

Reflect and review: the arts and creativity in early years

The most valuable attitude we can help children adopt –

the one that, among other things, helps them to write and read with most fluency and effectiveness and enjoyment – I can best characterise by the word playful ... It begins with nursery rhymes and nonsense poems, with clapping games and finger play and simple songs and picture books. It goes on to consist of fooling about with the stuff the world is made of: with sounds, and with shapes and colours, and with clay and paper and wood and metal, and with language. Fooling about, playing with it, pushing it this way and that, turning it sideways, painting it different colours, looking at it from the back, putting one thing on top of another, asking silly questions, mixing things up, making absurd comparisons, discovering unexpected similarities, making pretty patterns, and all the time saying 'Supposing ... I wonder ... What if?'

'Common sense has much to learn from moonshine'
(by Philip Pullman, in *The Guardian*, 22 January 2005)
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Preface

The importance of nurturing creativity in the care and education of children under six has now been recognised. It is endorsed by government frameworks and publications such as the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage* (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2000) and *Birth to three matters* (Sure Start, 2003). Many individual artists and arts organisations have begun to work in early years settings, collaborating with early years practitioners to embed creative learning opportunities through the arts.

Reflect and review focuses on the particular role of the arts in offering opportunities for young children to be creative. The arts – such as painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, music, dance, drama, storytelling – offer particular opportunities for creativity. They allow children of all abilities and backgrounds to use their senses and to express their personal feelings and emotions. Because the arts involve words, images, sounds, movement and touch they offer children an introduction to different ways of exploring the world.

This booklet is based on consultation with a range of early years settings from the maintained, voluntary, independent and private sectors. The settings took part in a pilot to test the feasibility of extending the Artsmark award scheme into early years settings. As a result of the Artsmark early years pilot, Arts Council England decided to produce a publication promoting good practice in provision for the arts and creative education, rather than an award scheme. Early years settings who participated in the pilot have provided many of the examples cited in this document.

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Reflect and review

Aims

This guide is designed to help early years settings to:

- build understanding of the arts and creativity
- celebrate what is already being achieved
- audit and review their provision for the arts
- improve provision if possible

Audience

Reflect and review will be useful to adults running early years settings, including teachers and early years practitioners, volunteers and parents. It may also serve as a resource for childminders, especially through local childminding networks. Its emphasis is on serving the voluntary, independent and private sector. It will also be of interest to artists and arts organisations who work in early years settings.

Structure

The guide is divided into six sections, which look at different aspects of provision for arts and creative education in early years settings. There is also a list of resources offering further support. Each section includes useful examples, relevant issues, likely challenges and a practical checklist.

You may find it useful to work through the audit checklists with other adults in your setting, so that you can reflect on current arts activity and how you might improve practice and provision.

Opposite: A child from St. Thomas Early Excellence Centre, Birmingham, uses clay slip with potter Jon Williams as part of Craftspace Touring's *Treasure Boxes* series of artist residencies. Photograph: Marcus Rowlands.

What is creativity?

Creativity brings into existence new ideas, original ways of doing things and new creations of all kinds.

Cultivating Creativity in Babies, Toddlers and Young Children
(by Tina Bruce, 2004, reprinted by permission of Hodder & Stoughton)

Introduction

Creativity is one of the characteristics which defines us as human beings. It is available to everyone, not just the talented, and can be taught and encouraged. A creative action may not be unique, but new to the person doing it. This personal innovation is a form of creativity – the excitement and joy of having an idea or doing or making something new to you, which is valued by yourself and others.

Creativity is about connecting the previously unconnected in ways that are meaningful for the individual.

Supporting Creativity and Imagination in the Early Years

(by Bernadette Duffy, 1998, reproduced with kind permission of the Open University Press/McGraw-Hill Publishing Company)

Creativity can take place in all kinds of human activity from cookery to chemistry. It requires inventiveness, curiosity, risk-taking and imagination. The arts can have a strong role in developing creativity in babies and young children. They can offer opportunities for sensory development, exploration and discovery, for experimentation, for asking 'What if?' and for practising different types of communication – all important aspects of creative behaviour.

Things to think about

Adults are central in helping children find out how to be creative through the arts. They can introduce new materials, words, stories, movement and music, build stimulating environments and displays. Adults can show children how much they value what they are doing or making through encouragement, interest and praise. However, creativity is quashed when adults impose their own ideas and preconceptions.

Provide children with a range of materials to help them represent their unique and individual perception of the world, unrestricted by adult ideas; eg rabbits need not have whiskers made of drinking straws.

