Harnessing the power of ‘YES’ and ‘YET’

How playing to our strengths can help staff and children flourish in Early Years settings.

This paper discusses how positive psychology and a ‘growth mindset’ can support a learning culture in Early Years settings that enables employees to play to their strengths and bring their best selves to work.

Rather than ‘fixing and correcting’, the approach is to identify – and build on – strengths, bringing wide-ranging benefits for the way that both staff and children learn and develop.

To bring about this organisational change, PurpleBee proposes a learning ecosystem that brings together formal and informal learning, people and technology, and best practices in workplace learning.

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Harnessing the power of 

**‘YES’ and ‘YET’**

*How playing to our strengths can help staff and children flourish in Early Years settings.*

What makes a great workplace? How do we create workplaces that are positive environments where everyone enjoys coming to work, absentee rates are low and children and families are happy? These are important questions for Early Years providers who want to keep up high standards, retain their staff and to stay a popular choice with parents. They are also questions we need to answer to be able to provide the best environment for children to learn and grow.

**Wellbeing and the link to learning**

If you work in the Early Years sector you will know how important it is to create the right environment for children to play and to learn. You will have experienced for yourself that creative ‘buzz’ that meets you when you walk into a happy nursery where children are engrossed in their play, asking questions, making friends, negotiating and experimenting with new ideas. By taking care of children’s wellbeing and giving them the support they need to feel safe and happy, we are also creating the conditions for them to learn and develop.

Whilst the importance of wellbeing for the development of young children may seem almost self-evident, it is only recently that we have started to understand the vital role it continues to play for effective learning in older children and into adulthood. The founder of positive psychology, Martin Seligman, has conducted research that shows that wellbeing enhances learning at any age: with positive mood comes broader attention, more creative thinking and more holistic thinking.¹

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Wellbeing, according to Seligman\textsuperscript{2}, cannot exist only in your head: it is a combination of feeling good \textit{as well as} living a life that has meaning, good relationships and accomplishment. There are five measurable elements that count towards wellbeing and these are represented by the acronym \textbf{PERMA}:

![PERMA Diagram]

All forward-looking Early Years providers know that their staff are their most important asset and that to keep up with the pace of change every member of staff needs to continue learning throughout their careers. Fostering workplace wellbeing as a pre-requisite for learning is a smart move for your staff development strategy: not only does it make for a happier workforce, it also has tangible benefits in terms of individual, team and organisational improvements.

\textit{To what extent does your organisation enable or promote the five elements of \textbf{PERMA}?}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{P} – positive emotions – feeling good
  \item \textbf{E} – engagement – feeling absorbed and energised by the work
  \item \textbf{R} – relationships – feeling connected to others
  \item \textbf{M} – meaning – feeling that your contribution and existence has purpose
  \item \textbf{A} – achievement – feeling a sense of accomplishment and success
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{2} Seligman, M. (2011) \textit{Flourish: A new understanding of happiness and well-being – and how to achieve them}, London: Nicholas Brealey, p.25
The Power of ‘Yes’

positive psychology

In its pursuit of wellbeing for individuals, organisations and society, positive psychology advocates approaches that are:

- **appreciative**: celebrating what is right, what is working well, rather than focusing on what is wrong or not working
- **strengths based**: starting from what people do well rather than on their weaknesses or deficits.

This emphasis on the positive is not to the exclusion of learning from bad events or taking notice of the negative – there are times when this is still important. But, Seligman argues, “for sound evolutionary reasons, most of us are not nearly as good at dwelling on good events as we are at analysing bad events. ...So to overcome our brains’ natural catastrophic bent, we need to work and practice this skill of thinking about what went well”.

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The science of motivation

A popular misunderstanding about positive thinking is that a ‘glass half full’ attitude to life will carry you through. Positive thinking, whilst it can provide a starting point, is not enough, according to Gabrielle Oettingen of New York University and the University of Hamburg and author of *Rethinking positive thinking⁵*. Putting up a few motivational posters around the nursery might provide a moment of inspiration but if staff do not have a way to move between the present and the aspirational future it can have an adverse effect.

On the basis of large-scale scientific studies, Oettingen has developed a cognitive technique called ‘mental contrasting’ that combines visualising a desired future with facing the reality of the present. By addressing our fears about what holds us back – the challenges, obstacles and limiting self-beliefs that face us now – we can then make concrete plans to take action. She calls the tool WOOP for ‘wish, outcome, obstacle and plan’ – a more populist acronym than the academic term Mental Contrasting with Implementation Intentions (MCII)!⁶

There are other similar models for goal setting and action planning, such as the GROW⁷ model, that have been used in coaching for over twenty years, but it is only recently that we have started to see the evidence that these approaches can have a real impact on how people learn and change behaviour.

