

BTEC Level 3 National in Children's Play, Learning and Development

First teaching September 2016



Sample Marked Learner Work

External Assessment

**Unit 2: Development of Children's
Communication, Literacy and Numeracy Skills**

In preparation for the first teaching from September 2016 and as a part of the on-going support that we offer to our centres, we have been developing support materials to help you better understand the application of Nationals BTEC Level 3 qualification.

What is Sample Marked Learner Work (SMLW)?

The following learner work has been prepared as guidance for centres and learners. It can be used as a helpful tool when teaching and preparing for external units.

Each question explores two responses; one good response, followed by a poor response. These responses demonstrate how marks can be both attained and lost.

The SMLW includes examples of real learners' work, accompanied with examiner tips and comments based on the responses of how learners performed.

Below displays the format this booklet follows. Each question will show a learner response, followed by comments on the command verbs and the content of the question. Tips may be offered where possible.

The appendix has attached a mark scheme showing all the possible responses that perhaps were not explored in the SMLW, but can still be attained.

The red box comments on the command verbs used in the question. Command typically means; to instruct or order for something to be done. Likewise, in assessments, learners are required to answer questions, with the help of a command verb which gives them a sense of direction when answering a question.

This box may choose to highlight the command verb used and comments if the learner has successfully done this, or not.

The green box comments on the content words and phrases. Content makes reference to subject knowledge that originates from the specification. Learners are required to use subject specific knowledge to answer the questions in order to gain maximum marks.

The comments may include:

- *Any key words/phrases used in the learner's answer.*
- *Why has the learner gained x amount of marks? And why/how have they not gained any further marks?*
- *Any suggestions/ ideas regarding the structure of the answer.*
- *If the answer meets full marks- why it is a strong answer? What part of the content has been mentioned to gain these marks?*

TIPS!



Tips offer helpful hints that the learner may find useful. For example:

- *Recommended length of the answer*
- *Reference to the amount of marks awarded*
- *General advice for the learner when answering questions*

You will need to refer to the appropriate specification alongside these sample materials.

The link below will direct you to the SAMs that this SMLW refers to.

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/BTEC-Nationals/Childrens-Play-Learning-and-Development/2016/specification-and-sample-assessments/Sample-assessment-material-Unit-2-Development-Of-Childrens-Communication-Literacy-And-Numeracy-Skills.pdf>

Set Task Brief

Happy Stones Early Years Centre

The centre is located in a large city. The area where Happy Stones is located is multicultural, and home to a large number of families who have recently moved to the UK and who do not speak English at home.

Happy Stones has a pre-school room and an outdoor play area. There are currently 30 children aged from three to five years who attend five morning sessions a week, including five children who have additional needs.

The setting is able to support children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

Set Task

You must complete ALL activities within the set task.

Activity 1

Happy Stones latest Ofsted Report

Happy Stones has just received its latest Ofsted report: the quality of the provision was seen to be satisfactory. What the nursery needs to do to improve:

- *Maximise children's opportunities to engage in activities to develop skills in numeracy*
- *Extend children's understanding of numeracy problems and counting by using regular daily routines to develop knowledge and skills for the future*
- *Improve the use of observation and assessment systems across the staff team to more consistently plan learning opportunities and experiences for children.*

Produce a report responding to Happy Stones pre-school's latest Ofsted report.

You must:

- make recommendations to the pre-school manager
- describe the resources required, including the role of the early years educators, parents and others
- justify improvements that link best practice to early years theory.

Activity 1

[Total marks for Activity 1- 20 marks]

A report to address issues from an OFSTED inspection for Happy Stones Early Years Centre

Introduction - A report for the Pre-school Manager to support implementation of improvements required by OFSTED to improve the quality of provision. Key issues are development of numeracy skills for the 30 children aged 3-5 years. Observation and planning to support planned learning experiences for all the children, including 5 who have special needs and those who recently moved to the UK and do not speak English at home.

Maximising children's opportunities to engage in activities to develop skills in numeracy

Early Years Educational programmes must involve activities and experiences for children in "Mathematics providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures." (EYFS, 2014, p.8) Mathematics is one of four specific areas of learning. By the time children are 5 years old they are expected to be ready for school and to have achieved the Early Learning Goal Numbers: children count reliably with numbers from 1 to 20, place them in order and say which number is one more or one less than a given number. Using quantities and objects, they add and subtract two single-digit numbers and count on or back to find the answer. They solve problems, including doubling, halving and sharing. (EYFS Profile, 2016, p.11)

In order to develop numeracy skills children need opportunities to practice their skills through play. Piaget proposes the children learn best by doing and exploring. He was interested in the way in which fundamental concepts like the idea of emerged. To understand number the child first needs language to count by rote before their learning can be processed into the concept of what number is. Children need to understand what is one? two is more than one, before they can use numbers effectively. Piaget calls 2-7 years the Pre-Operational Stage when children start to think about things symbolically. (Simply Psychology)

Children need opportunities to count aloud in play activities and to recognise written numbers so they learn numbers have meaning. Shop role play provides opportunities to point out numbers on till receipts, Count items, select coins and make purchases. It can be extended at home by suggesting parents involve their children when out shopping. Parents may need encouragement to help them to support numeracy skills. Giving them practical ideas e.g. pointing out numbers on number plates and house numbers gives parents confidence. Using simple mathematical language helps children to link concepts to their experience. They learn about quantity "all gone", "full and empty", "one more." The adult role is to encourage children to use number names praising their efforts and providing commentary. The adult ask questions "How many?", " Do we need more bricks for this model?" Adults can provide commentary to tell the child what they have done, "Wow, you coloured two red cars." "You filled the jug with water", "You poured out all the sand." Children can add and subtract when it has meaning for them.

They start to understand if four children are allowed in the water area at once and three aprons are in use then only one more child can play in the area. Classifying objects by colour and shape, and ordering by size is incorporated into small world play with the garage or farm. This helps with understanding concepts. The adult needs to know when to intervene so the child can develop skills independently. The adult can help but should not take over the task which may undermine the child's confidence.

Extend children's understanding of numeracy problems and counting by using regular daily routines to develop knowledge and skills for the future

Bruner suggests children store and use information in different ways. Modes of representation represent a sequence of cognitive processes. (Simply Psychology) Using actions and muscle memory is the enactive mode. This is the way we learn practical skills. Children, especially those with learning disabilities, need to handle objects as they learn about numbers. Children should be guided touch the objects as they count them. The iconic phrase is where information is stored visually in the form of mental images. This develops as children learn by doing and then start to use symbols in writing and numbers. The final stage usually around 7 years of age is symbolic. Language and interaction with adults is vital to help the children refine their understanding of concepts. Using words such as "big", "little", "over", "under", "behind" and "in front" helps children be familiar with mathematical language so it becomes more natural for them. (Snaith, 2007, p.455)

The everyday pre-school routine provides opportunities for counting and to use number names so children build their understanding. Stories and rhymes include 10 in the Bed. Three Billy Goats Gruff and Goldilocks and the Three Bears includes counting and learning about size. Opportunities for repeating numbers in songs and rhymes helps too. 5 Little Ducks where one duck does not come back at each verse. 5 Currant Buns also helps with counting down. It may be better to learn to count up before counting down so 1-2 Buckle my Shoe is a good choice.

Counting can be incorporated into play with bricks as the child builds a tower. In outdoor play by counting the steps going up the slide. In small group activities by counting the number of children present. One to one correspondence is learned in creative activities as one child has an apron, piece of paper and a paint brush. The parents can develop this skill at home when laying the table so each person has a plate or bowl and a spoon and a cup.

Playing simple board games encourages children to count numbers on the dice and number of spaces they move. They need adult support in pre-school as they are still learning number has meaning. Creative activities allow time to explore pattern and shape and to colour match. Cooking is a way to learn measurement for ingredients using numbers on jugs and counting spoonfuls. The multicultural aspect of pre-school can be celebrated by cooking foods from other cultures such as curry, or noodles. Parents could be invited to share their skills with children and staff in the setting. It helps children feel settled as they enjoy familiar foods.

