

# Unique Child

**Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.** Being two is a crucial stage of learning where children are not simply 'big babies' or 'small three-year olds'.

*"The essence of being two is about major changes in brain development, gaining a sense of self as an individual, beginning to use language in social contexts and also thinking and having the physical ability to move independently and with increasing control" (K. Matheison 2013 'I am two!' pg 8)*

Practitioners should focus on providing for the three prime areas as these are the foundation for all subsequent learning and development. The four specific areas can then be used to support and enhance the prime areas.

*How do you ensure children have learning opportunities within the prime areas of learning and that the right resources and time are provided?*

*How do you use the specific areas to support this?*



Two-year-old children need ample opportunities to develop the three Characteristics of Effective Learning. This will allow practitioners to consider *how* children learn, rather than focusing on just *what* they are learning.

*How familiar are you with these characteristics? Do you use this information to support individual children and inform your daily practice?*

A sound knowledge of patterns of play, i.e. schemas can also help you as a practitioner to support children's interests, learning styles and enhance their development.

*Are all practitioners fully aware of schemas and learning styles?*

Between the ages of two and three years children's language skills are developing rapidly; however, there may still be moments of intense frustration where children are unable to express themselves verbally.

*How do you currently support children who cannot verbally express their needs and wishes?*



Playing cooperatively is still something children of two are learning. Therefore, support from adults is vital to empathise and to give children a model to understand the concept of sharing.

*How do you and your practitioners support children's ability to play cooperatively? Does everybody adopt a consistent approach, which is age appropriate?*



*Are you providing sufficient resources to minimize disputes over toys?*

*Two-year-old children are learning to test their physical boundaries and will spend lots of time 'on the move'. It is therefore important that practitioners allow two-year-old children plenty of time to be physically active in challenging ways.*

*Do you allow sufficient time and space for your two-year-old children to be physically active and exuberant whenever they wish?*



*Do you encourage two-year-old children to take manageable risks e.g. climbing the steps of the slide by themselves? Two-year-old children will often have a high exploratory drive and are therefore unlikely to sit and attend to group activities for more than a couple of minutes.*

*Do you have times in the day when two-year-old children are expected to sit still for more than a couple of minutes at a time? If so, could the same learning intentions be met in a different way?*



As two-year-old children spend so much time on the go they will tire easily (and usually very suddenly). This means there needs to be suitable opportunities and places for rest and relaxation, both indoors and outdoors.

*Do you provide spaces for two-year-old children to rest throughout the entire day? Is everyone aware of and providing for Communication Friendly Spaces?*