Whichever model is adopted, it is important that people feel that they have the capability to move from where they are now to where they would like to be – and that they have the tools to design a plan that they can review at a later date. As Seligman puts it:

> “Learning occurs when highest strengths meet highest challenge.”⁸

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⁶ Read about the science behind WOOP [http://woopmylife.org/woop-1](http://woopmylife.org/woop-1)

⁷ The GROW coaching model was originally developed in the 1980s by business coaches Graham Alexander, Alan Fine, and Sir John Whitmore. This was refined into the TGROW model by Myles Downey (2003) in his book *Effective Coaching*.

⁸ YouTube video: Martin Seligman - *Wellbeing Before Learning; Flourishing students, successful schools* [https://youtu.be/Rl8yX_8LVnc?list=PLBTcDJ2vo15MeJa4dWjhHm740H8vAKAG4](https://youtu.be/Rl8yX_8LVnc?list=PLBTcDJ2vo15MeJa4dWjhHm740H8vAKAG4)
Strengths based staff training

What are strengths?

Strengths are more than natural ability, which may lie dormant, below the surface, as a potential, without even being used. Strengths are something that we can choose to use and we gain energy and satisfaction from doing so. Each strength comes from a four-fold combination of ability, motivation, effort and support.

Strength = ability + motivation + effort + social support

Jeni Hooper

When it comes to staff training, it is tempting to focus attention on gaps and problem areas, concentrating resources and training efforts on ‘filling the gap’. But what if we change the lens and instead look at what a person does well - and enjoys doing? How might this affect the learning experience? There is a growing body of research, led by Professor Fred Luthans, that suggests that one of the outcomes of playing to our personal strengths is that we can build up our resilience and the ability to face challenges, meaning we can bounce back when we face difficulties in life or work. The pace of change that we all face in the modern workplace means that employees need to develop ‘psychological capital’ (PsyCap) – and this holds true whether you work in the Early Years sector or in a Fortune 1000 company.
Enabling people to articulate their values and to find the aspects of the work that have real personal meaning for them helps us to tap people’s energy and enthusiasm. Staff who are able to use, and extend, their natural skills each day at work find they feel more energised and invigorated, both of which increase motivation.

Psychological Capital (PsyCap)

Professor Fred Luthans and his colleagues have applied positive psychology to the workplace and identified Psychological Capital (PsyCap) as the critical component in Positive Organizational Behaviour. PsyCap is characterised by four qualities:

**Self-efficacy**: having confidence to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks

**Optimism**: making a positive attribution and expectation about succeeding now and in the future

**Hope**: persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals in order to succeed

**Resilience**: when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond to attain success

According to their research, these four qualities are associated with higher performance, commitment, and satisfaction. They also claim they lead to metrics such as lower employee absenteeism, lower employee cynicism and intentions to quit, and higher job satisfaction, commitment, and organisational citizenship behaviours.

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Teamwork and collaboration

Alex Linley, the founder of the Centre for Applied Positive Psychology (CAPP), and his colleagues suggest that, from a team-building perspective “a strengths framework provides individuals with a language to gain a greater understanding of each other’s behaviour at work, and a new context in which to view these behaviours.”

Additionally, the strengths framework means that, rather than trying to fill our skills deficits by going on training courses that we may have little interest in attending, instead we look to the wider team to partner and collaborate with others who have strengths that we may lack.

Where the magic happens

When we enable staff to bring their highest strengths to meet their highest challenges we are asking them to move out of their comfort zones. To do this effectively we must build in support. An Early Years setting that has started to develop a strengths based learning culture will be thinking about how it can support learning every day in the workplace.

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The blend of approaches will be unique to your setting but may include, for example: coaching, mentoring, action learning, and building networks of peer support.

Though the mix may differ, there is one vital ingredient. You need to understand what staff think about learning – and whether they have a fixed mindset or a growth mindset.

The Power of growth mindsets

The term ‘growth mindset’ was coined by Professor Carol Dweck13, a psychologist at Stanford University, and emerged from her research into the different ways that people think about themselves and how our self-images can affect how we behave and how we learn. Based on her findings, she describes two ways that we can view the world and how we engage with it. She called these the ‘growth mindset’ and the ‘fixed mindset’. This is how she describes the differences:

“In a fixed mindset students believe their basic abilities, their intelligence, their talents, are just fixed traits. They have a certain amount and that’s that, and then their goal becomes to look smart all the time and never look dumb. In a growth mindset students understand that their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching and persistence. They don’t necessarily think everyone’s the same or anyone can be Einstein, but they believe everyone can get smarter if they work at it.”


