

Teaching and Learning

Under 2's – Curriculum



When planning and creating your curriculum for children under 2, you need to establish exactly what skills you want the children to master in order to be able to thrive and flourish in their learning and development, think of it as the foundation blocks to successful lifelong learning. Babies and toddlers require a developmentally appropriate and flexible curriculum that supports their holistic growth and is responsive to their individual needs and interests.

“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.”

Grenier, J (2020).

Let’s explore how **care, learning and development** and the **characteristics of effective learning** support you further in creating an effective curriculum that works for the under 2’s in your setting.

TASK 1

It is important that your curriculum for your under 2’s, promotes high quality **care**. Refer to the list below, does your curriculum promote high quality care for under 2’s? Reflect on your own practice and learning environments and consider what could be improved. Are there any other aspects of high-quality care that you can incorporate into curriculum?

Does your curriculum include...

- A safe environment – such as soft flooring, safe furniture, and age-appropriate toys.
- A clean, hazard free and well- maintained space where babies and toddlers can explore without risk.
- Well trained practitioners in caring for babies and have excellent child development knowledge.
- Practitioners with good observational skills.
- An environment that is rich in sensory experiences and exploration.
- Consistent caregivers who are warm, loving, nurturing and responsive to each child's needs, enabling them to build secure attachments and trust.
- Practitioners who are attentive to a child's cues for feeding, sleeping, and comfort and respond promptly and appropriately.
- Consistent routines embedded with a flexible approach that provide each infant with a sense of security.
- Well-designed environments that encourage babies to explore and discover, supporting problem solving and critical thinking.
- High quality interactions which encourage infants to engage with their peers and build early social skills.
- Practitioners who promote independence and self-help skills in the under 2's in a well-considered staged approach.
- Healthy nutritious meals and snacks.

- The teaching and modelling of hygiene practices such as hand washing, brushing teeth and clearing up.
- Strong parent, partnership working.
- The promotion of diverse and cultural representation, such as incorporating books, photos and toys that reflect various cultures and disabilities.
- Collaboration with families to honour their cultural values and caregiving practices that can be incorporated into your curriculum.
- Effective support of babies and toddlers to ensure smooth transitions between activities and room changes.

TASK 2

“The Prime areas of learning are vital for all babies and young children because they underpin all later learning. The statutory framework for the EYFS says they are ‘particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships, and thriving.’”

(Ofsted, 2023)

Within your team, reflect on how you incorporate the prime areas of **learning and development** into your curriculum for the under two’s.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- How does your curriculum foster secure attachments and emotional well-being in the under two's?
- In what ways are opportunities provided for babies and toddlers to begin developing self-awareness and confidence in a group setting?
- How do practitioners support early social interactions, such as sharing turn-taking and understanding their own emotions and of others?

Physical Development

- How does your curriculum ensure babies and toddlers are provided with as many opportunities as possible to develop their physical skills, such as crawling, walking, or grasping?
- Does the environment offer safe spaces for both gross and fine motor development?
- Do you encourage and practice tummy time from a very early age and work with parents to promote this?
- How are the children supported in developing self-care skills such as feeding from a spoon, drinking from a cup, taking off their own shoes and washing their hands etc?

Communication and Language Development:

- How are daily routines and activities used to model and encourage language development?
- What strategies are in place to support non-verbal communications such as gestures, facial expressions, and visuals for the under 2's?

- How does your curriculum promote listening and attentions skills, and how is this adapted to meet the individual needs for the children?
- Do you promote plenty of language exposure? Such as story time, singing and talking to children even if they are not yet speaking?

TASK 3

When creating your curriculum for 0–2-year-olds, the **Characteristics of Effective Learning** require careful consideration. Reflect on the questions below and discuss how your curriculum fosters the Characteristics of Effective Learning:

Playing and Exploring

- How does your curriculum provide opportunities for babies and toddlers to engage in their environment?
- How does your curriculum promote the use of open-ended resources and materials available to all children to access open-ended play?
- How do you observe and respond to each child's interests during play?

Active Learning

- How does your curriculum promote the support you provide in developing 0-2 years olds persistence and concentration?
- How does your curriculum promote the use of strategies used in celebrating successes and how do you encourage further attempts?
- How does your curriculum ensure 0–2-year-olds have plenty of opportunities to engage in physical activities that challenge their fine and gross motor skills?

Creating and thinking critically

- How does your curriculum ensure 0–2-year-olds have plenty of opportunities for creativity and problem solving?
- How does your curriculum ensure children are exposed to a variety of open-ended resources that offer multiple ways of playing?
- How does your curriculum facilitate opportunities for children to think critically about their play and make connections between different experiences?

Useful links and resources:

[Help for early years providers : Curriculum planning \(education.gov.uk\)](#)

[thecuriosityapproach.com/blog/Early-years-curriculum](#)

[How to Plan for & Observe Babies and Toddlers in Early Learning Services! \(theempowerededucatoronline.com\)](#)

[Quality in the baby room | Croner-i \(croneri.co.uk\)](#)

[DAP: Planning and Implementing an Engaging Curriculum to Achieve Meaningful Goals | NAEYC](#)

[Best start in life part 2: the 3 prime areas of learning - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[A strong foundation in the early years is crucial to children's success - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Related Q card: [Let's reflect - Quality curriculum \(leicester.gov.uk\)](#)