

Parenta

Working together for our children

Issue 12
December 2015

Sensory play

by Lisa Lane

Is water on tap?

By Katharine Tate

Time for reflection?

Get set for the challenges of 2016!

Including: staying safe online

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In case we miss you later in December...

Merry Christmas

from all at Parenta

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer

You know Dasher and Dancer and Prancer and Vixen,
you know Comet and Cupid and Donner and Blitzen,
But do you recall
The most famous reindeer of all

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer
Had a very shiny nose
And if you ever saw it
You would even say it glows
All of the other reindeer
Used to laugh and call him names
They never let poor Rudolph
Join in any reindeer games

Then one foggy Christmas Eve,
Santa came to say,
Rudolph with your nose so bright,
Won't you guide my sleigh tonight

Then how all the reindeer loved him,
As they shouted out with glee,
Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer
You'll go down in history

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Why is it so hard to recruit L3 Early Years staff at the moment?



By Allan Presland

Did you see the fascinating report published at the beginning of November about the link between Level 3 qualified staff and outstanding Ofsted outcomes? **It concluded that having greater than 75% of nursery staff qualified at Level 3 resulted in a greater likelihood of achieving an outstanding grade.**

This is great news for the whole industry and a powerful vindication for those studying or who have studied to achieve this level.

A few weeks before, though, I saw AELP published a response from the Childcare and Education Minister, Sam Gyimah MP, to their briefing paper number 20: [\[The\] Impact of GCSE requirements on the EYE](#). This paper presented a clear argument against having GCSEs as mandatory exit requirements for the EYE level 3 qualification. It cited the significant reduction in take-up of Level 3 apprentices along with issues employers are facing recruiting Level 3s due to a lack of supply. They went on to produce a logical argument for the return to Functional Skills as a direct replacement for GCSEs. Sam Gyimah's response asserted the Government's stance that GCSEs in English and Maths are a requirement because **"the evidence shows that the higher the quality of childcare, the higher the quality of a child's learning and development."**

On the face of it, both parties appear to agree. We have Ofsted saying that a high number of Level 3s in a setting leads to a higher likelihood of an outstanding Ofsted grade. The Childcare Minister is saying that the higher the quality of childcare, the better the quality of a child's learning and development, and therefore sticking to his guns on the GCSE requirement. So, they are effectively complimenting each other: higher qualifications leads to higher outcomes and a greater likelihood of an Outstanding grade. That's really positive, isn't it?

Well, not entirely. It appears the quality bubble may be about to burst. See, **AELP have presented evidence to say there's a huge reduction in the number of Level 3s being trained.** If that's the case then both the claims of Ofsted and the Minister are undermined by a lack of supply.

My team and I speak to a lot of childcare providers. Parenta work with about 5,000 settings, so we have great insight into the sector. **The difficulty of recruiting Level 3 staff is one of the most consistent things we hear.** Indeed, I was recently sat with the MD of a top 10 chain of nurseries and he was very clear about the impact this was having on his business: significantly delayed staff appointments and increased wage demands.

The other issue that AELP talked about in the briefing paper was that some Early Years training providers had closed down due to the drop in demand. I know of 3 such providers in the South East alone who have shared a similar fate.

So, I thought it would be interesting to review the number of Level 3 apprenticeship starts that Parenta made in the 14/15 academic year, versus the 13/14 academic year. To put this in context first, Parenta is the 2nd or 3rd largest provider of vocational qualifications to the sector, delivering qualifications to about 2000 learners at any one time. **My findings were shocking!**

In 13/14 we undertook 895 L3 qualifications, and in 14/15 we undertook 268 – that's a 70% reduction!

As I talk to providers about the L3 recruitment issue, they frequently give the same answer - we have to increase the number of Level 2s, or recruit very young staff who do have the relevant GCSEs so that they can train to become Level 3s.

The matter is clearly not helped by the inflexibility of GCSEs. **Exams twice a year simply don't fit into the apprenticeship delivery model:** fail at your first attempt and you have to wait another 6 months for a re-sit. This is also massively hindering training providers, as our success rates are inevitably damaged and financial rewards delayed (and potentially denied if the learner just gives up). This is another reason we've lost so many childcare training providers in the last year.