How can we support learning in the workplace?

What are we doing to:
• support people while they are practising new skills?
• encourage people to persist and keep trying?
• share and celebrate individual and team success?
• enable people to adjust their plans in the light of experience?
The following infographic summarises the important differences that Dweck observed in her research between the two mindsets. Notice the congruence of the growth mindset qualities with the four qualities of PsyCap:

**TWO MINDSET**

**Fixed Mindset**
- Intelligence is static
- Leads to a desire to look smart and therefore a tendency to...
  - avoid challenges
  - give up easily
  - see effort as fruitless or worse
  - ignore useful negative feedback
  - feel threatened by the success of others

**Growth Mindset**
- Intelligence can be developed
- Leads to a desire to learn and therefore a tendency to...
  - embrace challenges
  - persist in the face of setbacks
  - see effort as the path to mastery
  - learn from criticism
  - find lessons and inspiration in the success of others

**As a result**, they may plateau early and achieve less than their full potential.

**As a result**, they reach ever-higher levels of achievement.

All this confirms a **deterministic view of the world.**

All this gives them a **greater sense of free will.**

Two mindsets: infographic by Nigel Holmes reproduced with kind permission
http://www.nigelholmes.com/
The important point about Dweck’s work is that she found you can move from one mindset to another. With appropriate support, feedback and encouragement it is possible to develop and adopt a growth mindset – and with a growth mindset, it is possible to learn and do things you might not have attempted before. This is more than wishful thinking; the concept of a ‘growth mindset’ is supported by brain science that has shown that the brain is capable of great ‘plasticity’, meaning the brain is able to create new neural pathways in response to experience. A fixed mindset literally switches you off from learning.

With a growth mindset we believe that we never stop learning or improving and this is an approach to learning that finally puts to bed the idea that we are each fixed by a ‘learning style’ that dictates how we learn. There are variations of the learning style concept – the most well-known is perhaps VAK, the idea that students can be categorised as Visual, Auditory or Kinaesthetic learners. This is still taught in some schools and training courses but in recent years has attracted criticism for lacking empirical evidence but also, more importantly, for stereotyping and holding students back from experimenting beyond their comfort zone. There’s every reason for using different methods of delivery in our training – text, audio-visual and experiential – but that’s quite different to saying that people will always learn best in one modality.

It’s important when we talk about mindsets that we don’t fall into the same trap of stereotyping ourselves – or others – as being defined as having a ‘growth mindset’ or a ‘fixed mindset’. Dweck reminds us that a growth mindset is not the same as being open-minded and flexible or having a positive outlook and that, in reality, we are all a mixture of the two. We can all slip into fixed mindset behaviours and patterns of thinking – and this is where it can be so helpful to have mentors and coaches to help us recognise when this is happening.

14 A full list of research to support this view is given at the end of this blog post: Donald Clark Plan B: 7 reasons why teachers believe, wrongly, in ‘Learning Styles’ http://donaldclarkplanb.blogspot.co.uk/2016/10/7-reasons-why-teachers-believe-wrongly.html


Also see this interview where Dweck addresses how to avoid ‘false growth mindset’ https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/12/how-praise-became-a-consolation-prize/510845/
Learning from failure

Where Dweck’s work gets really interesting is what her model tells us about our response to failure – and the importance of constructive feedback. People with a fixed mindset tend to fear failure because it threatens their sense of self (their innate ability). People with a growth mindset tend to see failure as an opportunity to reflect on what went wrong and try again. In experiments with students where effort is praised, rather than talent, they choose more challenging tasks than those who are told they are smart.16 In her 2014 TED talk, *The power of believing that you can improve*,17 Dweck introduces the ‘power of yet’ – the idea that a grade that says ‘not yet’ (rather than ‘fail’) gives you a learning curve, a path into the future. We are all novices at some times in our lives and continuing professional development is all about the journey, the learning curve, the ‘not yet’. There is really no end point, because professional development is not the accumulation of new facts but a continuing process of learning from experience.

