Personal education plan toolkit for early years education

Identification of pre school and year R children's needs, supportive strategies and interventions within the pre school setting

2018

Hampshire Services
VIRTUAL SCHOOL CiC

**Hampshire Virtual School
for Children in Care
Children's Services Department**

Hampshire
County Council

Produced by:

Julia Alfano
Educational Psychologist (LAC lead)

Michelle Cain
Education Adviser for the Hampshire Virtual School for Children in Care

Kirsty Joisce
Senior Educational Psychologist (Early Years)

Concept/commissioning of document:

Anwen Foy
Head Teacher, Hampshire Virtual School for Children in Care

Foreword
by Brian Pope

It is well known that there is a large discrepancy between the educational outcomes of children in care and those in the general population and that, despite the challenges that many of our children in care face, we should be enabling them to achieve much better outcomes.

We know that colleagues in schools and from across Children's Services share our commitment to improve the education of the children in our care, but sometimes find it difficult to identify the specific areas of need that require intervention. Consequently this makes it increasingly difficult to plan appropriately to meet these needs, engage the children in their learning and thus support them to attain the educational outcomes to which they are entitled.

The first edition of the PEP Toolkit was a pioneering piece of work and in which we have provided school and Children's Services staff with clear guidelines on how to identify, and then meet, the needs of children in care in educational settings. We know that children in care generally do not differ in their cognitive ability to their peers but their educational attainments are significantly lower. This new Early Years toolkit will provide information that will help those working with this vulnerable group of children in the early years to identify specific areas of need that may be impacting on educational outcomes. In addition, it will offer practical guidance on how best to meet these needs and thus raise attainment. The toolkit is divided into two sections. The first section is a needs identification tool which will guide staff in identifying particular behaviours, skill deficits, cognitions and emotional difficulties that are affecting learning. The areas of need that we have identified as being the most frequently cited by educational and social care staff as requiring targeted intervention are: difficulties with adult relationships, difficulties with peer relationships, difficulties with executive functioning skills (for example, organisation and planning, attention and concentration), difficulties with self-regulation of behaviour and learning, poor motivation, a negative self-concept and specific difficulties around language and communication. The second section has a chapter devoted to each of the areas of need, with practical guidance for staff on how best to meet these needs. However, in identifying specific needs, staff also need to be mindful of the strengths of the children and the situations in which these difficulties are not present, as this is as important to identify when planning interventions.

We hope you find this Early Years Toolkit useful.

Brian Pope
Assistant Director, Education and Inclusion

Children's Services Department, Hampshire County Council,
Floor 3, EII Court, Winchester

Tel: 02392 441471
E-mail: brian.pope@hants.gov.uk

Foreword
by Anwen Foy

The purpose of this toolkit is to enable schools to secure good educational outcomes for children in care.

Effective use of the toolkit will support schools in their recognition and management of children in care through clear identification of need and suggested interventions, thus assisting the personal education plan (PEP) process. This new edition has been written specifically to support practitioners in early years settings.

The need for this toolkit and associated guidance became evident to Hampshire's Virtual School team as a result of our collaborative work with schools, settings and other partners to raise and improve educational outcomes of children in care. We know that there is the will and moral purpose to achieve this, and that progress has been made. However, standards for children in care remain unacceptably low.

The first edition of the PEP toolkit is now widely used by schools to help identify the specific needs of children and young people in care. As a result, teachers have been able to adapt their practice or put in place strategies to secure learning to bring about better outcomes.

Schools and settings educate children and the local authority provides challenge and support to achieve high standards for all children. In this instance, our focus is on those in our care and it is important that we support schools and settings to devise effective PEPs that enable all our children to achieve good educational outcomes. Most children in care do not differ in their ability to access the curriculum but their educational outcomes are generally poorer than those of their peers. This is related to the many other factors influencing their learning which we hope have been captured in this document. The needs identification and guideline information are intended to help staff in schools, settings and social care recognise where the difficulties lie and to offer ideas for classroom management together with specific teaching strategies and interventions that can be incorporated into the PEP.

We trust you will find the toolkit and guidance useful in enabling you to secure good educational outcomes for our children in care.

Anwen Foy
Head Teacher, Hampshire Virtual School for Children in Care

Children's Services Department, Hampshire County Council,
Elizabeth II Court East, The Castle, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 8UG

E-mail: anwen.foy@hants.gov.uk

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The authors would like to thank **Family Futures Consortium** whose work we have drawn on extensively in this document and who have kindly given us permission to reproduce some of this work. Family Futures has made a significant and pioneering contribution to this field and also provides training for teachers and educationalists. Family Futures also offer an intensive assessment and treatment programme for children who are fostered or adopted. Family Futures are an adoption support and adoption agency.

Family Futures Consortium Ltd
3 & 4 Floral Place
7-9 Northampton Grove
Islington
London
N1 2PL

Tel: 020 7354 4161

Email general enquiries: contact@familyfutures.co.u
Email training enquiries: training@familyfutures.co.uk

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PAC, 5 Torriano Mews
Torriano Avenue London NW5 2RZ

Advice line 020 7284 5879 (Monday to Friday 10:00 – 13:00; Wednesday& Thursday 17:30 – 19.30)

Office: 020 7284 0555

ww.pac.org.uk
http://www.pac.org.uk/Schools
Email: advice@pac.org.uk

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Introduction

Attachment begins in pregnancy and develops throughout infancy and toddlerhood. It is the bond that grows between a parent and their child through affectionate feelings, thoughts and actions.

Touch, eye contact, smells, smiles, parental control and, most of all, joy and attunement play a major role in this process. A positive attachment triggers a heart and mind development in the child that lays the foundation for future relationships; a safe and sensitive first experience of a close relationship equips the child to form healthy relationships with self and others in the future (Cocking and Georgiades, 2003). The first three years of a child's life are particularly important in determining how they form relationships with others in the future. For a baby, human contact and interaction is part of survival and it will engage other humans to get its needs met by any means necessary (Cocking and Georgiades, 2003). If a baby's basic needs are not met by its carers in a consistent, caring way, its expectations and ways of engaging with the world become distorted. One of the child's biggest fears is of no human contact at all. Therefore, it is better to have cries met with anger and irritation than to be ignored. If this is a persistent pattern in the child's early life, they begin to lose the ability to tell the difference between positive and negative attention or to value one over the other. Their aim is to avoid being forgotten and neglected (Cocking and Georgiades, 2003). Children with these difficulties may act out these feelings of rejection with practitioners at pre school as these are the child's attachment figures in the setting. In fact, the more maternal the practitiioner (male or female) the more likely they are to experience this type of behaviour from the children with attachment difficulties.

Some children with disrupted patterns of attachment have had early histories that have left them feeling completely out of control of their destiny. They have been moved between their birth parents, relatives, foster carers or child care institutions a number of times. Furthermore, many children awaiting adoption will remain in foster care for some time before suitable adoptive parents are found. Even though social workers work hard to prepare children for moves, the impact on the child goes beyond an intellectual understanding of why and where and whom. Many children recount their life stories with little prompting. What is often missing from these stories is the sensory, emotional and psychological experience of this history; the impact of which cannot be underestimated. It is not, therefore, surprising that once such a child is old enough, they begin to find ways of taking control of their environment and relationships. Their aim is to escape from the feelings of helplessness and chaos in their lives (Cocking and Georgiades, 2003).

Footnote
Much of the information in the introduction has been taken from Cocking and Georgiades, Working with adopted and fostered children in education (a publication from the Post Adoption Centre 2003) and used with their kind permission.

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In the setting difficulties stemming from this early disruptive history may manifest in one or more areas, including; relationships with teachers/practitioners and peers, problems with activities and in more general emotional and behavioural difficulties. In order to best meet the needs of children in care (CiC) in early years settings it is critical that the PEP is thorough and comprehensive, clearly identifying the specific needs and outlining appropriate related interventions.

The following toolkit is designed as a way of helping practitioners and social workers achieve this aim. It must be mentioned, however, that not all CiC experience the difficulties identified in this document and some are happy well-adjusted children. This needs to be borne in mind when using the needs identification toolkit and a focus on the children's strengths and resiliency is also of utmost importance.

The guidance and advice in the Early Years PEP covers the complete Foundation stage curriculum and thus includes YR school children as well as pre-school age children.

