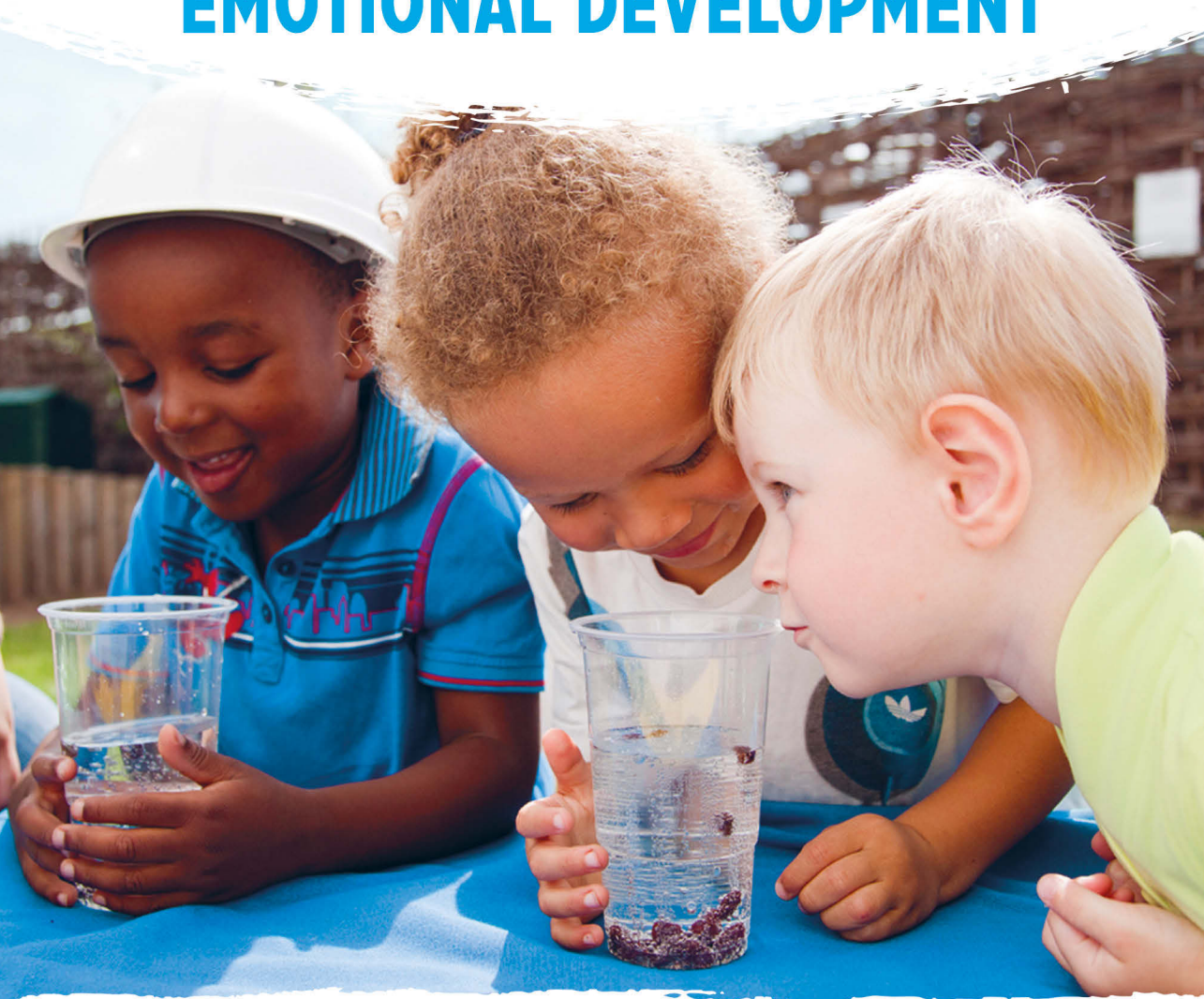


EARLY YEARS ASSESSMENT

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

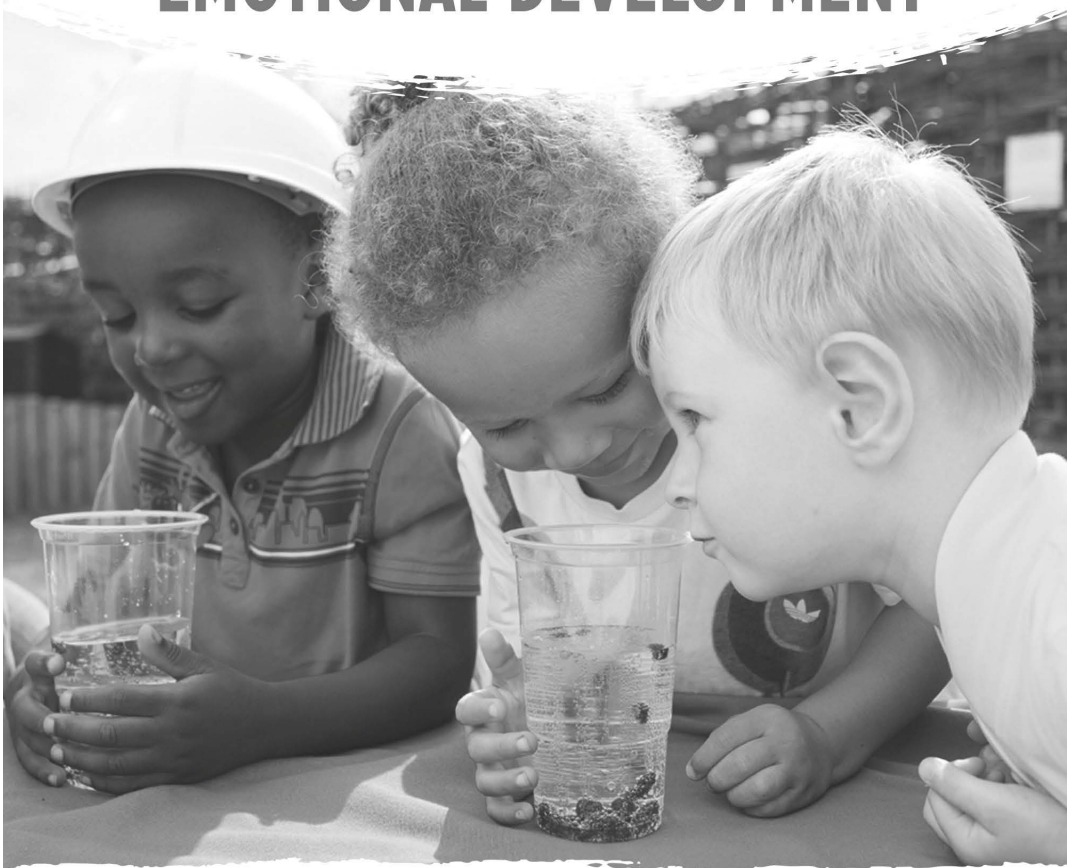


TRUDI FITZHENRY AND KAREN MURPHY

FEATHERSTONE

EARLY YEARS ASSESSMENT

**PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**



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Introduction

This is a book about the prime area of Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) in the Early Years. It is designed for practitioners to use as an assessment tool as they observe and support children's early social and emotional development.

As a prime area of learning, PSED forms a fundamental part of each child's learning and is also their right as spelled out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

'Children have a right to provision which enables them to develop their personalities, talents and abilities irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities or gender.'

(EYFS Development Matters, 2012)

It is our responsibility as early years practitioners to do what we can to allow children's personalities, talents and abilities to thrive in a safe and supportive environment. How we support PSED in our settings is key to achieving this:

'Personal, social and emotional development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.'

(EYFS Framework, 2014)

As adults we continuously model social and emotional behaviour through the way we speak to children and each other, how we react to different situations and through our facial expressions and body language. Much of the time this happens without us being fully aware of it. Therefore, it is really important that we, as practitioners, are self-aware and able to reflect on how we exhibit emotions and how we deal with our feelings and reactions in the work environment. We need to develop our own emotional intelligence so that we are capable of recognising our feelings and emotions, as well as those of others, to support us in forming positive relationships. This book seeks to provide valuable guidance to practitioners on how to achieve this through clarifying and expanding on ideas to support each child in each phase of their development.

