

ALVER VALLEY SCHOOLS EARLY YEARS NETWORK



Welcome

**MARCH 2022
FIRST NETWORK**



The Vision for the Network

A forum for Early Years practitioners to meet and share good practice, work collaboratively to develop our practice and improve outcomes for children in our local area.

Each session will include:

**NETWORKING &
SHARING
PRACTICE WITH
OTHER
PRACTITIONERS**

**A SHORT INPUT
ON AN AREA OF
INTEREST TO THE
GROUP**

**SHARING &
SIGNPOSTING
OF USEFUL
RESOURCES**

Changes in Early Years!



Seven Features of Effective Practice

1 The best for every child

- All children deserve to have an equal chance of success.



- High-quality early education is good for all children. It is especially important for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- When they start school, children from disadvantaged backgrounds are, on average, 4 months behind their peers. We need to do more to narrow that gap.



- Children who have lived through difficult experiences can begin to grow stronger when they experience high quality early education and care.

- High-quality early education and care is inclusive. Children's special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly. All children promptly receive any extra help they need, so they can progress well in their learning.

2 High-quality care

- The child's experience must always be central to the thinking of every practitioner.

- Babies, toddlers and young children thrive when they are loved and well cared for.



- High-quality care is consistent. Every practitioner needs to enjoy spending time with young children.

- Effective practitioners are responsive to children and babies. They notice when a baby looks towards them and gurgles and respond with pleasure.

- Practitioners understand that toddlers are learning to be independent, so they will sometimes get frustrated.

- Practitioners know that starting school, and all the other transitions in the early years, are big steps for small children.



3 The curriculum: what we want children to learn

- The curriculum is a top-level plan of everything the early years setting wants the children to learn.



- Planning to help every child to develop their language is vital.

- The curriculum needs to be ambitious. Careful sequencing will help children to build their learning over time.

- Young children's learning is often driven by their interests. Plans need to be flexible.

- Babies and young children do not develop in a fixed way. Their development is like a spider's web with many strands, not a straight line.



- Depth in early learning is much more important than covering lots of things in a superficial way.

4 Pedagogy: helping children to learn

- Children are powerful learners. Every child can make progress in their learning, with the right help.

- Effective pedagogy is a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other, and through guided learning and direct teaching.



- Practitioners carefully organise enabling environments for high-quality play. Sometimes, they make time and space available for children to invent their own play. Sometimes, they join in to sensitively support and extend children's learning.

- Children in the early years also learn through group work, when practitioners guide their learning.
- Older children need more of this guided learning.

- A well-planned learning environment, indoors and outside, is an important aspect of pedagogy.



5 Assessment: checking what children have learnt

- Assessment is about noticing what children can do and what they know. It is not about lots of data and evidence.



- Effective assessment requires practitioners to understand child development. Practitioners also need to be clear about what they want children to know and be able to do.



- Accurate assessment can highlight whether a child has a special educational need and needs extra help.

- Before assessing children, it's a good idea to think about whether the assessments will be useful.

- Assessment should not take practitioners away from the children for long periods of time.

6 Self-regulation and executive function

- Executive function includes the child's ability to:
 - hold information in mind
 - focus their attention
 - think flexibly
 - inhibit impulsive behaviour.



- These abilities contribute to the child's growing ability to self-regulate:

- concentrate their thinking
- plan what to do next
- monitor what they are doing and adapt
- regulate strong feelings
- be patient for what they want
- bounce back when things get difficult.

- Language development is central to self-regulation: children use language to guide their actions and plans.

- Pretend play gives many opportunities for children to focus their thinking, persist and plan ahead.



7 Partnership with parents

- It is important for parents and early years settings to have a strong and respectful partnership. This sets the scene for children to thrive in the early years.

- This includes listening regularly to parents and giving parents clear information about their children's progress.



- The help that parents give their children at home has a very significant impact on their learning.

- Some children get much less support for their learning at home than others. By knowing and understanding all the children and their families, settings can offer extra help to those who need it most.



