

Let's think about...

From Routine to Relationship: The Power of Care

A 1 hour staff meeting template to use within your setting.

Before the meeting:

- Identify what you are trying to achieve from the meeting. What is the teams current knowledge on this subject? What would you like the outcome of the meeting to be?
- Reflect on how you are going to present the informaton. Can you provide visuals? Things to hold? Practical activities?
- Check the sources of information being presented with a critical eye
- Plan your prompts for after the meeting i.e. posters, reminders, peer observations etc.
- Do as much pre-reading, watching and listening as possible.

You can find out more about planning continual professional development [here](#).

Meeting Plan

Activity 1 (10 mins)- What does care mean to you? You can use flip chart paper or ask team members to speak to each other and feedback.

Reflect upon the feedback and share these quotes about care in early years;

'Effective early years provision pays as much attention to children's care as it does to play and learning as these are intertwined and impact equally on children's development and overall well-being.' [Birth to 5 Matters](#)

'Do you ever feel that the snack to prepare, the hands to wash, or the nose to wipe is getting in the way of teaching? What if we adopted a new way of thinking about care and incorporated it into the heart of our pedagogy? What would our practice look like if we lifted up the daily chores of caring as honourable rituals and essential educational practices?'

Carol Garboden Murray 2021



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Activity 2 (20 mins) - Caring moments reflection carousel

The next activity is going to allow you to reflect upon everyday physical care interactions. You will need to set up stations around the room, each with a care routine scenario - you can choose from the list below or create your own.

Prompt teams **in small groups to discuss**

- **What went well?**
- **How was the baby or child's dignity respected?**
- **Was the baby or child's voice heard and listened to?**
- **How could care be more attuned to the child's needs?**

Add your thoughts to sticky notes at each station and rotate to the next group when your staff meeting leader lets you know to move on. You might choose to reflect upon specific scenarios and further reflect in the context of your setting and practice.

Activity 3 (20 mins) - Respectful interactions

This activity is all about respectful interactions, starting with a quote from Birth to 5 Matters guidance on care;

‘Respectful caregiving requires respectful interactions. In a respectful caregiving approach, the practitioner recognises the child as a free and equal human being, with whom they are working in co-operative partnership. The adult does everything **with** the child rather than **to** the child, so care events become co-operative dialogues in which the child feels competent, recognised and valued as an individual.’

Watch this short clip from St Pauls Nursery School - Ask team members to reflect upon; **what do you notice? What about this interaction is respectful? In what other interactions might we need to reflect upon the respect and care we show for babies and children?** You might choose to ask team members to talk in pairs or small groups and feedback.



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Watch this [EEF Evidence Store video](#) of Nazmul promoting self-care through handwashing as three- and four-year-old children get ready for lunch **and reflect on how you do the following in your setting...**

‘Organise for individualised care within a group routine: a balance needs to be struck between caring for the whole group and caring for individual children. Practices that treat children as if they have identical needs do not support children’s positive self-concept or sense of autonomy.’ [Birth to 5 Matters](#)

How do your routines and environments supporting caring moments? What could you put in place to improve your caregiving in your room? You might choose to ask team members to talk in their rooms for this activity.



Wash the germs off

Watch Nazmul promoting self-care through handwashing as three- and four-year-old children get ready for lunch.

Conclusion and final thoughts (10 mins) - Come together to reflect upon what you have been thinking, are there any implications for practice? What actions are you going to take as individuals and as a team.

Reflect on any amendments to provision or practice (ensure you allow time for the team to identify their actions so you can follow up at their next supervision). You might want to prompt team members to reflect on something new they are going to try, something they are going to keep doing and something they are going to stop.

Follow up prompts and activities for after the staff meeting:

- Share [Birth to 5 Matters Guidance about Care](#) (you might want to print a copy for the staff room or share it on your Whatsapp group)
- Share [evidence informed approaches to Promoting Self-care](#)
- Put A3 pieces of paper up and ask team members to note down when they are noticing their care in practice following the staff meeting
- Observe care across the setting alongside room leaders and feed this in to your setting action plan
- Borrow (and read) *Illuminating Care* (2021) by Carol Garboden-Murray from a library or friend.

Would you like a staff meeting template like this one about a specific topic?

Get in touch to let us know what you would find helpful at your setting by emailing us on sph@beyth.co.uk



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Activity 2 Possible Caring Moments Scenarios

1. Nappy Change: Responding to the Child's Cues. A practitioner lifts a child onto the changing mat while chatting to another staff member. The child looks uncertain, turns their head away, and stiffens their body. The practitioner carries on quickly to "get it done."

Reflection prompts:

- What cues is the child giving?
- How could the practitioner slow down or involve the child?
- How could respect and communication be improved?

2. Mealtime: Supporting Choice & Autonomy. A toddler is offered lunch. They push away the spoon but reach for the bowl. The practitioner gently says, "No, let me do it," and continues feeding them.

Reflection prompts:

- How could the practitioner recognise the child's desire for independence?
- What opportunities for participation or choice could be given?

3. Sleeping Routine: Comfort and Predictability. A baby is unsettled at sleep time. The practitioner rocks the cot briskly while talking across the room to another adult. The baby looks towards the practitioner but receives minimal eye contact.

Reflection prompts:

- How can we support a calm and predictable transition to sleep?
- How could attuned communication be strengthened here?

4. Getting Dressed for Outdoors: Supporting Independence. A child tries to put on their coat but struggles with the zip.

The practitioner steps in immediately and zips it up for them to avoid delay.

Reflection prompts:

- Where could the practitioner pause and observe first?
- What small steps could the child do themselves?
- How does this moment build confidence?

5. Arrival Time: Emotional Care. A child arrives in the morning upset and clings to their parent. The practitioner cheerfully says, "You're fine, mummy's coming back!" with a smile on their face. The child continues crying without comfort.

Reflection prompts:

- How could the practitioner acknowledge the child's feelings?
- What would a more attuned, co-regulating response look like?

6. Toileting Transition: Respecting Privacy. A practitioner changes a child's clothes after an accident with the door open.

Two other children walk past and look in. The child appears embarrassed and turns away.

Reflection prompts:

- How can dignity and privacy be protected in this scenario?
- What simple adjustments would improve the child's experience?

7. Bottle-Feeding: Relationship Rich Moments. A practitioner feeds a baby while scrolling on the nursery iPad resting beside them.

The baby gazes up at the practitioner, but the eye contact is brief.

Reflection prompts:

- How can feeding time become a warm, relational moment?
- What is the impact of distraction on the child?

8. Transition Back Indoors: Supporting Emotional Regulation. Children are asked to come inside. One toddler lies on the ground, upset to stop playing. The practitioner says, "Come on, don't be silly," and lifts them up quickly.

Reflection prompts:

- What is the child communicating?
- How could the practitioner offer time, empathy, or choice?



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