

TRANSITION TO SCHOOL REPORT



Name

DOB:

Report Date:

School Attending:

**Copies of Report to: Parents
School
MOE - Special Education**

It is important to acknowledge that the information contained in this report is specific to the child and family, and therefore should be treated with respect and strict confidence.

When I feel cross or frustrated, I show this by yelling, making frustrated noises, crying, saying "stuck" in a loud voice, shaking, dropping to the floor, squeezing an adult's hand or arm really hard or very occasionally biting if I am really cross. You can help me feel better by giving my body some deep pressure input, talking in a calm voice, playing some music and redirecting my attention to something I enjoy.

I really love to play outside, especially jumping on the trampoline, climbing trees, riding my scooter, swinging and water play. Some other things I really enjoy are tickles with daddy, riding in the car, music and dancing (action songs like 'rock a bye bear'), climbing really high, cuddles with mummy and daddy, riding on escalators, jumping on the bed, books and really really BIG bubbles!

I feel most comfortable when I'm in familiar surroundings with familiar people and I can hold my special toy friends. My 'friends' help me to feel safe. Loud or unexpected noises can frighten me!



When I feel sad you will see my eyes well up with tears, my lip quivering and my face looking very sad. I usually suck my thumb too when I am feeling sad. You can help me feel better by giving me a firm cuddle, redirecting my attention to something I enjoy, playing music and singing, squeezing my bare feet and pushing on the soles, rubbing my back or rolling me up in a blanket.

When I feel happy I show this by laughing, jumping around, giggling, squealing, smiling, skipping. My giggle is very infectious and I'm sure you will want to join in!

My favourite foods are: pizza, mini donuts, icecream, chocolate, lollies, chicken (daddy's special made with satay sauce), popcorn, chippies, garlic bread. Sometimes I put non-food items in my mouth. Just remind me to put sharky in instead!

I will need some time to get to know all my new friends and helpers at school. These are some things you can do to help me get to know you and trust you:

- Speak to me in a calm and gentle voice and be patient with me. Loud or angry voices may frighten me.
- Praise me when I am doing the right thing – I love to know I am doing well ☺
- Always let me know before things change so I have time to get used to the idea and prepare myself.
- I understand much more than I can say and I really like it when you talk to me as the almost 6 year old intelligent boy that I am.
- Give me lots of cuddles and firm massage to keep me regulated and open to the world around me. I also like pressure in the form of a cushion squashed on top of me. Be available for hand holding and cuddles. I may want to sit on your knee once I get to know you.
- I LOVE music and rhythm. Singing songs, instructions and narrative about what is happening around me will get my attention, as will making a steady beat.
- I love to have fun and to laugh and giggle. Copy my actions and dance with me. A good gentle 'getting to know me' activity is playing 'round and round the garden'. I love being tickled.
- Be sensitive to my daily moods and energy levels: some days I have lots of energy, other days I need lots of quiet times.
- I watch and notice a lot that goes on around me. Talk to me about what is happening.
- I like new things to explore and can get bored with the same things all the time. Allow me time to explore in my own thorough way. I am very agile - let me challenge myself, but keep me safe.

Personal History and time at The Champion Centre

The following sections are aimed at providing important and easy-to-access information about X in the different curriculum areas. The strategies used to support each of these areas will be detailed separately.

Managing self

X has a gentle, endearing personality and, when well regulated, he is able to engage with opportunities for learning, fun, play and exploration. He relies on the support of well-attuned and trusted adults to help him stay regulated throughout the day.

X is likely to become distressed and anxious in response to loud or unpredictable noise from peers or in the environment. Careful monitoring of X's levels of stress and anxiety will enable a familiar supporting adult to intervene and provide calming activities and appropriate sensory input before X's stress becomes overwhelming for him.

When X is unwell, hungry, overcrowded, or overwhelmed he is less able to stay regulated. He does not yet have the verbal language to communicate his lack of well-being. He is likely to use non-verbal signs such as physically withdrawing, trying to remove himself from the room, placing his hands over his ears, vocalising, crying or putting his thumb in his mouth.

