Supporting Children on their Personal, Social and Emotional Development Journey



Thursday 7th May 2026

What is PSED?

PSED stands for Personal, Social and Emotional Development

It is one of the prime areas of learning in the EYFS – one of the 3 most important

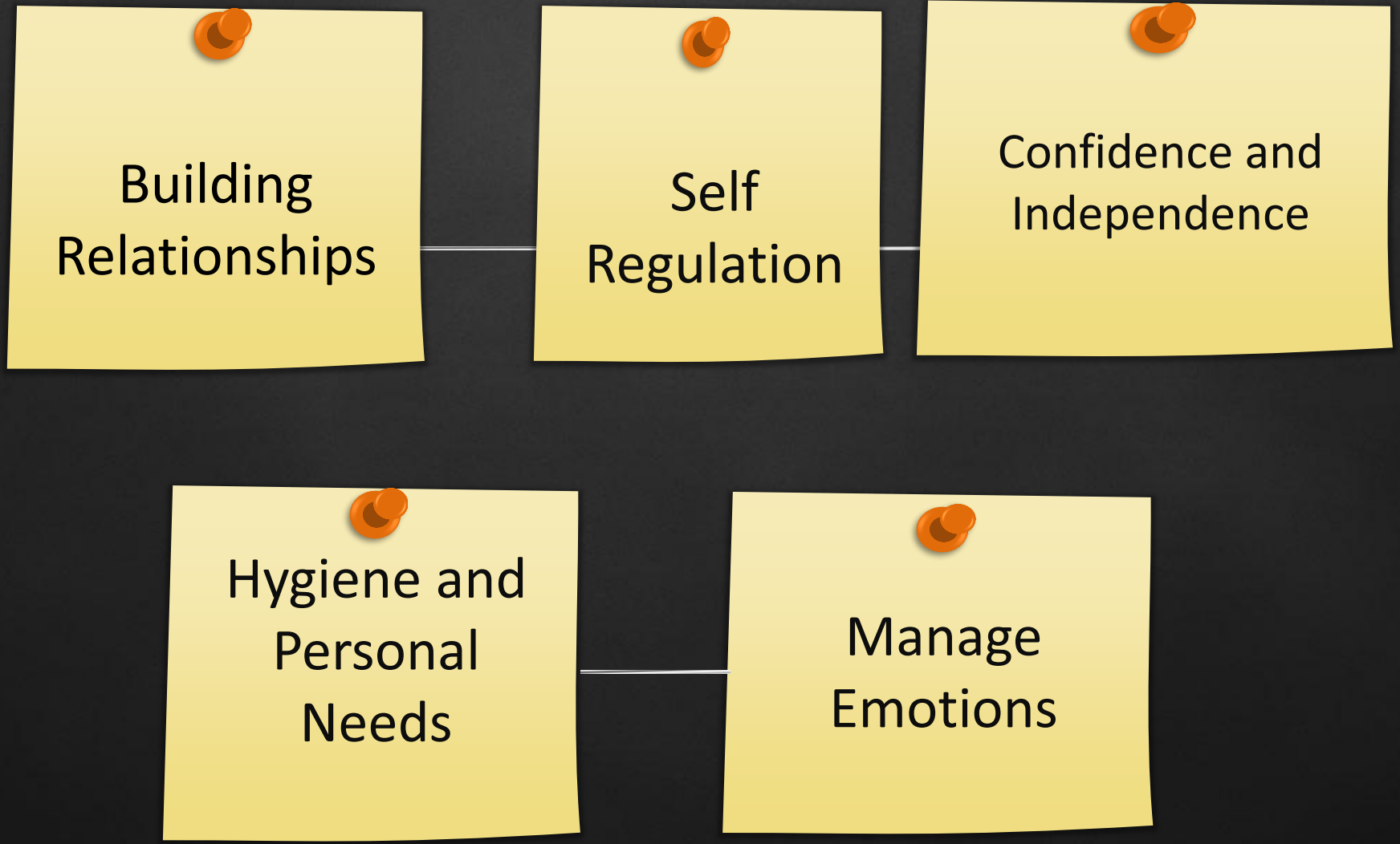
Supports children's wellbeing, confidence, and relationships