Birth to three matters (Sure Start, 2003)

It takes time to be creative. Creative ideas in both children and adults go through many stages before they emerge, and even then may be discarded or changed. Try to give babies and young children time to make connections for themselves, and to go back to activities as often as they need to.

We value each individual's creativity and demonstrate respect for their ideas. Children need and deserve time and space and high quality resources. We offer scaffolding for children's learning, giving them a secure structure to work within by demonstrating techniques and skills or initiating ideas. Then we let the child take the lead.

Lilycroft Nursery School, Bradford

It is worth remembering that not all arts activities are necessarily creative. If children are given too rigid a framework and little choice in the materials they use, their opportunity to be creative is limited.

Challenges

When young children are engaged in an arts activity, it is the process, more than the end result, which is significant to their creative learning. You may feel that parents and carers expect to see many finished, similar end products from arts activities in your setting. Try to explain that young children's creativity is not about pleasing adults or producing adult-determined outcomes.

It can be challenging to develop a shared understanding of what is meant by creativity. It may help to discuss and agree on a mission statement about your setting's commitment to creativity.

Checklist

- We have discussed the idea of 'creativity' in our setting, and there is a shared understanding of what it means
- Everyone at the setting believes that all children and adults have the potential to be creative
- We ensure that all babies and children, including those with disabilities, are given opportunities to develop their creativity
- Adults support children in developing their own ideas in arts activities
- Children have time to develop their creative ideas
- We are not focused on end products, and believe that the process in arts activities is important

Building a creative curriculum

Through a curriculum rich in creative and imaginative opportunities, young children have the opportunity to develop skills, attitudes and knowledge that will benefit all areas of their learning and development.

Supporting Creativity and Imagination in the Early Years

(by Bernadette Duffy, 1998, reproduced the with kind permission of the Open University Press/McGraw-Hill Publishing Company)

Introduction

Planning for a full range of arts activities can offer children many creative experiences. They can develop skills, knowledge and understanding, and have opportunities for self-expression and imaginative play and exploration.

The arts include:

- music – for example, singing, making sounds with the body, with home-made instruments, with found objects and with conventional musical instruments; composing and recording sounds; listening to music
- art – for example drawing, painting, photography, digital media, weaving, printing, collage, modelling, pottery, constructing with found materials; looking at artists' work
- dance – for example, moving in response to sound and music, moving in time, moving with a partner or in a group; watching others dance
- drama and imaginative play – for example, copying actions using toys, puppets, props and costumes; playing 'in role' and making up stories individually or in groups; miming; using props such as boxes to create an imagined world; watching and listening to plays and stories, including their own, acted out by others

For example, the teacher (or other adult) adopts the role of the old woman who lives in a shoe; she needs help from the children, who are expert carers and who can advise her on how to keep her many offspring out of trouble. At this age children also enjoy sharing their make believe and play-making with others.

Drama in schools, second edition (Arts Council England, 2003)

The arts can support many other areas of learning. For example, drama and imaginative play develop language, singing counting songs helps understanding of numbers, dance develops balance and

spatial awareness, learning about the arts of another country increases knowledge and understanding of the world, and respect for others.

Children from diverse ethnic backgrounds may have arts skills and knowledge which could be shared at your setting. Learning about cultural diversity through the arts can be a positive way of building self-esteem and ensuring inclusion for all children.

Regular projects involve the children in the use of a range of different materials and equipment. The focus on African patterns involved the children in looking at African fabric, dressing up in costumes and looking at different books. We created our own patterns with three-dimensional forms – pebbles, cones and sand – and large hangings with fabric, pen and inks.

Ashton House Nursery, Chester, Cheshire

Things to think about

When you are planning a new activity or theme, think about how the four artform areas could be included - art, music, dance and drama/imaginative play. This will ensure that you are offering children a broad and balanced range of arts experiences.

The materials you gather can make a big difference to the range and choice of activities on offer. Can children use different brushes, tools, colours and textures for their paintings? Do dressing-up clothes stimulate open-ended play or suggest just one or two characters, limiting children's imaginations? Are tapes and CDs representative of different kinds of music? Do you have arts-based programmes for children to explore on computers?

Challenges

Do you find some artforms are given less time than others? Is this because of lack of space or materials, or of expertise? You can help staff, volunteers and parents gain confidence through discussing, planning and doing arts activities together and by encouraging them to learn more (see page 39).