Children in Happy Stones come from different cultures and some do not speak English at home. They should be encouraged to count in their home language as well as English. Staff could learn to count to ten in a pre-dominant language that children feel more comfortable with. This will help children who recently moved to the UK. The children may not know number names in English but may be able to count in their home language. The home language should be valued. Having a key person helps the child feel secure and will help support development of English. A key person can provide commentary and repetition to reinforce learning. They should model the correct use of words without over-correcting. Skinner's operant conditioning theory is that positive reinforcement encourages children to repeat wanted behaviour. Praising children's efforts means children are more likely to repeat new words. "Language is central to our sense of identity and belonging to a community." (EYFS Profile 2016, p.19) Learning numeracy should be fun.

Pre-school needs to ensure there are resources to reflect the multicultural nature. Role play needs utensils from home in different sizes in sets of different colours to enable matching bowls and spoons, jugs with numbers on, pans with lids, plastic money and a till. Books, number jigsaws and posters to reflect home cultures.

Improve the use of observation and assessment systems across the staff team to more consistently plan learning opportunities and experiences for children.

Observing children's progress is important so practitioners can plan play activities to meet the next steps for each child. Children learn in individual ways. They learn best when following their own interests. A child with special educational need will show learning and development in different ways. Practitioners observe a child to understand their level of achievement and interests to be able to shape meaningful learning experiences for each one. 'In their interactions with children, practitioners should respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share.' (EYFS Profile 2016) A child who has special educational needs may not communicate verbally but by use eye pointing, symbols or signs. Practitioners should focus on what each child is capable of. They are also aware when a child is not meeting expected norms of development. Early intervention or referral enables the child to progress. Regular observations inform assessments of a child's development. Observations should be shared with the key person, other practitioners and the child's parents to gain a full picture of a child's stage of development. Parents like to hear of, or see, the interesting things their child has done. It is not all the responsibility of the Key Person. All staff could take a photograph or record a child's use of language when they see a special moment. The Key Person should carry out routine observations so each child is observed regularly. Planning learning opportunities challenges the child to achieve the next steps in development. Individual learning journeys should be updated frequently with annotated photographs, children's work, short narratives and post-it note. The observations should link to EYFS Learning Matters to inform next steps. This should be informative and individual rather than involving paperwork taking adults away from the children. Parents should be encouraged to share their knowledge of the child's achievements from home. Effective planning is focused on the individual child to extend their learning through everyday interactions and experiences.

Summary and Recommendations

1. Encourage counting in play activities in a natural way
2. Encourage children to count in everyday routines to enjoy numbers
3. Encourage children to use mathematical language by modelling correct terms
4. Work with parents by suggesting practical ways to extend numeracy skills
5. Ensure numeracy resources reflect multicultures
6. Implement regular observations of children and share these with other staff and parents to make accurate assessments of the child's stage of development to plan effective next steps.

Bibliography

EYFS Framework (2014)

EYFS Profile (2016)

Simply Psychology <http://www.simplypsychology.org/bruner.htm>

Simply Psychology <http://www.simplypsychology.org/piaget.htm>

Snaith M. (2007) Supporting Children's Numeracy Skills in Squire G. BTEC National Children's Care Learning and Development Oxford Heinemann

17 marks

The activity asks learners to produce a report. A report is a formal structure with should include; a title, introduction, paragraphs detailing each issue to be reported on, a summary and recommendations. A bibliography is useful to demonstrate that the learner has used relevant sources of information to inform their answer.

Good response: The command verbs are to:

Make recommendations to suggest a course of action. This response has suggested ways to address the three issues raised in the OFSTED report.

Describe the resources. The response includes the everyday play resources in the setting and gives details of how to use to use them. For example specific songs and rhymes are included. The specified role of the adult is included.

Justify improvements that link to best practice to early year's theory. The response includes links to Piaget and Bruner and to Early Years Foundation Stage giving reasons why the improvements are best practice.

Good response: The response marked using the Activity 1 Marking Grid is a holistic judgement on quality. The response is in Band 4 and gains 7 marks for recommendations.

Recommendations are relevant

- For the age of the children in the case study.
- For the setting; although there is only a brief mention of outdoor play which could be extended.

Recommendations are applicable to the case study:

- Address all three issues identified in the OFSTED report.
- Refer to the multicultural nature of the setting and cooking activities.
- Includes families who do not speak English at home counting in home language.
- Refers to observing children who have special needs. It could be focused on children who have learning or other disability to gain higher marks.

A wide range of recommendations are included relating to:

- Use of everyday play resources - roleplay with coins and a till, simple board games with dice and counters to move squares, number of aprons in the water area, numbers on jugs and spoons for cooking, colour and shape in creative activities. Using interactive computer programs to encourage and reinforce mathematical concept could be added.
- Role of the adult - asking questions, modelling mathematical language, knowing when to intervene to support learning, sharing practical ideas with parents to promote numeracy. Songs and rhymes. Using parent's expertise to share multicultural cooking activities.
- Observation, assessment and planning for each child. Sharing observations with other practitioners, key person and parents. Regular observations to create an individual learning journey. Being aware of their individual stage of development, knowing what next steps are and when to refer a child.

The response marked using the Activity 1 Marking Grid is a holistic judgement on quality. The response is in Band 4 and gains 10 marks for the justification of recommendations.

All recommendations are good examples of best practice

- The Early Years Foundation Stage is used to explain the skills 3-5 year olds need in mathematics. "Mathematics providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures." (EYFS, 2014, p.8)
- Best practice in observation is shown 'In their interactions with children, practitioners should respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share.' (EYFS Profile 2016)

Please note EYFS is relevant for England. Other home countries in the UK have their own early years curriculum guidance.

- Using mathematical language in everyday conversations with children is supported by a reference to a Level 3 Text Book. 'Language and interaction with adults is vital to help the children refine their understanding of concepts. Using words such as "big", "little", "over", "under", "behind" and "in front" helps children be familiar with mathematical language so it becomes more natural for them. (Snaith, 2007, p.455)'

Please note there are a variety of relevant Level 3 Text Books that could be used to support this response.

All recommendations are thoroughly justified, supported by explicit and sustained links to early year's theory.

- Piaget's cognitive theory is used to justify that children learn by doing and exploring. Piaget's Pre-Operational Stage 2-7 years is when children start to think about things symbolically.
- Bruner's modes of representation is used to show how children learn about concepts including number.
- Skinner's operant conditioning shows how praise reinforces children to repeat and learn new words. Skinner is not named in the Unit 2 Content but has relevance for children who are learning English as an additional language.
- A theorist that could be included is Vygotsky to support the importance of social interaction with adults and peers in everyday play experiences.
- Please note Simply Psychology is not the only relevant website available with information on psychologists.

OFSTED have just completed an inspection for Happy Stones nursery and they have found it to be graded as satisfactory. That is good news. It is not easy to be inspected by OFSTED.

To improve things in Happy Stones we have to

1. Maximise children's opportunities to engage in activities to develop skills in numeracy
2. Extend children's understanding of numeracy problems and counting by using regular daily routines to develop knowledge and skills for the future.
3. Improve the use of observation and assessment systems across the staff team to more consistently plan learning opportunities and experiences for the children.

In our pre-school we extend children's understanding of numeracy problems through play. The children need to see lots of numbers in the environment on a daily basis so we have a number line with numbers from 0 to 100. The children can look at the numbers and start to recognise them. In our setting the number line has rockets with numbers printed on them. The boys in particular are very interested in space travel so the rocket number line is ideal.

We have regular daily routines where we have numeracy hours when we practice counting out loud together and repeating times tables such as the two times tables. The children learn by repeating all the numbers. It helps the less confident children if we all join in together. Having numeracy hour means their is a set time for numeracy everyday.

After sitting together for counting and times tables we have individual work in small activity groups. Usually this is counting and colouring in activity sheets where the children have to decide which is the biggest or smallest animal, or vehicle. It all depends what our theme is. The children have support from an adult going around the tables to be sure the children understand what they have to do and to sort out any squabbles about crayons. The plenary session is when we all join together on the carpet so the teacher can go over what we have learned. Sometimes, we can use the interactive computer on the large whiteboard. It is great for keeping the children engaged because the characters are so funny and colourful. The children love to use the computer to learn about maths. Learning should be fun.

