

Appendix 1: Nurture Group Principles

NG teacher ensures that:

Children's learning is understood developmentally

- ✓ There are opportunities for Personal, Social & Emotional Development beginning at the very earliest levels of play, communication, language & literacy in close proximity to the adults
- ✓ There is support for fine & gross motor development & coordination
- ✓ There are basic experiences which are practitioner selected & directed
- ✓ The developmental aspects of every situation are emphasised
- ✓ Children's play enables development through clear stages: sensory, experimentation, repetition, investigation & exploration
- ✓ Cooperative play is encouraged, but not expected & it is introduced in a planned & systematic way
- ✓ National requirements & school policy are met at the appropriate level for each child within the overall nurture context

The classroom offers a safe base

- ✓ The organisation & management of the nurture classroom are integral to the curriculum & are understood as critical to the context for learning & teaching
- ✓ An explicit Nurture Curriculum is provided for those children who have very early developmental needs
- ✓ In working closely with the nurture group assistant (NGA) a trusting relationship is established which offers reassurance, constancy, interest & commitment. Together they model constructive relationships & interaction
- ✓ A domestic setting with food, comfort & consistent care & support is provided to facilitate emotional & physical attachment
- ✓ The day is structured so that it is predictable, establishes routines & emphasises order & repetition
- ✓ Clear boundaries - both physical & emotional - are set & maintained
- ✓ Practitioners engage with children in everyday routines - tidying up, sorting, putting away - with helpful, uncritical adult reminders
- ✓ Everyone recognises & respects the child's expression of need for play & work space

The importance of nurture for the development of self-esteem

- ✓ Practitioners value children as individuals & work to establish a close relationship with each child as the first priority
- ✓ Children are called by their names, are noticed & everyone shows pleasure in the children's achievements
- ✓ Small achievements are praised in a diversity of ways, including non-verbal such as smiling & nodding, & remembers that for children the best reward is the sense of genuine achievement

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- ✓ Practitioners establish & maintain eye contact; use facial expression & vary their tone of voice, deliberately exaggerating if necessary
- ✓ Practitioners engage in & enjoy reciprocal, shared activities such as play, having meals, sharing books & reading aloud together
- ✓ Practitioners allow time for engaging in remembering & talking about events & feelings
- ✓ Music is used to establish relationships through expecting practitioners to sing with children & play finger & body games & songs
- ✓ Practitioners listen to, anticipate & are responsive to children's needs

Language as a vital means of communication

- ✓ The crucial importance of early communication & language is understood
- ✓ Language is assessed & developed in all aspects of the curriculum at the appropriate level for the child
- ✓ There is time & opportunity for children to express & explore the stages of language development
- ✓ Provision is made, where necessary, for additional support for children with speech & language delay or difficulties
- ✓ Practitioners maintain a verbal commentary to activities while working & playing with children so they make connections between the action & the language
- ✓ Practitioners use every opportunity for extended conversations, recalling & planning for tomorrow
- ✓ Opportunities are provided for imaginative play which is encouraged; practitioners model by playing 'with' for mutual enjoyment & shared learning
- ✓ Practitioners share feelings & satisfaction, & put feelings into words both with children & other adults in the classroom

It is understood that all behaviour is communication

- ✓ Practitioners relate intuitively to the child in a developmentally appropriate way: cradling, holding, rocking; sensory exploration
- ✓ Practitioners understand the importance & significance of non-verbal communication & respond appropriately
- ✓ Practitioners understand that physical contact may be communication
- ✓ A variety of strategies is developed such as distraction & humour (not sarcasm) in order to respond to behaviour
- ✓ Practitioners respond to undesirable behaviour firmly but not punitively, they are not discouraged or provoked
- ✓ Children will sense that as their behaviour is understood rather than judged, difficult situations may be diffused

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- ✓ Practitioners observe & record objectively without making judgments but with growing understanding of developmental levels
- ✓ The Boxall Profile is used regularly for assessment & that practitioners base IEPs on the needs identified in the Developmental Strands as well as NC levels

The importance of transitions in children's lives is understood

- ✓ A simple & manageable routine is provided which is slow moving & has a clear time structure so establishing a secure base
- ✓ School transitions between lessons & sessions are given time & prepared for, so supporting & affirming
- ✓ Children are prepared for changes in routine, such as teacher absence & visitors, so establishing clear procedures known to the children beforehand
- ✓ Simple changes are introduced to the routine & environment. These are prepared for in detail, for example off-site visits in the local area to accustom children to change
- ✓ Practitioners allow opportunity for children to talk about & comment on 'out of school transitions' they involve parents wherever & as much as possible
- ✓ The school community understands that children may be unable to sustain achievements & may need support during times of stress
- ✓ Practitioners make use of transitional objects to help a child separate
- ✓ In the event of bereavement a nurture child is supported & practitioners work alongside the school's protocol for bereavement & family trauma
- ✓ Reintegration is planned for & managed to ensure optimum success