Cost may be a challenge, but not all materials need to be bought. Materials which stimulate and appeal to children may be available at home in the recycling box or as offcuts or remnants from local shops and stores. Asking parents to find exciting materials with their children is a creative activity in itself. You could join a local scrap store, or work with a primary school which is already a member.

Checklist

- We think about art, music, dance and drama when we plan activities
- We think about how the arts can support learning in all areas of the curriculum
- We introduce and value the arts of different cultures
- We have a range of materials and activities for each artform
- The dressing-up clothes are suggestive and not just based on familiar book, TV or film characters

Your space – an environment for creativity

We have developed a light and spacious multi-sensory environment using natural materials and colours. Music, light, smells and tactile experiences are fundamental. The building has been utilised to provide children with freedom to develop their autonomy supported by caring, sensitive adults.

Eastfield Neighbourhood Nursery School, Wolverhampton,
West Midlands

Introduction

Our environment affects the way in which we experience different stimuli and how we respond to and interact with other people. Early years settings need distinctive and attractive spaces that support children's creativity, giving them freedom to make, move, investigate, reflect and play.

Grouping and labelling resources clearly with words, pictures and symbols at eye-level will help children find what they need. Children have differing emotional responses, and diverse learning preferences. In making their own choices, children are taking part in creative exploration and experimentation. Their learning is not compartmentalised.

By following their interests, extended creative opportunities can arise from their play and fascinations. Enthusiasm for outdoor living and an interest in birds led children from Crossens Nursery, Southport, to build their own enchanted forest. With help from adults, 3D tree sculptures were created out of chicken wire, papier mache and recycled materials. A willow 'hide' was made, from which children observed birds through binoculars and made detailed drawings. To keep the birds happy they decided to make bird food out of clay.

An outdoor area can provide much more than a chance to 'let off steam'; children can make music, paint, act and dance, while the natural environment itself can stimulate all sorts of creative responses through play and discovery.

I feel the garden complements the work going on indoors and enables some children to develop creativity in new ways, particularly boys who, research has shown, thrive and learn so much during outdoor play.

Mannadale Independent Nursery, Braintree, Essex

Things to think about

Which areas do children go to most frequently, and what seems to attract them? Can they revisit activities? Do you ensure that

materials and activities are refreshed regularly and changed in response to children's interests? Observing how children view and respond to their space and environment will help you organise your resources more effectively.

You may be able to stimulate children's creativity as they move around by integrating books and visual aids, rather than restricting these to a book corner or single display. You could also provide aural stimulation.

Children are encouraged to listen to music while they are painting or we sometimes listen to music before the painting session to set a mood or feeling.

Peel Brow Primary School, Ramsbottom, Bury

Challenges

Each setting will have its own frustrations and limitations as well as its own particular ambience. All can be used to promote young children's creativity and imagination, if we, the adults involved, use our own creativity and imagination.

Supporting Creativity and Imagination in the Early Years

(by Bernadette Duffy, 1998, reproduced with kind permission of the Open University Press/McGraw-Hill Publishing Company)

Not all settings have access to an outdoor area which is conducive to creative play. Investigate all possibilities to make the best of your situation. For example, Widcombe Acorns Preschool, a voluntary setting in Bath, Somerset, has restricted access to a garden that is also used as a car park for the community centre. Although not ideal for them, they have managed to negotiate shared and safe use of this space.

Many early years settings are not in purpose-built spaces and must pack away after every session. It can be difficult to plan for activities such as drama or create stimulating displays. Setting out simple but suggestive 'props' and furniture, pieces of fabric, and playing intriguing sound effects or music can quickly suggest new environments and prompt ideas for imaginative play.

Checklist

- We ensure that our setting has a range of multi-sensory stimuli
- The outdoor area is used as resourcefully as our indoor area
- All resources accessed by children are clearly labelled and within reach
- Observation of the children informs our planning and use of the space and sensory environment
- We refresh materials and activities for the arts regularly and respond to children's interests
- We have books and other visual aids in relevant activity areas, not just in the book corner
- All staff and adults expect children to have time to choose freely which areas they want to visit and revisit

Sharing and celebrating

Parents are children's first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development and learning.

Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage (Copyright © QCA 2000)

Introduction

There can be many positive outcomes when young children readily share their creative work with others. Sharing with each other and with adults can be a way of celebrating what they have done. It can build self-esteem and shows children that their personal creativity is recognised and valued.