Things have already improved at Happy Stones since we changed to way we record our observations of the children. Instead of one member of staff sitting down to record a long written narrative observation we now use snap-shots of the children on post-it notes so we can record development quickly. We add the post-it notes to the notice board so we can see what the child likes to play with. Observation, Assessment and Planning works in a cycle so we can promote the child's holistic development.

There are theorists that talk about child development. An important one is John Bowlby. Bowlby did his research on juvenile delinquents who were in trouble because they were deprived of their mother love when they were babies. He says babies need a bond of attachment with the person who cares for them so they can be confident and meet the emotional needs. We make sure we have a Key Person to give each child a sense of security in our pre-school. We think it is important for each child to feel they are understood and valued.

Another theorist is Piaget. He has stages of development for the child but not everyone agrees with his theory. Bruner has three stages enactive, iconic and symbolic.

In Happy Stones, we make sure we follow the best practice so the children are secure and safe in our environment. We carry out risk assessments before the activities to make sure they are no hazards to harm the children. This is part of the daily routine before the children go outside for outdoor play. We always check the area for needles, rubbish, glass and animal poo to make sure all is safe for the children. We will supervise outdoor play carefully so the children do not fall or bump into moving bikes or prams. We always check the large equipment is safe so the children can climb and slide without being hurt. We have an outdoor play area so it is good that the children can run around in the fresh air and enjoy learning to take turns. Outdoor play helps to burn off any extra energy so children can be settled down for learning indoors.

Recommendations

1. Use daily routines such as numeracy hour to develop knowledge of numbers and to learn times tables which are good skills for the future.
2. Use the Observation, Assessment and Planning cycle to plan activities for learning.
3. Keep the children safe when they play outdoors as part of the daily routine.
4. Always use best practice so children feel secure. Bowlby's theory is good for having a Key Person. The Key Person gets to know the child and forms a bond of attachment with them. Children learn best when they are having fun and they feel secure.

1 mark

The activity asks learners to produce a report. A report is a formal structure with a title, introduction, paragraphs detailing each issue to be reported on, a summary and recommendations. A bibliography would be appropriate to show the learner has used relevant sources of information to inform their answer.

Poor response: This response is not in a report format, the language used is informal 'our nursery' and the focus is on saying what the setting does rather than what the setting needs to improve. 'Things have already improved at Happy Stones since we changed to way we record our observations of the children.'

The command verbs are to:

Make recommendations. This response has listed recommendation but they are not linked to address the three issues raised in the OFSTED report.

Describe the resources. The response has no detail of everyday play resources in the setting or the role of the adult in supporting numeracy skills.

Justify improvements that link to best practice to early years theory. There is a brief mention of Piaget and Bruner, however this lacks any development or links to the case study. There is a paragraph on Bowlby, but it is not directly relevant to the requirements of the task.

The response marked using the Activity 1 Marking Grid is a holistic judgement on quality. The response is placed in Band 1 and gains 1 mark for recommendations.

Poor response: References are made to the case study, but it will lack detail and relevance to the context. The poor response included:

- Number line, times tables and numeracy hour to develop skills in numeracy but these suggestions are not relevant for children aged 3-5 years.
- Outdoor play daily routine is focused on safety and not numeracy.
- Observation, Assessment, Planning cycle is mentioned very briefly.
- Recommendations identified do not meet all issues raised in the scenario
- There is no mention of multi-cultural area, families who recently moved to UK and do not speak English at home, or children who have additional needs.

The response marked using the Activity 1 Marking Grid is a holistic judgement on quality. The response is in Band 0 and gains 0 marks for the justification of recommendations.

There is no justification for relevant recommendations to link to best practice.

Overall the poor response gains 1/20 marks



TIPS!

-  Use the preparation time wisely to research development of numeracy skills. You will be given the set task 2 weeks before submission. It is recommended you spend 2 hours carrying out unsupervised preparatory work.
-  Plan your answer and try to include relevant quotations.
-  Keep the focus on the Activity Question and on the details in the Case Study to ensure your recommendations are relevant.
-  Remember to justify your recommendations to explain why they are good practice. Show how theory informs good practice.

Activity 2

David is three years old and attends Happy Stones.

His father and mother work long, irregular hours, and he is often collected from the pre-school by a friend of the family.

David has been observed speaking less than would be expected of a child of his age, and has shown reluctance in communicating with the other children. He expresses himself in single words and short phrases.

During a recent assessment, David was observed during a role-play activity. David and two other children of the same age were playing in a purpose-built area in the room designed around a post office. During the activity he used only single words and did not respond to the other children when they asked him a question.

Produce a set of actions that can support David's communication development both at pre-school and at home.

You must:

- suggest actions that exemplify best practice
- describe the resources required, including the role of the adults caring for David
- justify your actions with reference to early years theory.

Activity 2

[Total marks for Activity 2- 20 marks]

Actions to support David's communication development

David is aged 3 years. According to Meggett (2013) at 3 years he is expected to 'be fascinated with cause and effect and often ask why?', remember and repeat songs and nursery rhymes, carry on simple conversations, learn to speak more than one language if he hear more than one language spoken around him as he grows, and still talk to himself when playing.' David has been observed speaking less and in a post office role-play activity he used only single words and did not respond to questions from the other children. His behaviour may be more like a child who is not yet 2 year old.

Actions in pre-school involve having a **language promoting environment** where there are small spaces and low background noise levels. It may not be easy to achieve in a busy pre-school room with 30 children, but this will help David to concentrate on what is being said. Having low partitions and shelving to create small cosy spaces and keeping group sizes to a minimum of no more than 2 or 3 children working with an adult will make interactions less intimidating for David. Carpet or soft surfaces help to absorb sound so may be helpful if David's hearing is not acute. EYFS Practice Guidance (30-50m) suggests setting up a listening area where children can enjoy rhymes and stories. **Songs, rhymes and stories** with repetition can help David learn new words. Story tapes and music support listening.

David needs to have exciting **play activities to provoke his interest** so he will be encouraged to talk about the new things and use new words. He joined in the play in the post office which shows he may be interested in this. An adult should join to encourage David to talk about what is happening and act out roles in character (EYFS 40-60m) Play encourages children to communicate because they do not feel pressured. Having a **role-play area resourced with materials reflecting his family life and community** may help David feel secure and more confident to start to make friends and enjoy playing with others. It would be important if his family recently moved to the UK or if David recently started Happy Stones.

Children need **practitioners who ask open questions** to show they are interested in what the child is doing. For instance saying, "Tell me about your picture" invites the child to tell an Early Years Educator about a painting. David is offered opportunity to plan the painting and to talk about his ideas. He needs **time and encouragement to respond**. The adult should be at his level and sit down near him. His attempts to communicate should be acknowledged with the adult **sensitively expanding his statements**. It helps to give David new words to name colours and objects, expand single words into short sentences and reflect back pronunciations. For example if David answers he is painting 'cat' the adult can reflect this back saying, 'Yes, you are painting a red cat', 'The cat has a smily face', 'I wonder why the red cat is smiling.' David may be drawn into the conversation when the adult **draws his attention to detail, listens actively** and gives David new things to talk about.

Speech and language development links to social and emotional development. David can be encouraged by the use of positive reinforcement when the adult praises his efforts to communicate. **Skinner's theory of operant conditioning** is when a child repeats words or sounds because they are rewarded. It is important not to overcorrect David's language so he does not become despondent and give up trying to communicate. (Simply Psychology)

Communication is not just verbal. It can be sign, body language, pointing and eye contact. **Chomsky's theory** says children have an innate **Language Acquisition Device**. The voice box, lungs and brain. A child's brain is programmed to understand the rules of grammar. For example: adding 's' to make plurals and 'ed' for the past tense. This is why sometimes children say 'mouses' instead of mice and 'runned' instead of 'ran.' It is not that the child has heard the words but they know the rules. There is a critical period for language development so it is important to nurture communication. David needs encouragement to speak and listen. He needs opportunities to interact to build friendships with other children. Children who have limited speech and language skills may have difficulties in expressing themselves, which may lead to frustration, poor understanding and limited social skills. (Tassoni, 2014)

Vygotsky argues children develop language through **social interactions** as they talk with others. It is particularly through interaction with adults that children learn to communicate. David may not express himself in words, but he may understand more than he says. David needs time to interact with other children with support from his Key Person. Harding and Meldon-Smith (2004) suggest sharing a self-made book of his interests with photographs and pictures from of a walk in the park when he used a magnifying glass. This activity may help David to recall a fun time with a friend.