Helps children understand feelings and manage behaviour



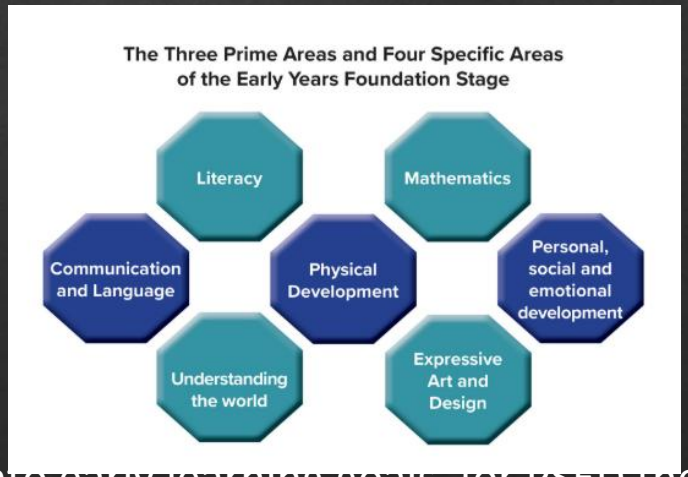


What is PSED?


Building Relationships
Self Regulation
Confidence and Independence
Hygiene and Personal Needs
Manage Emotions

Why is PSED a Prime Area of the Curriculum?

PSED is one of the three prime areas within the **Early Years Foundation Stage** (EYFS).



Each prime area is divided into early learning goals, for PSED these are:

- Self-Regulation
- Managing Self
- Building Relationships

Why is PSED a Prime Area of the Curriculum?

Personal, social and emotional development (PSED) supports children to learn to get on with others and make friends, understand and talk about feelings, learn about 'right' and 'wrong', develop independence and ultimately feel good about themselves.

Children's early PSED has a huge impact on their later wellbeing, learning achievement, and economic success too. Research consistently shows that strong personal, social, and emotional development in the early years supports children's future academic attainment, mental health, relationships, resilience, and long-term life outcomes. The Department for Education highlights that the Prime Areas of learning are "crucial to children's early learning and their later success in education and life," with PSED underpinning emotional wellbeing, relationships and learning behaviours.



Why is PSED a Prime Area of the Curriculum?

Strong PSED development supports progress across all other areas of learning, including literacy, maths, and communication. For example, a child who can take turns, cope with frustration, and feel confident speaking to others is better able to participate in group activities and learning experiences.

Research in early childhood development also shows that emotional security and positive relationships are essential for healthy brain development and long-term outcomes in education and wellbeing.

Why is PSED a Prime Area of the Curriculum?

Studies have also found that children with stronger emotional wellbeing, self-regulation, and social skills are more likely to achieve better educational outcomes and remain positively engaged in school.

Research from The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) further shows that the social and emotional skills developed in early childhood can have lasting effects on later employment, income, health, and overall wellbeing.



How do we Teach PSED?

PSED is embedded within everyday routines, play and interactions, we give children positive feedback and model kindness, empathy and respectful behaviour.

We have conversations with children to get to know them and build relationships and support children to form secure attachments with adults and peers.

It's important that we make children feel secure in our setting. If children have low levels of well-being, they will be unable to learn.

- We help build relationships
- We build confidence and impendence
- We support hygiene
- We help children manage their emotions



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Reception Class content

- Seasons and change
- Life stages in plants, animals and humans
- Where do babies come from?
- Getting bigger
- Me and my body
- Looking after my special people
- Looking after my friends

Sample Learning Activities

- Role play how you can help your special people at home
- Read a book together about getting bigger
- Using the pairs cards, match up the baby animal with its adult equivalent
- Invite a midwife in to talk about her job
- Draw pictures of a friend. At the bottom of the picture write how they look after that friend or how their friend looks after them.





