



Applying the Revised EYFS in your Montessori Setting

Guidance Prepared by Montessori Musings UK



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Prime Areas



Personal, Social and Emotional Development

EYFS: Personal, Social and Emotional Development



Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

Birth to 5 Matters: Personal, Social and Emotional Development



Who we are (personal), how we get along with others (social) and how we feel (emotional) are foundations that form the bedrock of our lives. As we move through life, we are continually developing our sense of self as we weave a web of relationships with self, others and with the world.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development is fundamental to all other aspects of lifelong development and learning, and is key to children's wellbeing and resilience. For babies and young children to flourish, we need to pay attention to how they understand and feel about themselves, and how secure they feel in close relationships: in so doing they develop their capacities to make sense of how they and other people experience the world. Children's self-image, their emotional understanding and the quality of their relationships affect their self-confidence, their potential to experience joy, to be curious, to wonder, and to face problems, and their ability to think and learn.

A holistic, relational approach creates an environment that enables trusting relationships, so that children can do things independently and with others, forming friendships. Early years practitioners meet the emotional needs of children by drawing on their own emotional insight, and by working in partnership with families to form mutually respectful, warm, accepting relationships with each of their key children.



Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Supporting PSED in a Montessori Setting

Personal development

As Montessorians and alongside other early years educators we recognise that each child is an individual with a unique potential. A person in their own right. In the first six years of life we nurture the unfolding of this unique person by supporting the children's sensitive periods and giving them opportunities to engage in activities, conversations and relationships. We give them time and space to try and do things for and by themselves, concentrate and persevere through self-chosen repetition and by recognising that we learn a great deal from things which may not work out or be easy first time round – we see errors as great opportunities for learning. It is our job as the facilitators of the children's learning to get to know them for who they are and support their urge for independence in a loving and understanding way.

Emotional development

All children need to feel safe and loved if they are to benefit from the play and learning opportunities on offer in the prepared environment. Strong and meaningful individual relationship with the adults in the family and in the setting need to be established, demonstrating trust and respect and honouring the roots and culture of the child's family and community if the child is to develop a sense of well-being and belonging. Giving children time and space to choose and do things for themselves is one of the key aspects of the Montessori prepared environment and nurtures their sense of self and confidence. This autonomy is fostered by the child's freedoms with responsibility. These characteristics will contribute towards the child's growing capacity to focus and be self-reliant and gradually self-regulate (or as Montessori puts it be capable of self-discipline). The adults need to help the child in this plane of development express a full range of emotions and support their slowly emerging understanding of their own feelings.

Social development

The key characteristic of all humans is their capacity for social life, which Montessori identified as the human tendency for gregariousness. The child is a social being from the moment of birth, wired to communicate with others. How we communicate and care for the child will make a significant contribution to how we see and understand our relationships with others. From the moment of birth we are curious and interested in others around us and have a need to be part of a social circle, or, as Montessori put it, contribute to the cohesion of a social unit, which we witness as the child's capacity for oral communication and social conventions which develop in the second half of the first plane of development. It is often through role play that we come to really see who the children are and what matters to them, and what experiences are shaping their relationships. The nature of our social relationships is strongly influenced by our role models, be it parents, teachers or peers. They will guide us in establishing friendships, expressing our care and solidarity for others and voice our concerns for fairness and social justice – the elements which underpin Montessori's vision for peace education. Children need the company of others outside their family and, as educators, we must support their sensitive period for social aspects of life.



Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Early Learning Goals

These identify the goals young children work towards during their pre-school experiences. By the time they reach the end of reception year they will be assessed against these goals as set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

Self-Regulation

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly;
- Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate;
- Give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.

Managing Self

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge;
- Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly;
- Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.

Building Relationships

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others;
- Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers;
- Show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs

About Montessori Musings UK

Montessori Musings, set up by Barbara Isaacs and Wendelien Bellinger in the summer of 2020, is an online community, providing a space for Montessori friends and colleagues from around the world to come together and reflect on the work of Maria Montessori and unite as we guide the children in our care.

Through reflection and and cooperation, we aim to reinforce and strengthen “our voices”, challenging our practice in order to keep it relevant for the 21st century child. Through critical engagement with Montessori’s work, connecting it with current practice and child development theory, we aim to articulate the Montessori legacy to all interested in the future of education and its reform.

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