It is important **observe** David's communication to discover if he understands spoken words. In the sequence of development, understanding of language comes before speaking. Assumptions cannot be made on one observation. David may understand the question but not have the vocabulary to answer. He may have communicated non-verbally and the practitioner did not record this. Staff noticed David is speaking less and is reluctant to communicate with other children. This may be a sign that David's communication development is not at the expected stage for his age. Early referral to a speech and language therapist will mean any problem is identified and intervention can be started to prevent David falling further behind his peers. He may not have heard the children's question. This could be conductive hearing loss needing referral to hearing support services. Learning disabilities require additional support. The right intervention started early will promote David's holistic development.

David's **Key Person needs to share any concerns with his parents**. As they work long and irregular hours, staff should make an appointment at a convenient time for them. David's parents may be able to explain emotional issues that make him reluctant to communicate. David's parents are his first educators and they know him best. The **Key Person works in partnership with his parents** to ensure they understand David needs. Together they support developing communication skills. Professionals benefit from his parent's expertise in understanding David as an individual. Together they build on David's interests to encourage communication in pre-school and at home.

David's parents also need to provide a **language promoting environment** where he is encouraged to reply to simple questions and where he hears language spoken. **Turning off the television** and radio will help David to concentrate on speech. The **quality of adult interaction** is important. **Joining in play and giving a commentary** will help to expand his vocabulary. For example if David is playing with toy cars, he can learn about colour, shape, size, direction, (forwards, backwards, sideways) He can extend his vocabulary by hearing new words, learn to categorise things (let's put all the blue cars in this box), and put things in sequence (what comes next?) When an adult joins in learning and development take place in a natural way. In **everyday routines** at mealtimes, dressing, bath time and bedtime there are opportunities to talk together. 3 year olds enjoy colourful books. David's parents can **ask him questions about a book they read together**. (Words for Life)

Storysacks with puppets can be taken home so David and his parents can share a story together. Talking with a puppet is less intimidating. David can be encouraged to retell the story in his own words. As his parents do not always collect David from pre-school they miss opportunities to **talk about his day**. Their family friend helps by talking with David on the way home. Key Persons share information each day with parents. David's learning can be shared using the setting's mobile phone to send photographs and text messages so parents know what he enjoyed at pre-school. Emails may be appropriate. This information could form a basis for a conversation about David's play experiences and encourage his parents to take time to listen to him. Parents need reassurance and practical ideas to help them communicate more effectively with their children.

David's parents need to be **kept up to date** with observations on development and on advice from expert professionals involved in supporting David. Strategies used in pre-school will be more effective if they are also carried out at home. When his parents and Key Person are working together in partnership, David will feel secure and more confident to communicate. A key person has special responsibilities for working with the child, giving reassurance, building relationships with the parents, ensuring the needs of the child are met and that development progress is shared with parents and other professionals as necessary. EYFS (2008, p15)

Summary and Actions

7. Provide a language promoting environment at pre-school and at home
8. Provide quiet listening spaces
9. Provide play activities and join in to provoke David's interest
10. Use songs, rhymes and stories including storybags with puppets
11. Have a Key Person to build relationship with David and his parents
12. Talk about David's day and the things that interest him.
13. Regular observation to check on progress
14. Early referral for expert advice. Use the strategies at home and pre-school
15. Ask open questions, give time to respond, sensitively expand comments
16. Provide opportunities and support to interact with adults and other children

Bibliography

EYFS Practice Guidance (2008)

Harding J. and Meldon-Smith L. (2004) Helping Young Children to Develop London Hodder and Stoughton

Meggett C. (2013) Child Development An Illustrated Guide Oxford Heinemann

Simply Psychology <http://www.simplypsychology.org>

Tassoni P. (2014) Level 3 Children's Learning and Development Oxford Heinemann

Words for Life <http://www.wordsforlife.org.uk/3-5/tips>

17 marks

The activity asks learners to produce a set of actions. Each action is explained in a separate paragraph and there is a brief list of suggested actions at the end. A bibliography is appropriate to show the learner has used relevant sources of information to inform their answer with links to theory and best practice.

Good response: The command verbs are to:

Suggest actions that exemplify best practice. The response includes practical ideas to support the child's communication development including examples from placement and appropriate text books.

Describe the resources. The response includes details of the everyday play resources in the setting and at home. The role of the Key Person and David's Parents is included.

Justify your actions with reference early years theory. The response includes links to Skinner, Chomsky, Vygotsky and to the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Good response: The response marked using the Activity 2 Marking Grid is a holistic judgement on quality. The response is in Band 4 and gains 7 marks for recommendations.

Recommendations make sustained reference to the case study

- Actions make constant reference to the case study
- Actions suggested are focused on the named 3 year old child, David, to ensure they are relevant to meet his needs.
- Actions refer to the recent observation of David in post office role-play.
- Actions address the issue of David's parents working long, irregular hours.

Recommendations are entirely relevant to the context

- Actions are relevant for a 3 year old who is not communicating as expected.
- Actions are focused on developing David's communication skills.
- Actions for the pre-school setting and David's home are included.
- A wide range of recommendations are described thoroughly
- Actions listed at the end are described in individual paragraphs to include resources and the role of adults.
- Actions include early referral to other professional for their advice.
- Actions from the Unit 2 Content are highlighted in Blue type.

Recommendations meet all issues in the scenario

- Actions relate to practical suggestions to use in pre-school and at home.
- Actions include how to work in partnership with David's parents when they work long, irregular hours. Using a mobile phone or email each day to send photographs of David playing and text messages is recommended.

The response marked using the Activity 2 Marking Grid is a holistic judgement on quality. The response is in Band 4 and gains 10 marks for the justification of recommendations.

All recommendations are good examples of best practice

- Meggett is used to identify David's expected stage of development.
- Ideas from EYFS include setting up a listening area and joining in role-play.
- Having a Key Person to work in partnership with David's parents is part of the EYFS Statutory Framework.

Please note EYFS is relevant for England. Other countries in the UK have their own early years curriculum guidance.

- Ideas to extend communication are taken from textbooks and the internet.
- Self-made interest books (Harding & Meldon-Smith)
- Puppets and storybags encourage communication in less intimidating ways.
- David's parents sharing a book to ask him questions about a book they read together. (Words for Life)

Please note there are a variety of relevant Level 3 Text Books that could be used to back up this response.

All recommendations are thoroughly justified, supported by explicit and sustained links to early years theory.

- Skinner's operant conditioning shows how praise reinforces children to repeat and learn new words.
- Chomsky's theory argues that children have an innate capacity to develop language but there is a critical period for language to be nurtured
- Vygotsky is used to support the importance of having social interaction with adults and peers.
- EYFS reinforces the importance of partnerships with parents.
- Early referrals to experts means interventions are in place to prevent further deterioration in communication and promotes holistic development.
- A theorist that could be included is Roger Brown's stages of language development

Please note Simply Psychology is not the only relevant website available with information on psychologists.

Level 3 Distinction Grade Descriptor is achieved in the good response.

There are sustained links to the case study. The learner demonstrates thorough understanding of communication and relevant theory. Parents and childcare professionals are integral to solutions to support communication. David's needs are evaluated and the approaches proposed are justified in response to the identified problems.

There are theorists who tell us about language development. Roger Brown had an idea about Mean Length of Utterances (MLU) to define stages of language development. Roger Brown did a groundbreaking longitudinal study focused on three children, the now-famous "Adam," "Eve," and "Sarah." He calculated the MLU "by dividing the total number of words (morphemes – smallest meaningful part of a word) spoken by the number of utterances a child makes. So if a baby used two words in two utterances the MLU would be one. Brown has related Mean Length of Utterances scores to stages of Child Language Acquisition.

