

Nurture Principles

Overview description

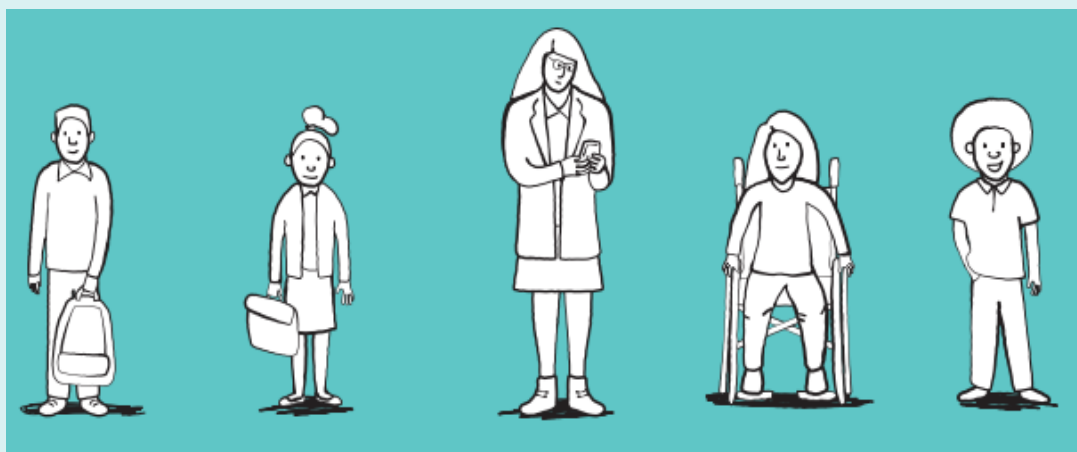
Nurture is defined as to grow, develop and succeed. Human babies are born relatively immature in relation to other species and can do little unaided, a baby's survival is reliant on another to provide near constant physical and emotional care. That is, they need someone to nurture them. The formation of these strong nurturing bonds are what leads to secure and strong attachments with primary carers and allows a child to flourish and thrive. However, as we know there are times that primary carers may not be in a position to provide nurturing care or difficult life events may mean that nurture is no longer forthcoming for a child. This can lead to insecure attachments, and development of a negative sense of self for a child or young person.

Throughout the life course we will all need varying levels of nurture and this is true in our education experiences too. For some children and young people who have not experienced optimal levels of nurture, they may need a constant key nurturing adult in the education environment. For others, they may need a short nurturing intervention to get them through a tricky point in their life and others may simply need a broader nurturing ethos across the education community.

Key Aims of Nurturing Approaches

Nurture based approaches allow children to flourish emotionally and develop and grow as an individual and based on their individual needs. These approaches often have an emphasis on early intervention, a focus on behaviour as communication and they take time to understand the reasons behind a behaviour. Most importantly put relationships at the forefront.

Nurturing activities are often those that are soothing, calming and reassuring, they make the world feel predictable, safe and warm. They allow the child to feel taken care of and build the idea for the child that they are valuable and worthy of love.



Setting-Wide Nurturing approaches

Whole setting nurturing approaches fit well with the DfE's description of 'quality first' teaching.

Nurture UK have identified 6 fundamental principals at the heart of setting-wide nurture approaches.



Education Scotland 2018 states that whole school nurturing approaches have the following components:

- A positive role model from teachers
- Positive relationships in school/college which are reliable, predictable and consistent
- Inclusive, respectful relationships across the whole community, including learners, staff and parents/carers.
- An understanding of attachment theory.
- A balance of care and challenge.
- Incorporation of attunement, warmth and connection.
- Alongside structure, high expectations and a focus on achievement and attainment
- A particular focus on those pupils with missing early nurturing experiences
- The development of resilience and capacity to deal more confidently with life.

Nurture Groups

Nurture groups were developed in the 1970s in London to help support children who were struggling with their social and emotional skills. They are usually a provision within a mainstream school with 2 staff and between 6-10 children. They aim to provide nurture to children whose difficulties are considered to result from disrupted intersubjective learning in the early years, due to fractured or chaotic family relationships (Bennathan & Boxall, 2000). They are designed to recreate missed early social and emotional experiences and usually have the following features:

- They feel homely.
- The learning is based on each individual's developmental stage not chronological age.
- They offer lots of opportunity for one to one and small group work.
- They focus on social learning through interactions.
- They are predictable and have a consistent routine.
- Activities are planned for smaller chunks of time.
- They focus on preparing children for a return for mainstream classes.

