

Contribution of the eyfs to young children's development and learning

[Psychology](#), [Child Development](#)



Introduction

Early Year Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting is an important surrounding for young children's development. Positive relationships are built at this stage, where children learn through respectful and caring interactions. Practitioners are also able to give priorities to main person, and respectfully react to children and their parents' respective opinions. The enabling environment at EYFS provides children with the needed time, space and materials to express themselves through plays, investigations and explorations of new ideas (Wood and Attfield, 2005). The practitioner is able to observe, organise and plan the flow of activities. Significantly, it is at this stage where a practitioner is able to identify the difference among children in terms of unique capabilities. In essence, developmental rates for children differ, with varied interests mostly influenced by the different socio-cultural and family backgrounds.

Positive interactions

Young children often rely on adult educators to stimulate and sustain their learning (Broadhead, Howard and Wood, 2010). One of the key goals of the EYFS is to create the ideal condition for learning to take place. EYFS also allows children to know the practitioners, thus enhancing trust and rely upon the adults for support. Studies show that "young children have their own ideas about what they wish and want to do" (Broadhead, 2010, p. 29). Given free will to choose what they want, they would passionately pursue their chosen career over those preferred by family members.

Bringing children together in the EYFS programmes also provide them with

the opportunity to share individual knowledge with each other. Through group plays, individual child is able to initiate their destiny, take the lead, make choices, and develop individual thinking capacity as well as new ideas. They are also keen to draw sense from things in their surroundings.

The positive interaction is also observed in the manner in which children adapt play as a form of learning. Play is recognised as an important aspect of well-being and development of children. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Children (1989) states that play should be a fundamental commitment within the EYFS. Although the relationship between play and learning is not straightforward, research evidence suggests that different types of play “ help children to learn and to become confident learners in their future lives” (Wood and Attfield, 2005, p. 113). Other researches also indicate that children’s learning is enhanced when they interact with skilled adult in certain ways, thus promoting their good progress (Miller and Almon, 2009).

The benefits of playful approaches to learning can never be overstated in the effective development of young children. EYFS settings are made with certain guidelines that focus on both short term and long term success. The best outcomes of children’s learning is often found in places where learners are exposed to a myriad activities, including initiatives spearheaded by children themselves and supported by skillful adults.

The interaction between young children and skilled adults at EYFS has the ability to increase adult support. Studies have indicated that too little adult interaction and support can limit a child’s learning process (Miller and Almon, 2009). Similarly, play with adults although can be rich and be full of purpose,

may be full of chaos and repetitive to an extent that it limits learning and exploration among the young children. The interaction is a critical aspect that will ensure the young children get professional support even as they grow and learn.

Opportunity to listen to children

EYFS allows practitioners to listen to young children and understand what they should be taught. At the same time, practitioners are able to set new challenges within the context that the young children can recognise.

When the children are brought together through EYFS, the practitioners are able to acknowledge individual child's ability and be fully aware of what they can learn, thus allow them to plan and provide for every stage in the learning process (Broadhead, Howard and Wood, 2010).

When relationship has been developed between young children and adult practitioners, the latter knows the right thing to engage them during play, through the use of sounds, gesture, movements or objects (QCA, 2005). The practitioner is able to judge the extent of their engagement with the children during play, and when they are ready for the introduction of new skills.

Practitioners, as skillful adults, use the EYFS to support and enhance young children's learning by selecting from pool of strategies available and matching them according to the specific needs of the children. In the EYFS setting, decisions such as what to give children and what best ways to help them learn are made several times each day. A skillful practitioner is able to learn the children's needs through listening to them in an EYFS setting, where they can also learn the nature of play and playfulness each child

possess.

Increase effective teaching

Children often cherish moments when they are in control and periods when they acquire the feelings that they are autonomous in their daily learning.

Neuroscience studies have shown that children are well motivated and intelligent learners who explore everything around them (Lancaster and Broadbent, 2003). Thus, when children are brought together in an EYFS, the teaching becomes more effective because the practitioners are able to build the right conditions for learning. Adults are also able to manage the pace of activities and ensure they learn through stimulating opportunities.

When balance between spontaneous plays is established, the practitioner is able to evaluate the children's choices and achievements and provide a guiding principle of learning to increase effectiveness. It is established that "too much directed activity often deprives children of the opportunity to engage actively when learning" (Broadhead et al., 2010). EYFS practitioner can increase effective teaching by arranging time, space and activities within the daily routine programme to reflect the overall combination which significantly support wellbeing of children.

A combination of child-initiated plays and adult-led playful activities allows professionals to choose the right approach that will not only enhance the developmental stage of the children but also provide individual and group support as a form of effective teaching (Miller and Almon, 2009). For example, a particular day can be set to allow free play between children without any adult's involvement. This approach provides children with the needed space, independence and relaxation. At the other end of the scale

are days when short sessions are carefully planned and structured with activities that are useful when teaching specific skills.

At the EYFS setting, skillful practitioners are able to impact young children positively by teaching them how to build positive identities through collaboration. Young children are also able to develop caring relationships with other people, manage and take risks, experience success, develop resilience, cope with failures, and develop 'can-do' attitude that is critical in the modern world's increasing competitive environment. The high-quality provisions at EYFS are essential for children in their attempts to develop positive dispositions, which is the foundation for long-term learning success.

Unique Child's opportunity to learn

Children often have different development rates, varied interests, different cultural backgrounds and unique families that define their early life experience (Rogers and Evans, 2008). EYFS themes allow them to explore these abilities, and design what fits each child according to their background.

At the EYFS setting, practitioners are able to plan and structure activities that can be essential in the teaching of specific skills. This stage of teaching can benefit children with recognised special educational needs. Young children are also able to build their vocabulary and demonstrate to them how to use specific tools and equipments. Neuroscience studies show that human brains develop and function in an exploratory setting (Tovey, 2007), which is essentially offered at EYFS. The freedom to combine resources at the EYFS in many varied ways is important because of the flexibility of the cognitive

development process. Unique children are able “ to build pathways for thinking and learning, and to make connections across areas of experience in the process” (Miller and Almon, 2009).

Theories of learning and development agree with the perspectives developed in brain research that learning is both individual and social, and that young children, particularly the ones with unique abilities, are not passive learners (Miller and Almon, 2009). These children drive their learning and development through selective choices on what they like, individual interests they make in these activities, the knowledge they acquire, and their motivation to do things with competence. Broadhead, Howard, and Wood (2010) observe that choices and interests of unique children are the driving forces that build knowledge, skills and understanding. For example, the children are constantly learning about themselves as well as their socio-cultural worlds when they play with other children and skillful adults

Conclusion

Young children learn in several ways as they grow up. First, it is recognised that children learn through play, both amongst themselves and with adults. It's through play that children are able to explore, investigate and develop ideas. Young children also learn at the presence of other people, which allows them to develop emotional security and social skills. Through EYFS, children are able to meet these needs by being active and talking to themselves. They are also shown how to do things and how to meet physical and mental challenges, thus helping them develop lifelong learning habit.

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