Another theorist is Chomsky who says children are born to speak language. This is a nature debate when theorists say development is inherited and is acquired naturally. The opposite is the nurture debate which says children's development happens when children are supported to learn. Vygotsky says children learn to communicate through interaction.

In pre-school activities to promote interaction are the sand and water area. Four children can be together to play and learn. They are sensory tactile experiences for children to enjoy and learn for themselves. They can fill jugs and pour water. They dig and build in the sand. In my placement 2 year olds love to play with the digger in the sand pit. They like to watch the tracks made in damp sand when the digger moves. Adults have to supervise children in the sand area in case they start to throw sand and it gets into their eyes. In the water area, adults have to be careful to make sure no water gets spilled otherwise a child might slip and fall. Spills of sand and water need to be mopped up immediately.

Children in pre-school need lots of opportunities to develop communication with adults and the other children. When playing in the role-play area they can talk together and share ideas to show their imagination. Imaginative play is good for children when they can act out what it feels like. It helps emotional development when they imagine how it feels to be grown-up and confident in the real world. An adult can extend imaginative play by putting on a hat and pretending to be a visitor who has come for tea. The adult can ask the children to make the tea and pretend to drink it. The resources needed are plastic child-size cups and saucers and plates. Pre-school also needs a small table and chairs in the home corner. It is a good way to help language development when playing.

In the scenario for Activity 2. David is 3 years old and he is observed playing in the role play area. He did not answer children who asked him questions and only says single words. Perhaps, he does not like playing in the Post Office, or he may want to be the Post Master but another child has taken that role. Daniel could be frustrated because he cannot get his own way so he ignores the other children.

At this age children are still learning to take turns and to share. Daniel might not have learned to share in pre-school. The Early Years Educator is busy observing the children but may need to intervene if the children are unsafe or distressed. If a child starts to throw things it is better to put them in time-out and remove the disruptive child from the home corner until they can play nicely together. The adult has an important role to keep children safe and to make sure they learn to behave well.

The Happy Stones pre-school has an outdoor play area so it would be a good idea to play a play activity outside. There is more space outside and it is exciting for children to play outside. Children can play outside in all weathers if they have the correct weatherproof clothing and they are well supervised. Even the post office could be taken outside on a warm calm day to give the children a change of scene. The resources needed are a post box, counter with a till, pens and paper to write letters, stamps, boxes to wrap up for parcels, wrapping paper and sticky tape. The children can pretend to write letters and wrap up parcels to send to someone. The post office role play encourages mark making in a realistic way. This is a good way to help the children's fine manipulative skills using their hands in a co-ordinated way. This will help them when they are controlling a pen to write. Mark making promotes fine motor development. It also helps children learn that marks on paper have meaning. When learning is fun the children enjoy it and they repeat it. Children might join in more and communicate if the play activity is exciting for them.

Piaget says it is important to observe children's language. Piaget observed his own children and talked about the way they learned. Jean Piaget was born in Switzerland in 1896. He was a Swiss clinical psychologist known for cognitive development. He believes children construct learning in stages. The first stage is the sensorimotor stage which Wikipedia says "extends from birth to the acquisition of language" This is the stage when children understand the world through the senses of sight, sound, touch, taste and smell, and their physical actions. David is speaking less than expected so he may be still at this stage of development. He needs lots of opportunity to play. **1 mark**

The activity asks learners to produce a set of actions that exemplify best practice.

Poor response: The learner appears to have confused actions that support David's communication development with describing roleplay activities

The command verbs are to:

Suggest actions that exemplify best practice. The response includes practical ideas to support the child's safety and behaviour and learning but is not well focused on communication development.

Describe the resources. The response lists resources for the home corner and post office but does not describe these in detail. The Early Years Educator's role in promoting communication is limited. No other adults are included.

Justify your actions with reference early years theory. The response mentions Roger Brown, Chomsky, Vygotsky and Piaget briefly but the theory is not applied to the child in the case study and does not justify the actions given.

Poor response: The response marked using the Activity 2 Marking Grid is a holistic judgement on quality. The response is in Band 1 and gains 1 mark for recommendations.

References are made to the case study, but it will lack detail and relevance to the context. The poor response is not relevant:

- Suggestions refer to children not the specific child. David is mis-named Daniel. It is less important than the lack of focus on supporting his communication.
- There are no clear actions and the suggested play activities are not relevant.
- Sand and water are sensory tactile activities where the role of the adult is to maintain the children's safety with no mention of communication. The example from placement relates to a 2 year old. It is not relevant for David who is 3.
- Role-play links to imaginative play and to stimulating excitement by taking the post office outside. The adult focus is on mark-making and fine motor skills.
- The mark awarded is for the suggestion for outdoor play that might encourage children to join in more and communicate if a play activity is exciting for them.
- Recommendations identified do not meet all issues raised in the scenario
- The observation is mentioned but is focused on David not being able to share.
- Only the pre-school is mentioned. There is nothing about supporting David's communication development at home or the role of adults at home.

The response marked using the Activity 2 Marking Grid is a holistic judgement on quality. The poor response is in Band 0 and gains 0 marks for the justification of recommendations.

Recommendations

- The level of response is not worthy of credit as the actions are suggestions for play activities which are not focused on communication.
- Actions are wider than play activities and should include the role of the adult.
- No recommendations are justified, supported by links to early years theory.

There is mention of theory - Roger Brown, Chomsky, Vygotsky and Piaget. The poor response merely outlines the theory without any application to the case study or to justify the actions put forward. The only statement of note is that Piaget says it is important to observe children's language. This is not linked to the case study or actions to support

David's communication development.

The Level 3 Pass Grade Descriptor:

Learners are expected to demonstrate understanding of stages of communication. Make reference to theoretical principles to given situations related to the needs of a child (David) in a setting (Happy Stones Pre-school Room) Understand the need to work in partnership with parents and other professionals in context. Suggest feasible activities and approaches to identified problems relating to a child in an early years setting.

The poor response demonstrates none of this.



Use the preparation time wisely to research development of communication skills. You will be given the set task 2 weeks before submission. It is recommended you spend 2 hours carrying out unsupervised preparatory work.



When you plan and write the task keep focus on the case study scenario to include the area of development, setting and age of the child or children.



Remember to justify your actions to explain why they are good practice.



Keep focus on the Activity Question and case scenario. Research relevant theory. Apply your understanding of theory to show how theory informs good practice. Remember your focus must be on the theoretical ideas that underpin early years teaching practices rather than the theorist.

Activity 3

Design two activities to enhance the development of space and shape for four year olds at Happy Stones. The activities must also consider the needs of children with communication delays, and the contribution and support made by the early years educator.

You must produce a plan for each activity, including:

- information about the resources required
- the role of early years educators, adults and others
- how the activity can meet the needs of individual children
- justifying your activity by linking best practice to early years theory.

Activity 3

[Total Marks for Activity 3- 8 Marks for Activity Plan 1
28 Marks for Activity Plan 2]

Activity Plan 1 An indoor creative activity to explore 2D and 3D shapes

Learning Outcomes

The 4 year old children in Happy Stones Pre-school room will:

- match (and start to name) 2D and possibly 3D shapes
- recognise and identify differences in shapes
- use shapes to create a 2D rocket picture or 3D model of a rocket
- enjoy learning more about shape and spatial awareness

Rationale

The activity is part of the current theme of space travel the children are enjoying after one child was interested in Astronaut Tom Peake's space adventure. The children's pictures and models will form part of a display on space travel. It is an adult initiated activity where the children can choose to create a 2D picture or a 3D model of a rocket. EYFS suggests model making is a suitable activity for 4 year olds. There are children in the group who have a learning disability and may find creating a picture using shape is achievable.

EYFS 30-50m "Show an interest in shape and space by playing with shapes or making arrangements with objects."

40-60m "Use mathematical names for solid 3D shapes and flat 2D shapes and use mathematical terms to describe shapes."

Learning about shape and space is part of early maths. Space is not learning about space travel and outer space it is about being aware of yourself in a given space and understanding how objects relate to each other. The activity will help children learn about position. The cone of the rocket is on top.

