



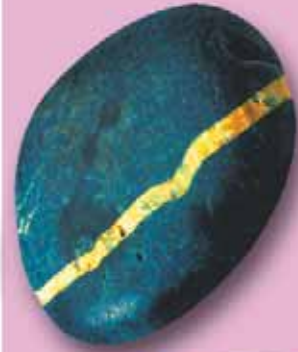
Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority

DVD and
practitioner's guide



Foundation stage

Seeing steps in children's learning



Guide to be used
with the DVD

SureStart

Contents

About the DVD	1
Principles for early years education	2
Overview	5
Jahmael	6
Alex	8
India	10
Thomas	12
George	14
Useful resources	16
Acknowledgements	16



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About the DVD

Seeing steps in children's learning features children learning in a range of early years settings. The DVD starts by showing what the principles for early years education look like in practice. It then focuses on five children developing their skills and understanding and achieving stepping stones and early learning goals.

The DVD has been produced to help you:

- identify where children in your setting are achieving the stepping stones and early learning goals
- 'tune in' to children's learning and plan next steps
- link activities in your setting to the principles for early years education set out in *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage* (QCA/DfES 2000)
- reflect on and improve your own practice.

Watching the DVD

It is important to watch the 'Introduction to settings and principles' before moving on to the individual stories about Jahmael, Alex, India and Thomas, and George.

Each story is divided into sections. Before focusing on a specific section, it's a good idea to watch the story in full.

India and Thomas attend the same setting and are featured as one story on the DVD. In this guide, however, their learning is looked at in two separate commentaries.

Getting the most from the DVD

When you watch the stories, try to look for ways in which the principles for early years education are being put into practice. You may want to reflect on how the practice you see is helping children to develop and learn.

As you watch the DVD, look out for evidence of other learning that has not been highlighted in the commentaries. Only the most obvious stepping stones and early learning goals have been picked out.

It may be helpful to keep these questions in mind as you watch:

- To be sure that a child has achieved a stepping stone or early learning goal, what other information might you need?
- What would you record if observing this child?
- How could you engage with and support the child to extend his or her learning?
- Do you agree with the possible next steps suggested in the commentary on a particular child?
- What would you do differently?

You may also want to think about the learning of other children featured.

Using the guide

The practitioner's guide has been produced to help you get the most from the DVD.

The principles for early years education set out in *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage* are summarised on pages 2 and 3.

All the stories on the DVD are summarised in the overview on page 5 and described in detail in the commentaries on pages 6 to 15.

The commentaries pick out the most obvious stepping stones and early learning goals in a story. They also refer directly to some of the principles for early years education.

The stories can stand alone. You may want to discuss a story with colleagues and draw your own conclusions before reading the commentary.

Sections within each story are marked with a 🎯 in the commentary.



Principles for early years

These principles are drawn from good and effective practice in early years settings. They are set out and explained in full in *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage* (pages 11 to 17).

- **Effective education requires both a relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand and are able to implement the curriculum requirements.**
- **Effective education requires practitioners who understand that children develop rapidly during the early years – physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.**
- **Practitioners should ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued.**
- **Early years experience should build on what children already know and can do.** It should also encourage a positive attitude and disposition to learn and aim to prevent early failure.
- **No child should be excluded or disadvantaged** because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability.
- **Parents and practitioners should work together** in an atmosphere of mutual respect within which children can have security and confidence.
- **To be effective, an early years curriculum should be carefully structured.** In that structure, there should be three strands:
 - provision for the different starting points from which children develop their learning, building on what they can already do
 - relevant and appropriate content that matches the different levels of young children's needs
 - planned and purposeful activity that provides opportunities for teaching and learning, both indoors and outdoors.

education

- **There should be opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and also those that they plan or initiate themselves.**
- **Practitioners must be able to observe and respond appropriately to children,** informed by a knowledge of how children develop and learn and a clear understanding of possible next steps in their development and learning.
- **Well-planned, purposeful activity and appropriate intervention by practitioners will engage children in the learning process** and help them make progress in their learning.
- **For children to have rich and stimulating experiences, the learning environment should be well planned and well organised.**
- **Above all, effective learning and development for young children requires high-quality care and education by practitioners.**





Key elements of effective practice (KEEP)

The principles for early years education are at the heart of the key elements of effective practice (KEEP) set out below.

KEEP is an evaluation tool for local authorities. It illustrates the key elements of early years expertise required to implement the principles for early years education.

Effective practice in the early years requires committed, enthusiastic and reflective practitioners with a breadth and depth of knowledge, skills and understanding.

Effective practitioners use their own learning to improve their work with young children and families in ways that are sensitive, positive and non-judgemental.