In the text the use of teacher and practitioner is interchangeable as are classroom, setting, school and pre-school.
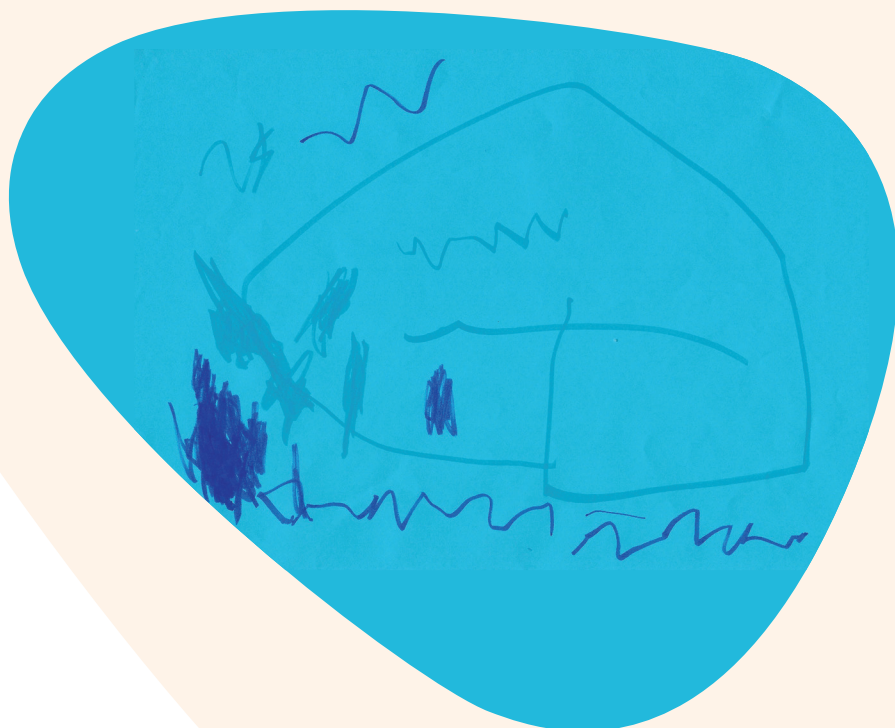
Administration guidelines

1. Who is this toolkit for?

The toolkit is designed to be used as an aid to writing PEPs in early years settings, so can be used by early years practitioners and social workers. This toolkit is aimed at children in the early years foundations stage (EYFS) although school staff may also refer to the school version of the document.

2. Who is the tool designed to be used with?

The tool is designed to be used primarily with CiC when writing their PEPS.

In addition, it may be appropriate to use the tool with children who: have been adopted; are on the edge of care; currently or previously have had some social care involvement; live with extended family members (kinship care) as part of an Inclusion Partnership Agreement (IPA).

The items in the profile have been specifically developed from a literature review identifying the most frequently occurring behaviours, cognitions, affective (mood) states and specific skill deficits found in children who have been in care or are on the edge of care. It must, however, be noted that not all children in care or on the edge of care will present with difficulties, and it is important to focus on resiliency factors in addition to needs.

3. Purpose of the toolkit

The PEP toolkit is specifically designed to provide a structure for gathering and recording information being sought from the adults supporting children, in order to plan appropriate interventions and monitor their effectiveness over a period of time.

4. The child's voice

This toolkit is specifically designed to gain the perspective of the adults around a child. It is, however, also advisable to complete the PEP with the involvement of the child, to help plan appropriate interventions, taking into consideration their perspectives.

5. Reviewing the needs analysis outcomes

Pre school managers are advised to review the needs analysis outcomes in conjunction with the two-year old check and the child development national benchmark tool.

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Personal education plan toolkit – needs analysis tool

Use this toolkit to support the summary of needs that are causing a barrier to learning

Information from the education health and care plan (EHCP) should be used when identifying needs.

Consider the following questions in relation to behaviours, actions, cognitions, skills and emotions the child demonstrates.

Note: The following are to be used just as a guide. The following areas of need are not necessarily fixed and they may change depending on factors such as mood, the nature and quality of the relationship the child is in and whether the child is in a situation they find particularly challenging or anxiety provoking. **Many young children will present with behaviours identified below as part of typical development.** Practitioners looking at the needs analysis should consider whether the child demonstrates behaviour that is significantly different to what might be typical for a child at a given age.

It may be useful when considering these questions, to contemplate in what situations these behaviours do not occur, as these can be just as powerful when designing support and intervention.

Does the child	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always
Deny the need for support from the adult?					
Appear sensitive to the proximity of the adult?					
Need consistency from the adult or they become unsettled?					
Show hositlity to the adult if directed?					
Appear sensitive to tone of voice, body language, perceived warmth of the adult?					
Have a constant need for adult attention?					
Show dependence on the adult?					
Direct hostility to the adult when frustrated?					
Have difficulties showing trust to adults?					
Show controlling tendencies especially when directed by an adult?					
Sometimes seek/respond to affectionate contact and reject it at other times?					
Engage in regressive behaviours with the adult (i.e. acting in a baby-like manner)?					
Crave affection/approval of adults but remain insecure when reassurance is given?					
Resent the adult giving approval/affection to other children?					

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Does the child	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always
Have difficulties with peer relationships (maybe physically aggressive to others)?					
Have difficulties with co-operative play?					
Have difficulties abiding by the rules of the group at any time?					
Have difficulties accommodating other children when they play/socialise?					
Lack interest in their peers (may be more focused on adult attention and be hositle to peers if they think this is being taken away)?					

Does the child have marked difficulties with	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always
Inhibiting their behaviour – this is the ability to stop one's behaviour at the appropriate time and not acting on one's immediate impulse. These children appear out of control in the early years setting and may show particular difficulties in non-structured periods and activities and need the presence of an external regulator to assist them in managing their impulses.					
Shifting – this is the ability to move from one activity to another and make smooth transitions within any problem-solving activity. Children with difficulties in these areas tend: to be inflexible in their aproach and can find it difficult to switch from one activity to another; to become disoriented by change; to not be able to move on from a playtime dispute.					
Working memory – the abiltiy to use working memory involves the ability to hold information in one's mind in order to complete a task.					
Impulsivity and attention control – does the child: ● appear impulsive ● require immediate gratification ● have difficulty in sustaining attention in tasks ● tend to be easily distracted ● fidget with hands/squirm in seat ● call out answers to questions before they are completed ● have difficulty waiting for their turn ● have a tendency to interrupt others?					

Does the child	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always
Have difficulties calming themselves down after an altercation? What is the approximate time taken to calm down?					
Have uncontrolled/unpredictable emotional outbursts (e.g. to release/relieve pent-up anger/agression/anxiety)?					
Have difficulties in controlling reactions when they do not get immediate attention (poor frustration tolerance)?					
Overreact to affection or attention (e.g. may become overexcited, loud, boisterous)?					

Does the child have difficulties	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always
Making efforts to improve?					
Working towards tangible rewards?					
Responding to positive social reinforcement (e.g. a smile/verbal praise)?					
Accepting feedback?					
Maintaining confidence when learning new skills?					
Readily answering questions?					
Enjoying responsibilities?					
Enjoying the process of learning through play?					
Enjoying the times when they are given a choice in what to play and learn?					
Believing they can succeed?					
Persevering with challenging tasks?					

Does the child	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always
Explode into temper/rage/violence when thwarted/frustrated/criticised?					
React hypersensitively to the criticism of others?					
Spoil, or show negativity, to the achievements of others?					
React defensively when there is a perceived threat (this can be related to play and learning activities)?					
Appear self-denigrating/self-demeaning?					
Do they have difficulty accepting compliments?					
Appear listless/work only with direct support?					
Find it difficult to accept when disapproval is shown or when attention is withdrawn?					

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Does the child	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always
Have a negative body image?					
Display a high level of anxiety in the setting (maybe demonstrated by controlling behaviour)?					
Have difficulties accepting not knowing things and asking for help from others?					

For their age, does the child have difficulties in their first language with	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always
Receptive language?					
Expressive language?					
Intelligibiity of speech sounds?					
Expressive grammar skills?					
Narrative organisation skills?					
Expressing age appropriate vocabulary?					
Age appropriate thinking and problem-solving skills, such as visual-spatial tasks and practical skills that do not involve language?					

Reflect on the responses to the questions and look at where the frequency of ticks occur for each section. Correspond with the colour coded table below to help you identify the underlying needs of the CiC. You can then refer to the relevant pages in the handbook to gain further insight and knowledge about these needs and decide on possible suitable interventions; there are also useful suggestions and strategies to help practitioners to support the children. This needs identification can be photocopied for each child with whom it is to be used.

Identified need of CiC	Refer to the chapter on page
Relationships	15
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Chapter 1:
Relationships

Research suggests that CiC often have difficulties forming relationships with adults. Sadly, some children spend the first months or years of their lives being told how bad they are. For others, though, their lack of worth may not actually be expressed in words but in actions or lack of action.

Being beaten, punched, kicked, bitten or burnt is more than enough to demonstrate to anybody that they are unworthy of love or care. Having to find one's own food, being abandoned or living in squalor and excrement understandably will affect one's view of life. Even being placed for adoption as a baby can lead to profound feelings of worthlessness. When all this is put into context, one can begin to see the dark cloud of shame under which these children live; it is not surprising that many of these children have difficulties trusting adults which may lead to difficulties in their relationships with adults (Allen, 2008).

The following section outlines some recommendations that can support young CiC form positive relationships with adults.

The key person role

Attachment is defined as a *"lasting psychological connectedness between human beings"* (John Bowlby, 1969). The external connections a child makes with its attachment figure (usually its parent) from birth provide a secure base which is fundamental to the development of positive relationships that promote learning. Attachment theory explains normal development to ensure survival and it provides us with the essential foundations for social and emotional learning and wider development. Within close relationships children acquire representations or internal models of themselves and their worthiness based on the availability and ability of the caregiver to provide care and protection. The child of an attuned, emotionally available supportive caregiver will be secure and have a model of self as valued and competent. However, the child of a neglectful and maltreating caregiver will be insecure and have a model of self that is incompetent.

Empathy is developed through this relationship and empathy is the key to controlling aggression and the ability to understand the needs of others. Thus, securely attached children are able to confidently explore their environment (as they show curiosity and interest) thereby enhancing cognitive development. They tend to feel valued and therefore demonstrate a positive sense of self-worth (so they may show you their painting and puzzles etc.), they have greater self-esteem (they are pleased with their achievement so will take risks) and have greater impulse control (they do not get over excited frustrated or cross as much), they are socially skilled (they can share and take turns) and have good language skills (so they can express themselves and

understand age appropriate language) and overall they have a better understanding of themselves and others, having secure emotional well-being (including emotional self-regulation and more effective coping skills). All the above are core components in learning success. Conversely poor attachments can result in difficulties in all the above areas. Thus attachment is central to learning.

