

Supporting children as active learners



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In my report I plan to inform the reader about my ability to support children as active learners. I will relate to some of my observations and my work against theorist, National guidelines and childhood writings.

Active learning is an approach that whereby children challenge their thinking and are responsible for their own learning. Sensitive adult interaction will enable the child to be supported through choice, offer their ideas for their own learning and next steps and taking control ownership of their learning. At my placement active learning is ongoing within the setting and this will be made evident through my observation sheets.

Active Learning is an approach that early year settings are encouraged to use. Curriculum for Excellence,(2010), Building the Curriculum 2 , talks about active learning occurring through any of the five terms. " Spontaneous Play, Planned and Purposeful Play, Investigating and Exploring, Events and Life experiences and focus Learning and Teaching".

In order for myself to deliver and support children as active learners I felt it was important to have an understanding of child development. According to Moyles and Adams (2001) " Effective knowledge of child development and an appreciation of the next and previous stages of education , will ensure that practitioners foster children's healthy growth and development. Without such knowledge there is a danger that practitioners will provide " nice" activities rather than challenging young children's learning and extend their current abilities." I feel this is a strong statement as being a practitioner I have to deliver opportunities to challenge children learning experience. If children are bring active with their learning then I have to provide

challenging tasks and resources in order for them to challenge their own level of achievement.

There was a child in my placement who was very much in charge of his own learning and spent most of his day learning through spontaneous play. This is evident in observation report 3: Spontaneous play , column 1, 2, 3. The child choose his own learning rather than following the whole group. The adults allowed this child to make his own choice to meet his health and well being needs as well as his learning. This child had additional support needs so understood the importance to read his file and speak to his one-one worker to see what strategies were best to use when working with him.

Children have a say in their own learning by using Big book planning and discussion at welcome time. I have referred to the observation report 4: Patterns on Alien Templates. The children were encouraged to look at their Big Book planning as often or as little as they wished. The children are encouraged through discussion about what topics and activities they would like to take part in. The staff team then use the children's ideas and relate it to an outcome from the Curriculum for Excellence outcome. With children choosing an planning what they want to do it is in-line with ' High Scope'- Plan do review. This is the process where the children get to express their own thought and intentions of what they want to do and learn. The child then will then reflect on their experience. A high quality curriculum has to be in place and a good understanding of their learning environment. The children in the my setting used the book to plan their ideas then then try out there ideas. There wasn't much emphasis on the children reflecting though.

The setting has various areas in the playroom and the children have opportunities to discover. At welcome time the teacher informs what they are doing. It is then the children's choice to join in. If a child wishes to play with construction or at the role play area the full session, this is seen as acceptable to take place. Within these areas staff may encourage communication and interaction. They will not tell a child to leave an area and do something else. In my observation report 7: Story time, I have demonstrated that the children choose their own activity. It also explains the range of resources that are on offer to the children. This is outlined in column 1, 2 and 5. During my experiences with the children I was aware of Lev Vygotsky, Zone of Proximal Development. He was a social constructivist theorist as his theory was underlined by the contribution to learning made by others. His theory was the gap between what a child can achieve and learn alone and what they can do with the support from another adult or a child. He rated child interaction between themselves as being very important. I feel this is positive and in my setting the ante pre and pre mixed so they can support each other learning and this too is an active approach. This is evident in my grids as some of the three and four year old children did mix together and share their ideas. (See observation record 6: snack) Bruner's concept of spiral curriculum was valuable to my setting as some children have been there for over a year and Bruner's theory believed children will revisit play materials over the years but choose to use them differently as part of their cognitive development. Bruner saw the child as an active learner and problem solver.

When I began following activities that fitted with in the room plan I felt confident within my role. I was wary at first on how to feedback to parents. I took on board my mentor advice and became more confident. In my observation report 6: Snack time the children have a rolling snack. I felt I had an important role to meet the children health and well being needs. Snack is a great opportunity to listen to the children language and how they interact. I felt with this activity I did have to intervene with the children conversation in order to provide the children with valuable info about healthy eating.

Children need to have the opportunity to learn about a healthy lifestyle. This is in-line with National Care Standards, Standard 3, Health and well being, point 3. There was an activity I was working with, where I felt the structure of the room interrupted the children's play. This is evident in observation report 5: Jelly cubes. The children left the activity where they had been exploring their ideas with the jelly to fit in with the plans set by the teacher. It was important they did go and brush their teeth but I felt they could do this straight after their snack rather than them being interrupted .

The staff team do encourage children to join in to offer a wide range of experiences. I would encourage the children by explaining what I would be doing and then show the children. Leading to my last week I felt I was confident to lead activities relating to a learning episode. The children had been discussing Transport. I then took this on board and planned to offer experiences to encourage the children to think of different modes of transport and to learn from each others experiences. My observations reports 8-12 are all related to my learning episode to the children. I brought in a variety of recyclable tubs and boxes and asked the children what could

we do with them. The children gave the idea to make something which also fitted into the theme of the room. This is evident in Observation report 11. Junk modelling. Dowling, M (2010) P63 Suggests " a carefully planned programme in a setting should allow scope for the child's enterprise but also provide a place for adult guidance and when appropriate adult involvement and adult interaction". I felt I did provided support when needed but gave the children the opportunity to create their own ideas. With the junk modelling the children choose to this so the scope was there for them to make the decision to use their junk in the role play area.

The Child at the Centre, Self Evaluation in the Early Years, discuss interaction with children. It states in point 5. 2, page 30 " Although we support children in their learning, often we intervene too early in their play, reducing opportunities for children to develop their ideas". I did asked my mentor to observe myself as I was keen to understand if I was interacting at the right times and using appropriate questions.

I felt with the support I had from my mentor and the team I was able to incorporate challenging activities to the children. I was aware to adapt to the children's needs and have a good understanding of the milestones of child development. This is outlined in National Care Standards, Standard 4, Engaging with children point 2.

I was aware I was a role model and importance of my activities for the children. As stated in The Child at the Centre, page 35 " we have well planned opportunities for children to experience worthwhile achievement". This was important for myself to keep in mind when planning and evaluating

my experiences for the children learning. I was very much a part of the children planning and this help my progress and understand the importance of supporting their active learning. In appendix number.... I will evaluate on my report and how I will improve on supporting children as active learners.