Furthermore, whilst many people clearly are willing to study again to further their careers, many are not. And, inevitably, these people fall into the middle-aged and older categories; the very people we need in childcare. It's those mums and dads who have had their own children and bring life skills and experience to the setting.

Indeed, in her review Professor Nutbrown specifically stated that "all of those working in the early years - whatever their job title and role - must be carers as well as educators, providing the warmth and love children need to develop emotionally alongside and as part of planned and spontaneous learning opportunities". She went on to explain that **care and education must not be mutually exclusive.**

Now, let's be clear. I am not advocating a reduction in quality for Level 3 staff. Far from it. **I am, however, advocating a return to Functional Skills for Maths and English, rather than the insistence on GCSEs.** Functional Skills were created for this purpose. They were only introduced in 2012 as a replacement for Key Skill to increase quality and rigour. According to a joint publication by AELP and LSIS (the Learning and Skills Improvement Service) published when Functional Skills were being introduced, their purpose is to ensure that an apprentice will:

1. Be able to apply skills to all sorts of real-life contexts
2. Have the mental ability to take on challenges in a range of new settings
3. Be able to work independently
4. Realise that tasks often need persistence, thought and reflection.

The same document goes on to say "some employers may believe that existing qualifications, such as GCSEs, are not preparing people for the

world of work". Today, Functional Skills are acceptable for all other vocational qualifications, including teaching assistants and L2 Childcare. It seems they are only not acceptable for L3 Childcare.

And where it becomes really silly, is when you read the letter from the Skills Minister, Nick Boles. He wrote to the Chairs of all FE colleges on the 21st July 2015 stating: **"I believe that Functional Skills should continue to be the main alternative English and Maths qualifications to GCSEs."**

Confused? Well, I am. We are looking for a significant expansion of the childcare sector via the 30 hours free entitlement proposals and at the same time a significant expansion in the number of apprentices via the commitment to 3 million during the life of this parliament.

We clearly have a **significant and demonstrable reduction in Level 3 starts** and setting after setting are saying they can't find new Level 3 staff, so the expansion is clearly threatened.

But here's the interesting bit. The new rules about GCSEs for L3 Early Years only came into play last August (2014). This means that there's just a handful of staff in the sector who have qualified under the new GCSE requirement rules. Ofsted have stated that Level 3 staff make a difference to quality, and yet the vast majority of these staff **MUST** have qualified under the old rules, which means either they already had GCSEs, OR they qualified using Functional Skills, and given the reduction we've seen in L3 starts, it would be logical to assume the later. In which case, it's fair to conclude that **the quality outcomes that Ofsted referred to are because of, not despite, Functional Skills!**

The present policy of requiring L3 students in our sector to have GCSEs puts an unnecessary and **grossly unfair ceiling for those who are passionate about childcare and are warm and exceptional child carers, simply because they are not academically gifted.**

Ultimately, I believe this insistence on GCSEs will reduce quality in the sector not improve it, simply because **not enough people are being trained.**

Read more allanpresland.com

Have you got the most from your staff this year?



As the end of the year draws to a close and the days get shorter, you might find yourself looking back and reflecting on how your team has performed this year. Did they achieve everything they set out to do? Have they made the most of any training? Have they gone over and above what you expected of them? If the answer is no, here's a 5 step strategy you can use to help you get the most out of your team in the coming months:

Setting objectives

This is a really important way to measure progress in the workplace. Nearly half of childcare providers (48%) who responded to our National Childcare Survey said they drive staff performance by setting objectives.

TIP: When you set objectives for your staff, you need to make sure they're SMART - specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-specific. This makes it easy for the individual to understand what's expected of them, and for you to be able to appraise them.

Measuring achievement

Our national survey revealed that 83% of settings held staff reviews every quarter. Creating objectives is only one half of the story: it's also vitally important that you assess each staff member's progress on a regular basis and provide them with feedback.

TIP: Give staff notice that their review is coming up, so they have plenty of time to reflect on their performance and prepare for the meeting.

Rewarding behaviour

Given the delicate balancing act of keeping expense down in many nurseries, it's no surprise that 1 in 2 providers do not incentivise staff with rewards. However, 44% of providers who responded to our survey had, in fact, rewarded those members of staff they felt had exceeded expectations.

