
Emotions & Feelings In Building Relationships

Building up relationships is particularly important for children for their development and future happiness. In order to build up relationships children must be given the opportunities to mix with others and learn how to interact and communicate with others. This is part of the socialisation process, which enables children to build up the skills needed to have these valuable relationships with family members and create friendships. Learning these skills will enable the child to become confident around others and know how to be kind and how to fit in with others, therefore, having the opportunities to create good friendships. Babies start to have relationships from birth with their primary carer such as skin to skin contact with their mother when they are born as this helps with the bonding process. Around 6 months, babies start to become aware of others and will show interest in other babies, such as smiling at another. They also like to engage in focusing on adults such as an adult who plays such as peek a boo, and a child will laugh and interact back. This phase in development is known as pro-social behaviour. Once a baby grows and hits the toddler years, they begin to learn to be social and play alongside others. They will learn to copy another child in play. Increasing this skill means that by the age of around two to three the child needs to have more access to be able to socialise such as toddler groups where they will be able to mix and play with a range of other children. Learning to think of others feelings is also important when they are developing their social skills as they need to be aware of what could upset someone or what might hurt someone and by the age of around 5 – 8 years children are able to begin to think about this and their actions. Like many developments, there is a general pattern to the socialisation process a child will go through providing they are given the time and opportunities to grow this skill. Firstly, they will develop a relationship within their family with their primary caregiver and then expanding this to other adults if they have siblings and from this, they develop a trust between these people who play a big part in their lives. Once they are confident and have a good foundation where they feel safe and secure, then they will have the confidence to expand their social area and start to learn to separate from those around them in a safe environment. This can mean that they will then have the opportunities to play with other children and begin to know about taking turns and sharing toys which in turn will mean they can learn to express their own preferences to certain toys etc. The more independence the child gains, they become more aware of themselves and therefore beginning to want to become a little more independent and start doing certain things for themselves. As they become more independent, they will come up against situations where there may be a disagreement with a child they are playing with, and they will need to learn what they need to do in these situations to overcome the issues and that sometimes they may not be correct in the way they handle it, but it is ok as they will make mistakes. But they can also learn through these mistakes. Finally, children will then be able to increase their confidence in themselves and when around others and really start to understand the feelings of others and knowing how to treat them.

One way to help children and their social skills is to create opportunities for group learning. Early years setting can encourage this by planning activities such as singing time or circle time which can involve singing and playing games such as the elephant on a piece of string song. This can be done as a circle game where one child is chosen to start with to walk around a drawn-out circle with the other children sitting outside. They will start with one elephant, i.e. one child and then move on to two elephants requiring child number 1 to choose another child to join

him/her, and then they work together to walk around. This will encourage children to make decisions themselves about who to choose but will also get them to work together to form a chain around the circle string getting all the other children to sing and clap means that everyone is joining in together and encouraging them to participate and engage with others. Group learning could also be done in smaller groups for story reading and then encouraging the children to talk about their stories and share what bits they liked/didn't like. This way, children will learn that everyone has different views. If you have a mixed group of ages, then it is a good way for children to learn about leading a group as you may find the older children begin to help and encourage the younger ones. All these ideas of group learning are ways in which a child can be helped with developing their social skills.

Creating a secure and strong relationship within an early years setting is especially important to the development of the child. Practitioners will encourage secure relationships with themselves. This is one of the reasons why the keyworker idea was introduced as it means that a child will have a main point of contact. This means that they will be able to develop a secure relationship with their keyworker which will give them the confidence to explore and enjoy their time at the setting. The child should be encouraged to have a good relationship with all the practitioners working in the setting, but by having a keyworker, they have a safety net as such that they can go to if they do feel a bit unsure. The practitioner will need to spend time with the child to build up a secure relationship as it can take time. The practitioner will need to spend time getting to know the child. Finding out what they do and don't like. Asking questions about their home life and making sure they take the time to listen to the child, so they feel valued and that you really do care about them. The practitioner can make time to sit with the child and play with them and engage in play, all of which will help to cement the trust. The child must be able to feel they can go to their keyworker if they are finding things hard. The practitioner will also build up a good relationship with the child's parents/main carer and this will demonstrate to the child that they keyworker values the people close to them and shows how relationships are built. If the child's family are happy with the keyworker and are open and able to talk to them then the child will more likely follow.

As well as creating a secure relationship with their keyworker and other practitioners at the setting, it is important that a practitioner helps the child to create relationships with other children. This can be done by encouraging the child to join in and play with others, this can be done through the group learning as above. It could be that at each session the keyworker may spend a short while in a group with all his/her key children so that they spend time as a group and can get to know each other better. They could share ideas or spend a little bit of time by saying good morning and sharing any news they have from home. The practitioner can then encourage the other children in the group to give praise and acknowledge the child's sharing. This will teach the children to take an interest in others, know how to praise them and that it is good to share. This will help and encourage the children to build up friendships. This could be done for just a short time in each session and after that then the children can mix with the other children to also widen their circle of social interaction. The practitioner could set up role-play activities to show the way in which children can share they could demonstrate playing together and taking turns.