Activity

The activity is to build a model of a rocket using 3D shapes such as a cone on top of a cylinder on a cube base. Shapes can be stuck together with glue or sticky tape. Children have the option to create a 2D picture with triangle, rectangle and square shapes to create a rocket. The children are working individually in small groups to create their own rockets. They can explore shapes further by sticking on shiny squares of paper to represent heat shields needed to keep the rocket cool on re-entry into the earth's atmosphere.

Role of Adult

The Early Years Educator needs to ensure there are sufficient resources for all the children and arrange the creative area so they can create the rockets safely. The adult introduces the activity in an exciting way to stimulate the children's enthusiasm and interest. The adult facilitates learning for each child to scaffold learning so they achieve more than they would alone. Vygotsky's constructivist learning theory is children learn by doing things for themselves but learn more through social interaction with an adult who extends their understanding. The adult introduces new maths vocabulary to name 2D shapes e.g. triangle, square, rectangle and 3D shapes e.g. cone, cube, cylinder. Although, some children will understand ball shape and box shape better. Children need words to describe the shapes e.g. flat, solid, pointy, straight edges, round. They need position words such as on top, bottom, in the middle to help them appreciate how the parts of the rocket fit together in the space. "Children learn when interactions are purposeful and have meaning for the learner." (Simply Psychology)

The adult can ask questions and leave time for each child to respond. The adult offers encouragement by praising their efforts to use unfamiliar words. Skinner's idea of reinforcing wanted behaviour uses operant conditioning where behaviour is more likely to be repeated if it is rewarded. "Speech and language are linked to numeracy because so many of children's earliest numerical experiences will depend on their ability to use language and be able to put their experiences into words." (Tassoni 2014) For example, if children do not recognise and understand the words 'triangle', 'square', and 'on top', they will find it difficult to recognise and understand the concepts.

Observations and assessment should inform activity planning. The adults need to know the child's current level of understanding to support next steps in learning and development.

Resources

- Craft table with wipe-clean surface and chairs for the children
- Paper of different colours to form background for the picture
- 2D pre-cut shapes in colourful paper - triangles, squares, rectangles
- Glue and glue sticks
- Sticky tape
- Blunt ended safety scissors (right and left-handed)
- Aprons
- 3D card objects to build a rocket - cones, cylinders, cubes
- Small shiny paper squares to stick on to cover the rocket shape
- Crayons to add detail and write on the children's names
- An adult to work with the group to facilitate individual learning and to encourage communication using mathematical language.

Extension activity to provide challenge

Stories and songs can help to consolidate learning. Books such as *Whatever Next* by Jill Murphy. Songs like *Zoom, Zoom, Zoom we're going to the Moon* and *Five Little Men in a Flying Saucer*. The children can be encouraged to recognise and name shapes in the environment.

Differentiation

- A child who has learning disability may benefit from individual support from another adult. The child may find it easier to assemble their rocket picture if there is a pre-drawn template for them to follow to match the shapes. Words such as ball shape and box shaped may be easier for the child to understand rather than mathematical terms of sphere and cube.
- Children who have communication delays need support from an adult who takes time to actively listen to the child, allows time for the child to respond and acknowledges their attempts to communicate.
- A child who has hearing impairment needs to have their hearing aid.
- A child who is developing fine motor skills may prefer to cut out the shapes. Left and right-handed scissors should be available.
- Children who use a wheelchair for mobility needs access to all the materials and a work surface at a comfortable height.

Best practice

Adult-initiated activities can be child led when the child follows their own ideas. Children can choose to create a picture or a more challenging model. The activity should be challenging to promote learning, but not too challenging or the child may become despondent. Self-discovery and learning to solve problems without adult interference is a good way to promote understanding.

7 marks

Good response: The good response marked using the Activity 3 Marking Grid is an holistic judgement on quality. The response is in Band 4 and gains 7 marks for recommendations.

Activity Plan 1 is a thoroughly detailed activity plan with a clear explanation of The role of the early years educator or other adults in facilitating the activity. In this activity the role of the early years educator is shown as

- ensuring there are sufficient resources
- preparing a safe environment
- stimulating the children's interest
- encouraging use of maths vocabulary
- providing new words to describe the shapes
- encouraging repetition of new words
- planning to extend the child's known development stage
- there could be more on facilitating problem solving by the children by allowing them to decide how to stick the parts of the model together. Problem solving is another part of early maths to develop.

Resources required to undertake the activity

- resources are listed including adapted equipment such as left-handed scissors

Clear explanation shows how the activity will meet and support individual needs of children

- ideas to differentiate the task for children of different abilities are included such as using simpler vocabulary or more advanced maths terms
- access for a child who uses a wheelchair is considered
- Children who have communication delays need support from an adult who takes time to actively listen to the child, allows time for the child to respond and acknowledges their attempts to communicate.
- there could be more to reflect the multicultural aspects of the setting and to support the children who recently moved to the UK to gain maximum mark. However, the space travel topic chosen does not relate to a specific culture so may be appropriate for all the children.

Overall, the activity plan is age appropriate and linked to EYFS Stages so the children from Happy Stones can enjoy learning about shape and space.

The good response for Activity Plan 1

Activity Plan 2 A construction play activity to explore how different sized objects fit into spaces in the outdoor environment.

Learning Outcomes

The 4 year old children in Happy Stones Pre-school room will:

- match small world animals and figures to fit into constructed dens
- understand and use words to describe an objects position in relationship to other objects
- use natural materials to create small dens
- enjoy learning more about spatial awareness

Rationale

At 3 to 4 years, children will have a greater spatial awareness. (Tassoni, 2014) This means children are starting to understand how objects fit into spaces. Being able to fit objects into the correct size container will help children learn how their own body fits into space in relationship to other people and objects. EYFS 30-50m states children show an interest in space. A suggested activity for 40-60m is to construct dens in the outdoor environment. Constructing childsize dens may not be possible in a large city Early Years Centre such as Happy Stones unless there is a Forest School nearby. The children can construct miniature dens for small world animals or figures using twigs and leaves, pine cones and boxes of various sizes. Children enjoy the idea of hide and seek and having a secret place. "Design skills are key to a successful den and being able to visualise the finished product is paramount to its success. They need to be able to think logically and look carefully at the shape and size of the materials they are using." ([Muddyfaces](#))

Activity

The activity is for the children to work in pairs to build an outdoor den suitable for a small world animal or elves or fairies to fit inside. Children use their imagination and creativity using natural materials to construct a secret hideout. If the weather is too cold or wet and windy, groups of children can build indoor childsize dens.

Role of Adult

The adult needs to ensure the outdoor area is safe before the children go outside. A risk assessment must be carried out to ensure hazards are removed and risks are minimised. There needs to be a higher ratio of adults to supervise the children to ensure they are kept safe. Children need suitable outdoor clothing and boots. The adult explains the activity to the children in simple words introducing vocabulary such as 'inside, outside, too big, too little, on, over, under, above and below.' Adults showing an interest interacting a natural way with pairs of children extends their learning through commentary and asking sensitive questions. "What happens if a bigger creature wants to come in?" Respect it is the children's activity. Adults only offer guidance if asked so children are allowed to develop their own ideas. This fits Piaget's theory of learning. Children learn by exploring and solving problems. They assimilate information through real experiences taking in information and adapting their mental ideas (schema) to accommodate a new experience. "Schemas are integral to development of mathematical thought." (Simply Psychology Piaget)

Resources

Outside mini dens need natural materials - soil, sand, twigs, sticks, stones, leaves, moss, pinecones, acorns, shells could be collected before the activity. Also scraps of material, string, ribbon and wool. Small world animals of various sizes. Elves and fairies. Waterproof outdoor clothing and boots to protect clothes. Wellington boots.

Indoor childsize dens need tables, chairs, clothes airer or plastic indoor climbing frame or a pop-up tent or a tunnel for a den frame. Lengths of fabric, old sheets or curtains make den covers. Large cardboard boxes. Cushions and a torch for inside.

Extension activity to provide challenge

The den can be extended into a miniature village with paths for the small world creatures to walk on and bridges to walk over or hide under. It will help children to understand concepts of "on, over, under." Knowing and using positional words enables children to understand what they mean. Bruner's theory of development is learning is an active process where children are actively involved. Learning in the enactive stage starts with the child's own actions. Mathematical concepts of space become real as the child tries it out. Putting the animal in the den, on the path, walking over the bridge or hiding the animal under the bridge.

