

Children are Individuals

Every child is different and has specific interests, experiences, and ways in which they learn. Practitioners therefore need to develop strategies to help all children succeed.

- Some children may learn by trial and error, whereas other children will learn by watching others before trying it themselves.
- Some children need step-by-step instructions demonstrated with guidance.
- Some may find it easier to perform a skill outside; other children might feel more secure inside.
- Some may be better able to learn from another child rather than from a teacher / adult.

Differences in Children:

Gender

Children are learning what it means to be a girl or a boy, therefore adults need to allow children to exploring gender-related roles and taking part in activities that reflect the different roles.

Boys and girls should receive positive messages about who they are and what they are capable of doing, with adults being aware of their own beliefs and pre-conceived ideas about the behaviour and roles of girls and boys.

Boys and girls behave and develop differently throughout every age.

Birth to Age 2

Different regions of the brain develop in a different order and at a different speed in boys and girls; development milestones are reached at about the same age.

The differences in infancy are subtle, but girls are slightly more advanced in sensory and cognitive development.

Age 3 to 5

Boys are more advanced than girls in visual and spatial awareness and prefer to use more space and play in large groups. This impacts on the development of their gross motor skills.

Girls tend to be more focused and spend more time in small spaces, which leads to better development of fine motor skills.

However, do not assume this is always the case!



Temperament

Temperament is our nature and affects how we behave. The way children react to different situations is affected by their temperament. Some are shy and cautious, whereas others will be enthusiastic and keen to try new activities.

Interests

Children have unique interests which motivate them to learn. It is therefore a great tool to assist learning. If a child is reluctant to engage, their interests can be used to help them interact with others.

Culture

The culture of a child has an impact on the way they think, talk, express and feel about personal space.

Learning Styles

There are different ways of learning and we all have a way that we learn best. There are three different styles of learning:

Auditory Learners

Where children learn by listening, they learn best through sounds and words. Auditory learners can follow instructions and explanations.

Visual Learners

These children learn best by observing and tend to think in images or pictures. Visual learners learn the best when they are shown how to do things.

Kinaesthetic Learners

These are children who learn best by moving. They are usually co-ordinated and confident movers. Kinaesthetic learners need to move to learn and understand.

As children learn in different ways it is important to ensure that activities are presented in different ways.

Life Experiences

Experiences and circumstances in life play a role in a child's ability to learn. It is important to find out as much about the child from their family in order to 'paint a picture' of them.



Special Needs

If a child is gifted or disabled, it is important to remember that this is only one aspect of the child, not the whole child; all should be seen as individuals.

Children with Disabilities

It is always important to work with specialists but each child should be approached in the same as any other. Identify their strengths and weaknesses and plan what changes and adjustments can be made to support the child to learn.

Always focus on what children with disabilities are able to do and build on this.

Ultimately our aim for disabled children should be the same as for other children. It is important for all children to be engaged and active and they should be offered an environment and opportunities that will enhance their potential and develop their abilities.