X independently chooses to use transition objects to help him stay regulated when moving between environments and activities. These 'friends' can vary from day to day, but he is very particular in his choices. When attending preschool and the Champion Centre, he has learned to put his 'friends' in a bag on his hook when he arrives, to enable him to participate more easily in the activities offered to him. However, if he becomes stressed, anxious or overwhelmed, he requests having his 'friends' back again and they are very supportive for his calming process. If used carefully, his 'friends' are likely to be an important regulatory support for X as he settles in to the school environment.

X has a poor sense of self and reduced body awareness. He presents with difficulties in planning and undertaking activities, particularly those which are new. (Refer appendix 3 on Motor planning and Praxis). His sensory systems also need alerting for learning due to his innate low registration. A "Low Registration" sensory profile means that X can appear to 'switch off' or 'zone out' for lengthy periods, appearing to 'not hear' or 'not look' at what is happening around him. X needs alerting, generally in whole body, familiar active movement, to engage with people and learning opportunities.

Movement activities also help to keep X regulated throughout the day and he is becoming skilled at independently seeking the movement that his system needs. X is able to engage in preferred movement activities spontaneously, such as jumping, climbing and swinging and shows great joy when he does so. It is more difficult for him to participate in group movement activities selected by others, however when given time to observe and supported by music and repetition, X may choose to join in over time.

When new or challenging activities are presented to X, or his performance or compliance is directly requested, X typically becomes very anxious. He shows this by increased mouthing/chewing/ingestion of non-food items (Pica), sucking his thumb, lying on the floor, becoming tearful and moving away from activities and people. However, he may return to activities when he has had a chance to observe and he feels like the pressure to perform is reduced.

X wears pull-ups during the day and requires support with toileting. He is learning to go through a toileting routine and is sometimes able to use the toilet with support. He is also beginning to dress himself with support.

X's ability to be safe with support has improved significantly over the past year. He is now more able to walk calmly, holding hands with a trusted caregiver, without running away. Holding his special 'friends' in his hands supports him to stay present and calm and we have also used visual supports, such as videos of stopping on request, and photos of him walking safely holding hands, to support his learning. However, X does not yet have an independent understanding of how to keep himself safe and requires constant and vigilant adult supervision. He sometimes puts non-food items in his mouth, he can run fast if he sees something that interests him and he is a very skilled climber.

Relating to Others

X develops strong and positive relationships with the significant people in his life. He recognises and responds to his parents and sister as well as to other very familiar caregivers. He takes some time to get to know and trust new people in his life, but once he feels safe and comfortable, he is able to look, greet, respond, smile and engage. He seeks hugs and emotional support from trusted caregivers when distressed, and loves to play jumping, laughing and tickling games together when he is feeling happy.

X's ability to express his emotions has developed in the last year. He is becoming more joyful during favourite activities, using smiles and giggles more readily than when he was younger. He also expresses sadness, frustration, fear and distress very clearly and is now able to seek help more actively from others.

When X is highly motivated (e.g. during a bubble, balloon, jumping or music activity) and regulated, he is able to engage one-to-one with a trusted caregiver using eye contact, smiles and laughing. He is often less able to be responsive in a group setting, but is usually happy to sit on the periphery with a trusted supporter and observe the other children.

X's imitation skills have developed significantly over the last few months. When well regulated, he shows interest in other children during familiar group music activities and is beginning to imitate gross motor movements (e.g. putting a hat on and off, balancing a teddy on his head and shoulders). He also responds really well to watching himself and others in a mirror.

X's reduced sense of his own body makes it more difficult for him to understand his space and the space of others. He is more prone to bumping into others or standing on hands/toes at mat time than his peers and needs support to be aware of the other children in his immediate space. At times he also becomes focused on an object that he would like and may try to just take it, without showing awareness of the child who is playing with it. Similarly, he can become focused on his special 'friends', to the exclusion of other people or activities in the environment. The adults supporting X will need to observe closely to see if he is using his 'friends' to withdraw for some quiet time to regulate himself, or if he needs support to redirect his attention and engage with a different activity/person.

X will sometimes pass an object to an adult during parallel play, as a way of involving them in his play. He is beginning to initiate turn-taking with a ball by dropping the ball in the general direction of a possible partner. He may hold out his hands to indicate that he is ready for the ball. If the partner responds by rolling or throwing the ball back to X, he is usually happy to engage for a few turns. With highly familiar partners, X can now wait for the ball to be passed to him, rather than coming into the partner's space. X may require support to take turns in a new environment or with new peers.

