

Supporting your discussion with theory, practice and evidence from literature, critically reflect on how you would support an individual learner whose progress is being affected by specific barriers to his/ her learning during one particular transition period (horizontal/ vertical).

‘Progression in learning should always be at the heart of curriculum design’ (Welsh Government, 2020). This suggests that it is imperative practitioners take into consideration the child’s progression when planning any interventions. Throughout this assignment, I will be referring to a support plan that was created in order to aid the development of a child with ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences). According to Child Welfare Information Gateway (2022), Adverse Childhood Experiences refer to traumatic events that occur before a child reaches the age of 18. In order to protect the identity of the child, I will be using the pseudonym ‘Jade’. A more in-depth description of Jade can be found in Part Two, which highlights her developmental barriers that will be targeted in her personal support plan. When planning Jade’s interventions, I will be drawing from my own prior teaching experiences as well as using evidence of excellent teaching practice and links to theory.

‘Children face many important changes in the first eight years of life, including different learning centres, social groups, roles and expectations.’ (Vogler et al, 2008). These changes are often referred to as transitions and are a constant occurrence throughout a person’s life. The way in which these transitions affect a person is dependent on a variety of factors such as a person’s ability to overcome obstacles or the extent of the change. When discussing transitions Kagan and Neuman (1989) state that there are two main types that must be taken into consideration ‘Vertical transitions’ which are defined as ‘when a child moves from one major setting to another’ and ‘horizontal transitions which are the daily movements between settings and situations’. For the purpose of this assignment Jade is currently experiencing a number of vertical transitions both inside and outside of school. The main target is to create a support plan that will allow her to develop a relationship with her new class teachers and her peers through the use of both whole class and 1:1 intervention. In addition to this, Jade has also experienced a traumatic vertical change in her homelife which was the death of her mother.

As stated previously, Jade will soon be moving from her current class to year 3 where she will have a number of new experiences including a new class teacher and a new classroom. According to the Dictionary (2023), ‘a barrier is anything that restrains or obstructs progress, access’. In this particular instance, Jade’s barriers are both her social and emotional development as it is causing a hindrance during her transition period. Bronfenbrenner (1979) defines development as a ‘lasting change in the way in which a person perceives and deals with his environment.’ There is an undeniable link between the social and emotional development of the child hence the decision to target these chosen areas for development. As can be seen in part two of this assignment, in order to assist Jade’s development it would be beneficial to begin by targeting her emotional development. By doing this, when targeting her social development Jade will be in a good place to manage any negative emotions. The pupil is having difficulty adapting to this new change and has not begun to make any meaningful relationship within the school. As referenced in Part Two, her father also has some concerns regarding Jade’s social and emotional development. That being said, the interventions put in place in order to support Jade will be targeting specific areas of development, including the creating and maintaining meaningful relationships, resilience and building emotional intelligence to assist her in her grief as can be seen later on in the assignment. Bronfenbrenner’s theory of ecological systems (1979) suggests that there are a number of factors that have an influence on an individual. In this particular scenario, the microsystem that is highlighted is the school. Therefore, when considering the influence of the child’s environment on the child’s development, Bronfenbrenner’s theory of ecological systems suggests that

it is imperative that we provide her with a stable school environment in order to aid her development. In contrast to Bronfenbrenner's theory of ecological systems Glasser (2010) states that 'basic choice theory is the belief that all our behaviour is our constant attempt to satisfy one or more of five basic needs that are written in our genetic structure'. These theories depict the two sides of the nature vs nurture theory which argues whether actions are a result of the influence of outside factors on the individual or whether it is due to it being part of an individual's DNA. Ergo, during the interventions it is imperative that it encourages the child to make connections within the microsystem (the school) whilst taking into consideration the specific needs of the child. In contrast to this, Banerjee et al. (2016) states that 'even where positive effects are reported in the intervention groups, these effects may not be sustained over time'. Thus, it is essential that even after the interventions have been completed practitioners ensure to carry on with check-ins to ensure pupils development is not becoming stagnant.