Consistent with attachment theory, it is necessary that these vulnerable children form a close bond with one or two adults in the early years setting. The EYFS identifies the importance of attachment figures for all young children through the key person approach. For more vulnerable children the role of the key person is even more critical to supporting development and the adult will need to provide:

- a high level of nurture and engage in nurturing activities with the child
- a high level of empathy and attunement with the child
- a high level of structure and consistency for the child
- a high level of engagement with the child
- emotional containment for the child when they are distressed, which may include physical contact, cuddling and holding as appropriate for the child.

The practitioner identified to take on the key person role will need to be best placed to develop this relationship and be able to provide the stability and consistency a vulnerable child will be likely to need. They will need to be available as much as possible during the sessions that the child is attending and should be someone who the child has been observed to relate to positively (e.g. through settling in visits). The allocation of this role needs to be given careful consideration, as it could be emotionally demanding for the practitioner as well as the child.

Further information on relationships and social and emotional development can be found in the *Social and emotional aspects of Learning (2008)* publication and *Social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL)* materials for Year R.

Support and consistency

The following interventions are adapted from Cocking and Georgiades' *Working with adopted and fostered children in education publication* (PAC, 2003) reproduced with their kind permission.

- The partnership between home and setting is essential for meeting these children's needs. Communication between home and setting should be carried out directly between the adults. The child should never be used as an intermediary or to convey information to and from their carers. Information can become distorted and misinterpreted by the child consciously or unconsciously, which can lead to a breakdown in communication and relations.

- It is important that all the adults involved with the child have regular meetings to share fruitful strategies and to ensure they are using a consistent approach.

- Although lines of communication should remain open between home and setting, what happens at home, in terms of misbehaviour, should be dealt with at home and what happens in the setting should be dealt with in the setting.

- Contact with home is important. This could be achieved through permission to receive phone calls at lunchtime to remind them that they are loved and being thought about.

- Be aware that the child may try to get you to reject them in some way. A child who has deep-rooted feelings of anger, low self-worth and fear may unconsciously project these feelings into the child/adult relationship. These children can provoke very negative reactions in adults and thus reinforce their own feelings of self-doubt and worthlessness. This transference is very powerful. A space for the adult to talk and recognise this process with other staff when trying to recognise and work with it is helpful.

- Be aware of short-term memory problems due to the child's need in the past to be hypervigilant. Their failure to retain information should not be interpreted as defiance. They may need instructions or information repeated several times. Check that the child comprehends

instructions and help them to stay emotionally connected with what is going on by repeating and reinforcing information, rather than extending support time.

- Staff changes can be a real source of anxiety for children with attachment difficulties. They may experience all kinds of fantasies about what has happened to absent adults or feel responsible in some way for the member of staff being off work. Children with attachment difficulties are likely to need more information and reassurance than other children about staff changes in order to reduce their anxiety. Give the child as much notice as possible of forthcoming changes.

- When children do form attachments to the adult, transition times such as moving from room to room, inside to outside, moving between settings and term breaks can evoke unconscious feelings of abandonment. The imminent loss involved in these situations triggers a high level of anxiety and a number of the behaviours described earlier. To pre-empt and minimise this behaviour, thought needs to be given to the way in which such transitions take place.

The transition to school (and consequently the end of time at pre school) or transition between settings can be particularly distressing for these children as endings are often associated with loss or rejection, so this time needs to be handled particularly sensitively. The child may need a visual reminder of the special times they have had in the pre school setting (e.g. photos from their learning journal). The child's key person in the pre school will need to prepare the child and recognise with the child that change can be difficult (at a level appropriate to the child). Through discussion between settings, it may be possible for the key person to be available to the child at certain times following the transition (e.g. where a preschool and school are located on the same site). As for all young children, but even more importantly for vulnerable children, transition visits should take place to the receiving setting to introduce the child to the new environment and new adults. A transition book or therapeutic story can be used to provide a permanent visual reminder of what is going to happen and the support that will be available (e.g. who to ask for help).

Boundaries

As the adult, it is the practitioner's responsibility to understand that CiC often have a history of rejection and expect, and even provoke, further rejection from adults in their lives. It is therefore imperative to avoid getting into control battles and to be self-aware of how we react to and deal with the behaviour that manifests as a result of the child's background.

Some of the following interventions have been reproduced and adapted with kind permission from *Attachment, developmental trauma and executive functioning difficulties in the school setting* (Allen, M Family Futures Publication. 2008). *Please consider in terms of age appropriate for EYE children.*

- Reprimands - keeping the reprimand succinct and focused enables the child to recognise your awareness of the misdemeanour and their need to take responsibility for their actions whilst minimising the possibility that shame will lead to anger, denial or dissociation. Ensure that you use an appropriate level of language for the child and don't expect them to be able to tell you why they have behaved the way they have; they may well be unable to answer you.

- Avoid long, drawn-out enquiries to elicit the truth. Don't be tempted to demand eye contact. You may feel that a lack of eye contact demonstrates rudeness but this can be incredibly difficult for a CiC since it can replicate early experiences. In actual fact, they do not need to actually look at you to hear you. They may be sinking in shame and imagining and predicting consequences in their mind before you even start talking. They are probably very afraid.

- For minor misdemeanours, the only question could be simply: *What could you have done differently?* This may help the child think and adults might be able to provide some suggestions for the child to consider as alternatives (if they are not able to provide these for themselves).

Consequences need to be specifically related to the behaviour and to be short-term. Consequences that add to their shame, e.g. being asked to sit away from the rest of the group, will confirm their belief about their unworthiness and will compound the shame with which they live constantly.

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With young children, natural and logical consequences should be used as far as possible.

- A natural consequence means that something happens because of something a child chooses to do (e.g. if Dad suggests that his child wears a coat outside and then they choose to go outside without a coat, a natural consequence might be that they get cold). The result is a consequence of the choice the child makes and is not imposed by the adult.

- A logical consequence is something that happens as a result of the child's actions but is imposed by the adult (e.g. if you throw the sand, it will have to be put away for the rest of the morning). Logical consequences are likely to be needed if there is potential for harm to the child (or other children). They should always be reasonable and related to the problem and come from the child's decision or choice. Try to ensure that consequences: fit the behaviour; are short; are completed sooner rather than later and that the episode is then finished and a line is drawn under it. The episode should not be not counted towards further sanctions and should not be referred to again when they do not manage next time.

The following suggestions have been adapted from *Working with adopted and fostered children in education* (Cocker and Georgiades, 2003) reproduced with the permission of PAC.

- Praise - children with attachment difficulties have a tendency to self-sabotage. They believe themselves to be worthless and find it difficult to cope with anything that contradicts this belief. Strategies such as behaviour charts can be tried, but therefore, may not work as they provide the opportunity to self-sabotage. Praising the children for good work, personal organisation and generally good behaviour is very important, but most effective if done in a low-key manner. Too much enthusiastic praise may create a desire to self-sabotage. It may be useful to link the praise to a small additional task, for example: Well done, now I wonder if you could…as well?

- Public praise - in large groups for example, may be difficult for CiC. This is best kept specific and short. Remember children who have been sexually abused may have very negative associations with praise, and phrases such as "being a good girl" may trigger distressful memories.

Developing a positive mind-set for adults

The following has been adapted from *Behaviour and discipline in schools: Practical positive and creative strategies for the classroom* (Galvin, P, David Fulton Books, London, 1999). Copyright © Peter Galvin. Used with kind permission.

The following may be helpful to discuss with colleagues to help you develop a positive mind-set that will improve the behaviour of difficult groups and individuals:

- keep a balanced view of the problem

- welcome the conflict as an opportunity to develop new skills - have a view of the future

- do not blame yourself

- get some help - talk about it

- have the view that bad behaviour is logical

- be a detective - develop a hypothesis (look for clues when the behaviour is not happening)

- consider that the motive for the behaviour is probably about getting needs met

- try something different - regard the process of experimentation as a success

- do as little as possible - think small, go slow

- notice the effects of what you do and value those effects

- do not be pulled out of shape (dabble too much/chop and change/be pulled all over the place) - think jazz (try creative variations around a central basic structure, which you keep in mind and to which you return)

- stay in touch with your basic values

- be optimistic - behaviour can change.

Adult behaviours to develop positive relationships

- **Co-operation and collaboration** - a willingness to work with other people, to learn from different points of view and to form new ideas and plans by pooling talents.

- **Concentration** - the ability to stay focused and avoid distractions.

- **Courage/self-belief** - the confidence to put forward one's own suggestions and ideas and to stand by a reasoned opinion regardless of other people's reaction, knowing that many good ideas are initially ridiculed.

- **Curiosity/enthusiasm** - an eagerness to ask questions, to explore beyond what is required and to discover new things.

- **Direction** - a sense of purpose, an awareness of one's own goals and the inclination to consider how these might best be achieved.

- **Empathy** - a willingness to listen to others and to try to understand things from their perspective.

- **Flexibility** - the ability to adapt, to generate alternatives and to change one's mind when new information or arguments are presented.

- **Humour** - an ability to laugh at oneself and keep a balanced perspective.

- **Imagination** - an inclination to visualise, to dream, be creative with one's thoughts rather than to think within conventional boundaries.