TIP: Rewarding exceptional staff behaviour doesn't need to be as expensive as you think. This [article](#) will inspire you with some money saving ideas.

Commitment to learning

According to our survey, 83% of settings confirmed that their staff had attended a funded training course in the past 12 months. This is great news, however, being a childcare practitioner involves a lifelong commitment to learning and improvements can always be made to the quality of care provided.

TIP: Consider all the ways in which your team could share their knowledge and experiences with each other. This could involve a member of staff presenting back to the team on a different childcare-related topic each month.

Getting staff feedback

Our survey revealed that 2 out of 3 providers had taken steps to measure staff satisfaction in the past 12 months (67%). Measuring staff satisfaction regularly allows you to recognise issues developing in the early stages and take preventative measures to put things back on course.

TIP: Give staff plenty of opportunities to feed back on how they're doing and raise any concerns about their development with you - this could be carried out in monthly one to one meetings as well as through staff satisfaction surveys.

If you want to find out how to improve your team's performance further, why not try our [Level 2 Team Leading qualification?](#)



How to manage your time better



When you run a nursery, there just doesn't seem to be enough hours in the day to get everything done. Like most managers, you probably have a to-do list for your to-do list! And then something happens which you hadn't planned for, such as your computer breaking down or someone calling in sick. How on earth are you expected to get anything done?

Help is at hand! If you long to say goodbye to those unnecessary distractions and pack more into your working day, read our 7 step guide to help you manage your time more effectively:

Hold a daily scrum

Having a 5 minute scrum (a meeting where you stand up) with your room leaders first thing will enable you to discuss everyone's priorities for the day. Regular scrumming also enables colleagues to share and support each other on the day's tasks. The result? Everyone knows what's expected of them and they're less likely to call on you unless they really need your help.

Allocate time to respond to emails

Check your inbox at set intervals throughout the day, for instance: first thing in the morning, again at lunch, and last thing before you leave. It's a good idea to flag any important emails in the morning and come back to them over lunch, so you can spend time putting together your reply without being rushed.

Prioritise your top 3 tasks every day

Most managers have a to-do list as long as their arm, and as a result, it can be difficult to know which activities to prioritise. To stop yourself from getting overwhelmed, pick your top 3 most urgent tasks and focus on completing these first. Once these have been done, pick another 3 and so on.

Document your procedures

If you always get called upon whenever the phone rings for something simple like booking a showround - it's time to get your procedures down on paper. Offer to take staff through how to do things like this once, then tell them you expect them to take on the responsibility next time around. Give all your staff members a printed copy of your procedures that they can refer to when they get stuck.