When building up relationship, children will begin to learn that they will have many emotions and will need to learn how to deal with upset and anger at times but also to enjoy the happiness as well so learning to understand their feelings. Children will learn about their emotions as they go through emotional development and how they can help use these emotions to show others how

they are feeling. It is about children learning what feelings and emotions are. When a child is born it is said they already have feelings and emotions, such as crying when they need something such as feeding / wet in their nappy or tired this is because from facial expression a baby can show anger, joy and fear. They will start to understand to calm themselves or respond to a familiar sound / voice that can soothe them. Children will start to show happiness by smiling around 2/3 months. 4 months is roughly when a child begin to be more aware of emotions, he/she will understand that he get upset if an item is taken from him or that he likes it when he has a cuddle. Learning about their emotions will take time as they need to grow these feelings and more aware of them and their self and how they feel. They will then begin to understand different emotions that they feel about others around them. Children will develop their self-esteem which is the feelings they have about themselves weather these are good or negative they will begin to understand how they feel and what they feel of them self. They will also develop self-concept which is the way in which a child sees themselves and how they feel that other people around them see them. As children develop their emotions they will begin to show that they can control their emotions , start to use words to show how they are feeling will learn when to ask for help if needed kif they are finding something nard. They will begin to show affection to people around them how they have created a bond with or who they have regular contact. As they develop these skills, they will also become more aware of other people feelings around them and will understand if someone is upset or happy.

Children will need guidance in understanding their emotions and feelings. When children feel these emotions, they need to be able to manage these. When children are young, they do not have the ability to control their emotions so will show us how they feel by as they cannot always tell us as they do not fully understand these emotions. They may use facial expressions or may use physical body actions to show us. Sometimes these actions can be shown by a child hitting or throwing when angry or becoming particularly excitable when showing joy. Adults can help show children how to manage their emotions, they will need to be guided and shown the best ways. Naming and talking through emotions with children is also important so they begin to understand these emotions, so they do not become afraid of them. Once a child knows what these emotions are, they can begin to learn how to control them. Some good ways to show a child how to help manage these are by taking deep slow breaths when they are feeling overwhelmed angry , asking for comfort such as a hug, doing something that they enjoy and they find relaxed them such as looking at a book, singing. They should be shown that its ok to ask for help when they are feeling emotions and encouraged to explain those feelings as best, they can. Practitioner could use cards that have face on them such as happy, sad, scared, excited or confused and a child could use these to point too if they are struggling to describe how they are feeling. Practitioner can spend some time with the children talking about feelings or using books to show feelings. The practitioner could use their own facial expression to show, such as if the children were not listening, they could show a grumpy face, or if the children are doing something well, they can show a happy face. The practitioner could show a sad face if they were to get hurt. Role-play is a good way a setting could show emotions the practitioner could act out scenarios showing a child hurt and show crying, they could act out a child achieving a task and show happiness, they could show giving comfort to another so showing love.

Factors which can affect the growth of relationships could be if a child is not given the opportunities to spend times with others and learn to accept other feelings as well as their own. Children need experience and opportunities to develop relationships. Factors such as a long-term illness could affect building relationships as if a child is aware of others or confined to a

hospital where they may not get as many interactions. If a child suffers from a learning disability, this could also be a factor that could cause it harder for a child to create friendships. A child with a learning disability may not be able to judge others feelings as well or maybe more impulsive so may not fully understand sharing and patience with others which can mean that it becomes harder for them to build up friendships. If a child is not able to have contact with others for long periods, this can also cause issues such as for example like we have been through with lockdown children were isolated away from friends and other family members so this may have caused a delay or a gap in this development of building up these secure friendships due to not having the social time to do this. If a family decide to move away to a different location then this can affect secure relationships because they may be too far away so they will not be able to develop them and also settling into a new setting can be tricky if friendships have already been established so it will take time and help from adults to help the child to settle and to start building up new friendships.

Above one of the areas I said could affect the development of relationships could be to do with the fact if a child suffers from a learning disability. In this case, it may be that the family/child has already had some outside help in aiding the child such as a health visitor or an educational psychologist who are there to help children in their learning and development if needed. They will be able to work alongside the family and work with the early years setting, so they all work together in the same way in order to benefit and help the child as much as possible.

Creating these attachments and relationships as we have seen are especially important for a child's development and future with regards to forming healthy, happy relationships. However, if a child does not experience this or have the opportunities to grow these then these can be classed as a child having developed an insecure attachment. This could be an Avoidant attachment. This is where a child has been brought up in an environment where their main carer is present in their lives but does not show them the comfort and emotional support that they need. It may be that the main carer does not know how to respond when a baby/child is showing their emotions and therefore will keep their distance rather than comfort. The issue with this is that the child learns that their needs will not be met so they learn to hold their emotions in and not to show them. If a child is cared or sad then their main carer / parents may not comfort them in the way they need or may even discourage them from crying or showing their emotions which in turn teaches the child that it isn't ok to show emotion. For example, if a child hurts themselves then they may be told that it is babyish or wrong to cry when hurt and that they should toughen up. To avoid this type of attachment the parents/main carer need to make sure that they offer comfort and reassurance and times this child is distressed rather than shaming. Offer them love when they need it to show that it is ok to show how they are feeling. Another type of insecure attachment is anxious attachment. If a child develops an anxious attachment that means as they develop and grow they will often have trouble when building up relationships as they may become clingy or may not trust the person and may seek constant reassurance from that person This can cause problems within relationships as they may become over bearing and may not be able to show the person any trust.