We encourage and promote creative activities. We held three all day arts workshops for families; the activities were child-focused, with specialist arts activities for the under-threes. Parents and children worked collectively with four artists from Q Arts to create a giant processional baby complete with red babygro, based on one of our babies who attends a Sure Start creche.
Sure Start Rosehill, Derby

Inviting parents and carers to join in with creative arts activities, for example with singing, dancing or making, helps build the confidence of both children and adults. Parents and carers may feel more able to support their children by continuing and developing arts-based activities at home.

Displaying work imaginatively is one way of showing children that their contribution and creativity are valued.

Our babies' artwork is displayed on the walls of the baby unit and our staff seem to have endless ideas about using tiny painted hand and footprints to create pictures of trees, animals and festivals.

Oakdene Nursery, Cubbington, Warwickshire

Things to think about

Displays need not be static or one-dimensional. If you have the space, plan displays that children can easily see, interact with and enjoy. Music, dance, drama and the visual arts can all be recorded or photographed and easily shared with the help of digital technology.

We have a fairly generous allowance of wall space where we can show children's work if they don't want to take it home. We always consult children on this. Sometimes they take it home and then will bring it back so it can be displayed. This obviously involves the parents as well.

Downs Playgroup, Harrow

If possible, plan opportunities for parents and carers to share and take part in everyday creative activities at your setting, as well as special occasions and celebrations.

Challenges

If you have limited space for displays or need to pack away everything, you could consider buying temporary display boards which could be taken out for each session. Photos of the children engaged in activities could be displayed in albums or scrapbooks that require little storage space.

Some parents and carers may not be able to come and share activities. Could you make a CD of songs often used in your setting, for parents and carers and their children to enjoy at home? Could photos be sent home individually or on CD, or be on display where parents can see them when they collect their children? Could you safely use email or a website to help parents keep in touch with activities? You should always get parental permission to use any images of children in print or online. Always check that children cannot be identified by name.

Checklist

- We provide children with opportunities to celebrate and share their creativity
- We involve parents and carers as partners in valuing and developing their children's creativity
- We encourage parents and carers to develop creative and arts skills to share with their children
- We plan displays carefully, to encourage interaction and enjoyment
- We document and show all the artforms children take part in
- We change displays regularly
- If we don't have space, we think of other ways of sharing children's creative work

Working with artists and other creative adults

To give all children the best opportunity for effective creative development, practitioners should give particular attention to opportunities to work alongside artists and other creative adults.

Providing children with well-planned opportunities to work with artists and other creative people will encourage them to develop confidence in their own creativity and to work in new ways.

Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage (Copyright © QCA 2000) pages 116 and 119.

Introduction

Inviting artists or other creative adults into your setting to play or work with your children can provide an enriching experience for all concerned. Artists can demonstrate a practical understanding of the arts and offer a different approach to creative learning. They may pass on new ideas and skills that can develop confidence and self-esteem for both the children and the adults in the setting.

A project designed to provoke verbal responses from a group with a number of special needs children developed in partnership with our musician. The project used cardboard tubes, which one of the children with Down's Syndrome had a passion for. A large tube was decorated and transformed into a magic speaking tube. The member of staff continues to use the speaking tube at registration, to encourage the child to speak. Eastfield Nursery School, Wolverhampton, West Midlands

Some arts centres and venues, including libraries, galleries and museums, provide performances, exhibitions and activities aimed at very young children. There may be a venue in your area that you could visit.

Things to think about

When you plan to work with an artist, consider what you want from this opportunity and how the children and adults at your setting might benefit. Have you explained to parents and carers why the visit is taking place?

Remember that, in creative terms, the process is as important – if not more so – as the end product. However, if your intention is that a resulting outcome is displayed or performed, ensure that you can achieve this in a way that will maximise the children's self-esteem.

Consider what support you can provide the visiting artist. Be clear about what materials the artist will bring, and if you need to provide anything. Make sure the artist is aware of the facilities you have available.

Your knowledge of the children will be useful to the artists, especially if they have little or no experience of working with young children. Nevertheless, try not to anticipate in advance how you think certain children might respond. Often, children behave differently when working alongside an artist or creative adult.

In recent years a wide range of exciting arts projects, some incorporating training for early years practitioners, has taken place across the country. Even so, not all artists have particular experience of working with young children. It is their approach as a creative thinker and practitioner that is central to what the artist can bring to your setting.

As a sculptor, I make public art works that encourage and provoke people to react and get involved. This was no different at the nursery.