Participating and Contributing

When well-regulated and motivated, X is a very competent and able learner. He shows a developing sense of humour and loves to laugh with trusted others. When supported with visuals and a known routine, he is usually co-operative with transitions between activities or environments. In unfamiliar environments, X may be more anxious and will need greater visual and emotional support to process and understand what is required.

As with most children, X's state of emotional and physical regulation when he arrives in the morning affects how he is able to engage and participate. If X is feeling stressed or anxious when he arrives at school, it will be important to take some time supporting him to become calm and regulated again, before expecting him to engage with school activities.

X responds well to visual cues and schedules, particularly if they are supported by a known routine. He is able to follow instructions for motivating tasks if they are given verbally, and are then reinforced on a tablet/iPad, or with a coreboard. X recognises visual representations of his own lived experience and will sustain engagement with photos accompanied by written and spoken language that retell the story of his own experiences.

X needs to be intrinsically motivated to engage meaningfully in any learning activity. When he is genuinely interested and feels a sense of confidence and competence within himself, X is able to sustain his attention and engagement for several minutes, persisting with the activity and showing pride when it is completed. Without this motivation, X tends to rapidly disengage from the activity and withdraw back into himself, sucking his thumb, in a way that makes him unavailable for engagement and learning. X responds best when adults carefully observe and follow his interests, and activities are provided that match and extend his interests. The use of music is a particularly motivating factor for X.

Language, Symbols and Text

X has limited expressive language, but despite this, he is a very clear communicator. He uses eye contact, facial expressions, body language, words, sounds and vocalisations to communicate with trusted partners. X understands spoken language instructions but still requires support to follow them.

He is most responsive when instructions are sung to him. X repeats back words or instructions in a grumpy tone if he does not want to do an activity.

X responds verbally to music, with a range of vocalisations at different pitches and volumes. The frequency and volume of X's vocalisations often matches what is going on in his environment (e.g. he tends to become louder with a greater range of vocalisation as the environment around him becomes busier).

X has been using a Coreboard to help him to communicate choices. He has matched symbols on the Coreboard in a PowerPoint presentation to help him locate them on the board. He has also matched the spoken word to the appropriate symbol and he frequently repeats the word. Adults model language on the coreboard. X does not always appear to be looking, however he has inconsistently used the coreboard to communicate e.g. 'stop, drink' to request a drink.

X is due to begin a trial of a communication device with the support of Talklink when he is settled in school.

X is very visually attentive and has a range of positive early literacy skills emerging. Specifically he can:

- match high frequency words from a choice of four
- attend to books with carrier phrases. He has been using some of the books from the 'See and Learn' early reading programme with his EIE in the Preschool environment, and also shows interest in any photo books made with pictures of his own lived experiences or objects of special interest.
- inconsistently order a five word sentence with a corresponding picture following a verbal prompt.
- match all symbols: letters, numerals, words, pictures, shapes.
- identify and verbalise some numbers.
- match words to outline in a sentence format.

X's expressive language skills are also developing. Specifically, he can:

- use up to three word sentences in context inconsistently.
- say 'stuck' in context, but not consistently. He often uses "stuck", spoken loudly and repetitively, as a way of expressing stress, frustration or a desire to escape a situation. This can also be a request for help.
- repeat single words inconsistently following verbal output on a computer e.g. saying "hello" in response to a video of a person saying "hello" on the screen.
- greet or farewell a familiar person in response to their greeting (inconsistent). This may be up to two minutes after the person has greeted him.

X is right-handed. He is able to hold a thick pen or crayon. He can scribble using circular or linear movements (but often will not be able to do this on request). He is able to draw around a picture or object independently. He will allow hand-over-hand support to write his name. He is able to use a stylus as a tool for tracing lines and letters.

X has been engaging in ABA training outside of the service offered by the Champion Centre.

