- Use pictures, photographs, drawings and objects, or anything else the child has collected or wants to use to **create something personal** which connects them with **their family and others**. **Dedicate** an **area or make a display** so that children can return to it.
- Make a **'family tree'** and **hang pictures**, **photos** or **handprints** on the 'tree'. You could ask family members to **draw around the child's hand** and **write down something about themselves** on it that they would be happy to share! Encourage children to **think about their own family - who** is in their house, **important people** in their life, **friends** or **community** and add things that are important to them onto the 'tree'.

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You might want to try…

- Think about **family** members, the nursery **community** and **friendships** and create class displays based on a theme (e.g. 'our class', 'our family', 'holidays'). Use play people and small world play to represent and talk about family; support **connections** to their home environment.
- Invite children to **bring in** photographs of family members and pets. Children might prefer to **bring in objects**, maybe something Grandma gave them, or something they made to **share** and talk about.
- **Make a picture** about 'my friend' and think about what they like or what their favourite things are, such as food, toy, game or colour. Support children to talk/communicate about their friend.

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HOW DID IT GO?



THOUGHTFUL THURSDAY

Provide experiences to connect with others and show that they are important to you – make food, cards or homemade gifts for family, friends or a member of the community. Give children the opportunity to think about others in the wider community. A recent example of this is the focus on 'Key Workers' and 'the NHS' and the displays in windows of rainbows and soft toys and clapping on Thursdays. Provide opportunities for children to take part in actions that promote awareness, gratitude and feelings of connection.

You might want to try…

» Encourage children to **think about** people who are **important to them** and think of ways they might say 'thank you'. At Circle Time create opportunities to share stories about who makes them laugh. What do they enjoy doing with the person they are thinking about?

» **Making a gift**: provide choices of materials to use, prompt children to talk about what they are making, why they are choosing particular materials and what they think the person might like or how it will make them feel to receive a gift.

» **Making** and **sharing food**, for example, during Snack Time or on special occasions. Invite parents to support children to bring things to share. You can do this in the home corner too!

» Try making a **card** or **picture for a family member or a friend's birthday,** or on special occasions and events or festivals (e.g. Easter, Mother's Day, Eid) or **just because** it is what you want to do!

» Make a **'friendship bracelet'** using **different materials** such as wool, ribbon, cardboard tubes, crepe paper, buttons, different sized beads and pasta tubes. Support children to make decisions by asking: 'what does your friend like?' You could also **make badges, medals, awards, cups** or **rosettes** for each other. **Award a friend** for something they do well or that makes you feel good.

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HOW DID IT GO?



FIRST TIME FRIDAYS

Provide opportunities to experience something new or extend an activity that has been successful previously – meal/snack times or other daily routines in the setting can provide lots of opportunities to practise new skills in different situations or to build on a skill step by step. This 'new' activity or experience might appear challenging at first but repetition will support children and increase their confidence to try new things that they have initially found challenging. Supporting children to problem-solve and allowing them time to test things out and experiment when faced with a challenge will support them to develop perseverance, flexible thinking and a growing sense of achievement.

You might want to try…

» **Invite parents** to **share** key information about their child during **times of transition**, learn about the child's recent experiences and what they have **tried for the first time!** Discover how the **parent supported** their child's new learning. **Use this information** to **talk** about what the family and child want to focus on next! Make this the **focus** for **planning** new **opportunities** and **experiences** and provide opportunities to practise newly-acquired skills in the setting, varying **when**, **where** and **what** the child uses.

» **Slowly introduce** a new activity or **vary the equipment** available to **to encourage experimentation** and **help develop** new skills – **change what is available** regularly but also remember children often like to go back to the familiar from time to time. Some children will need **prior warning** about even the small changes.

» **Provide opportunities** to try **new** foods at snack time or when eating outdoors. Consider introducing a small amount to try or begin by exploring new food **with hands or fingers** if needed. Use foods appropriate for children's mealtime routine, likes/dislikes or level of weaning etc. Talk about the new taste or new experience or 'what was your favourite?'

» **Vary** the **environment**, for example, change the home corner to a post office or other pretend places that spark a child's interest or passion – a space scene, supermarket or hospital. **Create new adventures** based on a **theme** and go 'on a journey' to the jungle, the ocean or another country. This might involve activities, stories or the environment. Provide **additional support** and **preparation** for children who find change more challenging.

NOTES - ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS, YOUR CHILD'S INTERESTS, KEEP A RECORD OF WHAT YOUR CHILD ENJOYS AND CELEBRATE WHAT GOES WELL.

HOW DID IT GO?



