

CASE STUDY

Tuning in to Two-Year-Olds



Bristol & Beyond
Stronger Practice Hub

This case study explores the professional development journey of Tawanda Tongogara, Early Years Practitioner at The Limes Nursery School, and her commitment to strengthening attuned practice with two-year-olds. After moving from working with three- and four-year-olds into the two-year-old room, Tawanda recognised the need to deepen her understanding of this unique stage of development. By attending the Tuning into Two-Year-Olds programme, she aimed to build confidence in her practice, reflect on her interactions with children and develop strategies to better understand and respond to their experiences.



What did the programme help you reflect upon?



"Moving into the two-year-old room felt like a whole new experience and I wanted to feel more confident in my practice. Being surrounded by other passionate educators and hearing different perspectives really inspired me.

The programme made me realise how easy it is to rush through the day because there is always so much to do. One quote particularly stayed with me: 'We should pause and allow children to take their actions and their play in their own direction. If we interfere, we do not let them independently develop the essential skills needed for lifelong learning.'

It reminded me to slow down, be intentional in my interactions and recognise that some of the richest learning happens when children's interests take us away from our original plans."

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How has the programme influenced your practice?



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"The sessions strengthened my understanding of two-year-olds and their experiences, helping me connect with them as individuals. Learning about reflexivity encouraged me to think more deeply about how my own experiences, assumptions and emotions influence my practice.

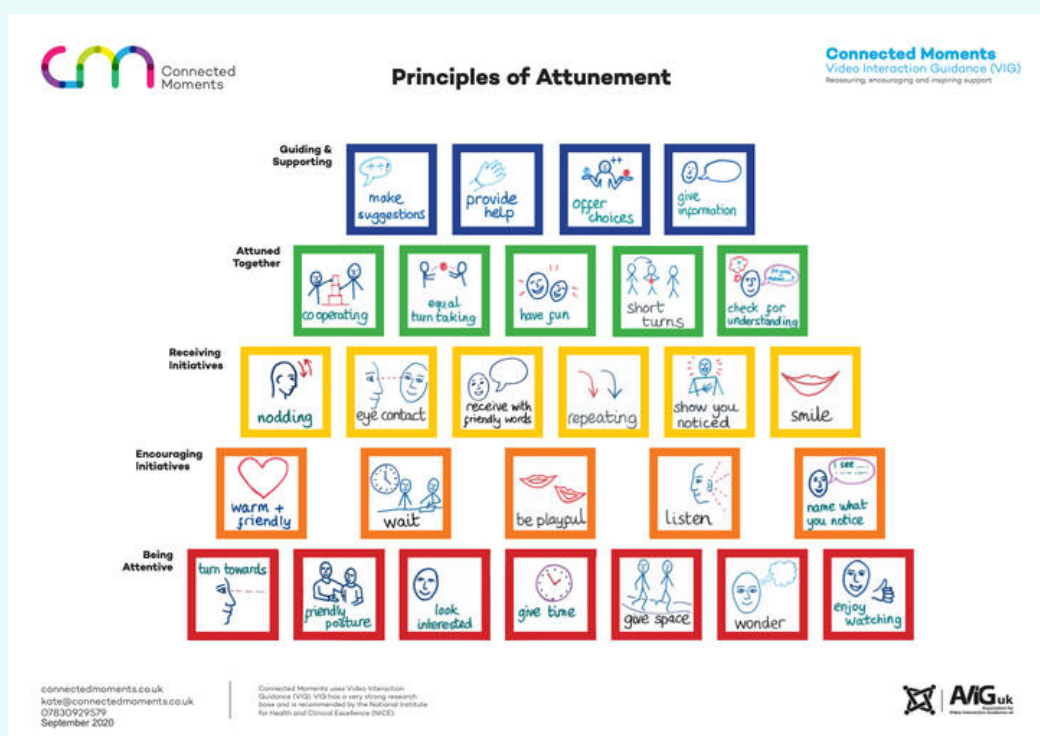
It reinforced the importance of continually reflecting on my interactions, being open to feedback and recognising that understanding children begins with understanding ourselves. I left each session with ideas that I could immediately implement and share with colleagues."



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

"One of the most valuable resources from the programme was the [Principles of Attunement poster](#). I printed copies for our classroom team and also shared them with parents who had asked for strategies to better understand and connect with their children.

Within the team, we chose one principle each week to focus on, using it as a shared point for reflection and discussion. This has helped us embed attuned practice into our everyday interactions rather than seeing it as something separate from our daily routines."



What difference has it made to the children, families and team?

Children

"By tuning in more closely to children's emotions and experiences, I believe they feel more understood and valued. Feeling valued strengthens children's sense of belonging, helping them feel secure within the nursery environment. This security allows them to explore, engage and thrive with greater confidence."

Families

"The Principles of Attunement resource has become a valuable tool when supporting parents. It has given us a practical and accessible way of discussing responsive interactions and understanding children's behaviour. We are now planning to include the resource in our school newsletter and display it around the nursery so that more families can access it."

Team

"The programme has encouraged more professional conversations across the team. We now share ideas more openly, reflect together more regularly and are developing a shared language around attunement and responsive practice."



Would you like to further explore Tuning in to Two-Year-Olds?

- Join our [Spotlight on Twos Network](#)
- Attend our next [Tuning in to Two-Year-Olds](#) programme
- Explore the [principles of attunement](#)
- Explore the Bristol Early Years [All About Twos](#) document
- Watch our webinar [What Makes Working with Two-Year-Olds Unique?](#) with Julia Manning-Morton