- **Independence/initiative** - an awareness of the strategies and options that are available and a willingness to reach one's own decisions and take actions based on these.

- **An open mind** - a readiness to welcome unusual ideas even if they sound strange at first and to consider how existing ideas can be improved and adapted.

- **Perseverance/tenacity** - a willingness to keep looking, keep thinking and keep learning rather than settling for the first plausible answer or idea that comes along.

- **Precision** - the willingness to be careful, accurate and pay attention to detail.

- **Reflection** - an inclination to think about the methods and approaches that have been tried and to analyse both successes and failures.

- **Resilience** - the confidence to stick with it when thinking and learning hurt, to not give up at the first hurdle and to recognise the importance of intellectual struggling.

- **Responsibility** - a recognition that each person is responsible for improving their own thinking and learning and for finding methods that suit them.

- **Risk-taking** - the courage to take a chance and have a go at new things even when success may not be guaranteed.

Many CiC have difficulties forming relationships with their peers. When you are fighting for survival in the early years of life, developing social skills is not a priority and not essential for survival. This does mean, however, there may be some delays in some areas of social development which can cause difficulties for the children.

Many children in an early years setting will be at early stages of developing their social skills with respect to peer relationships and co-operative play. Co-operative play, for example, involves many social skills such as being able to enter a group, being sensitive to others, negotiating the development of the play and managing conflicts appropriately if they arise.

The importance of developing positive relationships with adults, emotional understanding and self-regulation alongside supporting peer relationships will be of importance, as the links between these areas are so strong.

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Suggested strategies and interventions

- Adults need to get alongside younger children to model appropriate social behaviour and to mediate the interactions with other children to teach them how to play with their peers. Support children to resolve conflicts through exploring (and where required suggesting) possibilities and reflecting with children on the outcomes of choices made.

- Provide structure in their play. Child-initiated activities can be very challenging socially for these children. Zoning spaces is a good way of providing structure. Ensure that there is a wide variety of activities available at unstructured time.

- The child needs to practise games where they are not in sole control and can therefore learn to co-operate and work with others. Again this can be done through games, group work and outdoor activities for younger children. The key is, they will not learn these skills just from being with their peers; an adult needs to act as a facilitator or mediator to do this.

- Ensure that there is a safe area with adult presence and availability to talk where these children can go to if they are having difficulties.

Chapter 2:
Executive functioning

Research suggests that many CiC demonstrate delayed development of their executive functioning due to experiencing developmental trauma.

These executive functions are the skills that underpin learning and form the basis for the problem-solving skills of everyday life. Executive function is often referred to alongside self-regulation (which has a separate section here). It includes:

- **working memory** – the ability to hold information in mind and use it

- **inhibitory control** – the ability to master thoughts and impulses so as to resist temptations, distractions, and habits and to pause and think before acting

- **cognitive flexibility** – the capacity to switch gears and adjust to changing demands, priorities or perspectives (*Center on the developing child*, (Harvard University, 2014)).

Often adults struggle with the fact that, at times, a child seems to manage behaviour or situations that on other occasions they do not manage. It can seem that this behaviour is a deliberate attempt to thwart adult authority; however, this is not necessarily the case. It is usually related to the complex needs the child has in the areas identified above.

Activities to support the development of executive functioning in very young children (adapted from *Center on the developing child* (Harvard University, 2014)).

- **Interactive games/lap games**
  Children benefit from engaging in interactive games not only for the purpose of developing relationships with adults and language skills, but also because such activities are repetitive, predictable and include basic rules and expectations about behaviour. Games where the child has to anticipate reactions, wait and control their response all impact on developing executive functioning and self-control. Examples include row the boat, pat-a-cake, one, two three, four five..., horsey, horsey.

- **Hiding games**
  These games can challenge working memory as the child has to remember who or what is hiding and the demands can be increased accordingly. You can try hiding one or more objects, people and favourite toys.

- **Imitation and copying games**
  When children imitate, they have to keep track of your actions, remember them, possibly wait their turn, and remember what you did. This taps in to all areas of developing executive function as described previously. Imitation and copying games might include:

  - copying actions and sounds - this might be through familiar sequences (e.g. heads shoulder, knees and toes) or made-up sequences

  - organisation of objects (e.g. building a tower or bridge from blocks, making a pattern from beads)

  - developing simple pretend play sequences e.g. feeding the teddy, washing the teddy, putting him to bed.

- **Role play and imaginative play**
  Children often start off imitating the daily activities of adults and will progress to more complex and imaginary sequences in their role play. When a child engages in this sort of play, they again use their developing executive functioning skills, for example remembering what role they are playing or the sequence they are following, ignoring distractions and using self-

control. The play becomes more sustained as children develop and there are opportunities where adults are able to join in, giving children the opportunity to regulate other's behaviour as well. Play plans may be helpful for some children, where children decide who they are going to be and what is going to happen before the play starts. This can be recorded on paper by the child or adult. This means that they have the opportunity to think before acting and if supported, play can be planned in a group where social problem solving can be mediated.

Further suggested strategies and interventions

These strategies have been taken from *Attachment, developmental trauma and executive functioning difficulties in the school setting* (Family Futures, 2008) and reproduced with kind permission from Marion Allen.

There are strategies that can support these children and many of these strategies can be setting-wide, thus cutting down on time given to one child specifically and providing the opportunity to extend all children's executive skills. In the early years setting, these problems manifest themselves in many ways. Changes in routine and just moving from one room to another can be difficult.

- Daily visual planners, using visual timers, two-minute warnings for the end of each activity, consistent routines for beginnings and endings, warnings if there are to be different adults can all help.

- Starting an activity can be very daunting. These children often need support at the beginning of an activity to help them focus.

Children with executive functioning difficulties can find it very difficult to stop a task before it is finished (shifting from one activity to another). This is because they have not had adults to prioritise their needs and so have had no sense of what is a priority, what is not a priority or what can be left until later.

Many of these children have problems organising themselves and need structure and routine to help stay focused. They also need reliable adults around them with whom they can practise being dependent on, rather than trying to control everything themselves.

Strategies can also support those children who find it difficult to organize their personal materials.

- Visual organisers, and personal support and guidance can help here. Sand timers, water timers and stop watches that provide good visual clues can be helpful for marking the beginnings and endings of different activities, these children may also have difficulties with the concept of time so need visual reminders.

- Adults will need to work closely with children on this area of need and teach them how to prioritise using visual steps. In addition, the adult needs to reassure the child that they can finish their activity at another time, perhaps storing it somewhere so the child knows where it is (i.e. it is not gone).

- Self-evaluation can be built into the lesson/group time, using the plenary for the class/group to express individually how they feel they managed the lesson objective/activity. A show of thumbs up, sideways and down, smiley face sheets or a traffic light system all work well in the group setting. In a preschool setting the key worker can provide a narrative for the child to relate to.

The following have been adapted from Cocking and Georgiades' *Working with adopted and fostered children in education* (2003). Reproduced with their kind permission.

- The child's key person should go through the plan for the session. Even if the majority of time is child-initiated, they might review any key points (e.g. snack or group work) or events, as many traumatised children have difficulties organising themselves. Practitioners may need to show these children where objects belong, where things can be found and be prepared to do some tasks for the child where they are too anxious to cope.

- Transition can be very challenging for children with attachment/trauma difficulties as it can evoke anxiety about possible loss or abandonment. In light of this there needs to be clear communication between setting and home which would typically be the role of the key person.

- Beginnings and endings are highly charged situations for children with attachment difficulties. The practice of not telling children until the very last week or day who will be teaching them next year, or the pulling apart of the setting/classroom on the last week of term can have particular resonance for these children. For such transitions, young children need to be prepared in advance. They need to be given the opportunity to mourn the loss of the old way of being and have an introduction to the new. Enough time needs to be given so that this can be completed in small manageable stages.

- A transitional object can be used to remind a child that although they are separated from a carer they are still in mind. The transitional object can be anything like a cuddly toy, a blanket with a familiar smell, a photo or a note.

- Beginnings and endings on a smaller scale, such as the beginning and end of the pre school week, moving from inside to outside play areas, etc., can also raise anxiety and affect behaviour. Low-key but consistent checking-in with the children to say goodbye or welcome back and reminding them what is going to happen next may help the children to stay focused, relaxed and make transitions smoother.