Use nursery management software

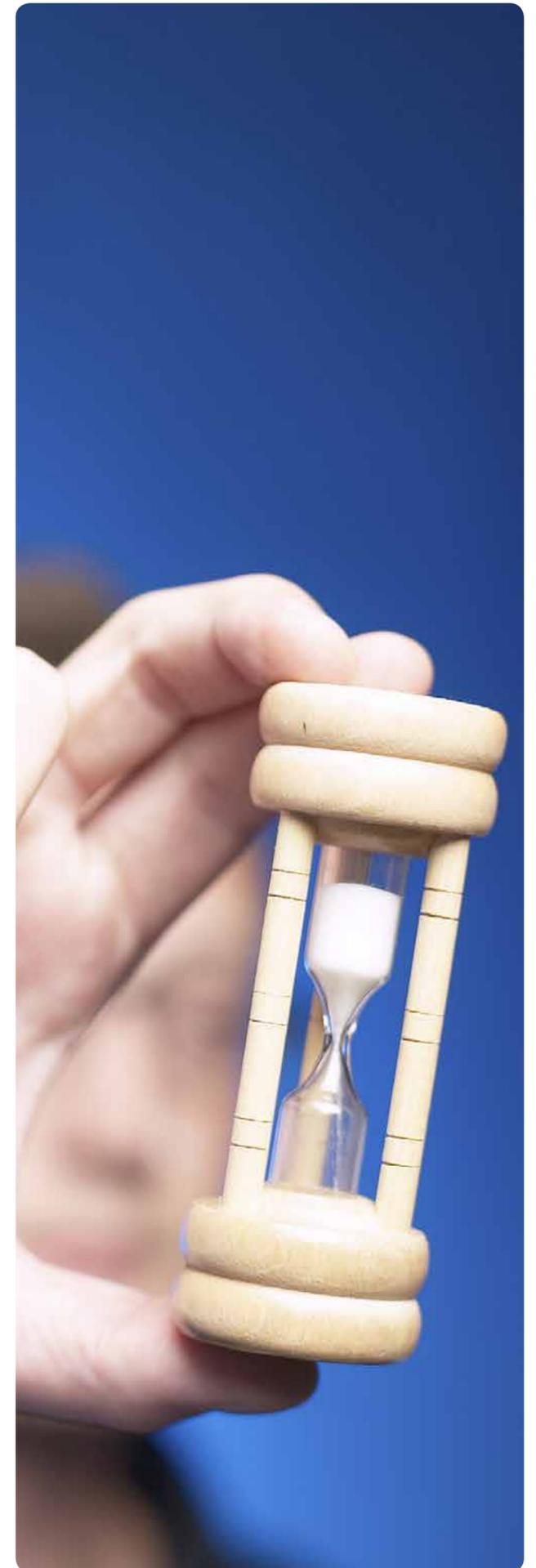
Sometimes it's not about how hard you work, it's about how smart you work. For instance, you could set aside an hour or two every weekend to draw up staff rotas by hand...or you could use management software to plan where each member of staff needs to be (by session and room) each day, within a matter of minutes. Then press print. Easy!

Get a childcare website

Not many nursery managers have time to write a marketing plan and come up with ways to keep occupancy rate high throughout the year. Rather than worrying out how you're going to fill spaces, why not invest in a childcare website? This is the single most effective thing you can do to bring in those new parents with the least effort possible.

Have a lunch break

It sounds counter-productive, but for you to work at your best, you need to make sure you put your needs first. If you decide to skip lunch, your blood sugar levels start to drop and your attitude to your team can take a nose dive, along with your concentration. Take care of yourself so you're in a better position to take care of others!



How to keep yourself safe online

Nowadays, the way we shop, find out information and socialise has moved online. The word “Google” has changed from the name of a search engine to a verb to describe how we look for information. Many of our everyday purchases come from websites like Amazon or more recently, Groupon. We follow our favourite celebrities on Twitter and keep in contact with friends on Facebook.

However, with so much of our lives and financial information now on the internet, we need to make sure we’re protecting our personal data to stop it falling into the hands of online criminals. So, here are 5 simple tips to help you stay safe:



Don't open email attachments from strangers

If you don't know who sent you the email, don't click on any attachments or links, as they could contain a virus. If an email attachment comes from a familiar email address but you weren't expecting anything from them, you should contact the sender before opening it.

Don't respond to phishing emails

Phishing is when criminals send out an email pretending to be your bank or another well known company. The email will typically direct you to a website where you'll be asked to update your personal information, such as a password or credit card details. The website will then steal any information you enter. Don't fall into the trap of giving away your personal details to a phishing scam.

Remove personal details on social media

Personal information like your mobile number, email and home address are easy for strangers to find on your social media profile. Burglaries have been known to happen when people post that they're on holiday and they have their address publicly showing on their Facebook. Remove any sensitive information like this or lock down your social media profile (via your Privacy settings) so only your friends can see this private information.

Check whether a website is secure

When you visit your bank's website to log on to your account, you'll see the address in the URL bar change from Http to https. The “s” stands for secure and means that you have extra security against people trying to steal your information. For example, Paypal's website address is www.paypal.com/uk/home. Always check that the websites you visit are secure before you carry out any financial transactions.

Change up your password

Don't be lazy when it comes to your passwords. Make sure every account has a different password and that you use a mixture of capitals, special characters and numbers. So, for example, if your password is Chantelle, you could change this to #Ch8nt3lle! to make it more secure.

Keeping yourself safe online doesn't need to be a headache. Stay vigilant, question suspicious-looking emails which fall into your inbox and don't make it easy for criminals to steal personal information from your online accounts. By building these safeguards into your everyday activities, you can stay one step ahead of the criminals.