Therefore through initial and ongoing training and development, practitioners need to develop, demonstrate and continuously improve their:

- relationships with both children and adults
- understanding of the individual and diverse ways that children develop and learn
- knowledge and understanding in order to actively support and extend children's learning in and across all areas and aspects of learning
- practice in meeting all children's needs, learning styles and interests
- work with parents, carers and the wider community
- work with other professionals within and beyond the setting.

This DVD and guide clearly support KEEP. They will be useful in stimulating professional discussion and reflection as well as developing practitioner knowledge and understanding of important aspects of early years learning and teaching.



Overview

Jahmael's story



Setting: children's centre

page 6

A busy day for Jahmael

This story shows Jahmael: enjoying outdoor play, investigating light, dark and shadows, acting out ideas and experiences in imaginative play, using his previous learning and imagination in construction play, applying and practising his counting skills in a mathematics game.

In brief: Jahmael makes full use of the learning environment during his busy day. He gets involved in a range of practitioner-led activities and also initiates his own play, alone and with a friend.

Alex's story



Setting: small, rural primary school with a mixed-age class

page 8

Alex's adventure to find the fox

This story shows Alex: working with her friends on a plan of Rosie's walk, using and developing a range of skills as she prepares a picnic, making full use of the outdoor environment to recreate and extend ideas from the story.

In brief: In the morning, their teacher reads *Rosie's walk* to the whole class as part of their topic 'journeys' and the reception children construct a map showing Rosie's route. They set off in the afternoon to find the fox, taking with them a sandwich and a drink they have prepared themselves.

India's story



Setting: independent day nursery

page 10

Tell me about it, India

This story shows India: exploring different voices and sounds in a music session, playing closely with others as she brings her own experience to role play, looking at what magnets can do.

In brief: India's morning starts with a music session. Later in the day she becomes very absorbed in role play as a dentist. Outside, a practitioner helps to extend her thinking about magnets.

Thomas's story



Setting: independent day nursery

page 12

Let's play together, Thomas

This story shows Thomas: examining a pair of binoculars, exploring different voices and sounds in a music session, talking and working with others, acting out his experiences and working with objects and materials in role play, helping an adult he knows to prepare food for a celebration.

In brief: Like India, Thomas takes part in the morning music session. He enjoys role play in the shoe shop, and helps to prepare samosas for an Eid celebration.

George's story



Setting: childminder's home

page 14

So where shall we go, George?

This story shows George: finding out more about travel and holidays through first-hand experience, consolidating and extending this learning through role play, learning about another culture through artefacts and food.

In brief: George's holiday snaps of the Isle of Wight led childminder Sandi to plan activities around the theme of holidays. A group of children visit the travel agency. George is four years old and eager to learn about other places and people.

Jahmael



Stepping stones and early learning goals

Personal, social and emotional development

- a) Persist for extended periods of time at an activity of their own choosing [CGFS p32]
- b) Maintain attention, concentrate and sit quietly when appropriate [ELG CGFS p32]
- c) Form good relationships with adults and peers [ELG CGFS p36]

Communication, language and literacy

- d) Initiate conversation, attend to and take account of what others say, and use talk to resolve disagreements [CGFS p48]
- e) Sustain attentive listening, responding to what they have heard by relevant comments, questions or actions [ELG CGFS p50]
- f) Begin to use talk to pretend imaginary situations [CGFS p58]
- g) Show interest in illustrations and print in books and in the environment [CGFS p62]

Mathematical development

- h) Count an irregular arrangement of up to 10 objects [CGFS p74]
- i) Begin to count beyond 10 [CGFS p74]

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- j) Talk about what is seen and what is happening [CGFS p88]
- k) Join construction pieces together to build and balance [CGFS p90]

Physical development

- l) Negotiate space successfully when playing racing and chasing games with other children [CGFS p104]
- m) Observe the effect of activity on their bodies [CGFS p110]
- n) Use increasing control over an object by touching, pushing, patting, throwing, catching or kicking it [CGFS p112]

Creative development

- o) Use one object to represent another, even when the objects have few characteristics in common [CGFS p124]

A busy day for Jahmael

Context

Jahmael is four and attends a children's centre in Newham full time. He first started at the centre on a part-time basis when he was three.

Jahmael is naturally curious about the world around him. So the nursery staff have planned for both child-initiated and practitioner-led activities that build on this.

What is Jahmael learning?

The letters in the brackets refer to stepping stones and early learning goals. These are highlighted in the margin, in the colours used in *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage* (CGFS).

Playing hockey

In the opening sequence Jahmael is clearly enjoying running around and propelling himself and others in the cart. For children who like to be physically active, the hockey game is ideal (a). It is fast and exciting and the children use the space well (l). Jahmael tends to hold the hockey stick with one hand, switching to two when he is trying to hit the ball. The children take turns to hit the ball but also begin to tackle each other to gain possession (n). At the end of the game, Jahmael says 'I ran out of breath' (m).