Thinking

X is a highly visual learner and attends to detail. It should never be underestimated what X is learning through observation. Whilst he may appear to be not engaging or participating in learning activities, he will be observing, often from the periphery. X will then be able to demonstrate his learning once he feels a reduction in pressure or expectation. Whilst this is a learning strength and can be harnessed to support him, it can also be a hindrance to generalising learning across settings, and to extending his learning. It can be a challenge, as X will feel intrinsic pressure to complete an activity in the same way he has seen it presented. For X, repeating things in the same manner is a safety net and can be calming for him. As teachers, we need to support him gently to extend this learning. We can do this through changing one part of a familiar activity, such as the medium used. Familiar books can be presented in different ways (e.g. big books, talking books, books with puppets, photo stories etc). Familiar and favourite/safe activities or 'friends' can be used as a safe entry point into new, unfamiliar activities. They can also be used as a reward.

X's concept of himself as a competent learner is developing. He is more able to engage and sustain his attention with self-chosen activities, rather than activities requested of him by others. He is most able to engage with learning when he is relaxed, regulated, in a safe, quiet and familiar environment, does not perceive any pressure to perform, and finds the activity intrinsically motivating.

X becomes anxious, withdrawn and unable to demonstrate what he knows when high levels of expectation (often perceived) are placed on him. It can take some time for X to trust a learning partner and allow them to come alongside him to share activities. Beginning with X's self-chosen activities and gaining his trust is usually the best way forward. Once X feels safe and regulated, you can begin to introduce other adult-chosen activities for him to observe and then engage with when he feels ready.

X's conceptual understanding is developing well. While it is likely that he understands more than he can show us at this stage, he has shown the following conceptual skills using computer and other visually supported activities. Specifically, X can:

- demonstrate understanding of questions such as "which one can you eat, read etc."
- select an object with two attributes (e.g. red square) and can often select one with three attributes (e.g. small pink triangle).
- select primary colours, plus pink, orange and purple, on the computer.
- match all colours within a routine task, such as replacing lids on pens.
- identify colours and shapes from the word and picture, and sometimes say the words in response to words on the computer screen.
- follow a sequence of up to 3 steps to achieve a result with a highly motivating toy.
- order objects by size both up and down.
- complete a repeating sequence of two objects or colours and has worked on three.
- point one-to-one to objects on the screen up to ten and find the corresponding numeral.
- place missing numerals in the correct place in the sequence.
- complete complex shape sorters (9pc) and puzzles. He is able to do inset framed puzzles and interconnecting puzzles. He can complete a 9 piece puzzle without seeing the picture or completed puzzle.

X is really good at exploring all aspects of objects - space, movement, weight, comparisons. X really enjoys learning through technology as it fits well with his visual strength. He has mainly used switches on the computer up until recently and is now beginning to use the mouse with hand-over-hand help. He can make selections by using a touchscreen and is learning to engage with a number of programmes on the iPad.

All of X's abilities, passions and skills are only able to be seen when he feels safe and secure, both within the environment and within relationship with those who come alongside him. When X feels unsafe, insecure (either physically - both environment and/or sensory system, regulatory, or emotionally), or under stress or pressure, he is unable to demonstrate his skills, or communicate how he is feeling. He may retreat internally and become quiet and withdrawn; he may distract through movement or by communicating that he does not want to; he may become highly distressed and vocalise this; he may become stressed and hit out at his primary caregiver; or he may remove himself from the activity or learning space. This is not because he does not want to participate; rather it is because he is *unable* to. When X presents like this, it is important to come back to a place of safety, relationship and regulation, and to give him time and space to become calm and engaged. This may take moments, but it may also take multiple and graded exposures to new learning activities alongside an adult with whom X has a safe, secure and reciprocal relationship.

