

Promoting Teaching Strategies

Reflect on your own interactions with the children.

- Are mistakes/risks allowed or do you feel that children are apprehensive to answer for fear of getting it wrong? How could this be prevented?
- Can mistakes really be considered as learning opportunities? If so, how? Can you think of ways that children's previous learning can be used to introduce something new?
- Do you think young children can cope with a degree of ambiguity? If so, how can you facilitate this in your classroom?
- Early years teachers are always being encouraged to be reflective practitioners, so should children also be encouraged to be reflective about their learning? If so, do you allow for this in your teaching?



Observing Children's Thinking Skills

Using the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities Poster, observe the children in your own classroom and comment on their ability to think.

- Do you consider the children in your classroom good at expressing their own ideas and asking questions? If so, why do you feel this is the case? If not, do you feel in any way responsible?
- What about their ability to resolve conflicts and solve problems for themselves? What strategies could you use to improve their skills in this area?
- Do they show flair and imagination? Are they creative? Can you think of further experiences that might help to develop these skills?
- Are they good at taking into considerations other peers' views and building upon them? What further opportunities could they be provided with to encourage the promotion of these skills?

Please follow the link below to access the full report on **Thinking Skills in the Early Years: A Guide for Practitioners** by Murphy, P.; Walsh, G.; Dunbar, C. in collaboration with the Early Years Enriched Curriculum Project Team (QUB).

Promoting Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities across the Curriculum in the Foundation Stage



Are you creating a high quality thinking experience in your classroom?

Creating a Learning Ethos

Reflect on your own classroom ethos.

- How welcoming and supportive do you consider it to be? Can you think of further strategies that could be used in an effort to make it even more caring and friendly?
- Consider the other definitions of ethos on the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities poster. Put yourself in the position of a young child and rate the ethos in your classroom accordingly. Are there any changes that need to be made as a result of this exercise?



Developing an Appropriate Physical Environment

Look around your classroom environment.

- What evidence is there to suggest that children are being encouraged to think? How could you make the displays more interactive and reflective of children's own work? What thinking aids are currently being used in your classroom? Could these be improved upon?
- Is the outdoor environment being used in any way to promote children's thinking and learning? If not, how could you facilitate this?
- Does your classroom lend itself to giving children a degree of choice and independence? What strategies could you use to allow for this, e.g. during play?
- Overall, would you consider your classroom environment to be stimulating? In what ways could this be encouraged or be encouraged or enhanced?



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Reflect on your own interactions with the children.

- Do you take ample time to listen to the children and tune into what they are doing? If not, how could you improve this?
- Do you model effective thinking strategies in the classroom, e.g. identifying options, thinking about the pros and cons, etc? Identify the modeling strategies you use and how effective you consider these to be. Is there any room for improvement?
- Is your questioning technique of a high standard and do you pose enough open questions? Do you encourage the children to predict, give reasons and express opinions, think about similarities and differences, sequence and order events and information or do the opportunities provided allow the children to simply report? Do children have opportunities to give reasons and opinions, e.g. how are we going to do this? Do we need any help? Did our plan work out? What can we do better next time? Do you find yourself asking all the questions or do you encourage the children to ask constructive questions?