Differentiation

Children who have learning disability may need practical suggestions to put their ideas into practice e.g. how to tie a cover on to the den.

Children who have communication delay can be encouraged to express their ideas by having support from an adult who gives a commentary and sensitively expands their statements. Showing an interest in the child's ideas encourages interaction.

A child who uses a wheelchair for mobility will need to use a raised flowerbed at a comfortable height and have resources within easy reach.

Best practice

Forest Schools are a way for children to extend learning by being independent as they play outdoors. Being outside adds a different dimension to learning which will encourage communication. "Building houses for mini people such as elves, woodland fairies and animals with natural resources is brilliant fun. You need a lively imagination and everyone can get involved. (Muddyfaces.co.uk)

Include parents to help with collecting natural materials with their children before the activity and invite them to join in den building with the children.

24 marks

Good response: The response marked using the Activity 3 Marking Grid is a holistic judgement on quality. The response is in Band 4 and gains 7 marks for level of response.

Activity Plan 2 is a thoroughly detailed activity plan covering all aspects of the question. The structure under sub-headings allows for a clear explanation of:

The role of the early years educator or other adults in facilitating the activity

- Safety is an important role. The outdoor area must be risk assessed before the children go outside. Children need suitable clothing. Outdoor activities require a larger ratio of adults to children to maintain safety.
- Promoting learning by explaining the activity and offering guidance if the child asks. Allowing the children to take the lead and make choices about resources they use and the size of den they construct. Providing practical help for children who request this.
- Encouraging communication with pairs of children by showing an interest, asking questions and expanding their statements in a natural way.
- Following Piaget's theory that children learn through experiences.
- Respecting the children to allow them to take a lead in their own learning.
- Parents can be invited to help provide resources and join in den building.

Resources required to undertake the activity

- Natural resources listed may need to be collected from somewhere else before the activity.
- Indoor dens (if needed) can be constructed using items available in the setting supplemented with items from home - clothes airer and old sheet and curtains.

Clear explanation shows how the activity will meet and support individual needs of children.

- Giving practical support when requested.
- Ensuring children who use a wheelchair can access the activity and the resources.
- Children who have communication delay can be encouraged to express their ideas by having support from an adult who gives a commentary and sensitively expands their statements. Showing an interest in the child's ideas encourages interaction.

Both Activity Plans marked using the Activity 4 Marking Grid give a holistic judgement on quality. The response is in Band 4 and gains 10 marks for the justification of recommendations.

All recommendations are good examples of best practice.

- Activity 1 - making pictures or models with shapes follows a child's interest and builds on a theme in the pre-school room.
- Activity 2 - building mini dens outside allows children to explore how objects fit into spaces. "Being outside adds a different dimension to learning which will encourage communication."
- Both activities allow children to learn about concepts by discovering for themselves. Children are active in learning to problem solve and to use maths vocabulary. "Speech and language are linked to numeracy because so many of children's earliest numerical experiences will depend on their ability to use language and be able to put their experiences into words." (Tassoni 2014)" "Knowing and using positional words enables children to understand what they mean." "Mathematical concepts of space become real as the child tries it out."

All recommendations are thoroughly justified, supported by explicit and sustained links to early years theory.

- Activity 1 links to EYFS, Vygotsky and Skinner.
- Activity 2 links to Forest Schools, Bruner and Piaget.

Overall, marks of 24/28 are awarded

Activity Plan 1 Shape Puzzles

EYFS suggests using “puzzles with large pieces and handles to support success in fitting shapes into space.”

Happy Stones Early Years Centre can set up a table with puzzles on as part of the everyday play and learning activities provided for the children. Arranging the play resources in a colourful attractive way will encourage the children to participate. Some of the puzzles could be started so the children know what to do.

The children can choose to play with the puzzles if they want to. Children can be independent especially if the puzzles have handles a small hand can hold so they can manipulate the pieces easily. Sometimes they need to turn the shape around until it fits in properly. They get a great sense of achievement when the puzzle is finished. They will come to show the Early Years Educator who claps and gives the child a sticker for being so clever.

The activity is to teach children about shape. In my placement, we have inset puzzles with handles in different shapes so the children can match the blue circle with the blue inset, the green triangle with the green inset and the red square with the red inset. Some other puzzles have other shapes too. For example: stars, half-moons, crosses, rectangles and hearts. The children learn to match shapes.

We have some space puzzles with rockets, spacemen, stars and planets for the children to learn about space. It is an exciting topic for the children especially the boys.

The children can choose which puzzle to use and we ask them to be kind and put the puzzle back into the box when they have finished. The children can make the same puzzle over again because they learn by repetition.

We also have a computer shape matching game where the children can drag and drop the shape to match with the shape on the screen. The children hear a bell and clapping hands when they are correct. When they guess wrong the children can try again. There is only one computer so children have to take turns using it. It is always popular with the children. Interactive computer games are great when the child can learn about shape.

1 mark

The response marked using the Activity 3 Marking Grid is a holistic judgement on quality. The response is in Band 1 and gains 1 marks for level of response.

Poor response: Activity plan 1 is incomplete. Details are likely to be missing about:

The role of the early years' educator, or other adults in facilitating the activity

- It is appropriate to set out play equipment in an attractive way to encourage the children to participate and starting off a puzzle can help a child know what to do. This could gain one mark.
- There is no other information on the role of the adult in supporting the children's understanding of space and shape.
- There is nothing about supporting communication.
- Even in an individual child-led play activity such as puzzles the adult should join in and interact with the child to provide opportunities to develop their language. The Early Years Educator does applaud the child's achievement but has missed a vital opportunity to start a meaningful conversation with the child. Answers can be extended by making links to theory. Vygotsky's theory is children construct their own learning and this is extended through interaction with an adult.
- The resources required to undertake the activity are not all relevant
- It is appropriate to use puzzles and interactive computer games to learn about shape. However, matching shapes is a skill which comes before naming
- shapes and recognising differences and similarities. It is more like the development of a 2-3 year old child. The children in the question
- are 4 years old.
- Having a puzzle about outer space with rockets, spacemen, stars and planets does not really help the children understand the concept of space as the relationship between objects and self in relationship to other objects and people. The maths concept is spatial awareness and position in relationship to other things - on, above, under etc. Space travel is more about knowledge of the world.

The Activity 1 planned is unlikely to meet the individual needs of children.

- The activity suggested in EYFS Practice Guidance is for children aged 16-26 months who are still developing fine manipulative skills. Inset puzzles with handles may be appropriate for a child who has learning disability but not for a majority of 4 year old children in Happy Stones.
- Child-led activities do allow children to be independent and repeat activities they enjoy. However, the child may not learn what was intended. Playing with the puzzles especially the one mentioned with coloured shapes may be achieved by the child matching the colours without noticing the shapes.
- There is no mention of the way effective adult support individualises learning to support each child. Free play that is chosen by the child promotes independence and concentration but learning may be limited. A solitary learner lacks communication to scaffold learning through interaction with a knowledgeable adult.

Activity Plan 2

The second activity is during outside play. EYFS 40-60 months suggests children learn about movement and space. "Travel around, under, over, and through. Balancing and climbing equipment. They show awareness of space, of themselves and others." The suggested activity is to have equipment at different levels, such as an overhead ladder, a tunnel to crawl through, a bench to walk along and a mat to travel around.

Outdoor play is exciting for children and provides time to practice gross motor skills such as running, walking, climbing, balancing and moving with confidence in co-ordinated way.

My activity is to have an obstacle course for the children to complete. We could put the children into teams and as each child completes the obstacle course the others can cheer for their team. The obstacle course can include climbing up a ladder, going up and over the overhead ladder, down the steps at the other side, crawling through a tunnel, running back under the overhead ladder, balancing along a plank and hopping back to the start.

All the children will need to be dressed appropriately in shorts and a short sleeved top so they are comfortable when running. They will enjoy playing outside in an adult-led game to develop their physical skills. A child who uses a wheelchair for mobility won't be able to climb or crawl through the tunnel but can manoeuvre their wheelchair around the parts of the obstacle course. Alternatively, the child could act as the umpire to check everyone completes the obstacle course.