STRATEGIES AND ADAPTATIONS TO SUPPORT X AT SCHOOL

Social-emotional regulation and engagement with others

- Build relationship and trust over time – X is only able to be calm, regulated, confident and available for learning when he is supported by a known, consistent, responsive and trusted adult.
- Build consistent and reliable routines and try to minimise sudden or unexpected changes to normal routines or activities.
- Use visuals to cue X regarding any changes to activities or transitions between environments. X responds to both photographs and boardmaker symbols. Visuals are very meaningful for X and enable him to understand, predict, anticipate and process what is expected of him and what is going to happen. Having a photo of X on his bag hook, desk and any other items/areas that he needs to recognise is also helpful.
- X's transition objects (his 'friends') play an important role in helping him to feel calm and safe in unfamiliar environments. It is, however, important to ensure they are not becoming a barrier to his learning and exploration by taking up his physical hand space or attention. Placing clear and consistent boundaries around how and when his 'friends' are available to him in the classroom may be useful for supporting X's engagement with other classroom activities. He can be taught to place his 'friends' beside him on the table/floor, or to leave them with his bag in the cloakroom, once he is feeling safe and secure.
- X enjoys turn taking with a ball, and may enjoy doing this with other children with adult support. It is likely that initially X will move toward the person with the ball to take it before it is passed. Start by responding immediately when X drops/passes the ball in the general direction of an adult or child, by picking it up and passing it back to X as quickly as possible. Gradually increase the amount of time before passing it back, as X learns to wait with new partners. Put words to the game e.g. your turn. Start with one or two other partners.

Sensory regulation and motor skills

- Try to provide a calm environment – think carefully about levels of visual stimulation and noise. If the environment is noisy and highly visually stimulating, he will need to be monitored carefully. If X's stress levels increase, he may need some time in a calmer environment.
- Be alert for early signs of stress/anxiety and try to offer calming activities before X becomes distressed e.g. move to a quieter environment, swinging, rolling a heavy ball over his back and legs, giving a firm foot rub or hug.
- Intersperse physical activities with focused learning activities - e.g. bouncing on the mini-tramp, swinging, walking, climbing.
- X appears to have challenges with finger strength and with organising his hands to execute fine motor tasks. He will benefit from activities that support his fine motor movement. Some examples of activities to develop fine motor skills and strength are:
 - Peg boards
 - Using playdough or clay to make shapes
 - Sensory play with rice, beans, pebbles etc
 - Kinetic Sand
 - Threading small beads
 - Ziplock bags
 - Windup toys
 - Use of tweezers, tongs or eye droppers
 - Use spring-loaded scissors
 - Small squirt toys in water play

For further ideas and suggestions see www.therapiststreetforkids.com/fm-fingerisolation.html

- X puts non-food items in his mouth (Pica) which requires his caregivers to be vigilant in their supervision. However, he has made significant improvement in this area over the last 6 months. The following safety plan was provided by Julia Ridgeway, Psychologist for Explore, and we have found the strategies very helpful:

Thinking and learning

- Allow X to observe new activities from a safe distance and be prepared to present activities consistently many times until X is comfortable to approach and engage. Do not give up if X chooses not to approach or engage the first few times an activity is presented.
- Ensure that there is a **clear visual plan of activities**, interspersed with movement breaks.
- To engage in learning (and thinking), X needs to be regulated prior to engagement through music, deep pressure, movement, or tactile play (beans/rice). Steady beat helps him process information in an organised and regulated way.
- Allow sufficient time for X to process and understand any requests or instructions, and always support visually.
- Use of computer – X has the loan of a Champion Centre iPad loaded with lots of learning resources. He is welcome to have this available to him at school until the technology grant can be accessed for him. Please let us know if you need any support with using the apps.
- Approaching activities within a play-based, social engagement framework and having fun with X, without placing too many demands on him, will be a good way to begin to earn his trust and help him to feel comfortable engaging with learning activities in the classroom environment.
- Use of photos of lived experiences to support attention, engagement and language development.
- Use highly motivating activities and/or characters within learning tasks. X loves animals and dinosaurs, and these can be a great motivator for him to engage. So too, can highly fun activities with a silly or surprise element, such as 'pop up pirate' or 'crocodile dentist'.
- Consider the different components to an activity and how many different skills are involved. Try to concentrate on one aspect at a time, and consider how X might be motivated using things he enjoys. For example, are you teaching pre-literacy or a new concept in literacy? Do you want to check if X understands the concepts before asking him to write them? Could he be playing with favoured items while you talk about what sounds they start with? Could X place them next to the corresponding letter or the letter next to the item? Is there a puzzle that teaches these concepts? Is there a computer based activity that X might find motivating?
- Suggestions for story writing, printing and drawing:
 - The use of a Magnadoodle will support X to develop his writing and drawing, as the magnets provide stability and 'stick' to the surface, ensuring greater success.
 - Use a variety of drawing and writing media (pen, pencil, paint, chalk, finger paint, brushes etc), on paper, whiteboard, an easel, or the floor.
 - When participating in 'story writing' activities, X will benefit from having the opportunity to draw his picture independently, and then trace one or two words with hand-over-hand support. This may be the carrier phrase or the last word of the sentence.
 - Another option for story writing activities is for X to stick in a photograph or momento depicting his story/news and then write, or match words underneath.
 - The use of the iPad will be a vital tool to support X's success with story writing activities.
 - Throughout the week, have a variety of different activities which all form 'parts' of handwriting/story writing/printing. It is important that X is given the opportunity to practice each part independently. It is important to realise how tiring and anxiety-provoking X finds drawing and writing, and to offer for him to complete only part of the activity independently (either drawing or writing with hand-over-hand support). Examples of activities offered throughout the week can be:
 - Writing letters or words with hand-over-hand support.
 - Matching letters in his name, or words in a sentence (written for him, and then stuck on top/underneath). Fine motor activities can be included such as cutting up the sentence.
 - Drawing.
 - Use Playdough to form letters.
 - Write on a whiteboard.