- Changes to the setting routine, for example, the introduction of a new practitioner or when a planned event is cancelled, need to be supported. A familiar member of staff can act as a link person to help the children negotiate the change. This may need repeated explanation and reassurance to keep anxiety at bay.
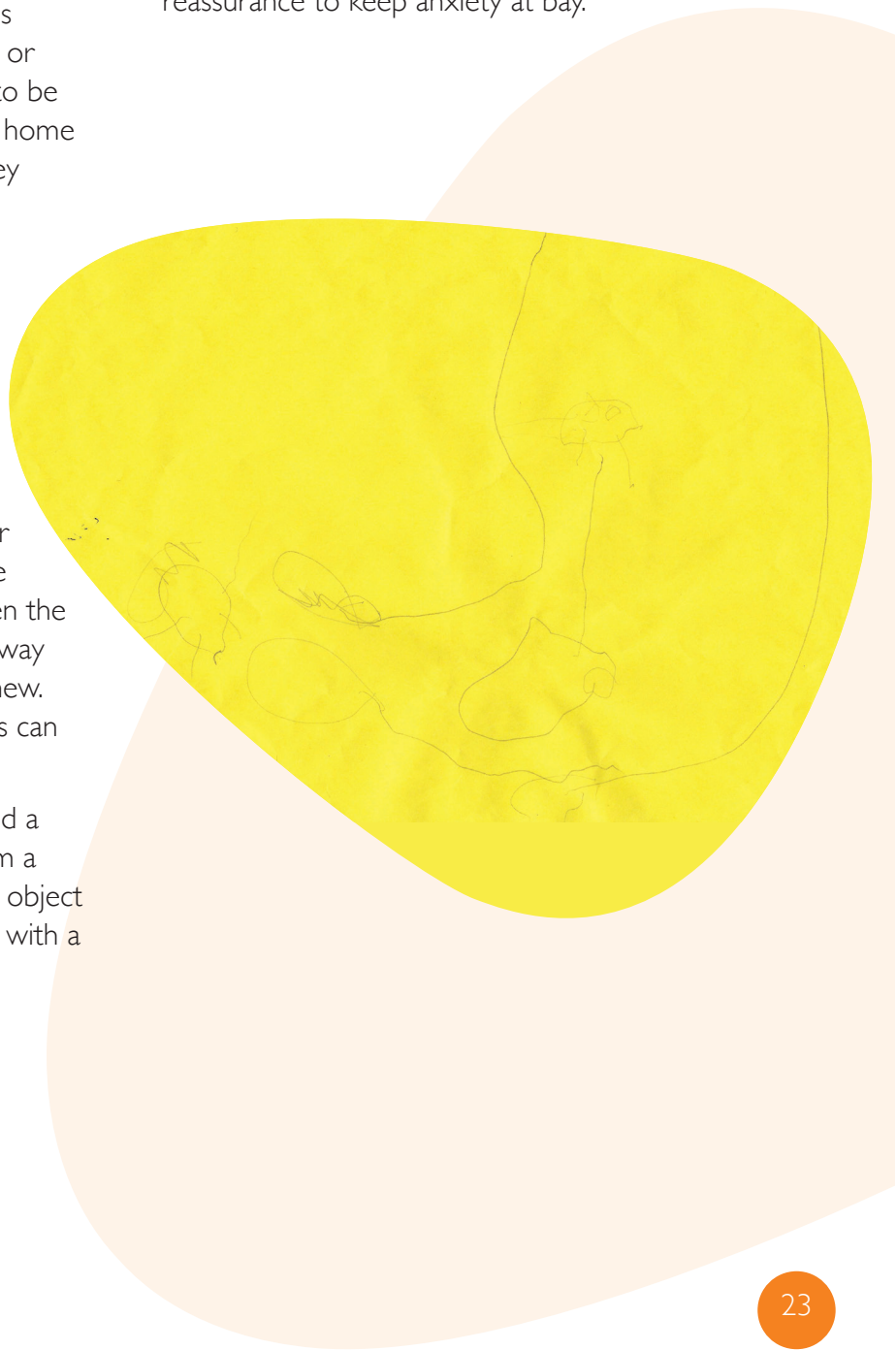
Chapter 3:
Self-regulation

Self-regulation (or self-control) is also an area of executive functioning but warrants a chapter of its own as the needs in this area are complex and often cause the most difficulties in early years settings.

What is self-regulation?

Some children find it more difficult to learn to manage their own behaviour than others of the same age. In an early years setting, they may present as impulsive, not guarding against potential hazards and apparently failing to learn from experience. They may behave like much younger children and are at risk of being perceived as having social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. We would typically expect small children to respond impulsively, for example, see a puddle and jump in it or without looking, run into the road after a ball. Adults are aware and vigilant so that they can act as an external source of regulation while the children gradually develop self-regulation. The role of the adult in supporting a child who may not have experienced this from their earliest days is particularly important.

In order to self-regulate using good judgement in a range of situations we need to go through a series of stages starting with accepting responsibility for our own behaviour. We also need to develop a number of skills that are mediated by language, of which the following are examples.

- The ability to label emotional states which helps us to recognise and control these states (Kopp, 1989).

- The separation of emotions from actions (Berkley, 1995; as cited in Ripley, 2009), e.g. swearing at a teacher may relieve immediate feelings but puts a child at risk of exclusion.

- The internalisation of rules so that we know what is acceptable behaviour in different settings.

- Planning ahead to accommodate future events. This supports many activities that involve goal directed behaviour, e.g. if I train regularly I will make the football team. Problem solving in an early years setting also involves working towards a goal, both for completing the task itself and thinking of the consequences, (e.g. finishing my painting before it is time to go home).

The early years before self-regulation

Very young children experience high states of arousal that are positive and negative. They rely on the adults around them who are attuned to their needs to manage those feelings and restore them to a comfortable state of arousal. Thus, we may drive our crying baby round in the car if this usually calms them, or anticipate the tears before bedtime when our toddler is over-excited by removing the sources of excitement and going into a familiar calming routine of bath/story/bed (Gerhardt, 2004). Children who have secure attachments (relationships) to their carers find it easier to learn to regulate their behaviour and modulate their behaviour according to the cognitive, emotional and social demands of specific situations (Rueda, Posner & Rothbart, 2007). Unfortunately, CiC often have fragmented early experiences that make it difficult to form secure attachments to key adults in their life and are often not exposed to adults who attune to their needs. This often results in poor self-regulatory abilities with regards to learning and behaviour, which are particularly salient in an educational context.

Suggested strategies and interventions

As practitioners we often talk of managing behaviour and discipline, we do not necessarily talk about teaching behaviour. We have expectations of behaviour and we manage the behaviour we don't

want to see. It is often necessary to step back from managing behaviour and begin to teach children the skills they need for effective behaviour in order to learn, socialise and manage their feelings.

It is useful to separate the behaviour from the child so we can teach and practice the self-management skills in relation to learning and support the child in transferring these skills to self-regulating behaviour.

The following guidelines are recommended to support children in the above. In an intervention study piloted in Hampshire around developing self-regulation skills in CiC (see Warhurst, Alfano & Ripley 2011) teachers reported the following to be helpful in assisting CiC self-regulate.

● Help the child identify how they are feeling. You may need to do some body awareness activities.

● The child will need to develop a feelings vocabulary. You can do this by starting to label the feelings for the child, then carry out emotional literacy work around identifying feelings.

● Adults to provide a commentary for the children and wonder aloud (I think you may be feeling like this…as I noticed…), this helps children to develop self-awareness and to differentiate behaviours, thoughts and feelings.

Children who are in a fight/flight state and subsequently have high levels of arousal will find it hard to sit still or regulate their own behaviour. They will need an adult to do this for them. Adults will need to co-regulate the child's behaviour and use lots of *we* and *us* language to help the child calm down. It is important to not leave them to do this on their own. This is where *time out* may not be appropriate as this can cause a highly aroused and traumatised child to become more agitated. *Time in* is a better way of working with the child and modelling to them how to regulate their emotions. If the child is exposed to this calming verbal commentary over time they will eventually internalise it and start regulating themselves independently. Key members of staff to whom the child has a positive bond can also then start teaching the child activities to help calm themselves down independently. Perhaps a *first aid* box of strategies

the child can come up with can be developed with the adult.

The following is adapted from the Family Futures Consortium recommendations to help traumatized children self-regulate.

Teaching a child how to self-regulate

Try to remember that a defiant front can be a desperate attempt to hide the fear they are feeling. Their cortisol and adrenaline levels may be incredibly high and they may be fiddling through anxiety. Alternatively, they may seem to be unaffected because they have dissociated as a survival strategy. All this can be incredibly annoying and can lead you to experience frustration.

While this is understandable, your calmness is more likely to help them see that their behaviour does not automatically lead to rejection or abuse as it did in the past. The child desperately needs to know that it is their actions you find unacceptable, not themselves. It is, therefore, vital that immediately after the reprimand you let them know they are worthwhile and can, with support, do things differently (Allen, 2008 for Family Futures).

● I can see that you are annoyed that Ethan wants to play with one of the trains, let's think about a way we can share them together.

● I'm really sad you hurt Issy, I think you were feeling very angry. Let's think about something else to do when you feel like that.

Creating structure

The purpose of structuring activities is to organise and regulate a child's experience. The adult sets limits, defines body boundaries, keeps the child safe and helps complete a sequence of activities. This will help children learn to self-regulate. A lovely way to do this is blowing bubbles and catching on a wand. The child can pop the bubble with a particular body part for example a finger, toe, elbow, shoulder or ear. Another way to do this is blow a cotton-wool ball between the adult and the child on a cushion.

Creating nurture

The purpose of nurturing activities as mentioned in the section under adult relationships is to give the child the message that they are worthy of love and care and this will be provided without having to ask. These nurturing activities, however, will also help to calm and regulate the anxious child and enhance feelings of self-worth. One way of doing this is to use a cotton wool ball and gently stroke the child's face, arms and hands with the cotton-wool ball naming the ears, nose cheeks, etc., this is regulating for anxious children.

Containment – The adults need to react in ways that *contain* the child and do not escalate the emotion. This will demonstrate that the emotion is *bearable* and able to be managed. By repeated exposure to this approach over time the young child will learn to internalise this and do it for themselves. This is using a calm, soothing commentary when the child is in distress.

Modelling – The adult needs to explicitly model the correct response to the child. The child probably does not have the language to describe how they are feeling so the adult needs to *wonder out loud* for them. For example "I think you may be feeling sad because…".