“Life is a succession of lessons which must be lived to be understood.” – Helen Keller

We are hard-wired to learn from experience. Watch any group of young children as they learn to walk, to ride a bike, to figure out a new problem. They fall, they stumble, they pick themselves up, they may run for comfort but then they try again. If we could look inside their heads, we would see the amazing number of neural connections that are firing, fusing and developing as they do so. As adults, we sometimes have to relearn what comes naturally to children – especially if our experience of formal education has been less than rewarding. But the research evidence is clear that with conscious effort and appropriate support, we can strengthen those neural pathways and learn how to learn (again).

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16 This experiment is shown in this YouTube video. Carol Dweck: the effect of praise on mindsets
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTXrV0_3uJY&list=PLBTcDJ2vot5Pcnxc8Fv2R8Nixu5o41W9j8&index=6

17 Carol Dweck The power of believing that you can improve (TED talk)
https://www.ted.com/talks/carol_dweck_the_power_of_believing_that_you_can_improve?language=en
The purpose of learning: outcomes matter

As Early Years professionals we are not learning for learning’s sake; we are accountable for our actions and we are learning to bring our best selves to work in order to bring about the best outcomes for children and families. Dweck herself is keen to emphasise that praising and rewarding effort is not sufficient: outcomes matter to both employees and the organisation.

“Unproductive effort is never a good thing. It’s critical to reward not just effort but learning from progress, and to emphasize the processes that yield these things, such as seeking help from others, trying new strategies, and capitalizing on setbacks to move forward effectively.”

Carol Dweck

How easy is it in your organisation for employees to engage in the processes that Dweck regards as important for positive workplace outcomes?

To what extent does the organisation encourage employees to:

- seek help from others?
- try out new strategies?
- capitalise on setbacks?

Do performance appraisals focus on developing strengths, self-awareness and collaborative team working or are they about gaps and deficits in performance?

Organisational culture

If your organisation is not one that fosters innovation, collaboration and a commitment to learning and growth, people may fear putting their head above the parapet and admitting to not knowing something or to needing help.

A growth mindset needs the right environment to grow – and when that is present in the organisational culture, the research shows it is positively correlated to positive behaviours in organisations, such as less blaming, more innovation, commitment, collaboration and lower levels of unethical behaviour.

Does your organisation have a development mindset culture or a culture of genius?

A two-year study\(^\text{19}\) of several Fortune 1000 companies looked at whether fixed and growth mindsets can be embedded in the culture of an organisation. An organisation’s mindset is the belief that it and its workforce has about the nature of talent and ability.

Which description best fits your work setting?

**Culture of Genius:** Fixed mindset culture in which talent is worshipped. This type of organisational culture asserts that employees either have it or they don’t, when it comes to skills and learning capabilities.

**Culture of Development:** This culture asserts that people can grow and improve with effort, good strategies, and good mentoring. They actively seek to stretch their employees and promote new skills.

Becoming an organisation with a ‘culture of development’ is not a quick fix. It’s hard work but the reward, as Dweck says, is that: “It gives them [individuals and organizations] a richer sense of who they are, what they stand for, and how they want to move forward.” \(^\text{20}\)

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Re-modelling attitudes and behaviours

Encouraging a culture of development requires us to look at what is happening at every level of the organisation. It’s not about change that is dictated from above because it’s less about what we do and more about how we do it. We can start to influence change from any point in the organisation.

Whilst this approach benefits from buy-in from everyone in the organisation it is not the same as a wholesale re-organisation and nor does it need to be painful. It is more about a whole series of small mindset shifts: from focussing on strengths not deficits; from reframing challenges as a chance to learn; from expecting ourselves to know the answers to being confident to ask the questions. It’s really about claiming back some control over how we work together, how we collaborate and share and how we pass on our valuable experiences.
Moving the organisational focus towards a developmental mindset can be a gentle process of re-modelling of attitudes and behaviours that can start anywhere, any time. Just try one of these mindset shifts today – in a meeting, a conversation, in an appraisal – and see for yourself how it changes the mood of the communication.

Once these small changes start to happen, the positive impacts ripple through the organisation, as we discovered when we applied a strengths based, wellbeing-led approach in the Old School House Nursery 21:

**Participants in our action research study at the Old School House Nursery near Cambridge commented on the impact of a strengths based approach:**

- “I was really proud when one of my strengths, ‘compassion’ appeared on the notice board, it meant a lot that my team leader had recognised and rewarded my hard work after supporting one of my key child’s parents through a difficult situation.”

- “It’s good to celebrate our strengths every day and fun finding new ways to use them.”

- “Knowing my strengths and understanding the strengths of others means we can support each other better.”