- Using magnetic letters to form words.
 - Window chalk.
 - X should be offered frequent opportunities to draw or paint independently using a range of media and tools.
 - Use hand-over-hand support to enable X to be successful and to create positive associations with writing activities.
 - Enable and support X to produce pictures independently rather than being exclusively adult-led.
- Ensure that X is seated in a stable but mobile position. He is able to sit and attend more readily when seated on a chair which enables some movement. We have used a 'dynamic movement' chair, which enables X to move whilst seated, which then supports his ability to focus and attend for extended periods of time. X also works well standing at the table.

Communication

- Use a home-school communication book so that all supporting adults have the information they need to support X's well-being, regulation and communication.
- X expresses a lot through his facial expressions and pitch (see more details within this report). Use this to help you to understand how X is feeling and how you might support him in each moment.
- X understands more than he can show. Talk to him about what he appears to be interested in e.g. 'you have a dinosaur, it is spiky'. Put words to what you think X is telling you. This includes when X is frustrated because he cannot or is not allowed to do something. Acknowledge this before redirecting e.g. you want to (x), you are frustrated. Lets try X
- Give him clear concise instructions, supported with visuals where possible, and make sure he has time to process the information before repeating it.
- X's communication partners should wear a coreboard and support their verbal language using this. This will also allow X to communicate using the coreboard if he desires.
- Be very aware of when X has his thumb in his mouth and has moved away/turned away from an activity. Sometimes this means that X is having some much needed time out, while at other times it means that X has disengaged from the learning activity (possibly because of too much pressure, real or perceived).

It has been such a pleasure to be a part of X's journey of learning and development over the past three years. He is wonderfully supported by his parents, Meredith and Ed, who have shown huge commitment to working in positive partnership with all of us to enable the best outcomes for X. We will miss you and we wish you all the very best for the exciting school days to come!

Kind regards,

The Champion Centre Programme

The aims of all Champion Centre early intervention are:

- To support the learning of the child in realising his individual potential.
- To allow each child to gain as much independence as possible.
- To encourage the development of all skills in parallel and to avoid isolated splinter skills.
- To prepare each child for inclusion in their early childhood centre and then their primary school of choice.
- To strengthen and develop skills within the family by empowering parents to work with their children at home and within their communities.
- To strengthen the relationships within the family and to develop the family's skills and confidence as they advocate for their children.

We work from the premise that parents are the child's most important partners in the ongoing education and therapy plan for their child. In the early years of a child's life, parents are the central partners who work to bring the child into the social world, and it is **within these intimate relationships that a child develops in all areas of functioning**. Both the research literature and our clinical evidence support the fact that a responsive environment is vital for the early development of any child, and even more particularly for children who have challenges to their development.

Everything in a child's development is interrelated all of the time. Therefore, a disruption in any area of development is likely to impact all other areas. To this end the early intervention is interdisciplinary, with all therapists working together to establish meaning around all skill acquisition. Children who have learning challenges are at risk of developing splinter skills, with nothing connecting these skills. The language programme holds a special place in avoiding such disconnection as it is threaded through all areas of skill acquisition to make the learning meaning-based.