Passing a smile

This is a time to sit down quietly and share with others. Jahmael understands this and readily responds to the request to share a smile (b and c).

Candles and shadows

Although this session is led by a practitioner, Jahmael and the other child play an active part. Jahmael turns off the light, and then both children watch and listen to the practitioner as she explains why they must be careful with matches and candles (b). All three blow out the candles and shine torches on the smoke. The girl shows that she is aware of change by saying 'little bit of water' when she sees the wax. This prompts Jahmael to climb up and stare intently into the candle. He listens and responds to the practitioner who introduces vocabulary such as smoke, wax and wick, examining everything pointed out to him (e and b). Lighting the candles and torches again, the three create shadows and Jahmael comments on his big head (j). He enjoys being active as he makes 'jumping shadows'.

Role play – the outdoor house

Jahmael is very imaginative in his role play and enjoys playing with another child (f): first the box is a bed, then a sofa; he ties a cord to the spatula and pretends it is a phone. After some disagreement, the chinks become a box of chocolates (d and o). When he is given the rolling pin this becomes a telescope (o): 'I can see faraway things. I can see you. I can see everyone'.

Building a castle

A book about castles sets Jahmael off on the task of building his own castle. With great concentration and perseverance, he fits the large construction blocks together and attempts to balance the shape (a and k). When he is shown the book again, he studies it (g) but says very definitely that he doesn't want turrets on his castle.

Counting

In this game Jahmael uses the die to take away and add to the range of objects in his dish. He counts up to 12, after a prompt to remind him he still holds one object in his hand (h and i). He listens to the practitioner using the term 'more' but does not attempt to use it himself.

Parents and planning

Jahmael is keen to tell his mother all about the castle he built. The practitioners say he enjoyed the hockey game so much that he went back to it in the afternoon.

How is Jahmael's learning supported?

- The practitioners work together as a team to plan and teach in the centre, building on their detailed knowledge of the children's individual capabilities and learning needs. They use this knowledge to plan activities and provide opportunities for the children to apply their learning in situations that are 'engineered around the child's interests'.
- Staff ensure a good balance of child-initiated and practitioner-led opportunities. The six areas of the foundation stage curriculum are reflected in the way the environment is planned, with ready access to all resources.
- All staff play a key role in observing, noting and recording the children's progress in individual files, sharing this information with parents who are encouraged to contribute to this record of progress.
- The children find the broad range of activities on offer both interesting and challenging. The activities combine a real-life purpose with the introduction of new concepts and ideas. The children's safety is a high priority but this is managed well and does not restrict the range of opportunities.
- The organisation and resources enable children to learn together in all six areas of learning. This allows a high level of cooperation between the children and provides opportunities to make independent choices and engage in new experiences.
- The practitioners observe what the children are doing and intervene at the right times by asking questions and making suggestions. They offer encouragement without interrupting the flow of the activity, but also extend learning through active participation, for example during the game of hockey.
- The practitioners evaluate the learning they have observed and use this to plan next steps.



Possible next steps

Consolidation opportunities for Jahmael

- Build on his enjoyment of physical activities by giving him opportunities to practise and hone his skills using the hockey sticks again. Introduce him to a range of games with simple rules and different bats.
- Darken a room and give him different torches and colour filters so he can explore light further.

Extension opportunities for Jahmael

- Play more games with Jahmael that encourage him to manipulate numbers and reinforce his understanding of counting and adding on.
- Make the outdoor house into a castle and make props with Jahmael to encourage further imaginative role play.
- Provide a range of stories and non-fiction about castles to read to the children and encourage them to read independently.

Alex



Stepping stones and early learning goals

Personal, social and emotional development

- a) Show confidence in linking up with others for support and guidance [CGFS p32]
- b) Display high levels of involvement in activities [CGFS p32]
- c) Maintain attention, concentrate and sit quietly when appropriate [ELG CGFS p32]
- d) Work as part of a group or class, taking turns and sharing fairly [ELG CGFS p36]
- e) Select and use activities and resources independently [ELG CGFS p40]

Communication, language and literacy

- f) Read a range of familiar and common words and simple sentences independently [ELG CGFS p62]
- g) Use their phonic knowledge to write simple regular words and make phonetically plausible attempts at more complex words [ELG CGFS p64]
- h) Write their own name and other things such as labels and captions and begin to form simple sentences, sometimes using punctuation [ELG CGFS p64]

Mathematical development

- i) Sometimes show confidence and offer solutions to problems [CGFS p76]
- j) Describe a simple journey [CGFS p80]
- k) Adapt shapes or cut material to size [CGFS p80]

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- l) Use simple tools and techniques competently and appropriately [CGFS p90]

Physical development

- m) Use one-handed tools and equipment [CGFS p114]

Alex's adventure to

Context

Introducing the setting

Alex attends a small, rural primary school where reception, year 1 and year 2 children are taught together. She is one of three children in the reception group, one of whom is also called Alex, the other Charley. Her birthday is in September and this extract was filmed in the summer term when she was five.