- It is important to encourage all parents to chat, play and read with their children.

Working with the revised Early Years Foundation Stage Principles into Practice

Julian Grenier



<https://development-matters.org.uk/>

Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage

Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five

Published: 31 March 2021
Effective: 1 September 2021

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

SAME!

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING

Active learning - children concentrate & keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, & enjoy achievements



Playing & exploring - children investigate & experience things, & 'have a go'

Development Matters 2021

Creating & thinking critically - children have & develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, & develop strategies for doing things



Check out Alistair Bryce-Clegg webinar

**FOCUS ON
INTERACTIONS IN
PLAY**

**WORKING WITH
OTHER SETTINGS**

**RIGOR IN
ASSESSMENT,
IDENTIFICATION OF
GAPS &
INTERVENTION**

**DEVELOPING PRACTICE
IN COMMUNICATION &
VOCABULARY**

**RESEARCH
BASED PRACTICE**

**PROGRESSION IN
MARK MAKING
THROUGH TO
WRITING**

**CREATE A
COMMUNICATION
FRIENDLY
ENVIRONMENT**

**DEVELOPING SELF-
REGULATION
PEDAGOGY**

Sustained Shared Thinking

Sustained Shared Thinking is related to scaffolding. It is ‘an episode in which two or more individuals “work together” in an intellectual way to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate activities, extend a narrative etc. Both parties must contribute to the thinking and it must develop and extend’ (Siraj-Blatchford et al. 2002:8)

Key Concept:
Sustained ‘contribution to
thinking’

Can be verbal and non-
verbal support towards
thinking

Assessment (knowing
children) key

The adult role is to support the child’s thinking and learning sensitively so that the child has agency to explore, solve problems, think for themselves or in pairs and is also supported by the adult in their ZPD.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME: COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE CHANGE

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. **Children's back-and-forth interactions** from an early age **form the foundations for language and cognitive development**. The **number and quality** of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a **language-rich environment** is crucial. By **commenting** on what children are interested in or doing, and **echoing** back what they say with new **vocabulary** added, practitioners will build children's language effectively.



COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE CONTINUED

Reading frequently to children, and **engaging them actively** in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with **extensive opportunities to use and embed** new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where **children share** their ideas with **support** and **modelling** from their teacher, and **sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate**, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME: PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PSED is **crucial** for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is **fundamental** to their **cognitive development**. **Underpinning** their personal development are the **important attachments** that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive **relationships** with adults **enable** children to learn how to **understand** their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to **manage emotions**, develop a **positive sense of self**, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities...

PSED CONTINUED



...to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention necessary. Through adult **modelling** and **guidance**, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently.

Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

CHANGE

SELF-REGULATION

- Not born able to regulate
- Is learnt in a social context
- Role of adult interactions
- Language development key

ROLE OF THE ADULT? PEDAGOGY?

Pretend play provides opportunities for thinking, problem solving, collaboration, waiting and persisting and planning.



SELF-REGULATION AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTION

Executive function includes the child's ability to:

- hold information in mind
- focus their attention
- think flexibly
- inhibit impulsive behaviour.

These abilities contribute to the child's growing ability to self-regulate:

- concentrate their thinking
- plan what to do next
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- be patient for what they want
- bounce back when things get difficult.



PLAY



Play is **essential** for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by **leading their own play**, and by **taking part in play which is guided by adults**.

Practitioners need to **decide** what they want children in their setting to learn, and the most effective ways to teach it. Practitioners must **stimulate children's interests**, responding to each child's **emerging needs** and guiding their development through **warm, positive interactions** coupled with **secure routines** for play and learning.

EYFS Framework, DFE 2021:16

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Adult role - They **also** need adults to 'scaffold' their learning by giving them **just enough help** to achieve something they could not do independently.