These children need structure, containment and consistent rules and routines, they also need an empathic, understanding approach.

Acknowledging verbally their problems to them can validate their feelings. As these children may not have early self-regulation from their carers, they may be in a fight/flight state and be hypervigilant and guarded and may not trust adults. This can lead to control power-seeking behaviours.

Being in control has been the child's survival strategy in the past and relinquishing this can make them feel very vulnerable. They can only relinquish control when they have built up a positive and trusting relationship with the adult and can then gradually develop self-regulation skills through internalisation of the adult commentary mentioned above.

It must be pointed out that children with attachment difficulties often misunderstand adults' intentions. They may attribute hostility to a raised voice or an adult pointing out a mistake to them and experience this as a form of attack or persecution. It may then take a while to build up the trusting relationship with the child, and practitioners may need to modify their interactions to quite an extent until this trust is built up. This will help reduce the anxiety or feelings of threat of the child that can lead to the altercations.

Using the language of self-management

Although children in the early years all still require a high level of support from adults to manage their emotions and behaviour, as adults, we can model the language and support the skills that will be helpful as children become more independent. Adult commentary can be helpful in doing this and could focus on the following areas of skill.

- **Planning** – thinking about the steps involved in a task or activity. Talking this through out loud or asking questions about what needs to be done first, next… and emphasizing the importance of having a plan in mind.

- **Staying focused** – seeing an activity through to an end point and avoiding distractions. Emphasizing the skill of maintaining attention or keeping focused through comments and feedback, e.g. "I think you managed to finish your model because you were really focused on what you were doing".

- **Being determined** – keeping going when things get tricky or when challenges present themselves is an important quality and therefore feedback to children might focus on when they were challenged by something and managed to overcome this.

- **Using different tools to problem solve** – encouraging a child to look for possible solutions and resources when encountering a problem. Encourage them to come up with a range of ideas and suggestions and if able, support them to evaluate their solutions.

Developing an inner voice

Often using an inner quiet voice can help us to self-regulate. Older children can be taught to use questions or prompts to help them with this. As an adult working with younger children, it is helpful to model some of the thinking to the child in order to

co-regulate their behaviour. In order to do this, it will be important to know the child well and be able to draw on other experiences you have had with the child where you have observed their behaviour. We may not be absolutely sure about the feelings they are experiencing, but the better you know the child, the more in tune you will become with their feelings and the more reliable your interpretations will become.

Think about whether you can remind them, for example.

- When they might have felt the feeling before (has there been a similar situation that they have managed to deal with)?

- What did they do to get through it?

- Who helped them and how did they do it?

- How did they feel afterwards?

These questions can relate to learning, social or emotional situations and it is important to remember that social and emotional learning opportunities are equally if not more important for developing children's self-regulation.

Further strategies that are helpful in developing self-regulation.

Physical games

- Develop physical skills through activities such as throwing, catching, balancing, running (within boundaries, e.g. keeping to a line, to a fixed point and back). By adding in simple rules and challenges, there can be added demands on working memory (e.g. running to a certain coloured hoop, picking up a certain object, taking turns with other children). Activities that require children to start, stop, go faster or slower can be helpful in developing inhibitory behaviour and these can be developed into games such as *Simon Says* where they have to inhibit an instinctive first response. Singing games as noted previously can also support the development of physical skills, self-control and working memory (e.g. heads, shoulders, knees and toes, hokey cokey, ring-a-roses). Freeze games can also be helpful to support self-control skills particularly if they have to switch attention (e.g. look for a

visual which might prompt them to perform and hold a certain pose).

- Offer adult-directed choices where possible, with the number of choices dependent on the needs of the child. Give children time and space to respond to the choices offered.

- Be clear about the behavioural expectations of a given situation, e.g. when you go to the shop today we are going to buy fruit. We are not going to buy sweets. Ask the child to recall the expectation when they are in the shop for internalisation.

- Allow children time to respond and/or complete tasks independently before offering assistance.

- Use language to assist self-control, e.g. "You are waiting very nicely, I can see you're trying very hard to finish that… I can see you were getting cross but you were able to ask for help".

- Encourage, model and teach sharing, taking turns, requesting and distributing items. Give children opportunities to develop their own solutions to sharing and taking turns with resources and equipment and use language of turn taking.

- Turn mistakes into learning experiences.

- Talk out loud as you solve a problem, modelling for children how they might work through something challenging.

- Let children teach you how to do something – letting them explain and show you how to do something helps practice initiative and feelings of control.

- Involve children in doing real tasks to promote feelings of independence and self-efficacy.

- Teach children to use simple calming strategies when frustrated and teach children to ask for help when experiencing feelings that are difficult to manage, e.g. counting to 10, turtle technique.

Chapter 4:
Motivation and locus of control

Effort is often a key area when discussing children's needs as it is something internal and within our control.

However, not all children have an internal locus control and they need a high level of support to believe that they can affect change and that effort will be effective. The majority of children will be developing this throughout the early years and into school. There tend to be two stages in order to help children do this. Firstly, the child is given sufficient support to be able to achieve more successfully. The second stage is to teach them to attribute this newfound success to the effort, skills and strategies they have been applying. It is during a child's early years that they begin to develop locus of control and therefore the way in which learning is developed and the messages they hear about their effort, strategies and skills at this stage is significant.

Dweck (1975) tested this experimentally. She used two groups of children. The first group was given support to improve their success in a subject. The second group was provided with support to be more successful, but was then trained to relate that improvement to the effort, skills and strategies they had used. She found that only those children who had been taught to attribute success (or failure) to the amount of effort they had applied persisted when they found tasks difficult. Consequently it is important to enable children to become more successful learners, but they need to be taught why they are more successful learners *Motivation and children's attributions* (HEPS, 2007).

Many of the strategies and interventions below relate to the characteristics of effective learning that are outlined as part of the EYFS learning and development requirements and outlined in chapter one.

Suggested strategies and interventions

How can we change children's attributions?
The literature (Alderman, 1999) suggests that there are several approaches to modifying children's attributions. One approach is the more children are aware of the skills and strategies they are mastering the more they are able to change their attributions. One way of doing this is that teachers and school staff need to provide verbal praise that draws attention to the effort, skills and strategies children are continuing to apply. This needs to start in the early years.

The following ideas are taken from *Motivation and children's attributions* (HEPS, 2007) and reproduced with their kind permission.

Self-instruction
Like all of these approaches, the basic aim is to shift attribution for success or failure to internal causes and consequently aspects children can control. The approach here is to have children give themselves instructions as they perform a task, e.g. I really want to give this my best effort. Again, the messages can relate to a variety of issues, but probably fall into the headings effort, skills and strategies. Through the self-talk that happens under these conditions, children become more conscious of what is involved in learning.

Dispositions of an active thinker and learner

The EYFS identifies a number of characteristics of effective learning (see below).

Characteristics of effective learning
Playing and exploring – engagement: ● finding out and exploring   ● playing with what they know   ● being willing to 'have a go'.
Active learning – motivation: ● being involved and concentrating   ● keeping trying   ● enjoying achieving what they set out to do.
Creating and thinking critically – thinking: ● having their own ideas   ● making links   ● choosing ways to do things.

By emphasising the sort of behaviours listed here, the aim is to emphasise a broad and balanced view of learning. Everyone, regardless of ability, can learn to improve their potential by developing positive thinking and learning dispositions. Try to catch the children demonstrating the behaviour, use the language specifically and help them to see how they can transfer this behaviour into other aspects of their lives, e.g. well done, you really stuck with building that model, I could see you weren't going to give up! Are there any other times this week when you've stuck at something and not given up (in or out of pre school)? Or, do you think there will be another time this week when you will keep going? How do you feel now?

These phrases can become a language for learning in the setting as practitioners model such behaviours and catch children demonstrating behaviours and help them to transfer them. The use of stories and puppets can also help to identify such behaviours in fictional characters, which can then be related to children's own behaviour.

Attribution feedback

The goal here is to focus the children's attention on the effort, skills and strategies they have used to produce a successful response. The key is to link their current achievements with these factors. Stressing possible future benefits has not been found to be as effective (Shunk, 1982). The sequence in which feedback is given also appears important. Initially, when learning something new, feedback should be directed to the effort the child has made.

As their skills develop, the feedback can shift to the skills and then the strategies they have learned. Co-operative learning can also help to establish attributions, particularly if children are taught how to give attribution feedback to each other.

Providing children with attribution feedback requires practice, but can be given both for success and failure on a task. Examples of the different types of attribution feedback are:

● effort - great, you have made a really great den because you put a lot of work into it

● skills - you've cracked it, now you really understand how to construct a tall tower

● strategies - you got it right because you followed the steps in your plan.

Failure will occur and the attributions for failure are equally important. If the child attributes failure to strategy ("I didn't use the right approach") they are more likely to be motivated to try again than if they attributed it to ability ("I'm not one of the clever ones"). Caution needs to be used when claiming lack of effort as it is difficult to assess another person's effort. You also need to ensure the task was within their ability to achieve. When children indicate they do not know why they have failed, the practitioner can suggest a strategy that would enable them to be able to accomplish the task (e.g. I noticed that you tried to fill the bottle with a jug. I think it might work better with a funnel).

● Take the magic out of success - describe the importance of attributing outcomes to controllable factors. Emphasise effort as a strategy that can be improved. Clarify what effort means (relative to the child's age and stage of development). It is more than just the time spent on a task; it requires active engagement.