In the previous week, as an introduction to their topic 'journeys', the class had taken a circular walk around their village and written a list of features passed on their way round.

The morning starts with the practitioner reading *Rosie's walk* to the whole class. The class talk about what they might take on a walk and conclude that food and drink, a map, an umbrella and wellies are important. The reception children from the class construct a map of Rosie's route with models and directions, while the older children work on coordinates.

Next, Alex and her two friends prepare a picnic. They spend the afternoon looking around the school for the fox from *Rosie's walk*, taking their sandwiches and a drink with them.

What is Alex learning?

The letters in the brackets refer to stepping stones and early learning goals. These are highlighted in the margin, in the colours used in *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage* (CGFS).

Rosie's walk

Alex enjoys listening to *Rosie's walk* and readily answers the practitioner's questions. She shows she can sit quietly, listen attentively and take notice of what others are saying, either when the whole class is together or in a small group (c).

Alex shows she can work independently when she draws up the plan of Rosie's route (e). The plan she makes with her friends correctly records Rosie's circular journey and the structures that Rosie passed on the route. Alex is fully involved in the tasks and keeps concentrating until the plan is complete (b). The three children choose and use resources to produce the structures and features seen in *Rosie's walk* (e). Alex and her friends write the labels that provide directions: 'Go past the behav' and 'Go past the windmill'. Her labels start with a capital letter (h). She holds the pen correctly and her handwriting is clear and legible (l). When she writes the directions, she makes a good attempt to spell 'windmill' and 'beehive' using her knowledge of phonics (g), and then reads one to the practitioner (f). When the other children come to see the plan, Alex gives a simple description of Rosie's journey, pointing out the route on the plan they have made (j).

Making a picnic

Alex uses the knife carefully and skilfully when she butters and cuts the bread for her sandwich (l and m). She spreads the filling carefully before cutting her own sandwich in half and wrapping it in foil (l).

She correctly estimates the amount of foil needed to wrap her sandwiches, but it tears diagonally. It is only when she tries to fold the foil over her sandwich that she realises it won't cover it (k). She hesitates, welcoming the other Alex's help and advice (a).

Alex waits patiently for her turn to pour out her drink. She makes sure she has the same quantity as the others by putting the beakers side by side and then pouring back the excess (d and i).

find the fox

Finding the fox

During their search for the fox, Alex reads the first instruction for their journey and then steps back, waiting for the others to read in turn (d).

When the practitioner asks whether Charley, who has four sandwiches, has more than Alex, who has two, Alex shows she has a good understanding of numbers. She answers that Charley has the same amount of bread but it's cut into smaller pieces.

During their picnic, Alex works out that between them the three children have 15 biscuits. She shows she can calculate using numbers beyond 10 and correct her initial wrong answer (i).

How is Alex's learning supported?

- Planning, teaching and organising is based on detailed knowledge of the children's individual capabilities and learning needs. The practitioner sees the stepping stones as a way of presenting a breadth of experiences as well as a means of assessing each child's progress to identify where to take them next.
- Practitioners provide a range of linked activities that are suitably challenging but achievable and interweave learning across five of the areas in the foundation stage curriculum.
- Because the activities are meaningful, the children show sustained involvement. The activities have a real-life purpose that builds on previous learning and experience at home and at school. For example the task of preparing the drink for the picnic was carefully planned to involve children in the mathematical tasks of pouring, sharing and levelling, and built on some earlier play activities.
- The range of resources and their use have been well planned, so everything is accessible. As a result, the children are able to work independently, making choices, cooperating on tasks and solving problems.
- The practitioners observe what the children are doing and intervene at the right times by asking questions and making suggestions. This extends learning while not interrupting the flow of the activity.
- These observations will feed into information collected for the foundation stage profile.

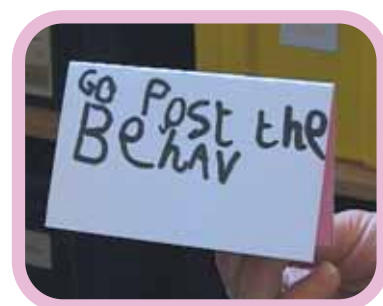
Possible next steps

Consolidation opportunities for Alex

- Use a large-scale map of the school site and ask Alex to describe where she went on her adventure to find the fox.
- Provide small-world, imaginative role play using the plan of Rosie's walk to encourage Alex to retell the story and develop her own ideas.