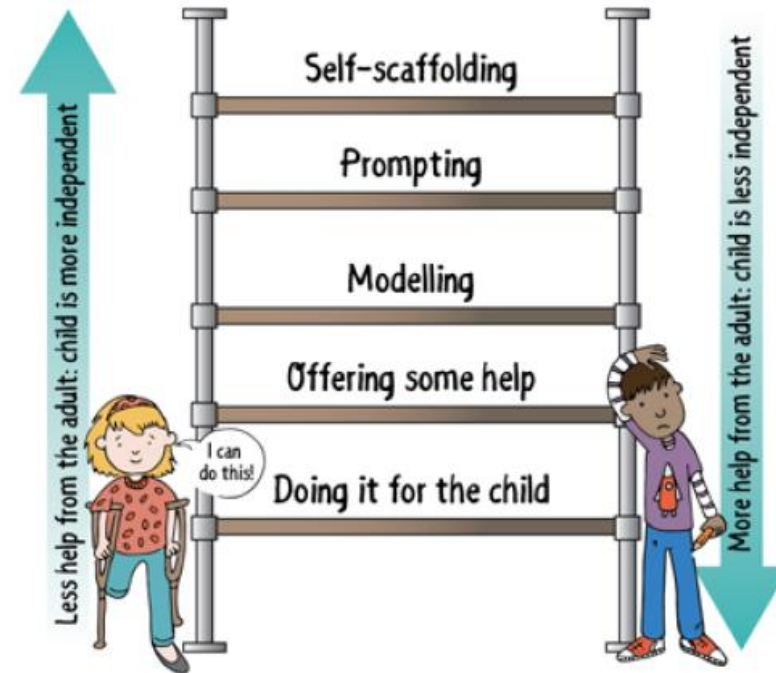
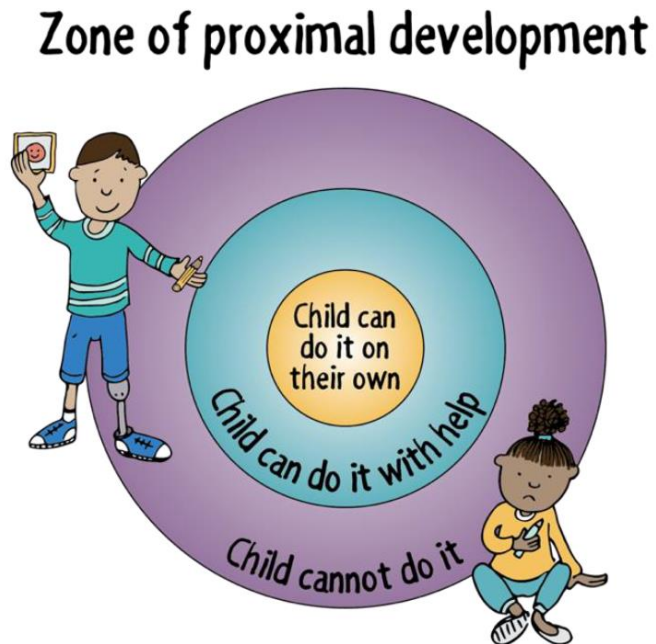
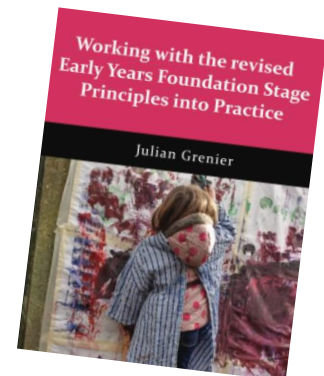
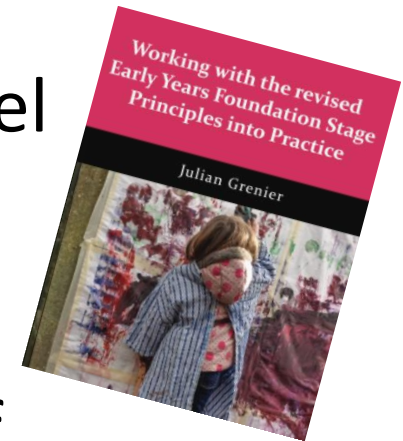