Examples include using children's senses to explore their environment (e.g. looking, listening, handling carefully), understanding that some skills require persistence and practice, using strategies to remember, knowing when to ask for help, experimenting with different ways to solve a problem.

● Help children reframe ability as something that can be developed through learning, practice and feedback. For example, reflecting with children about things that they couldn't do in the recent past, but have learned to do with practice and with support, "I remember when you couldn't push yourself along on the scooter, but you have been practicing and now you can do it".

● Provide models of constructive attributions that relate to effort, skills and strategies through modelling and feedback. For example, "I think that we managed to build that sandcastle because we had a good plan about how to put it together".

● Have children practise giving each other positive attribution feedback.

● Make children aware that learning new things can initially be confusing. It is a common experience for everyone. Show them that the skills can be learned and knowledge acquired in incremental steps.

● Provide praise and reinforcement, which links the outcome with the effort, skills and strategies they used. Use children's errors as an opportunity to clarify what they need to do to be successful. In this way, teach them a mechanism for handling failure by reframing the situation more positively.

● Child responsibility - if an activity works out well, get children to say what they did that contributed to that success; if the performance was poor, discuss what they might have done differently. Be sure that the attributions relate to specific performance criteria and not comparison to others.

● Help children to set themselves a personal challenge and focus on their own development (rather than making comparisons to their peers).

Practical suggestions

The following are practical ideas for practitioners to draw on when helping the child develop motivation:

Try to focus the child's attention on the effort, skills and strategies they have used during a successful learning experience.

The key is to make learning visible to the child!

1. Get your children to imagine that they have finished their activity. What will it look like, sound like and feel like? Get them to picture themselves having successfully completed it. Visualising success is a proven way of helping you to be more positive (for example, if the children decided that they wanted to design an obstacle course, get them to think about what they would include in it and what they might have to do to complete it).

2. Get each child to set a simple goal for the activity – what would they like to achieve in doing the task?

3. On beginning an activity, find out what the children know about what they are doing; have they done anything like it before? What vocabulary do they already have?

4. Get children to describe out loud what they are doing when they are undertaking a task, "Tell me about what you are doing at the moment".

5. Encourage children to share their mistakes and think about where they went wrong. Praise them for doing this.

These are adapted from Bill Lucas *Teaching children how to learn, teaching expertise* (2005) Available at: **http://www.teachingexpertise.com/articles/ teaching-childrens-learn-700**.

Try to draw the children into the process of learning by using carefully timed open-ended questions related to the process.

- What do I need to do next?
- What do we do now? Any ideas?
- Why do (how come) you think that?
- Show me how to do the next bit.
- Talk me through what you are doing.

What to say when a child is stuck; it is important not to smooth over these moments, try to get to the bottom of it as this will avoid future frustrations. It is not always helpful to ask if they are stuck or fake a query ("Is that right?") as the answer is obvious; instead ask the following.

- You've stopped – why is that?
- Why do you think that it's not working?
- Can you think of a different way?

If the child is unable to think of alternatives then messages that the problem can be worked out together will be helpful.

Praise as often as you can, this will support the shift in learning - children cannot get enough praise. Do not give false praise or general praise. Identify specific things that are done well and praise these, even if there are outstanding weaknesses that you want to address.

- I like the way you…
- I can really see how you've got better at…
- The best thing about…is…
- I notice that you remembered to use the same way as last time.
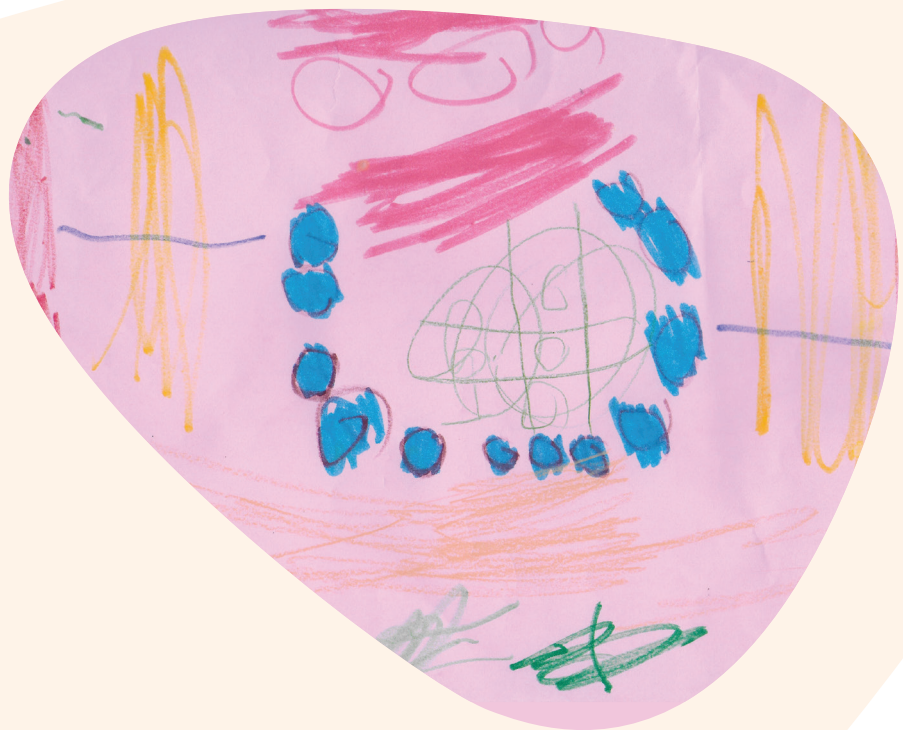
Chapter 5:
Sense of self

What is sense of self?

There is some confusion about the key terms of sense of self, self-concept, ideal self, self-esteem and global self-esteem and they are used interchangeably.

- **Self-concept** is really the perception that a child has of themselves – how they define themselves. For example: I'm a boy; I'm Arthur's best mate; I play football; I like Big Macs. My self-concept would be that I am a woman; I am loyal; I like writing and going to the gym; I love good wine and malt whiskey. It's these individual components that make up the person.

- **Ideal self** is what or who I would really like to be, and this is usually an idea that is formulated in comparison to others. Self-esteem, in effect, is the evaluation of those parts. For example, how much do I value being Arthur's mate? How important is it to have friends?

- **Global self-esteem** is the overall feeling that we have towards ourselves. There will be specific areas where we feel good about ourselves and others when we're not so positive - this is perfectly normal.

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Characteristics of children with low self-esteem

Children with low self-esteem do not all conform to one pattern of behaviour.

There can be a variety of ways that low self-esteem manifests itself according to how it interacts with the children's personality. The following table shows some of the different types of behaviour that can result from having low self-esteem.

Low self-esteem

Strong feelings of inadequacy and blame

Don't believe they are capable or loveable

May engage in criticising others in order to feel better about themselves

May hurt others physically

May harm themselves - e.g. eating disorder or other kinds of physical self-harm

May be excessive worriers

May often seem to be unhappy

If I just keep quiet maybe no-one will notice me at all

Withdrawn

Quiet

Shy

Afraid to talk about their ideas in case they get it wrong

I'll show them how much I'm worth

Show off, boast and brag about achievements

Loud and arrogant

Disruptive

Need to be first

Often this means that others may look at them and think that they're not suffering from low self-esteem when in fact these behaviours are an attempt to overcome insecurity and the need to prove oneself to others

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IIf everyone likes me and shows me approval I must OK

How others treat me determines how much I'm worth

Constantly seeking approval and reassurance from others

Smiling people pleasers

Over compliance

Easily led

How I perform determines how much I'm worth

Rigid, authoritarian perfectionist, critical of others around them

Driven

Obsessional

If I don't succeed, if I'm not the best at everything I do then I am nothing

Suggested strategies and interventions

The resiliency route to authentic self-esteem

Nan Henderson (2002, as cited in Shotton and Burton, 2012) developed a resiliency route to authentic self-esteem which she describes as not being the stuff of meaningless affirmations.

It is based upon: recognising actual accomplishments; identifying and understanding how we can make use of our strengths; living a life where we express our talents and gifts.

These processes involve a shift in thinking for both adults and children working to improve self-esteem. It is entirely solution focused. There is an appreciation of how and why we have done as well as we have done, and there is also a recognition of the need to draw on innate capacity for overcoming adversity and bouncing back. Self-perception (also referred to as self-esteem, self-belief or self-worth etc.), however, is a complex concept but its influence on human behaviour is well documented. Research suggests that CiC may have a negative sense of self/self-esteem due to the adverse situations they have experienced in their lives, however, they may try to hide their negative feelings of self-worth under bravado or macho behaviour (Cameron and Maginn, 2011). As children leaving public care are significantly more likely than their peers to need some kind of support or therapy (Jackson and McParlin, 2006, as cited in Cameron and Maginn, 2011) it is important that this area is addressed in the PEP.

Use of praise with CiC

We may know that adults were responsible for the children's experiences; the children are likely to feel that they themselves bear the responsibility. We may feel that **praising the children will help to make them feel more positive about themselves, while the children may view praise as a threat to their sense of self**. Furthermore, **praise for children who have been sexually abused may be linked with harrowing memories** (Allen, 2008). The fact that many of these children find it very hard to accept praise or to be reprimanded is, therefore, easily understood. They desperately need praise

to build up their self-esteem, especially when their inappropriate behaviours lead to the necessity of reprimands; yet this needs to be done in a way the children can tolerate and manage. Both praise and reprimands need to be handled carefully. Please see the following for ideas but always be sensitive to the background of the child when choosing the most appropriate intervention.