Extension opportunities for Alex

- Provide opportunities in the playground for Alex to construct a large-scale plan of her favourite walk in the village or the surrounding countryside. Get her to write directions for others to follow or make up a story to share with the class.
- Provide a range of stories about journeys for Alex to read independently.
- Encourage Alex to plan an activity that requires her to estimate how much food will be needed to cater for the class or a group of children.
- Explore ways of sharing food fairly.



India



Stepping stones and early learning goals

Personal, social and emotional development

- a) Display high levels of involvement in activities [CGFS p32]
- b) Initiate interactions with other people [CGFS p34]
- c) Work as part of a group or class, taking turns and sharing fairly, understanding that there needs to be agreed values and behaviour for groups of people, including adults and children, to work together harmoniously [ELG CGFS p36]

Communication, language and literacy

- d) Listen with enjoyment, and respond to stories, songs and other music, rhymes and poems... [ELG CGFS p50]
- e) Build up vocabulary that reflects the breadth of their experiences [CGFS p52]
- f) Use talk to connect ideas, explain what is happening and anticipate what might happen next [CGFS p56]
- g) Use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences [ELG CGFS p58]

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- h) Show an interest in why things happen and how things work [CGFS p88]

Physical development

- i) Negotiate space successfully when playing racing and chasing games with other children [CGFS p104]
- j) Show awareness of a range of healthy practices with regard to eating, sleeping and hygiene [CGFS p110]
- k) Construct with large materials such as cartons, long lengths of fabric and planks [CGFS p112]
- l) Use one-handed tools and equipment [CGFS p114]

Creative development

- m) Sing a few simple, familiar songs [CGFS p122]
- n) Tap out simple repeated rhythms and make some up [CGFS p122]
- o) Engage in imaginative and role play based on own first-hand experiences [CGFS p124]

Tell me about it, India

Context

Introducing the setting

Both India and Thomas (see page 12) attend an independent day nursery for children from three months to five years. India's birthday is in February and this film of her was taken in November when she was four. She is based in the room for four-year-olds, but shares the outside space with children of all ages.

As India likes to learn with other children, practitioners encourage her to talk about her experiences and ideas within a group. The range of child-initiated and practitioner-led activities encourages interaction: taking a passenger on a bike, a focused music session, India as the dentist, and finding out about magnets.

What is India learning?

The letters in the brackets refer to stepping stones and early learning goals. These are highlighted in the margin, in the colours used in *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage* (CGFS).

India enjoys playing outside with her friends. At the start of the sequence, she shares a bike with her friend (i), builds a structure with some of the other children (k) and engages in role play.

Music time

India clearly enjoys taking part in this practitioner-led music session. She joins in with well-known songs, performs the actions and keeps the beat (m and n). She has a good sense of rhythm and tempo (d). India is happy to put forward her own ideas about the fireworks 'and when they go down they go eeeeh'. She's also comfortable taking part in a group activity (f and c).

Role play – the dentist

India becomes fully immersed in her role as dentist (a and o). When she acts out her experiences she uses intonation and vocabulary carefully. She engages in conversation, gives instructions and makes use of the illustrations around the 'surgery' (b and e). Pointing to the picture of the toothbrush, she says 'Every single day put toothpaste on it.' This highlights her understanding of basic hygiene (j). India 'uses' the dentist's tools competently. She rinses the dental mirror between 'patients' and lifts up the other child's chin to help her examine the teeth (g, l and o). She understands the idea of taking turns, saying 'Graham, it's your turn' when she calls him to the dentist's chair (c).

Magnets

The practitioner leads this exploration of magnets. India responds in simple sentences to the questions asked. When asked 'what do you think it will do when you put it on wood?' India tries it out and answers 'it sticks' on metal, but 'it doesn't do it' on wood (f). She shows an interest in what the magnet can and cannot do and learns through active participation (h).

How is India's learning supported?

- The links between the planning, what the practitioners do, the equipment they provide and the physical environment work together to create a situation where the children feel safe and want to learn. Parents are kept informed about what their child will be learning during the week, so they can talk at home about it.
- The practitioners plan the activities based on their detailed knowledge of the children's individual capabilities and learning needs. They base the opportunities on what the children want to do, linking them to the stepping stones and the early learning goals and helping them to build on earlier learning and transfer their skills.
- The staff observe, note and record an individual's progress in the child's records. Adults stand back and watch to see how the children are using the opportunities. Children sometimes take the learning in a different direction to that planned by the adults, so the practitioners identify where they need to consolidate or where they must take the learning on to the next level.
- The good balance of child-initiated and practitioner-led opportunities, both inside and outside, allows the children to experience what is on offer while experimenting in their own ways. There are opportunities to make independent choices and engage in new activities that offer interest and challenge, based on a real-life purpose.
- The available resources enhance the quality of the role play in the dental surgery. They encourage the children to act out their experiences.
- The organisation encourages a high level of cooperation, sometimes between children of different ages. It also helps children learn to interact with different adults and children and participate in a range of formal and informal situations.
- The practitioners observe what the children are doing and intervene by asking questions and making suggestions. They also engage with the children in their role play, for example when the adult makes an appointment at the dentist.