- “Weakness isn’t about someone not pulling their weight: it’s a skill that needs developing with techniques and practice over time and may still always be a weakness e.g. self-organisation.”

- “When I was struggling with a new task I felt confident that I knew who I could go to ask for support.”

- “I’ve really noticed the increase in the team’s general enthusiasm. Just by celebrating people’s strengths and understanding each other has encouraged the team to tap into each other’s strengths, ask for advice and gain effective support.”

http://www.magonlinelibrary.com/doi/abs/10.12968/eyed.2015.17.7.25
Harnessing the power of

The learning ecosystem

Our vision for healthy Early Years workplace learning is one that harnesses the power of positive psychology with a growth mindset within the context of an ecosystem of learning (see Figure 1).

Like any ecosystem, this can start small – but it is important that the underpinning values and purpose are clear from the outset (the inner circle in the diagram). In a strengths based approach this means an organisational culture that fosters growth, collaboration and wellbeing. The purpose is optimal functioning which is more than performance improvement – it is about bringing our best selves to our work and requires self-awareness, reflective practice and teamworking.

This culture is expressed through the behaviours and attitudes described by the growth mindset (the middle circle), which need to be explicitly shared through mentoring and through appraisal as well as through formal and informal learning opportunities.

The learning ecosystem (the outer circle) combines three elements:

- Learning in the workflow
- Formal (planned) learning and informal (social learning) opportunities
- Support and guidance.
Figure 1: Harnessing the power of ‘yes’ and ‘yet’: a healthy learning ecosystem for Early Years settings (based on the seminal works of Dweck, 2012, and of Seligman, 2011)
Learning in the workflow

How we can learn in the busy flow of everyday work is the subject of much debate in learning and development circles, but there is now a growing consensus around the idea that workplace learning is more than individual training events or single courses and that it is essential to have support and processes that help ‘embedding, extracting and sharing learning as part of the workflow’ 22. Charles Jennings, a leading thinker in learning development, summarises the many theories of learning into four key areas, which are depicted here by Tanmay Vora23:

What opportunities do employees have in your work setting for each of the four ways of learning?

How does the organisation support and develop each of the following:

- Challenging experiences?
- Opportunities for practice?
- Creative conversations?
- Time for reflection?

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22 http://charles-jennings.blogspot.co.uk/2014/10/development-mindsets-and-702010.html

23 Reproduced with kind permission of Tanmay Vora under Creative Commons license (non-commercial) http://qaspire.com/2016/08/15/learning-experience-plus-reflection/
Making sense of our experiences is critical for workplace learning and this is the process we call ‘reflective practice’, which is based on the theories of action learning that were developed by Argyris and Schön. It is a practice that Early Years professionals need to develop both on their own and alongside other team members. As Jennings reminds us, reflective practice doesn’t just happen: “It is a learning process. It requires some degree of self-awareness and the ability to critically evaluate experiences, actions and results.”

“We don’t learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience.”

John Dewey

Formal and informal learning opportunities

There’s a place for formal courses, especially at the ‘novice’ stage of learning. Formal learning can demonstrate a person’s competence at a required level for accreditation, which is important for the credibility of the sector and as way for individuals to demonstrate their transferable skills and achievements.

These days, ‘formal’ rarely means classroom-based: digital technology means we can blend bite-sized elearning with collaborative discussion forums, access to webinars, videos and curated resources from around the web. The experience of learning online can be a very personal one – backed up with live web-conferencing – both one-to-one coaching on Skype type platforms, and in virtual classrooms where large groups can gather to watch expert presentations and to discuss topical issues.

Online platforms and social media can help break the isolation of working in a small or remote Early Years setting, linking people to peers and to experts in other locations. Some platforms, for example, have the functionality to post questions to a panel of experts, providing the possibility for almost instant answers to questions or dilemmas that a person might be experiencing at work.


25 http://charles-jennings.blogspot.co.uk/2016/07/the-power-of-reflection-in-ever.html

26 Dewey was one of the first theorists to write about reflective practice. Read more here: http://infed.org/mobi/reflection-learning-and-education/
Support and guidance

Novices benefit from personalised support and guidance and this is where coaching and mentoring can be particularly effective for embedding learning from a course in day-to-day practice and for helping the person to apply what they are learning to the challenges of real work.

In a strengths based approach, the learning is ‘scaffolded’ to help people learn effectively.

“Scaffolding consists of less than 10% of a building but take it away too early and you’re more likely to be left with a rock pile than a building. Similarly, formal learning can help shape and direct informal learning.”