Figure 5: Scaffolding techniques in the early years



Scaffolding... involves explaining why it is important to take turns, and why it is important not to upset others. For that to be effective, the child must have a warm and trusting relationship with the adult in the first place. There has to be an all-round spirit of friendly co-operation. Practitioners can be sympathetic to the wishes and impulses of young children, as they help them learn to regulate their emotions. Children can learn that all feelings are valid, but not all behaviours are. It is alright to feel angry, but it's not okay to hit or hurt.



Pretend play

The evidence suggests that social pretend/ role play is one of the most powerful contexts for children to develop self-regulation, metacommunication and metacognition. In pretend play, children have to follow the 'rules' of the play and restrain their impulses for a time.

Sustained Shared Thinking

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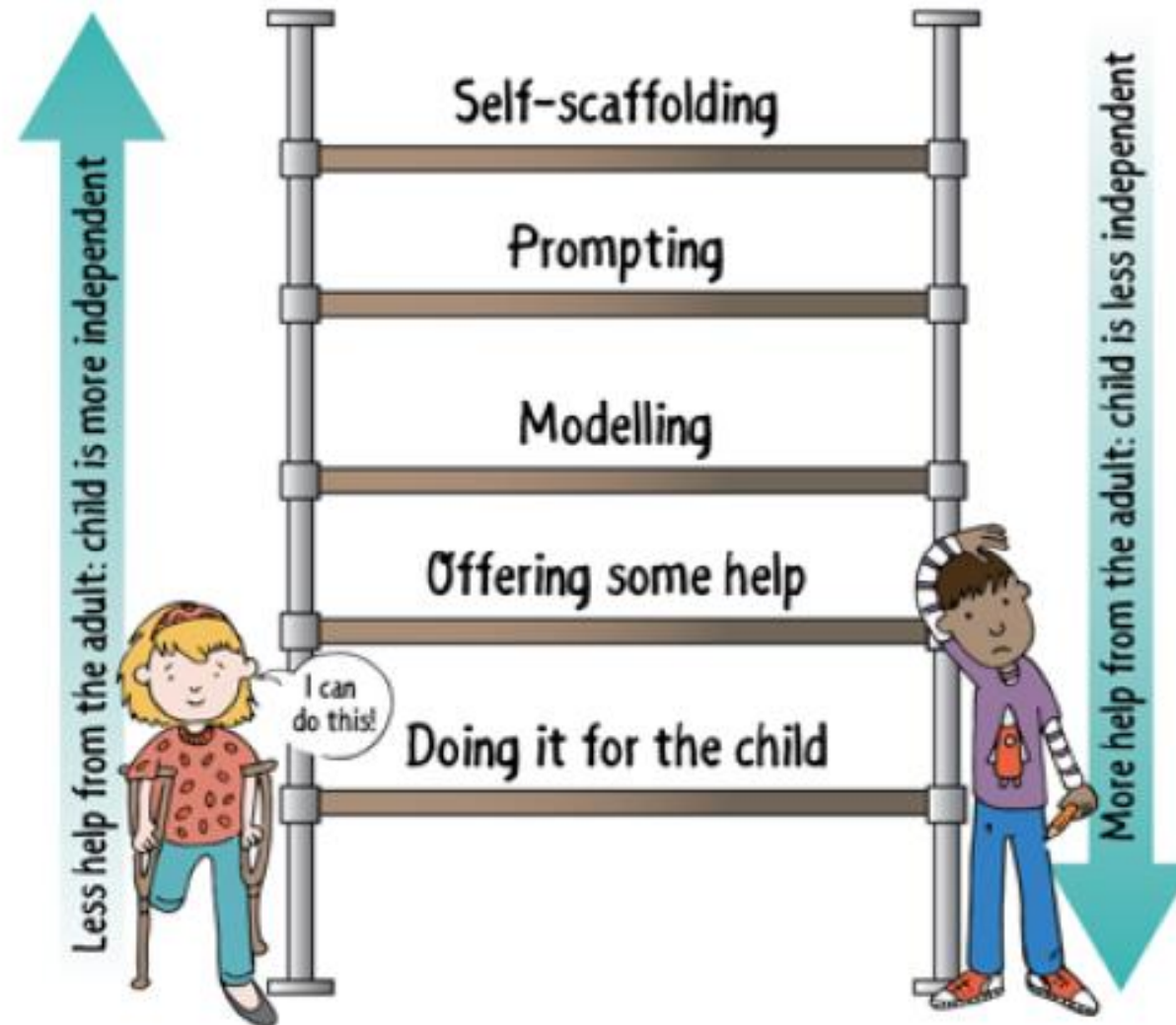
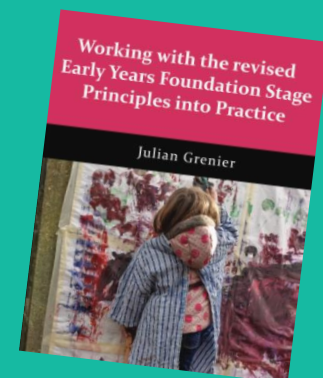