All children have the right to develop their potential, whatever that might be. However, children with learning challenges depend on us bringing the world to them, to enable this to happen. We cannot leave them to find the world in their early years. Therapy or learning does not take place in a vacuum but in the context of relationships and the environment. Not only is learning dependent on positive relationships, a child's whole sense of self develops in this context. The opportunities for establishing a positive self-image, a sense of being important, of trust and motivation are available in these early years. A child's sense of competence, his expectation of success and his motivation to work toward it are laid down in these years.

The challenge for us all is that young children have only a small repertoire to enable them to show us their vulnerability, their understanding and their reality. They show us in their responses and their behaviour. Therefore, careful, ongoing attention to minute detail in close consultation with parents is the only safe way to be sure that we are helping to provide the right kind of input to each child.

Motor planning

Motor planning is the ability to conceive, plan, and carry out a skilled, non-habitual motor act in the correct sequence from beginning to end. Incoming sensory stimuli must be correctly integrated in order to form the basis for appropriate, coordinated motor responses. The ability to motor plan is a learned ability which is generalised to all unfamiliar tasks, so that a child does not need to consciously figure out each new task they face.

Praxic considerations

In a baby, movement is automatic, primitive, reflexive. But the nature of movement changes and it is here that the difficulty shows itself, when movements become planned, organised, symbolic and operational actions. This is called praxis.

Praxis allows us to make choices, to demonstrate these, to plan what to do and how to do it. It enables us to integrate and organise the constant information we are receiving. It allows us to act upon the information.

Dysfunction in this area of development hinders the organisation of the brain's information and interferes with the ability to motor plan with that information, resulting in an integrative, organisational, planning difficulty.

Three processes can be affected:

- *Ideation or conceptualisation*
Difficulties with ideation or conceptualisation demonstrate a breakdown in knowing what is to be done. It is a thinking process. Difficulties experienced here mean that the child has little idea of what is possible, and of what might or should take place. The end result cannot be easily anticipated, and visualisation appears difficult e.g. the child is unable to 'see' the possibility of what he could do or what will eventually happen. This thinking aspect of praxis must precede the planning aspect i.e. one must have the idea first, then we make the plan. It is from this place that play ideas are formulated.
- *Planning or choosing a strategy of action*
Difficulties with planning can be understood in the following way. Praxis is the neuro-relational process by which cognition (thought) directs motor action. It is the consciously formulated internal plan of action in the brain that occurs before the actual motor execution or doing. To be able to do this a child must be able to know what to do, then select and organise in appropriate order.
- *Motor execution.*
It is only this third process that is strictly motor, and so the impact is seen in oro-motor function, speech, gross and fine motor capability.

Praxis (the ideation and the ability to plan) is central to the adaptive response which forms the basis for much behaviour. Challenges experienced within the development of praxis can result in dysregulation, anxiety and fear, and intense emotional responses.

(Jan Murphy, SLT & Clinical Practice Manager Champion Centre)

Appendix 4

Physical and emotional regulation

The current neuro-developmental science informs us in the following ways. The brain is the most precious and complex organ in our body. All that we do, all that we are, emanates from our brain. Quite simply our brain is who we are and who we become.