Possible next steps

Consolidation opportunities for India

- Plan activities that build on her enjoyment of learning with friends. Include a range of games with simple rules that reinforce the need to take turns.
- Provide further activities that extend India's understanding of magnets.

Extension opportunities for India

- Encourage her to develop and extend her imaginative ideas by engaging in activities with construction bricks and vehicles.
- Give India a range of books that link to her interests. Encourage her to share them in a group and read them on her own.
- Link number to the other areas of learning and play games that encourage her to talk and manipulate numbers at the same time.
- Encourage India to choose from a range of musical instruments and explore the sounds they make.

Thomas



Stepping stones and early learning goals

Personal, social and emotional development

- a) Have a positive approach to new experiences [CGFS p32]
- b) Display high levels of involvement in activities [CGFS p32]

Communication, language and literacy

- c) Use simple statements and questions often linked to gestures [CGFS p48]
- d) Link statements and stick to a main theme or intention [CGFS p54]
- e) Confidently talk to people other than those who are well known to them [CGFS p54]

Mathematical development

- f) Recognise groups with one, two or three objects [CGFS p74]
- g) Use shapes appropriately for tasks [CGFS p78]

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- h) Sorts objects by one function [CGFS p88]
- i) Show an interest in why things happen and how things work [CGFS p88]
- j) Gain an awareness of the cultures and beliefs of others [CGFS p98]

Physical development

- k) Experiment with different ways of moving [CGFS p104]
- l) Mount stairs, steps or climbing equipment using alternate feet [CGFS p106]
- m) Use one-handed tools and equipment [CGFS p114]

Creative development

- n) Engage in imaginative role play based on first-hand experiences [CGFS p124]
- o) Play cooperatively as part of a group to act out a narrative [CGFS p124]

Let's play together,

Context

🕒 **Introducing the setting**

Both Thomas and India (see page 10) attend an independent day nursery for children from three months to five years. Thomas's birthday is in January and this film of him was taken in November when he was three. He is based in the room for three-year-olds but shares the outside space with children of all ages.

Thomas is confident when he talks to adults and is learning to play with other children. The activities in this extract allow him to try new tasks, although he enjoys going back to his favourites, like playing with the binoculars. The practitioners encourage him to play with the others, but for some of the time Thomas plays alongside them.

What is Thomas learning?

The letters in the brackets refer to stepping stones and early learning goals. These are highlighted in the margin, in the colours used in *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage* (CGFS).

Thomas enjoys being outside and spends time climbing and jumping on and off the blocks on his hobby horse (k and l). He looks through his binoculars and on one occasion says to an adult visitor 'You can see easily with these' (c, e and i).

🕒 **Music time**

At the start of this practitioner-led music session, Thomas watches rather than joins in with the songs. He's keen to respond to the question on fireworks and clearly enjoys talking about his experiences and ideas (a and d).

🕒 **Role play – the shoe shop**

Thomas draws on his own experience of buying new shoes when he acts out the role of the shop assistant and has a conversation with the 'customer' (b and n). He pretends to use the foot gauge to measure his friend's feet, asking 'Are they comfortable?' as he fits a pair and tries to tie the laces in a knot (o). Thomas then wraps the shoes in paper, covering them completely, before putting them into a box (g). Taking them to the 'cashier', he works with a friend to sort out the change (d). He also works with a friend to match cut-outs of footwear (h).

🕒 **Making samosas**

Thomas is clearly interested in making samosas and concentrates hard (b). When he is preparing the food, he accepts an adult's help and fills the samosa with the spoon (j and m). Without counting them he knows that he has made two samosas (f).

Thomas

How is Thomas's learning supported?

- The links between the planning, what the practitioners do, the equipment they provide and the physical environment work together to create a situation where the children feel safe and want to learn. Parents are kept informed about what their child will be learning during the week, so they can talk at home about it.
- The practitioners plan the activities based on their detailed knowledge of the children's individual capabilities and learning needs. They base the opportunities on what the children want to do, linking them to the stepping stones and the early learning goals and helping them to build on earlier learning and transfer their skills.
- The staff observe, note and record an individual's progress in the child's records. They observe what the children are doing and intervene by asking questions and making suggestions.
- Children sometimes take the learning in a different direction to that planned by the adults, so the practitioners identify where they need to consolidate or where they must take the learning on to the next level.
- The good balance of child-initiated and practitioner-led opportunities allows the children to experience what is on offer and to experiment in their own ways. There are opportunities to make independent choices and engage in new experiences, which offer interest and challenge, based on a real-life purpose.
- The available resources enhance the quality of the role play in the shoe shop. They encourage the children to act out their experiences. The books provided reflect the role play and extend learning.
- The organisation of the learning environment encourages a high level of cooperation, sometimes between children of different ages. It also helps children learn to interact with different adults and children and participate in a range of formal and informal situations. All staff at the setting share with the children experiences and special times from their own cultures.