FIRST TIME FRIDAYS

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You might want to try…

» Introduce **new sounds, words, signs** or **symbols** specific to new experiences, activities, themes, books and stories. Have a new 'book of the week'!

» Create new experiences and opportunities for children to achieve, **use praise** which is **specific** and **immediate** for example, 'good sharing' or 'I like the colours you've used in your picture.' Look for tiny changes and praise the smallest success.

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HOW DID IT GO?



FIRST TIME FRIDAYS

Provide opportunities to take part in new activities based on children's interests – extend children's play and introduce a new experience following observations made or on what parents have reported their child has shown particular interest in or enjoyed. Support children to take 'new' risks; taking risks in a safe environment builds a child's confidence. Play opportunities, especially open-ended play, can support children to practise problem-solving, test things out and take risks. There are huge benefits for children which outweigh the risks (often called the 'Risk Benefit Analysis'), including increased confidence and independence, as well as nurturing resilience. Each child's existing experiences and their response to these are the starting points to create suitable and safe challenges and risks.

You might want to try…

- Set up **activities with a small amount of risk** in a **safe environment**. Adapt and differentiate activities so that all children experience success and build on emerging skills so that they gain confidence. Slowly **increase the level of risk-taking** over time; this will be different for individual children and the amount of support needed will vary.
- Support children to **prepare** for **new experiences**: use **'photo sequences'** or **role-play** to **prepare for changes** or **visual support** for new routines. Think about what is involved in the new activity and try **one step at a time**.
- Think of activities that **challenge** and have an **element of risk** for the child, for example, onto or into something higher or lower, rolling over and over or touching unfamiliar textures. Use gentle encouragement and build confidence by using positive language.
- Create opportunities for **open-ended** play, for example, different sized cardboard boxes might be turned into spaceships, cars or boats. Add unfamiliar, new and exciting items such as a torch or some old CDs and see what children choose to do with them.
- Give **choices when trying new things**, for example, wearing an apron for water play, using sponges or rollers when painting, providing something soft/crunchy to try at Snack Time.
- Introduce **simple games** with an element of **competition**, for example a game of **'skittles'**.

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HOW DID IT GO?



SENSORY SATURDAY

Sensory processing – think about sensory differences and how children in your setting process the information through all senses (external and internal) and from the environment around them. For some children who have sensory sensitivities (hypersensitive or hyposensitive), interpreting what they experience through their senses can be uncomfortable or even painful. Children who are hypersensitive (over-sensitive) experience any sensory input intensely or find some input overwhelming and therefore often avoid a situation (sensory avoiding). For children who are hyposensitive (under-sensitive) you may observe that they look for more stimulation through their senses (sensory seeking). Sensory difference can be difficult to identify and the underlying reasons are broad.

Clinical assessments of sensory processing needs must be carried out by an appropriately qualified professional. Always seek advice if you are concerned about a child.

Some things to look out for, think about and try in your setting

EXTERNAL SENSES

» **Vision** – if you notice that a child dislikes bright lights or finds flickering lights distressing or they tend to focus on flecks of dust or fluff they might be **hypersensitive**. For children who are **hyposensitive**, brightly coloured objects and lights or reflections are fascinating. You may see children who might touch everything in a room or look closely at objects for long periods of time.

» **Touch** – children who are **hypersensitive** might dislike wearing certain clothes or shoes and clothes seams, labels or fabric might be uncomfortable and irritate them. They might avoid close touch and being hugged. Parents tell you that trying to wash their child's hair or brushing teeth causes distress and things like going to the hairdressers, dentist or buying shoes can be very challenging. Some children will resist wearing an apron or taking part in messy or sensory play. Encourage small steps, adapting activities as needed (e.g. exploring paint through zip locked bags, introducing new textures slowly, allowing children to explore at a distance). If children walk on tip toes, you could introduce foot massage or let them experience sand/paint with bare feet. **Hyposensitive** children may not notice pain or their own body temperature and can sometimes hug tightly, bite or bang themselves. The use of deep pressure massage and lots of rough and tumble play could be introduced. You can also buy weighted toys and blankets for children to use.

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You might want to try…

» **Hearing** – you might see children covering their ears. This can be because some sounds are painful for them or they become distressed by sudden and loud noises and can easily be distracted by sounds **(hypersensitive)**. Allow children to wear headphones and listen to their favourite music. Alternatively, a child who is **hyposensitive** might seek out or make sounds, doing lots of tapping and banging.

» **Taste** – **hypersensitive** children might have a **restricted diet** and only eat **food with certain textures**. A child with **hyposensitivity** in this area might chew, mouthe, lick or smell everything (including inedible objects) or grind their teeth. Try chewable toys (with advice from an Occupational Therapist or replace with small amounts of chewy food. Some children might still be at the exploratory stage.

