



Eight vital skills children develop in ECMS early learning and care settings

Here are eight vital skills your child can develop in an ECMS early learning and care setting.

Confidence

Mastering new skills takes practice. Children build confidence when they can practice these new skills in a supportive environment and at their own pace. In quality childcare settings, play-based learning experiences build on children's interests and capabilities. Children become curious explorers and researchers of their world, make decisions and problem-solve. In this process, children gain important social, emotional, language, physical and cognitive skills. Learning these skills gives children a real sense of self-confidence and independence.

Relationship-building

Being able to build relationships with people outside the family before school starts is important. It's also an exciting thing for a child to do. In childcare, children develop meaningful relationships with others and learn how to talk and play with their peers and educators. They learn about themselves in groups, how to start conversations, and how to understand and cooperate with each other.

Participation and contribution

In childcare, children become participants in their world. Children are encouraged to contribute to their early learning community every day. This gives children a real sense of ownership and belonging to their childcare community.

Being 'known' and recognised by others makes children feel good about themselves. Knowing how to participate and contribute is also a huge advantage for when school starts.

Problem-solving

Decision-making and problem-solving are crucial life skills, both socially and intellectually. In childcare, children can practice these skills by being given lots of opportunities to choose and decide how things happen. Children learn what they can do to lead and change things around them, which helps them develop critical thinking. Problem-solving and reasoning are also vital pre-numeracy skills. Children learn things like patterns, sequencing, puzzle solving and reasoning. This is like a gym for the brain!

Language and communication

Language-rich environments are important for children to understand their world. That's why in quality care centres you will see lots of conversations, stories, singing and chatter. To be understood and have your needs met, you need to be able to ask and tell and inquire. Giving children a voice to be heard and understood encourages children to connect and belong. Lots of talking and discussion helps children develop thinking skills and later literacy skills too.

Emotional regulation

Have you ever tried reasoning with a child under two? If you didn't have much luck, it's likely because children don't learn how to manage their emotions and develop a sense of reason until about the age of two or three. Before this,

children are still 'collecting' and 'experiencing' emotions. Childcare enables children to practice managing themselves in relation to others. In this setting, children begin to understand that action and reaction are linked. They can master self-control and have an impact on what happens. It's an exciting time for children realising they are 'powerful!'

Empathy

At about the age of two children start to show understandings of other people's feelings. Pretend play is a really interesting way of feeling and showing empathy as children need to have an understanding of what someone else believes in order set up a game of pretend. This is very clever! Empathy is a sophisticated feeling that is a platform for strong social connections in the future. Childcare opens up opportunities for children to explore and practice their empathy with other children. In quality childcare settings,

educators will design play-based experiences that encourage children to understand and develop language around empathy.

Resilience

Resilience is an important characteristic. It requires children to step out of their comfort zone and try new things. Resilience is born from facing challenges, sometimes feeling a bit scared or vulnerable and finding ways to overcome this by being strong and brave and confident. Childcare can provide lots of experiences for children to develop and practice resilience skills: problem-solving, optimism, independence and social connection.

Best of all, childcare allows children to make the most of their carefree childhoods. Just as they have the right to do.