Possible next steps

Consolidation opportunities for Thomas

- Introduce more recipes from different cultures and teach him to use equipment while making the food.

Extension opportunities for Thomas

- Encourage Thomas to use designing and making to extend understanding of space and measures and develop skills of manipulation.
- Give Thomas a range of books that link to his interests. Encourage him to share them in a group and read them on his own.
- Introduce activities that encourage Thomas to experiment with the use of equipment such as binoculars and magnifying glasses and learn about the world around him.
- Encourage Thomas to choose from a range of musical instruments and to explore the sounds they make.



George



Stepping stones and early learning goals

Personal, social and emotional development

- a) Express needs and feelings in appropriate ways [CGFS p34]
- b) Initiate interactions with other people [CGFS p34]

Communication, language and literacy

- c) Have emerging self-confidence to speak to others about wants and interests [CGFS p48]
- d) Ask simple questions, often in the form of 'where' or 'what' [CGFS p48]
- e) Confidently talk to people other than those who are well known to them [CGFS p54]
- f) Begin to use talk to pretend imaginary situations [CGFS p58]
- g) ... know which letters represent some of the sounds [CGFS p60]
- h) Show interest in illustrations and print in books and print in the environment [CGFS p62]
- i) Use one-handed tools and equipment [CGFS p66]

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- j) Gain an awareness of the cultures and beliefs of others [CGFS p98]

Physical development

- k) Use increasing control over an object by touching, pushing, patting, throwing, catching or kicking it [CGFS p112]

Creative development

- l) Use one object to represent another, even when the objects have few characteristics in common [CGFS p124]

So where shall we go

Context

Introducing the setting

George is four and his birthday is in December. He is cared for by Sandi, a registered childminder from an accredited childminding network. A colleague (Shiva) joined her for filming in the summer term, bringing with her some older children whose school was closed for staff development. The activity was planned with the four-year-olds in mind.

Earlier on in the year, George had brought in some holiday snaps and talked to Sandi about his trip to the Isle of Wight. This conversation had set Sandi thinking about their next topic and how she might build on George's interest, so she planned some activities around the theme of 'holidays'. The starting point for the activities was a visit to the local travel agent. During the day, Sandi also drew on Shiva's understanding of another culture as her heritage is Iranian.

What is George learning?

The letters in the brackets refer to stepping stones and early learning goals. These are highlighted in the margin, in the colours used in *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage* (CGFS).

Travel agency

At the travel agency, George learns that he can find out about holidays by looking at travel brochures. The Disneyland brochure catches his eye (h) and he rushes up to Sandi to ask if he can go there (b). Once he's been introduced to the travel agent George is quite happy to ask him about one of the pictures (d and e). When he finds out it's a picture of the 'Pirates of the Caribbean' he looks at it again.

Later on, he listens to the older children as they talk about the illustrations in a simple atlas. He looks intently at the pictures and then answers their questions (h).

Travel agent role play

In the afternoon, at their own travel agency, George is learning how to interact with his peers. He points out the letters on the keyboard to the other four-year-old. He recognises and names some letters, including 'J' and 'A' (g). Then he talks to his friend on the phone (f) using a cup as a telephone (l). Although George doesn't understand the value of money, he tries to write down the numbers, writing '3' and '0' and 'p' for pence, with encouragement from Sandi. He holds the pencil well (i).

Playing together

During the short time that George plays with the ball, he scores a goal with considerable skill and control (k).

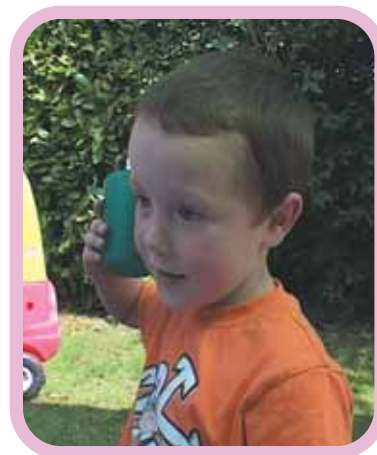
Finding out about a range of cultures

When Shiva brings in artefacts and food at the end of the day George is keen to investigate. He 'drinks' from the goblet, examines the bag, and looks on while Shiva talks about the prayer mat (j). He eats the food with relish, and is quick to express his delight (a and c).

o, George?