Individual Nurturing Activities

Activities that involve food can often be nurturing for example:

- Having a hot drink and a snack together.
- Have a child close their eyes and guess what you are feeding them, if this feels hard for the child you could put it in a container for them to feed themselves.
- Eat a snack and listen together for the noise it makes when the child is chewing it. For example, listen out for the crunches when eating a crisp.
- Feed the child alphabet cereal and think of something positive about them with that letter.
- Cook together and share what you have made.

Activities that involve noticing/showing you care about a child are nurturing. For example;

- Looking after child's cuts or grazes if they come to show them to you, applying cream or a plaster.
- Putting feathers/decorations in each other's hair so that they match, noticing that the colour of the feather suits them etc.
- Using paper to measure a child's height or arm span and commenting positively about this.
- Remembering something about the child.

Activities that involve appropriate touch can be nurturing. For example:

- Peer massage
- Drawing on the child's back with your finger, you could draw the weather, make a pizza or for older pupils trace a positive message on their back.
- Making lotion or talcum powder hand prints together, this involves putting lotion or talcum powder or both on to your hands and printing them on to black paper/card.
- Manicure, have the young person soak their hands in warm water, apply lotion to their hands and then nail polish if they are comfortable with this.

Nurture in Manchester

Both Bridgelea Primary School (Primary PRU) and The Endeavour Federation (SEMH Specialist) incorporate nurture principals at the heart of their practice.



Bridgelea Primary School have worked closely with Nurture UK to develop a 'Nurturing Schools Programme' and are currently working with a number of schools across Manchester to develop their whole school nurturing practice.



Top
Tips!

For Early
Years

The principles of a nurture approach are at the heart of the early years curriculum and are woven into daily practice. The following give some explicit ways of incorporating nurture approaches in our early years settings:

- Social snack and lunch times where children are encouraged to chat with one another, share news and build relationships with peers and adults.
- Ensure you are weaving PSED opportunities into learning/play activities and your continuous provision.
- Some children may require a smaller group for social elements of their day, think about having a 'nurture circle' intervention to mirror whole class circle/story/singing inputs.

Post-16

Top
Tips!

It is important to remember that we all need nurture and care no matter our age or circumstances. The level of nurture will vary throughout our life depending on our life experiences and circumstances.

Talk to the student and find out what helps them to feel cared for and nurtured. Support them to learn about what will help to prepare them for adulthood and to manage within their future careers. E.g. help them to think about activities that are soothing, calming, reassuring, what they need and what they can do to help their world feel predictable, safe and warm or what helps them to feel taken care of, valued and worthy of love in a healthy relationship or interaction.

Evidence-base

Supporting theory and research for Nurture

Attachment research indicates that nurturing and consistent interactions are important in developing secure relationships (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters and Wall 1978).

Bowlby's research in 1988 showed that comforting responses create an atmosphere of acceptance and create a secure base.

Touch which is important in nurturing approaches is key in human interaction, Brazelton 1990 says this is first important for survival and then for meaning. Touch has been found to raise levels of oxytocin which is calming to both adults and children (Makela 2005).

In Porges (2011) research he noted that "both the giving and receiving of caregiving or love has the capacity to protect, heal and restore."

Evidence base for Nurture Groups in schools

Please follow this link for a comprehensive summary regarding the evidence for nurture groups.

<https://www.nurtureuk.org/research-evidence/reports/>

Useful links & Resources

Book: Sunshine Circles: Nurture your classrooms with play by the Theraplay institute.

Book: Why love Matters, how affection shapes a baby's brain by Sue Gerhardt

Book: Nurturing Natures, Attachment and Children's Emotional Sociocultural and Brain Development.

<https://www.nurtureuk.org/>

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/search?term=nurture>

https://new.boxallprofile.org/?utm_source=Gads&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=2021Q2&gclid=EAlaIQobChMI2ZPbhpmP8AIVtRoGAB2AzAJxEAAAYASAAEgLGWPD_BwE#how

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-12/nurture-groups-a-handbook-for-schools.pdf>

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/inc55ApplyingNurturingApproaches120617.pdf>

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/fa/public/epspractitioners/uploads/sites/2864/2018/09/Nurturing-Schools-Pack-FINAL.pdf>

<https://education.gov.scot/media/2cbbaekj/inc55applyingnurturingapproaches120617.pdf>

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/q0nnqt4q/the-nurture-group-network-schools-programme.pdf>

<https://www.thersa.org/reports/inclusive-nurturing-schools-toolkit>