2 marks

The response marked using the Activity 3 Marking Grid is a holistic judgement on quality. The response is in Band 1 and gains 1 marks for level of response.

Poor response: Activity Plan 2 is incomplete. Details are likely to be missing about:

The role of the Early Years' Educator, or other adults in facilitating the activity

- There is no information on the role of the adult in supporting children's understanding of space. The focus of the obstacle course is physical skills.
- There is nothing about supporting communication. There are missed opportunities to talk about positional words "up, over, under, through" the adult could help the child be aware of how their body fits into the spaces on the climbing equipment.
- There is no mention of safety or supervising the children.
- The resources required to undertake the activity
- There is a description of the way the outdoor equipment is used to make the obstacle course. This gained 1 mark.

- The obstacle course is appropriate but is not used to promote awareness of space or shape.

The planned Activity 2 is unlikely to meet the individual needs of children.

- There is no support offered to support communication.
- The obstacle course is appropriate but is not used to promote awareness of space or shape.
- Activity 2 does not show inclusion. Using a more structured Activity Plan format may remind the learner to include all the relevant information.

The response marked for both Activity Plans using the Activity 4 Marking Grid is a holistic judgement on quality. The response is in Band 0 and gains 0 marks for recommendations.

The level of response is not worthy of credit as the planned activities are not appropriate to answer the requirements for Activity 3.

Recommendations are not informed by best practice

- Activity 1 shape puzzles is not age appropriate for 4 year olds. Children need achievable challenges to extend their learning and will be bored if an activity is too simple for them. They need stimulation to learn.
- Activity 2 obstacle course is appropriate for the age range but it is not used to promote awareness of space or shape.
- There are concerns about the learner's understanding of inclusion and differentiation in Activity 2. There are limited attempts to include a child who uses a wheelchair for mobility. Throwing balls or bean bags into a hoop would help spatial awareness and children could be offered choices of how they negotiate the obstacle course so the child feels included. Happy Stones is multicultural so saying children need to wear shorts and short-sleeved tops may offend some families who prefer the children's arms and legs to be covered.

References to early years theory are implicit or not linked to recommendations made

- There are no references to early years theory.
- References to EYFS in Activity 1 are for the wrong age range.
- References to EYFS in Activity 2 are focused on physical development rather than learning early maths concepts of space and shape and developing communication.

**TIPS!**

Plan the Learning Activities carefully by reading and reflecting on best practice during the preparation time. Think about activities planned in your placement.



Select and record relevant quotations from EYFS and theory to take with you into the supervised task. Remember to check age ranges for EYFS stages.



Read, and reread, the set question and scenario carefully. Do not be distracted. Focus your answers.



Focus on answering all sections of the question by using sub-headings in your work so you do not miss anything important.

Unit 2: Development of Children's Communication, Literacy and Numeracy Skills

- Sample mark grid

General Marking Guidance

- All learners must receive the same treatment. Examiners must mark the first learner in exactly the same way as they mark the last.
- Marking grids should be applied positively. Learners must be rewarded for what they have shown they can do rather than penalised for omissions.
- Examiners should mark according to the marking grid not according to their perception of where the grade boundaries may lie.
- All marks on the marking grid should be used appropriately.
- All the marks on the marking grid are designed to be awarded. Examiners should always award full marks if deserved. Examiners should also be prepared to award zero marks if the learner's response is not rewardable according to the marking grid.
- Where judgment is required, a marking grid will provide the principles by which marks will be awarded.
- When examiners are in doubt regarding the application of the marking grid to a learner's response, a senior examiner should be consulted.

Specific Marking guidance

The marking grids have been designed to assess learner work holistically.

Rows within the grids identify the assessment focus/outcome being targeted b. When using a marking grid, the 'best fit' approach should be used.

- Examiners should first make a holistic judgement on which band most closely matches the learner response and place it within that band. Learners will be placed in the band that best describes their answer.
- The mark awarded within the band will be decided based on the quality of the answer in response to the assessment focus/outcome and will be modified according to how securely all bullet points are displayed at that band.
- Marks will be awarded towards the top or bottom of that band depending on how they have evidenced each of the descriptor bullet points.

Activity 1

Assessment focus	Band 0	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4
Recommendations	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8
	Level of response not worthy of credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> References will be made to the case study, but it will lack detail and relevance to the context. Recommendations identified do not meet all issues raised in the scenario. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reference will be made to the case study, but in places will lack direct relevance to the context. Recommendations identified meet the issues raised in the scenario 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> References will be made to the case study, which are relevant to the context. Range of recommendations described to meet all issues in the scenario. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustained references will be made to the case study, which are entirely relevant to the context. Wide range of recommendations described thoroughly meet all issues in the scenario.
Justification of recommendations	0	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
	Level of response not worthy of credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations are not informed by best practice. References to early year's theory are implicit or not linked to recommendations made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations are informed by best practice although there may be occasional lapses. Recommendations made reference early years theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations are examples of best practice. Recommendations made are supported by early years theory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All recommendations are good examples of best practice. Recommendations are thoroughly justified, supported by explicit and sustained links to early years theory.

Activity 2

Assessment focus	Band 0	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4
	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8
Recommendations	Level of response not worthy of credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> References will be made to the case study, but it will lack detail and relevance to the context. Recommendations identified do not meet all issues raised in the scenario. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reference will be made to the case study, but in places will lack direct relevance to the context. Recommendations identified meet the issues raised in the scenario 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> References will be made to the case study, which are relevant to the context. Range of recommendations described to meet all issues in the scenario. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustained references will be made to the case study, which are entirely relevant to the context. Wide range of recommendations described thoroughly meet all issues in the scenario.
	0	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
Justification of recommendations	Level of response not worthy of credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations are not informed by best practice. References to early year's theory are implicit or not linked to recommendations made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations are informed by best practice although there may be occasional lapses. Recommendations made reference early years theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations are examples of best practice. Recommendations made are supported by early years theory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All recommendations are good examples of best practice. Recommendations are thoroughly justified, supported by explicit and sustained links to early years theory.

Activity 3

Assessment focus	Band 0	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4
	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8
Plan 1	Level of response not worthy of credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity plan is incomplete. Details are likely to be missing about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the role of the early years' educator, or other adults in facilitating the activity the resources required to undertake the activity Activity planned is unlikely to meet the individual needs of children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity plan with description of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the role of the early years' educator, or other adults in facilitating the activity Resources required to undertake the activity <p>Activity is designed to meet the individual needs of the children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed activity plan with a clear description of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the role of the early years' educator, or other adults in facilitating the activity Resources required to undertake the activity <p>Description of activity shows how the activity will meet and support individual needs of children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thoroughly detailed activity plan with a clear explanation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the role of the early years' educator, or other adults in facilitating the activity Resources required to undertake the activity Clear explanation shows how the activity will meet and support individual needs of children.

Activity 4

Plan 2	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8
	Level of response not worthy of credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity plan is incomplete. Details are likely to be missing about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the role of the early years' educator, or other adults in facilitating the activity the resources required to undertake the activity Activity planned is unlikely to meet the individual needs of children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity plan with description of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the role of the early years' educator, or other adults in facilitating the activity Resources required to undertake the activity <p>Activity is designed to meet the individual needs of the children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed activity plan with a clear description of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the role of the early years' educator, or other adults in facilitating the activity Resources required to undertake the activity Description of activity shows how the activity will meet and support individual needs of children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thoroughly detailed activity plan with a clear explanation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the role of the early years' educator, or other adults in facilitating the activity Resources required to undertake the activity Clear explanation shows how the activity will meet and support individual needs of children.
Justification of the planned activities	0	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
	Level of response not worthy of credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations are not informed by best practice. References to early year's theory are implicit or not linked to recommendations made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations are informed by best practice although there may be occasional lapses. Recommendations made reference early years theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations are examples of best practice. Recommendations made are supported by early years theory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All recommendations are good examples of best practice. Recommendations are thoroughly justified, supported by explicit and sustained links to early years theory.