Each area of PSED is covered in this book and these are grouped according to age and stage of development. A corresponding progress checklist linked to the chapters is included. If a child shows little or no progress towards the developmental pointers within the given range, take the time to discuss any concerns with their parents. Like adults, children's emotional states can fluctuate and are also affected by a range of circumstances, many of which will be beyond the child's control. It is useful to keep communication links between the setting and home open so that any changes that may have an impact on a child's emotional state or social behaviour are shared.

Managing the personal, social and emotional needs of young children can be challenging at times and practitioners need to have time to talk about their worries and concerns with their manager. When dealing with difficult behaviour, for example, try not to label a child and become exasperated by the behaviours they display. Instead, take a step back from the situation and look at what may be happening underneath the surface. Keep a log of not just the behaviours that concern staff but what happens just *before* each incident. This may help to identify patterns and potential triggers. Above all, remain calm and follow the policy of your setting which will provide a structure to follow when emotions run high.

How to use this book

This book supports the planning cycle at each stage of development. It contains clear guidance on what to observe, how to assess what is seen through both the assessment notes and progress checklists. Practical ideas to use in planning each child's individual next steps are also provided.

Each chapter in this book is linked to a phase or stage of development from birth to 60+ months. Each section is colour coded and links the Early Years Outcomes to the planning cycle, including observations, assessments and planning. Also included are possible links to the Characteristics of Effective Learning. Some of the photographs also contain a milestone comment. These are additional indicators of what we feel children may be able to demonstrate during this period.

There are additional activities that offer the busy practitioner a wealth of ideas to choose from linked to that specific age and stage of development. A short glossary features in each chapter and defines key terms as they appear. These definitions explain how we intend the words and phrases to be interpreted within the book. A traditional alphabetical glossary of all terms used appears at the back of the book for quick reference.

The progress checklists at the end of each chapter are available for practitioners to use when observing children's PSED. It is intended that the progress checklists could also be used alongside a setting's current tracking system to highlight any areas of concern and demonstrate progress made. They can be used to demonstrate progress in a specific area over time. The progress checklist at 40 – 60+ months is closely linked to the Early Learning Goal (ELG). It can be used to support the practitioner's professional judgement as to whether a child is at emerging, expected or exceeding level at the end of the Foundation Stage.

It is important that practitioners are aware of their responsibility to encourage parents to contact their health professional if the child appears to be developing outside of the normative range. If there is little or no progress after they have spoken to parents and included timed specific interventions in the child's individual plan, then practitioners should seek parental permission to involve outside agencies.

It is important that all practitioners remember that under 3s are naturally prone to putting everything and anything in their mouths as a form of sensory exploration. Practitioners must regularly check all resources and equipment available to the children to ensure they do not constitute a choking hazard and for signs of wear, damage, sharp edges and splinters.





Self-confidence and self-awareness

0 – 11 months

Early Years Outcomes

Laughs and gurgles, e.g. shows pleasure at being tickled and other physical interactions.

Uses voice, gesture, eye contact and facial expression to make contact with people and keep their attention.



Links to the Characteristics of Effective Learning

PLAYING AND EXPLORING

Finding out and exploring

- ★ showing curiosity about objects, events and people
- ★ using senses to explore the world around them
- ★ showing particular interests

Being willing to 'have a go'

- ★ initiating activities

*e.g. you notice that the child uses **eye pointing** to show you that they want a particular toy, such as a rattle.*

ACTIVE LEARNING

Being involved and concentrating

- ★ maintaining focus on their activity for a period of time
- ★ showing high levels of energy, fascination

e.g. when you are playing 'Round and Round the Garden' you notice that they remain interested for several repetitions and hold out their hand for more when you stop.

CREATING AND THINKING CRITICALLY

Having their own ideas

- ★ finding ways to solve problems

*e.g. as **prime carer** you notice that when they are tired the child holds your hand to their face. You respond by sitting and cuddling them until they fall asleep. Problem solved!*



Observation

What you may notice...

Does the child react differently to a range of physical interactions? Do they have favourite areas for tickling?

Are they more responsive at certain times?

Does the child use different gestures or sounds to express their wants and needs?
E.g. when excited they smile, squeal and gurgle whilst kicking their legs.

Assessment

What it may signify...

The child is beginning to express different levels of enjoyment and preferences.

The child is beginning to convey their feelings and understand when they are ready to engage.

The child is learning to express themselves in order to have their needs met.

