

## A Recovery Curriculum: Loss and Life for our children and schools post pandemic.

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“When will they actually go back to school?” This is the cry from many parents, as we write and there is no answer. But that does not stop us thinking about what it will be like for each and every one of our children, at whatever age, stage or ability level on the day they walk through the classroom door.....

See <https://www.evidenceforlearning.net/recoverycurriculum/> (to read the whole document)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bvx0-mjT9Tc> (or watch on YouTube)

### Some thoughts on this from an Early Years Point of View:

**Lever 1: Relationships** – we can't expect our children to return joyfully, and many of the relationships that they had with you were thriving, may need to be re-invested in and restored. We need to plan for this to happen, not assume that it will. Reach out to greet them, use the relationships we build to cushion the discomfort of returning.

**Lever 2: Community** – we must recognise that the curriculum will have been based in the community for a long period of time. We need to listen to what has happened in this time, understand the needs of our community and engage them in the transitioning of learning through play with you again.

**Lever 3: Transparent Curriculum** – older children will feel like they have lost time in learning and we must show them how we are addressing these gaps. With younger children, you will need to assure them they can still have fun in a room/pre-school that looks a lot different.

**Lever 4: Metacognition** – in different environments, children will have been learning at home in different ways. It is vital that we rebuild their confidence as learners.

**Lever 5: Space – to be, to rediscover self, and to find their voice on learning in this issue.** provide opportunity and exploration and give them opportunity to talk to you.

It is suggested the Recovery Curriculum is built on the 5 Levers, as a systematic, relationships-based approach to reigniting the flame of learning in each child.

The Recovery Curriculum is an essential construct for our thinking and our planning. Each pre-school and nursery must fill it with the content they believe is best for the children of their community, informed by their inherent understanding of their children in their community. What were the aims and values of your setting before this pandemic? Use these aims and values of your nursery to guide your judgements, to build a personalised response to

the child who has experienced loss. No Government can give you the guidelines for that. It is down to you, as that skilled, practitioner, who can lift the mask of fear and disenfranchisement from the child. You can engage that child as a learner once more, for engagement is the liberation of intrinsic motivation, (Carpenter et al, 2015).

The Loss the children experienced during this pandemic will have caused issues around attachment. Many of the relationships in your setting the children have forged over the time they have been with you will be bereft of the investment of those daily interactions and may have will become fragile. Our unwritten relationships curriculum must restore the damage of neglect; it must be a Curriculum of Recovery. Now is the time to address the damage of loss and trauma, so that it does not rob our children of their lifelong opportunities. Now is the time to ensure that we restore mental wealth in our children, so that their aspirations for their future can be a vision that becomes, one day, a reality.

Practically:

- Prepare the children for coming back (see Home activities sheet on STLS page)
- Share with parents how you will be implementing the Government's advice and making the setting safe for their children.
- Both children and adults needs to feel that pre-school is a safe place to be in on all levels. Children especially will need reassurance that the adults there can be trusted again.
- Find out what children have been saying about coronavirus at home (they will have picked up on something) and what the parent's response has been, so you can maintain consistency
- Discuss as a team how you are going to respond to specific questions and concerns
- Don't force the issue (i.e. you don't need to have a circle time about coronavirus) just let it come about naturally
- Or use story time to talk about feelings- this time may have made them sad. Talk about what you and they would put in a 'happiness box'.
- Do attend the EY Webinair on Friday afternoon about Bereavement & Loss
- Always acknowledge the interest or question that a child may have expressed; be factual but not alarming for e.g. 'it's like having a cold and for some people it can make them feel very poorly'
- Never dismiss children's concerns
- Don't talk over the children's heads

- Encourage good hygiene habits
- Focus on outdoor learning and keeping children active- these are happy and healthy places for the children to 'be'.
- Be mindful that many children will have the necessary resilience to recover from this unprecedented occurrence but others may need more time and support.
- Support each other; the children's experiences, may have resonance with your own experiences of the pandemic. If anyone finds the situation upsetting give them time out and reassure them its ok to feel like that. The NHS website has very good tips and advice for dealing with anxiety and stress.
- Show kindness- 'if kindness is shown; then kindness will be received'; also remember to be kind to yourself.