Speak to the Parenta website team and see how they can help you make the most of your online presence.

Call: 0800 002 9242



Benefits of sensory play for children with autism

By Lisa Lane

Many children with autism experience difficulty with everyday sensory stimulation; this can be related to noise, touch, taste textures or a variety of sensitivities. The world around an autistic child is likely to cause anxiousness; this can not only affect the child but also how the childcare provider involves them in day-to-day learning activities.

The three main areas which people with autism generally have difficulty with are: social communication, social interaction and social imagination. This means that a child may struggle to form friendships, will prefer to spend time alone and will struggle to engage in imaginative play and activities alongside their peers.

Creating opportunities for open – ended play

I believe that sensory play tables can create enough of an open-ended play opportunity to support children of all abilities. Sensory play allows random objects and textures to be included with no set agenda for how they are played with. Investigation and experimentation of this nature provides the perfect environment for children to discover likes and dislikes about the types of toys, textures, sounds and play they like. Anything can be added, so if a child has a preference of toys or objects they can be incorporated too.

Objects also become different things - a plank of wood may be a bridge for a car, a slope for a truck, a drawbridge for the knight or simply a piece of wood at the play table. Allowing children the opportunity to decide creates extremely valuable insight to a childcare provider and, for the autistic child, a means to be involved on their own terms both socially and creatively.



The benefits of sensory integration therapy

Routines are quite often key to those with autism, meaning that a sensory play table may be too open-ended for a child to be comfortable with. However, there has been a great deal of research conducted on sensory integration therapy. Such research, funded by Autism Speaks and led by therapists at Philadelphia's Jefferson School, illustrated that children who were given sensory integration therapy every day for 10 weeks required less assistance in self-care and social situations than those that didn't.

Lead researcher of the study, Roseann Schaaf, said: "The rationale is that by changing how sensations are processed by the brain we can help children with autism make better sense of the information they receive and use it better to participate in everyday tasks."

The concept allows the therapists to introduce a new sensory activity/sensation during a session whilst the child is engaged in something they are familiar and comfortable with.

Using sensory play tables

The use of sensory play tables in a childcare setting becomes an excellent resource for a childcare provider to observe children developing likes and dislikes; learning about cause and effect; mirroring each other's actions; deciding to play independently or collaborate.

Sensory play can, of course, be more structured and used for individual development. Simply sorting leaf shapes for counting, lining up twigs in size order or creating shapes with stones creates sensory awareness for learning.

However a child learns, whatever their different abilities and whatever their likes and dislikes in a learning environment, sensory play will always have a place and be an important part of child development.

Lisa Lane launched Sensory Scenes in 2014 with the aim to provide themed bags of fun for play, exploring and learning. With three boys of her own, she is passionate about children being able to manipulate, explore and use their imagination. Sensory Scenes' themed bags are perfect for individual play, sensory tray play and themed subject planning.

Follow Sensory Scenes on Facebook, on Twitter [@sensoryscenes](#), visit the [website](#) or email lisa@sensoryscenes.co.uk

Inspiring children to create their own artwork

By Matthew Kay



Children can be so unpredictable, constantly surprising you with their great passion for something previously unheard of! With so many motivating factors for children when exploring resources, much trial and error has brought me to realise that, just as every child is unique, so there's no single way to inspire children to make their own artwork and flexibility is key.

Familiarity with resources

Children are great innovators when it comes to creative play, so keeping a good supply of art resources available is essential. My preschool art sessions are focussed on exploring the possibilities that different resources present, and building children's familiarity with many materials and techniques. I find that children's creativity really kicks in when they are comfortable with materials and confident that they know how to achieve their goals with them. Motivation for exploring resources often comes from real artworks, particularly actual paintings and sculptures that the children can handle and fully experience. It can be good to have plenty of art around alongside appropriate resources for creating similar work: pair Henry Moore sculptures with wet clay; collages by Henri Matisse go perfectly with scissors, glue and card; watercolours and black drawing pens alongside illustrations by Quentin Blake.