How is George's learning supported?

- The childminder's planning is based on her knowledge of the children's interests, capabilities and learning needs. This approach makes it possible for her to link learning across five areas of the foundation stage curriculum.
- The activities have a real-life purpose that builds on previous learning and experience. Because she focuses on the two four-year-olds, the childminder is able to ask questions they can understand and engage them in the activity of planning a holiday.
- Because the activities are meaningful and offer practical experiences, the children are very interested and engaged and are able to apply their knowledge in imaginary situations.
- The childminder takes part in and guides the main activities to extend the children's learning. She draws George and the other children into conversation with the travel agent and encourages them to act out the roles of agent and customer, by suggesting questions they might ask each other.
- The childminder draws on adult knowledge and expertise to plan practical experience of another culture. This provides children with opportunities to handle new artefacts and taste unknown foods.
- The childminder evaluates the learning she has observed and uses this to plan next steps.



Possible next steps

Consolidation opportunities for George

- Use brochures from the travel agency or brochures the children have made to provide further opportunities for role play. Model the use of brochures to increase vocabulary range.
- Ask George to help pack a suitcase for a holiday or a family visit. Present him with a range of clothing and ask him to choose the most appropriate clothes for winter or summer holidays or visits.

Extension opportunities for George

- Encourage George to look at an atlas or a globe to help him find Iran, as well as where he went or will go on holiday, or has family links with.
- Build on George's experience of his own and other cultures, for example by helping him cook the food he has tasted, by singing songs and playing music, by reading him stories and by letting him use resources in role play.
- Plan activities that involve real money to help George understand its value and the cost of things. For example go to the shops to buy the ingredients for Shiva's recipes.



Useful resources

Birth to three matters
www.surestart.gov.uk

Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage
(order ref: QCA/00/587)
www.qca.org.uk

Foundation stage profile: handbook
(order ref: QCA/03/1006)
www.qca.org.uk

Guidance on the development of early writing
www.standards.dfes.gov.uk

Information pack for parents
www.surestart.gov.uk

KEEP: key elements of effective practice
(order ref: DfES1201-2005G)
www.standards.dfes.gov.uk

Observing children: building the profile
www.qca.org.uk

Planning for learning in the foundation stage
(order ref: QCA/01/799)
www.qca.org.uk

Primary National Strategy
www.standards.dfes.gov.uk

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Classification

This DVD is exempt from classification.

Technical information

Type:	DVD 5 single layer
Mode:	DVD video (PAL)
Aspect ratio	4:3 (1.25:1)
Audio	L/R stereo
Language(s):	UK English
Time to go through:	1–1.5 hours
The program is autoplay.	

Minimum specifications

DVD players

This DVD has been designed and tested for optimum playback on domestic stand-alone DVD players, across the range of current manufacturers. The disk will play back on all players conforming to the DVD video standard. As with all DVD technology, in a very small percentage of cases you may encounter playback difficulties. In this instance we recommend using a different playback device or platform.

Computers

Please note that this is a DVD and not a CD-ROM. It can be played on either PC Windows® based machines or Apple Macintosh® computers:

- Microsoft® Windows® 98SE–Windows XP Pro® (with DVD-ROM drive)
- Mac® OS 9.1–OS 10.3 (with DVD-ROM drive).

Processor:	1.0GHz+ (1.5 GHz recommended for Windows®)
RAM:	256MB
DVD:	DVD MPEG 2 capable with DVD drive (x4 speed)
Audio card:	Yes
Screen:	800x600 minimum
Software:	DVD player software recommended: Cyberlink PowerDVD 5; Intervideo WinDVD 6 Gold; Windows Media Player 10.

Please note that Windows Media Player must have the additional DVD Codec installed (not available on this disk). It can be purchased via www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/mp10/getmore/plugins.aspx#DVDDecoder

To use this DVD on a computer click once to select the button and click again to activate it. There may be a very slight pause before the clicking action has an effect. Alternatively, the disk can be used with a navigation bar.

About this publication

Who's it for?

Early years practitioners. The DVD and guide have been designed for use by individual practitioners, early years groups and by those who provide initial training and continuing professional development.

What's it about?

The DVD features children learning in a range of early years settings. It illustrates the principles for early years education and focuses on five children as they develop their skills and understanding.

Related material

Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage
(order ref: QCA/00/587)
www.qca.org.uk

KEEP: key elements of effective practice
(order ref: DfES1201-2005G)
www.standards.dfes.gov.uk

What's it for?

The DVD and guide have been designed to help practitioners: identify where children in their own settings are achieving the stepping stones and early learning goals, 'tune in' to children's learning and plan next steps, link activities in their setting to the principles for early years education and reflect on their own practice.



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