Figure 5: Scaffolding techniques in the early years

Grenier 2021:36-37



Ways to Support Sustained Shared Thinking

Tuning in: Listening carefully to what is being said, observing body language and what the child is doing

Showing genuine interest: Giving your whole attention, maintaining eye contact, affirming, smiling, nodding

Inviting children to elaborate: 'I really want to know more about this'

Re-capping: 'So far you have...'

Offering your own experience: 'I like to listen to music when I cook dinner at home'

Clarifying ideas: 'Right, so you think that this ice will melt if you put it in sun?'

Based on the work of Iram Siraj 2005 Early Education Sustained Shared Thinking Project

Ways to Support Sustained Shared Thinking

Suggesting: 'You might like to try doing it this way'

Reminding: 'Don't forget that you said the ice will melt if I put it in the sun'

Using encouragement to further thinking: 'You have really thought hard about where to put this door in the palace but where on earth will you put the windows?'

Offering an alternative viewpoint: 'Maybe Goldilocks wasn't naughty when she ate the porridge'

Speculating: 'Do you think the three bears would have liked Goldilocks to come to live with them as their friend?'

Reciprocating: 'Thank goodness that you were wearing wellington boots when you jumped in those puddles Kwame. Look at my feet they are soaking wet'

Based on the work of Iram Siraj 2005 Early Education Sustained Shared Thinking Project

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Ways to Support Sustained Shared Thinking

Thinking aloud: ‘Next I’m going to....’

Connecting ideas: ‘This reminds me of when Goldilocks...’ ‘we did something like this before...’

Reflecting back: ‘Let’s remember what you have done so far first you...’

Wondering aloud: ‘I wonder what would happen...’

Talking about feelings: ‘I think the Red Hen felt cross because the others wouldn’t help’

Posing Problems: ‘I see rain clouds in the distance, how can we make sure we don’t get wet?’ ‘How could we make this fair?’

Based on the work of Julie Fisher

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<https://www.sirenfilms.co.uk/library/why-dont-cows-live-in-the-water/>

- How are the children are learning?
- Which areas of development, engagement and characteristics of learning can you observe?
- In what ways does the adult support the children's learning?

SUPPORTING SUSTAINED SHARED THINKING

WONDERING

"I wonder what would happen..."

THINKING ALOUD

"Next I'm going to..."

CONNECTING IDEAS

"This reminds me of when Goldilocks..."
"We did something like this before..."

RE-CAPPING

"So far you have..."

OFFERING AN ALTERNATIVE VIEWPOINT

"Maybe Goldilocks wasn't naughty when she ate the porridge."

REMINDING

"Don't forget that you said the ice will melt if I put it in the sun."