Appeal to their interests

In one of my preschool groups, there was a child who didn't engage much with planned learning experiences but I found out one day that he was enthralled by woolly mammoths. From then on, every artist's techniques and materials were introduced to the children by demonstrating how to make a woolly mammoth in a similar style. He and his friends quickly got on board and were soon producing amazing paintings, prints, sculptures, even animations with great enthusiasm. Some of them were of mammoths, but many children understood that if you could make a mammoth with the same methods that Cy Twombly used to make flowers, then you could also use those methods to make a windmill, or a spider, or a ghost.



Fascination

Using language and gestures, one can model great excitement about artworks, describing textures, colours, forms and composition. Later that same excitement can be expressed when praising children's efforts at making their own art. I am convinced that children benefit more from the processes involved in art making than from the artwork itself. An empty **"Oh that's beautiful!"** in response to every picture sends the message that children can get praise for scribbling a little bit without really engaging in the learning experience. So I try to praise particular elements of their process, narrating to a child what it is that they are doing that is really working well.

Inspiring wonder is sure to result in extensive explorations of art materials and processes. A favourite activity of mine is zoetrope animation. A zoetrope is a Victorian toy that creates moving images and can be used to demonstrate to pre-school children how a series of still pictures comes to life. This can lead to many exciting experiments with animation. A small zoetrope is inexpensive and often comes with pre-cut paper strips for making your own animations. Making marks with some rubber stamps, felt pens or spot stickers can produce a vast array of fascinating animations.

Most importantly, don't be scared to try new things, take risks and make a mess - you can't be creative when you're afraid of making mistakes. Model fearless creativity and join your children in exploring art with abandon; show them that making art is exciting, fun and infinitely rewarding.

Matthew Kay is an artist educator specialising in Early Years. Alongside making his own work he facilitates contemporary art inspired learning experiences for nurseries and pre-schools in South West London as Eyes Pie Arts (eyespiearts.com).

Is water on tap?

By Katharine Tate

Water is essential for life and is critical for a whole host of different functions in the body. The importance of keeping children well hydrated and drinking water throughout the day can often be underestimated. Ensuring fluids are always available, encouraging sipping, and understanding how food can help children keep well hydrated will all support their energy and cognition as well as developing habits that will positively support their health throughout life.

Why it's important:

All the cells in our bodies require water to function and it plays a number of vital roles. These include regulating body temperature, lubricating joints, keeping tissues such as the mouth, eyes and nose moist and protecting body organs. It also supports the absorption of nutrients, flushes waste and toxins from the body and can help wto prevent constipation.



How much we need:

There is not one universal recommendation regarding water requirements as it's defined by many different factors including age, body mass, gender, environment and activity levels. The European Food Safety Authority (2008) recommendations suggest children up to the age of six need 100-190ml per kg per day and 6-12 year olds need 800-1000ml per day but this also includes water from other beverages and food.

Why good habits are vital for children:

Infants and children have higher fluid requirements than adults for a number of different reasons, which is why establishing good habits is important. One key reason is their greater body water composition compared to adults, whose bodies tend to be made up of about 60% water. The total body mass of a foetus can be greater than 90%, whereas a new born is likely to be around 75%, which then gradually decreases during the first year of life.

Children's high surface area for their weight-to-weight ratio can increase water loss through the skin. As growth is so rapid during the first year and during adolescence children also have a high metabolic and respiratory rate increasing water loss via the lungs, which combined with skin, can account for about 35% of water loss. Children also have an immature thirst reflex and can go without water for long periods of time, highlighting the importance of caregivers in establishing regular drinking habits.

Signs of dehydration:

As a caregiver/parent it's not always easy to identify the mild signs of dehydration which include feeling thirsty, alert, restless and reduced urine. Urine also becomes more concentrated and darker in colour. As the severity of dehydration increases moderate signs include drowsiness, sunken eyes and lethargy. Severe signs include apprehension, cold, cramps and even reduced consciousness.

Research suggests that 60% of children are dehydrated first thing in the morning, which could be impacting on their cognition, energy and mood throughout the day.

How to encourage good habits in early years settings:

Encouraging children to regularly sip water can be beneficial for addressing their needs and establishing good habits. Talking about hydration to help children understand they loose water and they need to replace it can help them to begin to register the need to drink.