» **Smell** – a child with **hypersensitivity** in this area finds it difficult to even tolerate some smells, people or objects. They may only eat certain foods (sometimes because the smell can cause severe reactions such as vomiting). For children who are **hyposensitive**, they might lick and smell everything.

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You might want to try…

INTERNAL SENSES

» **Vestibular** – if a child is **hypersensitive**, they may find it difficult if surfaces are unstable. It may be more challenging to change direction (e.g. during physical activities) or they can feel disorientated. For children who are **hyposensitive** you may observe them seeking lots of movement, rocking or spinning.

» **Proprioceptive** – for children who are hyposensitive it is difficult for them to understand where their body is in space and they often lean on others, fall over more often or seem 'clumsy'. They might also be unaware of sensations such as hunger.

» **Interoceptive** – this sense sends information about what is going on inside the body which allows the brain to process physical and emotional states (e.g. feeling hungry, pain, need to use the toilet). Children's ability to self-regulate is also connected to this system, as well as behaviour and how they might react. Impact on emotional awareness might affect how children engage with their environment and social situations. This can often be misunderstood as being a 'behaviour problem'.

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HOW DID IT GO?



SENSORY SATURDAY

Sensory differences – you can begin to understand how your setting environment can be adapted by going on a sensory tour (sensory audit). You can carry out a sensory audit with individual children as a focus. As you carry out the tour or audit, think about how the child may experience and process the information coming in through their senses. Quite often small adjustments to the environment can make a big difference to children's well-being, ability to focus, learn and interact.

Some things to think about and try in your setting.

» Go on a **sensory** tour or **walk** around the setting **and include the outdoo**r areas (perhaps with colleagues). Think about all senses, take notes and **reflect on what you see/hear/smell/touch**. Think about how children might feel and respond to this sensory information.

» Carry out a **sensory audit** so that staff can feel **confident to assess,** adjust and create **enabling environments** for all children.

» **Visual** – think about **lighting**, **the visual aids** used (for example, do you use laminated cards/symbols or other things with reflective surfaces that could be distracting?). Consider the environment; are **wall displays busy?** Are **areas cluttered** and **distracting?** Sensory rooms **(spaces/ tents)** can be helpful for children attracted to bright lights. For children who focus in on threads and details on carpets think about adding rugs or play mats.

» **Tactile** – consider activities and materials, seating and perhaps the **floor or carpet children sit on**. Think about the **nappy changing area**, does the **changing mat feel cold?** If you use **aprons** for 'messy' play these can be **uncomfortable** and also a new experience for some children. You could try using old shirts or T-shirts instead.

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Some things to think about and try in your setting.

» **Auditory** – think about **sounds which might be distracting** (including the acoustics of rooms). This might be **sounds from equipment**, hums from fluorescent lights or computers or **general sound from inside and outside the room**. **Rugs, carpets, soft materials** can help to soften noise and echo. Think about ways to soundproof the room. Would **headphones** support children to **block out distracting noises?**

» **Smell** – think about the **bathroom area** and key times like **nappy changing**, lunchtime and snacks. Consider strong smells such as from **cleaning products** or materials used for activities, for example, playdough or glue or adults wearing **strong perfume** which children can react to.

» How you **organise** the room, **seating at lunchtime** or support for **daily routines** is also important to think about. Can you arrange seating differently for children who prefer not to be close to others? If your room has somewhere where **food is prepared** or if the room is near to a kitchen or dining hall, are there **strong food smells?** Can you avoid areas being **too busy** or a 'rush' during transition times? If children find it difficult when arriving or leaving in large crowds, talk to parents about earlier or later drop off or pick up times

» Some children might need a **quiet space or area to retreat to** when they are feeling **stressed or anxious**. Think about how you can provide this and support children to know **where it is** and to **use it independently**, building it into their **own strategies for self- regulation**.

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HOW DID IT GO?



CELEBRATE SUNDAYS

Child-centred and person-centred practice – being child-centred is at the heart of high-quality early years practice. Think about how you can embed a child-centred approach as children make transitions into and within your setting. Parents are an incredibly important source of knowledge about their child and this is a key to establishing strong relationships with parents who may well be concerned about their child's well-being. Take time to get in touch with parents as soon as possible. Plan time for conversations, emails, virtual tours, visits, open days and Stay and Play Sessions. Some children have recently spent a lot of time at home with parents and other family members. Discover what experiences the parent, family and child have had and build on this. Using this resource and introducing it to parents before their child starts or returns to your setting will provide a wealth of information that can be used for planning and ensuring that children's unique profiles are at the core of everything you offer. One way to do this is to use a One Page Profile which is a positive and simple way to capture information about children as you strengthen your relationship and working in partnership with parents.