Arun Pradhan

People ‘learn how to learn’ – in other words they learn about their strengths, they learn how to build on what they do well, they work (often with a coach) to refine their vision of where they want to travel, then they plot their learning pathway, gather the knowledge and skills, and continually apply and test out that new knowledge in their everyday work. Ideally, they are supported in this journey by a supportive manager, workplace mentor and team who provide further opportunities to extend their repertoire and try out new things in the work setting. Feedback is constructive and appreciative, encouraging learners to continue building on strengths and what they are doing well. Performance appraisals and supervision are informed by the same values of positive appreciation and an understanding of strengths based learning, reinforcing the message that, whilst ‘learning is the work’, it is outcomes that matter.

“Like scaffolding, the aim should be to use formal learning to encourage and support a culture of learning so when the formal elements are removed, learners still thrive through experiential and social learning.”

Arun Pradhan

27 http://design4performance.com/2015/12/31/learning-ecosystems/
28 http://design4performance.com/2015/12/31/learning-ecosystems/
As people become more confident in their learning, they start to be more self-directed and flexible, seeking out informal approaches that suit them: participating in online communities of practice, using social media or just asking a peer for help. These are all practices that keep them up to date with current issues and provide a mutual sharing of expertise. Experienced learners may feel more able to volunteer for ‘stretch challenges’ at work and find ways to deliberately reflect on their work. At this stage, acting as a mentor to others can offer a virtuous circle for embedding learning whilst also supporting others.

A final message:

Celebrate the messy!

Organisations who invest in their staff understand that formal learning is just part of developing a learning culture that must be matched with continuing opportunities to embed and extend learning within the workplace.

So how do we extend and embed learning in the workplace? We believe our healthy learning ecosystem provides a model but we know the reality is messy. We’re all familiar with messy play in the nursery – it’s a great way for children to explore the unfamiliar, to
experience their sensory environment, and to develop bonds with others. Essentially, it’s about trying things out.

Learning for Early Years practitioners is similarly messy. There’s only so much formal theory or knowledge to access – the rest is trying things out, learning on the job, asking questions, feeling like you are back to the beginning again – but sticking at it. It can be frustrating, scary, inspiring and ultimately life-changing and we should not underestimate how tough it can be. If it was easy we would all be natural lifelong learners.

We all want to be seen as competent at our job so asking people to ‘learn from failure’ and to question what they do is not a small thing to ask. We can help our staff by normalising and celebrating the messiness of it all and by trusting that, where there are conversations and collaboration, there is learning. Learning arises from the messiness of the workplace – where staff can use their creativity and collaborate to meet the challenges of the everyday.

**Encouraging messy learning in the workplace**

Here’s some ways we can give employees the time and resources to incorporate learning into everyday actions.  

- Step back and allow staff to engage with one another
- Encourage staff to regularly collaborate and share knowledge with one another
- Host regular lunch-and-learn events, where a speaker comes to your workplace to share knowledge
- Provide access to learning resources on key areas – elearning can be particularly useful for quick reference.
- Reframe mistakes by modelling learning from failure - show staff that mistakes are actually essential to learning
- Develop a mentoring programme
- Each week or month develop collaborative projects and share the results of past projects.

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29 Ideas adapted from Fiona Quigley’s article [http://www.logicearth.com/blog/embracing-supporting-and-facilitating-messy-learning](http://www.logicearth.com/blog/embracing-supporting-and-facilitating-messy-learning)
As Early Years professionals we each have the privilege and opportunity to make a lasting impact on young children’s wellbeing and future development. We know the importance of providing a positive environment to play, learn and to interact with others. We know, too, that children observe us in all that we do, learning from our actions and the choices we are making. We are all role models for the children in our care and, if we are to model wellbeing and healthy choices, we need a healthy learning ecosystem that enables us all to bring our best selves to work so that we can provide the best possible start for the children in our care.

Authors

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PurpleBee Learning champions the value of positive psychology in Early Years education and staff development. We are developing training that supports and informs health and wellbeing initiatives in Early Years and that enables childcare professionals to make healthy choices, celebrate their self-worth and share their innovative practice with colleagues.

Members of our team work in an award-winning nursery so our training is rooted in the messy real world! Our shared aim is to support Early Years professionals to build on their strengths, discover how to learn at work – and from work – and how to model habits of wellbeing to the children in their care.

Find out how PurpleBee Learning can help you at www.purplebeelearning.com or email contact@purplebeelearning.com

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