Matt Shaw – Artist at Whitnash Nursery School, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire. *Flying in the wind* (edited by Fiona Godfrey, Arts Council England, 2004)

Challenges

Many settings do not have the money to pay a professional artist or support an outside visit, or the time to find a recommended artist to engage or venue to access. You could ask Sure Start, a children's centre or your local infant or primary school about artists and relevant networks, projects and partnership possibilities in your area. These organisations may also know of funding opportunities.

Rich Hughes was a parent of a child in the nursery class. He first came in on a voluntary basis to introduce shadow play to the children. We hung up a sheet and used a lamp and he played with the children. Over a period of six weeks we worked together and followed children's interests in creating stories and putting on shows for other classes. At the end of the year staff and children performed *Mr Dry Bones* to the parents, using puppets. The following year, Rich asked for support for his application to Arts Council England to develop the project. His application was successful and he has since

returned to school for 10 sessions of shadow play. He included a storyteller, artist, musician and film maker. School matched the funding he received of £500.

St Werburgh's Park Nursery, Bristol

The expertise of a professional artist can be of enormous benefit to everyone in your setting. However, it is important to use the artist's skills to support and encourage the children's creativity. If a theme or the activities are too prescribed by any of the adults involved, the children run the risk of producing something to order, rather than being creative.

Other creative adults within your local community may be willing to visit your setting voluntarily.

A parent who is a trained artist holds weekly sessions with parents developing their creativity, which gives them confidence to encourage their children.

Sure Start, Hounslow

Perhaps there is a local music or amateur dramatic society you could approach? Placing notices in local schools' newsletters, in libraries, churches and other places of worship may encourage people to contact you.

You must ensure that visitors are not left alone or unsupervised with any of the children and issues of child protection need to be addressed. This can be a sensitive issue, especially with volunteers. You could seek advice from Sure Start or a local school. Professional artists who work with children and young people should have been police-checked, and you should always ask to see a recent Certificate of Disclosure.

Checklist

- Artists and other creative adults visit our setting regularly
- We discuss how artists and other creative adults could have an impact on our children's creative learning
- We discuss how artists and other creative adults could increase our skills, confidence and expertise
- We are aware of contacts and networks who can advise and support us
- We are aware of artists we can invite to visit our setting
- We are aware of other creative adults within our community
- We always ensure police checks are carried out on artists and creative adults who work with children at our setting
- We access local arts centres and other external settings
- We ensure our families are aware of the benefits of working with artists and other creative adults

Learning more

The principles for early years education require practitioners to understand how children develop and learn during the early years. This is demonstrated when practitioners evaluate their practice, recognising the importance of identifying and meeting their training needs.

Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage (Copyright © QCA 2000)

Introduction

Learning more about creativity and the arts will build confidence and expertise among adults in your early years setting. Often adults lack confidence in their own creativity; it is important to develop a positive and supportive creative culture in your setting. There are many ways to learn more, including:

- working alongside another person, such as an artist
- going to and taking part in arts events
- reading books, articles and websites
- talking to and observing other early years practitioners
- attending short courses
- trying out new materials and techniques

We have attended short courses run by Harrow EYDCP on role and imaginative play. Now our increased use of puppets and props in story-telling has led to children being more involved and engrossed at story time. We have also split story time into two smaller groups and borrowed story sacks from the EYDCP. Downs Playgroup, Harrow

Things to think about

How often do parents and carers get a chance to learn more about creative development? Do you think all the artforms get their fair share of training and development? When people learn new things about creativity and the arts, how do they pass on what they have learned to others at your setting?

The arts are very practical, and adults, like children, are most likely to build their interest and confidence by trying things out, especially when techniques and ideas have been demonstrated in an inspiring way by creative people.

The varied training opportunities have developed an 'I can' atmosphere among the staff. The creative areas are more exciting and adventurous. Staff no longer opt for the 'safe' option.

Slough Centre Nursery School & Early Years Centre, Slough, Berkshire

Are you aware of all the talents, interests and skills of adults, including parents, at your setting? You may find that some adults have arts knowledge and skills which could be passed on to others.

One of the nursery officers has disclosed that she can use Indian drums. She is going to bring them to nursery to play for the children and also give them and other staff the opportunity to play them.

Park Road Community Day Nursery, Birmingham

Challenges

You may find that your setting is offered a lot of training about childcare and development, but not much on creativity and the arts. You may need to build your own approach to learning more. If you are able to arrange for an artist's visit, have you planned opportunities for all adults at your setting to learn from it?