One Page Profiles provide a snapshot of the child and should remain a 'live' document, updated regularly with the parents' involvement. Think about next steps, and how this approach will inform your planning, based on children's individual needs and interests.

What is a Person-centred One Page Profile?

» **Person-centred one page profiles are usually** divided into **3 main sections**. They should always start with **'What people like/admire'** about the child. In this section, those who know the child well write down the child's key strengths and personal characteristics. Involving parents, family members and the child themselves starts the conversation in a positive and strengths-based way.

» The **'What people like/admire' ('appreciation')** section or 'What we love about Harry…' might include information about a child's character or things they are good at. For example, statements like "He is always smiling and keen to socialise with others" or "Harry loves cuddles. He is kind and will cuddle other children if he sees that they are upset."

» The **'What is important to'** section should be looked at from the **child's** own **perspective**. It often includes the **people, places, activities, stories, songs, belongings, experiences** that the child **enjoys** and would be considered their **preferred way to spend time!** For example, "Elsa loves stroking the family's black and white cat 'Mystery", "Shabaz has fun looking in mirrors" or "George likes to be with other children who are quiet and calm."

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You might want to try…

» The **'What is important for'** and **'how best to support the child'** section covers the things which, when they are in place, **enable** the child to be included, join in, enjoy and benefit from the range of opportunities in your setting. For example, "Simon uses a specially designed chair to help him to play at a table," "Simon likes to move position during the session. He uses a prone board, a standing frame and likes to lie on soft surfaces." Another example is "Invite Chloe to join in at group time for 5 minutes, show her a visual prompt and gesture towards the area in the setting where group time will be." This section would include information such as "Oscar has medication with his lunchtime meal. This is to be administered by trained staff." This section might also include how best to **comfort** and help a child to **relax** if they become distressed, anxious or overwhelmed.

» Many profile templates have a space for a photograph of the child, their name and any useful information. As the profile expands over time you might also include details about communication and **next steps**.

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CELEBRATE SUNDAYS

One Page Profiles – there are a variety of templates available to support settings who wish to introduce and embed this person-centred approach to use with families. You might also like to design your own, taking into account a child's particular interests (e.g. dragons, transport, cartoon characters, unicorns, under the sea, etc.…). Invite parents to share their expertise about their child, enable the child's voice to be heard and use all the information gathered by trying out activities from this resource to deepen your understanding of the child and how to include their interests/experiences into the setting's way of working together to build resilience through relationships.

More about One Page Profiles…

- Profiles can be **updated** and used **throughout** the whole time the child is at your setting and beyond.
- **Talk** to parents about their child's **interests, achievements, recently-acquired skills** or new skills they are practising. This is a good time to celebrate success together too!
- **One Page Profiles** capture key information about a child and support **all staff** (including new staff/ visiting professionals) to get to know the child quickly. It is important to **update the profiles regularly** with parents and children. You might want to include extended family too.
- **Share** children's **achievements** with parents and **invite parents** to share what's going well. Parents know their child best and can ensure their child's **interests, aspirations** and voice are taken into account.
- Think about different ways to **involve children** in the **process of creating** a One Page Profile. Consider how children communicate and share their own thoughts and experiences and demonstrate this at home and in the setting.
- The information gathered on One Page Profiles, from parents, and from your **observations**, can **inform planning** and ensure staff are aware of **how individual children** interact or need supporting for a more **personalised approach**.
- This approach will also support staff to build positive relationships with parents in an environment where parents **feel valued** and an equal **partner** in their child's learning, development and well-being.

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HOW DID IT GO?



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www. sensory-processing.middletownautism.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/12/37.1-Sensory-audit-tool-for-environments.pdf

Anna Freud Centre '8 ways parents can help children manage the transition into nursery'
www.annafreud.org/media/11655/early-years-pc-2205.pdf

BBC Bite size – Parents Toolkit SEND
www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zh9v382

Big Life Journal – Mindfulness and breathing exercises
www. biglifejournal.com/blogs/blog/5-fun-mindfulness-activities-children-breathing-exercises

CBeebies – mindful garden app
www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/go-explore-app-your-mindful-garden

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Helen Sanderson Associates – One Page Profile
www. helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/one-page-profiles/one-page-profile-templates/

Hungry Little Minds
www. hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk

National Autistic Society - examples in the Sensory section
www.autism.org.uk/about/behaviour/sensory-world

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Sheff Kids – One Page Profile Templates
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www. carolgraysocialstories.com/social-stories/what-is-it/

Tiny Happy People
www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people

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