About 20% of our water requirements come from food so raising awareness about foods that contain high levels of water and including those throughout the day as snacks can also develop good habits around food as well as supporting hydration. Foods that contain over 70% water include bananas, sweet corn, strawberries, melon, pears, oranges, apples, grapes, cucumber, lettuce, tomatoes and carrots. Many of these foods are great for snacks and getting the children involved in the kitchen.

Equally important, is avoiding foods which increase dehydration, such as processed meals and snacks with high salt content.

Understanding the body's need for water and keeping children hydrated is essential, and establishing good habits at a young age may have an effect for life.

The Food Teacher, Katharine Tate, is an award winning nutritional therapist, she has founded The Food Teacher brand that combines her passion for education and nutrition to deliver a healthy childhood, focusing on promoting family health through food and lifestyle. For more information, visit her [Facebook page](#), follow her on [Twitter](#) or email her at thefoodteacheruk@gmail.com

5 top tips to help you raise concerns about a child's development with parents

By Kathryn Stinton



In my [previous blog](#), I shared some tips to help you to identify delays in a child's development and I stressed the importance of partnership working with parents. But, once you have identified these delays, how can you raise your concerns with parents? You might find this [Identifying Needs and Action Sheet](#) a useful starting point for discussion with parents and colleagues.

1. Who, where and when?

Think very carefully about who should meet with the parent. In most cases, it would be the child's key person and ideally, concerns should be raised as part of a regular progress meeting (rather than an additional meeting which could make the parent feel anxious). Make sure you have somewhere private to meet within the setting, and if possible, arrange childcare so the parent is free to listen without any distractions. What is the best time for the parent to meet, at the beginning or end of the session or is another time more appropriate? Have the observations and assessments you have gathered to hand and if you are nervous, practice what you are going to say with a trusted colleague before the meeting.

2. Begin by asking what they think

Your conversation should be guided by the parent and where they are in their awareness of a possible delay in their child's development. By asking them **"How do you think they're getting on?"** you can begin to judge this and adjust your response accordingly. Always start with the positive and gradually introduce your concerns. For example, *"They've settled really well and enjoy story time and being outside. We'd like to work more on their listening skills because they don't always follow an instruction. Do you find that happens at home and have you got any ideas of things we could both do to help?"*

3. Use parent-friendly documents

The **"What do expect, when?"** guide gives a good overview of all aspects of typical child development and will help you to share the child's strengths and areas for development. Remember that many parents do not know what children should be doing at particular ages so you will need to explain this sensitively and give examples of things the child does and doesn't do at your setting, sharing specific observations you have gathered.

4. Give control to the parent

Parents will become anxious if they think you are putting pressure on them to make a decision about possible referrals or interventions. Give them a number of suggestions of things they could do and suggest they spend time thinking about this, then ask them to let you know what they would like to happen next. A useful starting point could be to arrange a hearing test for the child as this is essential if there are concerns about speech and language or behaviour.

5. Think about the school starting date

If parents do not share your concerns, it can be helpful to say that although their child is making progress within your setting, you are concerned about the increased ratios and different routine when they start school and want to make sure you have done all you can to make sure they have a smooth transition. Explain that the waiting lists for many professionals are long and that if you make a referral now (for example to Speech and Language Therapy) and at a later stage the child does not need an appointment, you can always cancel the referral.

It can be a huge shock for many parents when you raise your concerns and this can understandably lead to many different reactions, including denial, anger and acceptance. If you are frustrated because a parent doesn't share your concerns, this [short film clip](#) of the poem "Welcome to Holland" by Emily Perl Kingsley may help you to understand how they might be feeling. Remember that you have a statutory duty to raise concerns, but these should be shared and discussed with all practitioners who work with the child before you meet with parents. If this is the case, you will be confident in your observations and assessments and can work with the parent to meet the child's needs.

Kathryn is a specialist early years teacher and trainer who has worked with children for nearly 25 years, including 10 years as an Area SENCO. She is a licensed Tutor for ICAN Talk Boost as well as an ELKLAN Speech and Language Trainer. She regularly writes and delivers courses for early years practitioners on all aspects of SEN. You can follow her on Twitter [@kathrynstinton2](#) find her on [Facebook](#) or visit her [website](#) for more information.



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For more information call 0800 002 9242 or email contact@parenta.com