

Pillar 1. Establishing secure relationships

Appropriate boundaries and positive discipline are part of good relationships.

Give them the tools to solve quarrels and resist bullying. E.g. various protocols, timers to facilitate fair allocation on preferred activities.

When possible, discuss emotions and feelings as they arise.

Parents can talk about their job or hobby, make things for dramatic play, practise things at home.

Key points

- Secure relationships are very important because without them, the most effective learning cannot take place.
- Secure relationships with and between children are nurturing and are characterised by
 - warmth,
 - affection,
 - trust,
 - mutual respect, and
 - appropriate boundaries.
- Encourage children to develop positive social relationships with one another, to respect one another at all times, and to work and play cooperatively whenever possible.
- Encourage children to recognise, label and express emotions appropriately.
- Get to know individual children, their families and friends where possible, and talk about them with the children frequently.
- Where possible, draw parents into the life of the classroom and involve them in their child's learning.
- Train your classroom assistant in establishing and maintaining good relationships.

Try to avoid creating a situation where children are competing with one another for your attention. Instead, try to draw the child who interrupts into whatever you were doing.

You will have succeeded when, if any child asked, "Do you know me?", you could describe their family, their likes, their dislikes, and their anxieties.

QLI indicators of success

- *Well-being*: Children appear happy and healthy. Laughter can be heard and smiles seen.
- *Social interaction*: Children play and work well together, are usually at ease with the teacher and are not unduly nervous when strange adults appear in the classroom. Children comfort those who are upset.
- *Respect*: Children are polite and considerate in their dealings with others.

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Cameo 1. Break time: café society

Year 1/2 composite class

The teacher sees break time as time that she can explore relationships with the children and develop their language.

Healthy break is a school policy. Teachers believe that it improves children's behaviour.

The teacher does not respond in the same way as when discipline is breached in other circumstances and does not encourage telling tales.

The teacher shows that she knows their families and their doings. She sounds genuinely interested and smiles a lot. The classroom assistant joins in too.

The teacher, Mrs Davis, takes her break with the children. She calls it her café society and sees it as an opportunity to further develop relationships and oral language work with a class of children many of whom have come to school with poor language skills. The children fetch their own break and take it to their seat. One girl, Jemima, immediately claims to have a healthy break. She does not put up her hand before she speaks. Mrs Davis asks Jemima to say what she has to eat and drink. Jemima names flavoured water, an apple and a cheese portion. Another boy chimes in that he has a healthy break too and names the contents of his box. Children now vie with each other to claim healthy eating habits. One boy, George, is accused of having a fizzy drink, against school rules. Mrs Davis asks him in a conversational tone whether that is true. When George acknowledges it, she remonstrates but more in the manner of a peer than a teacher. Meanwhile three boys at another table are talking about football and ignoring this conversation entirely. The main conversation changes direction when one girl says her mummy is expecting a baby next week. Mrs Davis says that she knows that and takes a genuine interest in the expected event, asking a number of pertinent questions. Then she turns to another girl and says, "Your sister is going to have a baby too, isn't she?" The two girls launch into excited comparisons of

The children show their independence.

The children understand that the rules are different from normal class time and she need not put up her hand.

Several children are talking at once, something that would not normally be allowed. Real conversations are taking place.

A child initiates the change of direction.

Another real and extended conversation takes place.

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Cameo 2 Play-based learning: Dealing respectfully with an interruption

Year 1/2 composite class

By her body language, the teacher politely indicates that she is still involved with the first child and avoids competition for her attention by making the task a shared one.

The teacher is sensitive to the loss of engagement and allows a change of direction.

When possible, the teacher facilitates the discussion rather than leading it.

The teacher, Mrs McShane, is helping a boy spell out a word with magnetic letters on a tray. Another boy approaches with a book of Bible stories, looking for some attention from the teacher. Without changing her orientation away from the first child, Mrs McShane warmly draws the second child in and integrates the book into the letter activity. She asks them playfully if they can identify certain letters in the book and then, possibly seeing their interest flag after doing this a few times, enters into a 3-way discussion with them about some of the stories. The children contribute as much to the discussion as the teacher does. The children decide to illustrate one of the stories and Mrs McShane moves on to another group.

The child feels confident about approaching the teacher.

On other occasions, she is happy to ask the interrupting child politely to wait until she is finished with the first. It depends on the circumstances.

Seeing them involved in an activity they can undertake independently, the teacher lets them carry on alone.