Noticing and navigating feelings

Self-Regulation

- Modelling calm behaviour and positive interactions
- Using stories and discussions to explore emotions
- Support co-regulation through reassurance and guidance
- Encourage independence and decision making
- Provide calm spaces and ways to express emotions
- Teach turn taking, patience and cooperation through play



Managing big feelings together

Helping Children to Manage their Emotions

Support children to name, recognise, name and talk about their feelings
Use calming strategies such as breathing exercises, quiet spaces or mindfulness activates
Reassure children that all emotions are normal and valid
Encourage children to ask for help when they need support
Use stories, role play and play based activities to explore emotions
Model positive ways to manage feelings and resolve conflicts calmly

Helping to Build Relationships

- We build warm trusting relationships by spending quality time talking and playing with children
- Model kindness, empathy and respectful communication through the day
- Children are encouraged to work together through partner play, group activities and shared experiences
- Help to solve conflicts calmly using gentle guidance
- Positive interactions are praised to build self-esteem
- Key person relationships help children feel secure, safe and valued

Building Confidence and Independence

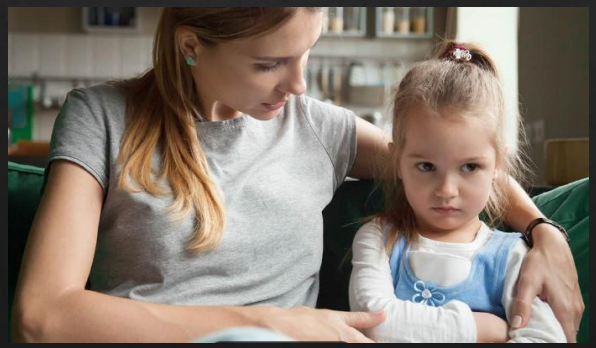
- Encourage children to have a go and try things independently
- Praise effect and celebrate achievements, both big and small
- Encourage and support problem-solving
- Reassure children that making mistakes is part of learning and growing
- Create opportunities for children to build self-confidence through everyday experiences

Helping Children Learn Hygiene and Personal Needs

- Encourage children to wash their hands regularly and independently
- Support children with toileting routines in a respectful way
- Promote healthy habits such as covering coughs and sneezes
- Encourage and help children to dress themselves
- Give lots of praise for small achievements

Supporting Children with Additional Needs

- Children may express their emotions and needs through behaviour
- Changes in behaviour can sometimes indicate that a child may need additional support
- Some children may experience difficulties with emotional regulation, communication, attention or social interaction
- Life events and change at home can affect children's emotional wellbeing and behaviour
- Early identification and supportive partnerships help us respond to children's individual needs effectively
- If you have concerns about your child's wellbeing or development, please speak to a member of staff



Supporting Children with Additional Needs



Every child is unique and support should be responsive to their individual strengths and needs.

Working Together

- Positive partnerships between home and school support children's development
- Open communication helps us respond to children's needs
- Every child develops at their own pace
- Consistency between home and the early years setting provides reassurance and stability
- Sharing experiences, progress and concerns helps create the best outcomes for children
- Working collaboratively supports children's confidence, wellbeing and independence

How Parents can Support and Home

Create opportunities for children to develop independence in everyday routines
Encourage open conversations about feelings and emotions
Recognise and praise effort, determination and progress
Provide consistent routines and clear expectations
Support children to develop confidence, resilience and problem-solving skills
Work collaboratively with early years staff to support children's wellbeing and development

Activity Time

Whilst colouring together chat about things that make you happy, sad, cross etc.

Here is a list of 20 open-ended questions to ask your children in the car, at the dinner ta
anytime you want to get them talking.

1. What do you want to be when you grow up?
2. What is your favorite place in the world?
3. What makes you happy?
4. If you opened a store, what would you sell?
5. If you could be any animal, what kind would you be?
6. What would you do if you made the rules at home?
7. What is the ickiest thing you've ever eaten?
8. If you could have any superpower, what would you have?
9. What is your favorite thing to do?
10. What is your favorite food?
11. How would you describe a perfect day for yourself?
12. What do you think you are good at?
13. If you had to live with a cartoon character, who would you pick?
14. How would you describe your family?
15. What is something you'd like to learn how to do?
16. What would you do with $1,000?
17. Which holiday do you like the most and why?
18. What is something that makes you laugh?
19. Why is the sky blue?
20. What made you smile today?