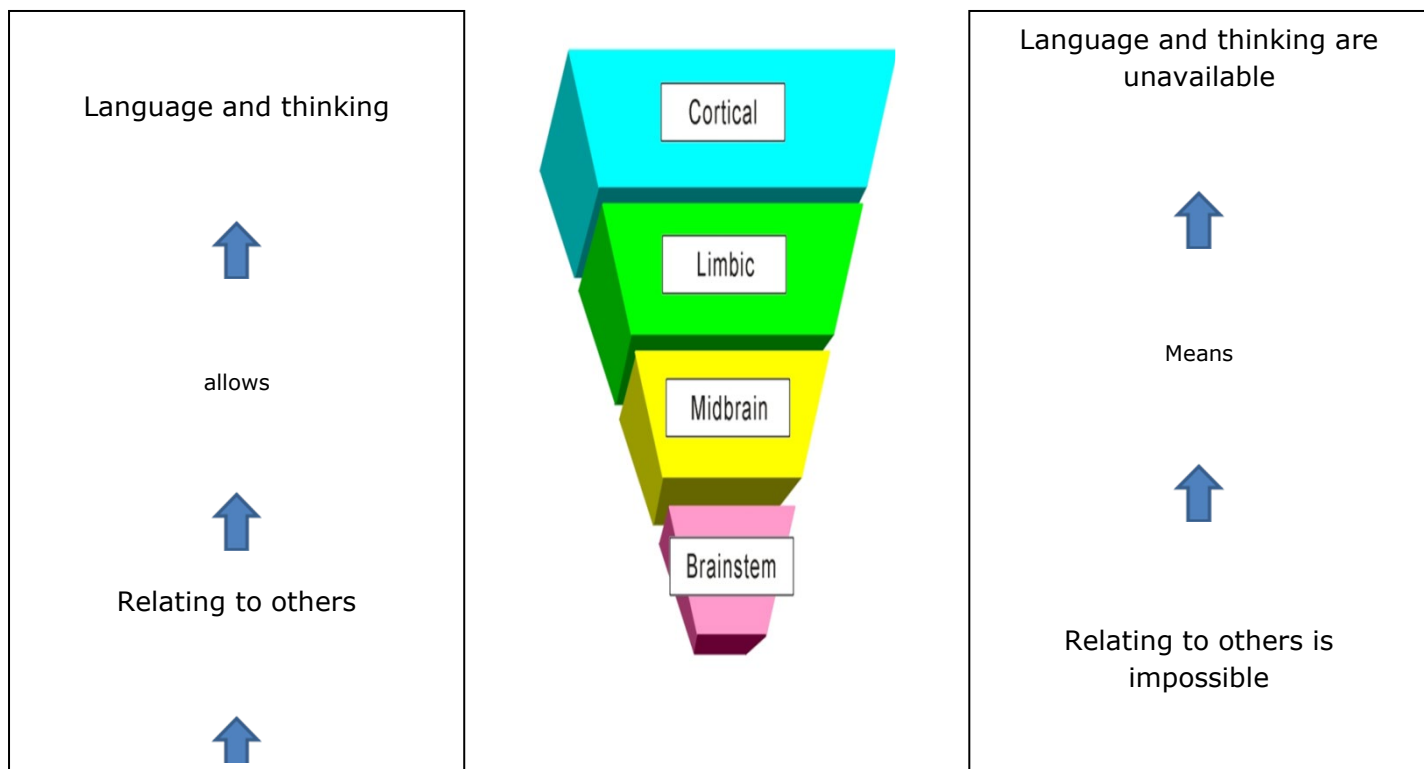
An understanding of the brain is essential if we are to try and gain some knowledge of what happens to the brain which develops differently. After all, the brain is our "learning machine". No single part of the brain can ever be discussed without connecting it to the whole.

The brain is a highly interconnected and complex system that integrates many units into a beehive of internal and external responses and actions. When we talk about one single response (e.g. "attention"), this response alone involves multiple parts of the brain and how fluidly the parts are connected.

No one system - brain or body - exists in isolation, but is interactive at all times, dynamically, within the child, and within the environment.

(Jan Murphy, SLT & Clinical Practice Manager)

A child's anxiety responses to sensory and social stimuli significantly impact their ability to be well regulated and to engage in learning within the classroom. Sensitivity to internal and external sensory stimulation results in them having an unreliable neurological system to work with. At all times, awake or asleep, a child's brain will be actively influencing their brain/body integration. This integration impacts the ability to think, feel and act at all times.



Based on Dr. Bruce Perry's Neurosequential model of brain function and development

Information being received into the brain (as in the diagram) needs to be able to flow sequentially from the bottom of the brain to the top (without significant interruption). When information in the brain is not integrated, chaos ensues, resulting in rigidity in response. The areas of the brain in which integration, and thus wellbeing occurs, for thinking, feeling and acting, are multi-dimensional and link to most areas of learning and behaving. They integrate body regulation, attuned communication, emotional balance, fear modulation, response flexibility, morality, empathy and insight.