



Re-opening Early Years What will it look like?



**Realising the
ambition:
Being me**

“We often talk about the environment in terms of physical spaces, but the key part of the environment for children is the human, social environment of positive nurturing interactions. Experiences are also part of the environment”

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Phase 3: guidance on reopening ELC should be followed to ensure the Health and Safety for all of our children, staff and families.



Setting up our groups **ELC only**

ELC Groups should:

- Be limited to 8
- consider friendships, needs, shared interests, siblings etc.
- Use one space (open plan areas can be assigned to a group, but should not be used by more than one group without strict cleaning, or unless separated by furniture etc.)
- stay together as a group, 2m apart from another group and groups should not mix freely
- have one main adult working with them
- have additional adults support when needed [eg changing children, break times, individual support] the additional adult should limit the number of groups they interact with
- adults must physically distance from each other at all times, including within the groups
- brief or transitory interactions such as passing in corridors or crossing play spaces to access other space are considered low risk

We can...

- reconnect and build a sense of belonging with our children
- remember that we are the most important resource in the space
- look after each other – our children need us to be calm and consistent, so we need to feel ok
- try to see things from our children's point of view
- hug and comfort the children when they need us
- be available with conversation, smiles and listening ears to children. All our children are important

Interactions

We can...

- remember that all behaviour is communication – we don't know the story of each child's life, so what are they telling us?
- focus on emotional wellbeing – naming emotions and finding out what makes this individual child feel better
- build positive relationships with families, because communication is more important than ever
- ask open questions, prompt thinking without pressure
- use the Edinburgh Bear transition stories and other books

Interactions



Spaces

We can...

- Create cosy nurturing spaces using fleecy blankets, washable cushions and soft toys
- Involve children in designing and organising their learning space
- Focus on resources that give children choices and encourage creativity in each learning space
- Make sure every child has as much access to outdoors as possible



Spaces

ELC only

We can...

- Look at indoor and outdoor provision as a whole learning environment, and make sure there are loose parts and other open-ended materials both large and small scale for children to experiment with [– these are kept for individual groups, and any donations are stored for 72 hours before use]
- Make moving in a controlled way from one space to another more fun by singing, playing hopscotch, making a train etc
- Make sure we have arranged spaces to eat, to rest as well as to play – and we have thought about the hygiene of the eating spaces carefully

We can...

- continue to encourage children to be independent and leaders of their own learning. The more they can do for themselves, the better!
- involve children in routines, explaining why there are changes. Keep routines as warm, nurturing and sociable, as possible
- think about nurture and make sure everyone recognises the first importance of making the routines fit the children, not the other way round
- think about learning and choose resources that offer children lots of possibilities – what are the ‘affordances’ of this material? What might the children be able to do with this? Does it hold lots of possibilities?

Experiences



Observing Understanding Planning

We can...

- Observe our children – get to know them as individuals and learners
- Understand what these observations are telling us
- Plan to support children's wellbeing, thinking and knowledge
- The core principles of your work have not changed – some of the structures and routines have changed
- Be confident in your expertise!



Health and Wellbeing

We can...

- Make HWB our top priority – particularly emotional wellbeing
- Name emotions and support children to regulate
- Respond to the children in front of us
- Provide opportunities for outdoor, physical play

We can...

- Make sure we have books freely available
- Embed drawing and mark making opportunities in our learning spaces
- Prioritise story-telling
- Make sure we have fun with rhymes and songs
- Offer role play opportunities
- Offer small world



**Literacy
and
Numeracy**

We can...

- Provide access to loose parts
- Offer block play/large building opportunities
- Consider key mathematical concepts in materials – size, shape, capacity, weight etc.
- Offer contexts for application of skills (e.g. calendars/ calculators/ scales in role play)
- Consider our language when we extend children's play
- Incorporate number songs and rhymes



**Literacy
and
Numeracy**



Resources:

WASH or REST

- Resources must be washed daily, or allowed time [72 hours] to rest between use by different groups
- Consider group boxes/bags with resources .eg. loose parts, small world
- Create book boxes/baskets for individual groups
- Either individual packs of mark making materials, scissors, pritt stick etc or packs per group that are regularly cleaned
- Soft materials eg. fleecy bankets, rugs, fabrics for role play must be washed daily
- Net bags could be a useful way to wash and dry small items either in the washing machine or dish washer (60° cycle)
- Outdoor equipment must be cleaned/wiped down regularly and between groups using it

Enhanced Hygiene Procedures

Hand washing is key in reducing potential transmission of the virus

Children and staff should ensure they wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds frequently:

- upon arrival in the morning
- re-entering the building throughout the day
- when hands are visibly dirty
- after using the toilet
- after coughing or sneezing
- before eating
- when going from one space to another or between groups of children
- after physical contact with others

Staff should supervise children to ensure they wash their hands carefully, providing additional support when necessary.





Key messages

- Play-based learning is key to meet our younger children's needs, with block play, mark-making, role-play and loose parts
- Create group packs of key resources where possible
- Where resources do not allow for group packs, strict cleaning protocols following H&S guidance is essential