

This case study explores the professional development journey of Sarah Ellis, Nursery Manager at Bristol Children's Playhouse, a charity-led setting in Eastville, Bristol, and her commitment to enhancing provision for two-year-olds. Sarah identified the need to strengthen practice for this unique age group following engagement with the Bristol Early Years All About Twos guidance. By prioritising developmentally appropriate approaches and attending the Getting it Right for Twos programme, Sarah aimed to deepen her team's understanding and address key areas such as routines and peer interactions.

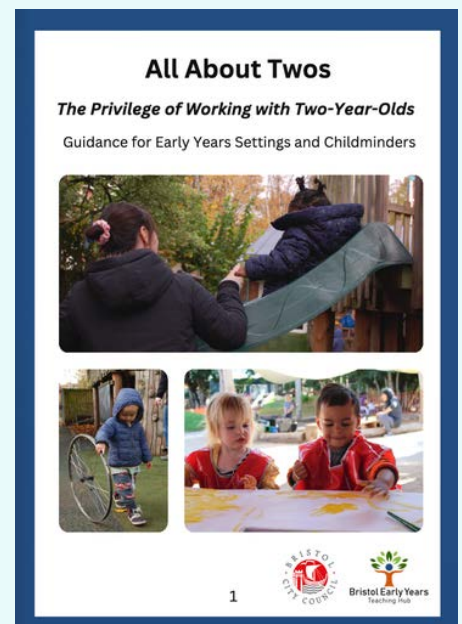


*Bristol Early Years and Bristol and Beyond SPH collaborated to deliver the Getting it Right for Twos programme, consisting of two full face-to-face training days and an additional online half-day session over a three-month period.*

### **What did the programme help you reflect upon?**

'Revisiting the disadvantage gap led to significant reflection. This felt particularly important at this time, due to the expansion of funded places for working families and the importance we were placing on ensuring that places remain available for eligible two-year-olds.

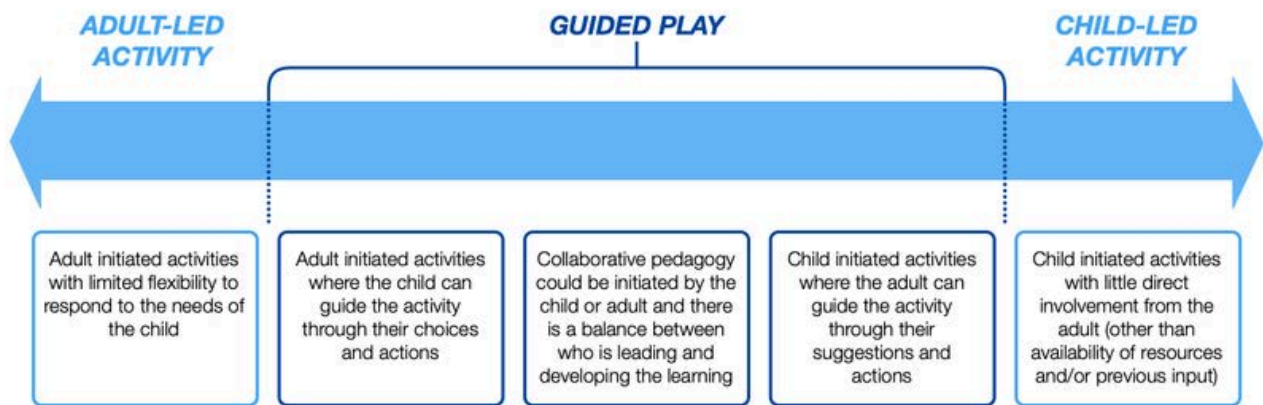
The discussions around the key person approach prompted me to reflect deeply on belonging and emotional security for young children. This meant considering how the key person relationship can be strengthened beyond effective relationship building within a smaller provision in which broader strong relationships can be seen to replace key person relationships. While strong relationships across the team are valuable, I reflected on how a clearly defined key person can support a child's sense of security and belonging.'



# How has the programme influenced your practice?

“The pedagogical continuum was a new concept for me and I went away to learn more about this. Understanding the continuum helped me to recognise and articulate the practitioner’s role in supporting learning throughout the day, not only during planned adult-led activities but also through interactions throughout the whole day.

It strengthened my understanding of how practitioners can support and extend play without taking control of it. This linked closely with the concept of slow pedagogy and encouraged me to adopt a more mindful approach to the pace of the day, ensuring that two-year-olds have sufficient time to become deeply engaged in their play.’



## What actions have you taken as a result of the programme?

‘Following the training, I planned and delivered a staff meeting focused on play and the role of the practitioner. Staff first contributed their own understanding



of play and what it means for children’s learning and development. I then shared research about play and early brain development to broaden understanding of the importance of play for two-year-olds.

We explored the adult role in play and I introduced the pedagogical continuum to support practitioners in understanding their role within guided play. This helped practitioners recognise that their interactions support learning throughout the day, not only during adult-led activities.’



# ***What difference has it made to the children and team?***

## **Children**

‘Previously, nappy changing had taken place on a rota basis. We have begun to adapt this system so that key persons carry out nappy changing for their key children wherever possible. As a result, Children appear more secure with their key persons and increasingly seek them out for comfort and reassurance. Some children who previously showed resistance during nappy changing now appear more relaxed and settled during these routines.’

Following on from the staff meeting, children are becoming more deeply engaged in their play, with longer periods of sustained involvement. Practitioners are more confident in joining children’s play and supporting development through conversation and shared experiences.’

## **Team**

‘Staff reported that the staff meeting helped them to feel more confident in their role in supporting play and understanding the importance of their interactions with children.’

One practitioner reflected:

“As a key person, changing my key children’s nappies has helped me to build on existing and emerging relationships. It gives us more time together on a one-to-one basis.”

Staff have shown increased awareness of their role within guided play and have become more confident in supporting learning through everyday interactions.’

## **Would you like to further explore Getting it Right for Twos?**

- Join our [Spotlight on Twos Network](#)
- Attend our next [Getting it Right for Twos online programme](#)
- Explore the Bristol Early Years [All About Twos](#) document
- Watch our webinar [What Makes Working with Two-Year-Olds Unique?](#) with Julia Manning-Morton
- Watch our [Thinking about Staff Meetings](#) webinar