The staff became more aware of the diversity of arts in South Africa. They saw examples of art work, pattern work on huts, music and dancing through watching the digital video made by the staff member and through the books and artefacts she brought back.

St Teresa's Catholic Infant and Nursery School, Southport, Sefton

It can be difficult to convince adults that they are creative and that they can engage with the arts. Encouraging people to stretch their creativity – working together as a group, sharing ideas and not being afraid to make mistakes – can all help build confidence and enthusiasm.

We have a limited budget, but were able to visit a local school for training and personal development sessions. These widened our vision of the arts and gave us confidence back at the nursery to be outdoors for longer, more sustained periods, producing excellent creative activities.

Tan Lane Nursery, Stourport on Severn, Worcestershire

Checklist

- We have a supportive environment, where everyone is encouraged to learn more about creativity and the arts
- We encourage experimentation with new ideas and materials
- We are aware of our training needs in creativity and the arts
- We know about the skills and knowledge which adults at the setting have in the arts
- We look out for training and development opportunities in all the artforms
- When artists or other creative adults visit our setting, we make sure that training and development is built-in

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Early years settings

Examples of existing practice have been included from the following settings involved in the Artsmark early years pilot: (October 2003–March 2004).

Ashton House Nursery, Chester; Crossens Nursery, Southport; Downs Playgroup, Harrow; Eastfield Neighbourhood Nursery School, Wolverhampton; Lilycroft Nursery School, Bradford; Mannadale Independent Nursery, Braintree; Oakdene Nursery, Cublington; Park Road Community Day Nursery, Birmingham; Peel Brow Primary School, Bury; Slough Centre Nursery School & Early Years Centre, Slough; St Teresa's Catholic Infant and Nursery School; Southport; Sure Start Hounslow; Sure Start Rosehill, Derby; Tan Lane Nursery, Stourport on Severn; Whitnash Nursery School, Leamington Spa; Widcombe Acorns Preschool, Bath.

A full list of participating settings can be found on the Artsmark website: www.artsmark.org.uk

Useful contacts

Arts Council England

www.artscouncil.org.uk

Phone: 0845 300 6200

Arts Council England publications can be downloaded or ordered from the above website. You can also find your Arts Council England regional office by clicking on 'my region' and find information involving the arts in education and early years in your area.

Artsmark

www.artsmark.org.uk

Phone: 0800 0560 196

Artsmark is an award scheme for schools who show a commitment to the full range of arts - music, dance, drama and art & design. It is a national award scheme and is managed by Arts Council England. A national pilot took place between October 2003 and March 2004 to test a version of the Artsmark scheme for early years settings.

Sure Start

www.surestart.gov.uk

Phone: 0870 0002288

Sure Start is the Government programme to deliver the best start in life for every child by bringing together early education, childcare, health and family support.

Sightlines Initiative/ReFocus

www.sightlines-initiative.com

Phone: 0191 261 7666

ReFocus is the forum for the Reggio Children network in the UK, and is co-ordinated by Sightlines Initiative, the national organisation responsible for supporting creative thinking and practice in early childhood services.

Curiosity and Imagination

www.curiosityandimagination.org.uk

Phone: 020 7522 6919

Curiosity and Imagination is the national network for children's hands-on learning, promoting playful hands-on experience as a powerful tool for learning. It works in partnership with parents, carers and guardians, the community and other partner organisations and agencies.

The British Association for Early Childhood Education

www.early-education.org.uk

Phone: 020 7539 5400

Known as Early Education, this is the leading national voluntary organisation for early years practitioners and parents with members and branches throughout the UK. It provides support, advice and information on best practice for everyone concerned with the education and care of young children from birth to eight.

Pre-school Learning Alliance

www.pre-school.org.uk

Phone: 020 7833 0991

The Pre-school Learning Alliance represents and supports 15,000 community pre-schools in England. Registered as an educational charity, the Alliance is the national dimension of the pre-school movement, which began in 1961 when, in the absence of state provision, parents started their own self-help nursery schools.

Child protection

www.artscouncil.org.uk

Phone: 0845 300 6200

Keeping arts safe, an Arts Council England guidance booklet for individuals and arts organisations on child protection issues.

Funding

Arts Council England

www.artscouncil.org.uk

Arts Council England, Grants for the Arts

Phone: 0845 300 6200

Awards for All

www.awardsforall.org.uk

Phone: 0845 600 2040

Big Lottery Fund

www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Big advice line: 0845 410 2030

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation Education Programme

www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk

Phone: 020 7297 4700

The National Foundation for Youth Music – First Steps

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