

Teaching and Learning

Scaffolding



Scaffolding is supporting children's development and learning during their early years by offering the right help, at the right time, in the right way.

The practitioner plays a supportive role in the child's learning. Your role is also to observe the children, recognise the stage of learning they are at and then provide support to help them to reach the next stage.

Task

Watch the video to find out more about scaffolding -

[Communication Trust Platform 3: Scaffolding - YouTube](#)

discuss the video with a partner – does this reflect your understanding of scaffolding?

Task

Hints - Providing hints is one way to scaffold effectively. You're helping advance the children's performance, but without giving away the entire solution. Hints could be verbal, pictures, or gestures to aid a child in reaching the answer or completing the task.

Suggestions - Offering a range of answers to a question, or a range of ways to complete an activity is another technique that can be used. If you can see that a child is struggling with the task at hand, provide suggestions to build that bridge between what they already know and what they are trying to grasp.

Resources-Make the most out of additional resources in your setting. For example, if a child is finding it hard to draw a picture of a cat, ask them where they can find a cat somewhere else. This could be in a book that you have read recently, a drawing that another child has done, or a cuddly toy.

Prompts - Using prompts is a great way to extend children's thinking. They can be used in lots of ways, for example:

Asking about a relevant topic – “Why do you think we use that...?”

Asking for alternatives – “That's a good way of doing that, but is there another way we could try?”

Providing support and working together – “Let's have a think about this together.”

Model and demonstrate - Help show your children what to do, or how to solve a problem, through modelling or demonstrating - not by outrightly telling them.

You then take a step back and only offer support when it's needed. Modelling language can help children learn vital social skills like sharing, for example. An instance of this could be “Ellie, why don't you tell Harry that you'd like a turn with the keyboard when he is finished.”

Feedback - Provide just the right amount of support and feedback, at the same time as giving plenty of encouragement. You can positively respond to both right and wrong answers, as this will encourage participation. Make sure to give praise to children, not only for succeeding but for attempting the task in the first place.

Questioning - Asking open-ended questions is a way to get children to use their imagination a little. Here are a few examples:

What do you think will happen if...

Tell me about a time when...

List everything you think you might find in.....

Do you have any other ideas?

Step-by-step - Breaking the tasks into smaller steps can help children that are stuck.

Group work - Lastly, don't think that scaffolding has to be a one-to-one activity.

In fact, in a lot of cases activities are best to do with a group of children, as they can then learn a lot from one another. Also, try not to create your groups of children only based on their abilities, as this will limit the scaffolding that can take place.

With this information carry a session observation. Step back and observe all children and staff engaging.

Which of the above strategies can you see being effectively implemented?

Are the techniques being applied well?

Is there a variety of scaffolding strategies being applied?

Are there any missed opportunities that you noted?

Reflect as a group on your observation – were staff aware of when they were scaffolding or where they potentially overlooked an opportunity?