Self-esteem - ideas for support

General ideas

- Developing your relationship with the child through:
  - listening to them
  - spending time with them
  - encouraging their efforts and praising their successes.

- Establish in children a sense of personal identity: what are their likes/dislikes in food, music, TV, books, etc.? Help them to see their uniqueness and their right to be who they are. Ask them to bring in and share photos of special people, things etc..

- Look for genuine achievements to praise; set meaningful goals. Make them small, specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed over a set period (SMART).

- Detail children's strengths and interests. Ask all adults to note down things that they notice the child doing well in the setting.

- Encourage children to join only those clubs and activities where they have the necessary skills.

- Give appropriate responsibilities and/or tasks. Ensure that these are both valued and meaningful in the setting.

- Ask the child to help another child in areas where they have strengths.

- Promote positive thinking. Get children to list the positive aspects of themselves:
  - one thing I like about myself is
  - my successes include
  - my friends like me because.

- Work together on situations that cause anxiety and worry. Develop a script for the children. Get them to imagine being in a situation and practising what they will say. Role play the situation before practising in a real context.

Self-esteem - specific ideas
- Develop a personal success book.

- Ask the child to imagine a special happy place. Ask them to draw/tell you about it.

- Ask the child to tell or draw a story, in which they are the hero/heroine and all ends well. Your child could write or draw about all the people that matter to them, and why they matter.

- The child draws a personal coat of arms and writes/draws in some of their unique qualities and skills.

- Produce a special treasure chest, with examples of special events, memories, successes.

- Ask children to bury imaginary treasure (i.e. special qualities) they possess to get to if they have to cross a land where there are helps and hindrances. Each child makes a map illustrating where the treasure is buried and the problems to getting to it. How they get there can be a game in problem solving.

Finding hidden treasure!

This is a powerful technique that Ioan Rees (2005, as cited in Shotton and Burton, 2012) describes as part of a solution orientated approach. You have a conversation with the pupil, getting them to talk about their hobbies, interests, holidays etc., in order to discover skills (what they can do), strengths (what they are good at) and resources (who knows the person has these skills).

A few suggested phrases.
- *I'd like to take the chance to get to know you more so I'd like to hear about the sort of things you enjoy.*

- *What could you start by telling me? What would you say you are quite good at? It could be at home or in pre school.*

As they talk about the things they like doing (e.g. playing on the PlayStation, cycling etc.) you draw more out of them about it. How often they do it, where and when, what they have achieved with it etc. You need to listen really closely because you are looking for hidden treasure, what those activities tell you about the qualities/virtues a youngster may possess that are unique to them.

So playing the PlayStation all day... that must take a lot of concentration. I couldn't do that. You must have good reflexes as well to be able to get such high scores. And you just keep going it at? You see, I would give up, but you don't you just keep going. Do you know what that's called? That's called perseverance.

Then you find out who else knows about this skill/strength.

- *Who else apart from me knows you are so good at the PlayStation?*

- *If they were here right now what else would they tell me about you that would be interesting?*

As the conversation goes on you could record the responses on a chart like this.

Activity	Skill	Related virtue	Resource (who knows about it)
Playing on PlayStation	Good reflexes Good hand-eye co-ordination	Concentration Perseverance	Neighbour
Cycling	Good balance Fitness	Gets back on when falls off Courage	Grandad

At the end of the session, take the time to feed back to the pupil all that you have learned about them, outlining the strengths that have been revealed.

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Chapter 6:
Language development

Research suggests that on cognitive tests CiC do not perform any worse than their peers, however, educational outcomes are significantly poorer (Forsman & Vinnerljung, 2011).

One possible reason for this is specific difficulties with their verbal skills. Evidence suggests that children with complex emotional and behavioural difficulties can have a specific language difficulty that is often not identified and may account for some of the child's difficulty with accessing the curriculum. (Ripley, 2007).

Communication and language development is one of the prime areas of the EYFS and therefore all children's progress should be monitored in relation to this. The early years outcomes guidance is a useful starting point when considering whether a child's language is developing as we might typically expect. In addition, there is information provided in the National Strategies Child Monitoring Tool.

http://www3.hants.gov.uk/ecat-child-monitoring-tool.pdf

Practical suggestions
The following are practical ideas for practitioners to draw on when helping the children develop language

- Gain the child's attention before speaking.
- Ensure all verbal instructions are combined with visual cues such as objects, pictures and gestures.
- As some of these children may process information slowly, practitioners should ensure they pause after verbal instructions to give time to process the information.
- Simplify your vocabulary, sentence structure and sentence length to the child's level of understanding.

- Give the child enough time to work out what you have said to them.
- Repeat key sentences and emphasise key words.
- Use directions with actions so that large chunks of language do not need to be remembered at once.
- Give the children time to reply.

Another useful reference is the Early Years Inclusion Development Programme for children with speech, language and communication needs.

http://www.idponline.org.uk/eyslcn/launch.html#

http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childcare

The significance of professional learning
We are absolutely clear that at the heart of meeting the needs of all learners is good teaching and learning, and a vision for insisting all children achieve regardless of background. What should, therefore, be considered is the professional development needs of the practitioners of CiC in a setting.

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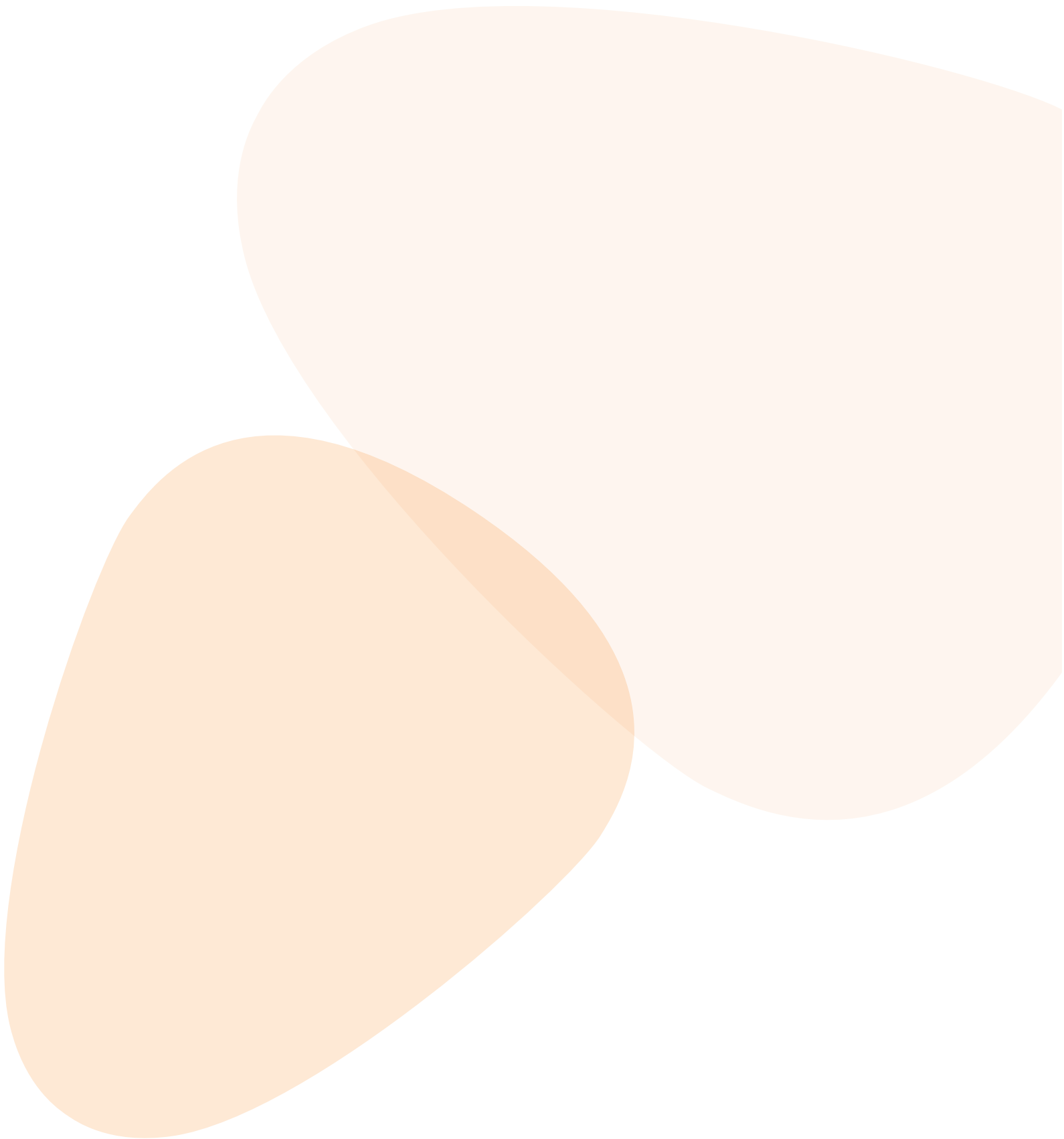
www.hants.gov.uk/cic-virtual-school

Contacting the Virtual School

Children's Services Department

Hampshire County Council

4th Floor EII Court North

Winchester, Hampshire SO23 8UG

Virtual School office telephone numbers: **01962-835227** & **01962-835229**

Hampshire Virtual School shared mailbox: **virtualschool@hants.gov.uk**

Virtual School website: **www.hants.gov.uk/cic-virtual-school**