SPECULATING

"Do you think the three bears would have liked Goldilocks to come and live with them as their friend?"

POSING PROBLEMS

"I see rain clouds in the distance, how can we make sure we don't get wet?"
"How could we make this fair?"

CLARIFYING IDEAS

"So you think that..."

INVITING TO ELABORATE

"I really want to know more about this."

OFFERING OWN EXPERIENCE

"I like to listen to music when I cook dinner at home."

TALKING ABOUT FEELINGS

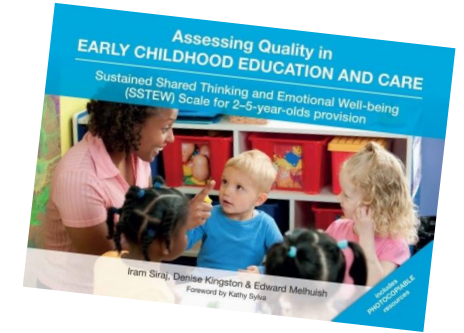
"I think the Red Hen felt cross because the others wouldn't help."

SUGGESTING

"You might like to try doing it this way"

Poster available to
download on the AVS
Early Years Network page
on our website

Sustained Shared Thinking & Emotional Well-being Scale (SSTEWS) for 2-5-year-olds Provision



Building trust, and independence

- *Self regulation & social development*
- *Encouraging choices & independent play*
- *Planning for small group & individual interactions/adult deployment*

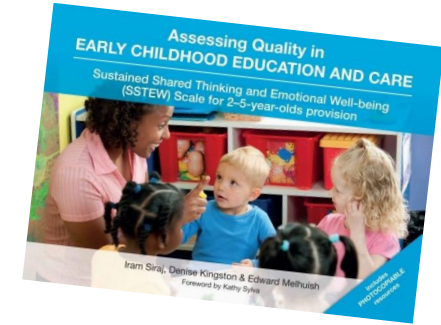
Social and Emotional Wellbeing

- *Supporting socio-emotional well-being*

Supporting and extending language and communication

- *Encouraging children to talk with others*
- *Staff actively listen to children & encourage children to listen*
- *Staff support children's language use*
- *Sensitive responsiveness*

Sustained Shared Thinking & Emotional Well-being Scale (SSTEWS) for 2-5-year-olds Provision



Supporting learning and critical thinking

- *Supporting curiosity & problem-solving*
- *Encouraging sustained shared thinking through storytelling, sharing books, singing & rhymes*
- *Encouraging sustained shared thinking in investigation & exploration*
- *Supporting children's concept development & higher order thinking*

Assessing learning and language

- *Using assessment to support & extend learning and critical thinking*
- *Assessing language development*

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING

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Playing & exploring – children investigate & experience things, & 'have a go'

Development Matters 2021

Creating & thinking critically – children have & develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, & develop strategies for doing things



CHALLENGE TO WHAT EXTENT DO OUR INTERACTIONS, CURRICULUM, ROUTINES, ENVIRONMENT, ALLOW CHILDREN TO DEVELOP THE COEL?

Reflection & Next Steps

- How do I currently support and extend children's thinking?
 - In the environment?
 - In the curriculum and routines?
 - In my interactions?
- How effectively do I facilitate and support children's conversations?
- How visible do I make my own thinking to children?
- What do I need to do next?

**CHALLENGE TO WHAT
EXTENT DO OUR
INTERACTIONS,
CURRICULUM, ROUTINES
& ENVIRONMENT ALLOW
CHILDREN TO DEVELOP
THE COEL?**

SIGNPOSTING & RESOURCES

Network Resources and Information

<http://www.alvervalleyschools.co.uk/early-years-network/>

Check out Alistair Bryce-Clegg webinar:

<https://abcdoes.com/webinars/early-years-framework-2021/>

Working with the revised Early Years Foundation Stage: Principles into Practice download

<https://development-matters.org.uk/>

EYFS Framework 2021

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

Please give us your [feedback](#).