When planning the interventions, it was essential we took into consideration Jade's interests in order to ensure it is a positive process that she is excited to carry out. Reeve et al. (2022) suggested that 'when intrinsically motivated (i.e. when students pursue their personal interests), they explore their surroundings, process information deeply, think creatively, engage themselves fully, and strive to learn something new'. To begin the intervention, I will be using a 'narrative approach' as Jade has an interest in reading and creative writing. This method is supported by HSR Psychology (2023), who states that this approach allows children to make connections to their own personal experiences whilst exploring their emotions through reading stories. By beginning with this session, it will allow the child to become familiar with the person leading the intervention and start to develop a clearer understanding of her emotions whilst in a way she will enjoy. As referenced prior, by using stories that the child can relate to it opens up the opportunity to discuss her own personal experiences particularly with grief. Kübler-Ross (2011) supports this idea and highlights the importance of including children in the talk and discussions as this gives them the feeling they are not alone in their grieving. She suggests that this gives the child the comfort of 'shared responsibility and shared mourning.' Although there is limited research to suggest that there are any major disadvantages to using fictional stories as an intervention it is essential to take into consideration the potential drawbacks or the effect it may have on the child. Critics suggest that when considering using the narrative approach practitioners must take into account the child's background so as to ensure it is culturally appropriate. Furthermore, when choosing the literature included in Jade's support plan, it was essential I took into consideration Jade's beliefs and reading level to ensure she was able to comprehend the story. In an article depicting the benefits of fictional stories on the development of children's social-emotional development Rampelli (2023) states, 'words labelling a complex emotion are used particularly often in an emotive sense in fiction but not in other genres'. Again, this supports my decision to include reading into Jade's support plan as it is proven to have a positive impact on the development of emotional intelligence which is one of Jade's targeted areas.

'The five stages, denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance are a part of the framework that makes up our learning to live with the one we lost. They are tools to help us frame and identify what we may be feeling.'

(Kübler-Ross and Kessler, 2009)

This may be used in correlation with part two, when taking into consideration Jade's 'struggle to regulate her emotions and often displays signs of anger'. Kübler-Ross and Kessler's 'stage of grief' (2009) suggests that Jade is currently in the anger stage and so it is essential practitioners are supportive and create a safe environment to allow her to go through her process. Bowlby (2012) refers to his theory of attachment (1979) stating 'attachment behaviour is any form that result in a

person attaining proximity to some other clearly identified individual who is conceived as better able to cope with the world.’ Furthermore, Holmes and Holmes (2014) refer to Bowlby (1979) and state that the threat of loss arouses anxiety and actual loss causes sorrow; whilst both situations are likely to arouse anger.’ Therefore, when taking this into consideration and linking it to the recent destruction of Jade’s close attachment with her mother it can be deduced that Jade’s lack of interaction and regular aggression may come as a fear of potentially suffering more loss. This allows us to develop a plan in order to assist her social development. Although, McManus and Paul (2019) refer to (Holland, 2003) and (Lowton and Higginson, 2003) stating ‘Moreover, research suggests that school staff feel that they lack the necessary expertise to engage with children around bereavement experiences.’ Again, although these studies are dated, they suggest schools are required to be part of the child’s grief support system but lack the necessary tools in order to assist.

‘Play is an essential parameter of children’s growth and expression, and this is the reason of why the use of play therapy is considered as fundamental means of preventing and dealing with problems and difficulties presented to children.’

(Koukourikos et al., 2021)

Moving on from my previous focus on the narrative approach. When taking into consideration the aforementioned quote by Koukourikos et al. (2021) it became evident that Jade would benefit from participating in an intervention that takes on a nurture approach whilst incorporating play therapy with the school’s Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA). As stated in part two, the intervention encourages the child to consider her emotions and express them in a way that is not intrusive or harmful. Bennathan and Boxall (2013) highlights an example of a school that implements a nurture approach into a number of small classes stating, ‘these small special classes provide a structured and predictable environment in which the children can begin to trust an adult and to learn.’ To refer back to part two of the assignment, the support plan highlights the use of both ‘nurture’ and ‘play therapy’. Play Therapy UK (2021) defines play therapy as ‘a type of therapy where play and art materials are used as the main way for people to express themselves.’ According to the Counselling Directory (2023) using this intervention will ensure ‘increased ability to express themselves and their feelings.’ To begin, the intervention will be on a 1:1 basis so as to allow Jade the opportunity to become comfortable with the situation and will progress to a 2:1 intervention to include one of her peers. When considering the work of Barrett (1975) ‘Play therapy has emerged as one promising method for providing development and therapeutic experiences for young children who need help in adjusting psychologically and socially to their life situation.’ This highlights the benefits of play therapy when supporting a child’s social and emotional development. It was imperative the intervention incorporated play as it was familiar to Jade and ensured that she was not at risk of being overwhelmed with having to cope with too many new experiences at once. Landreth (2012) reinforces this idea by stating ‘children express themselves more fully and more directly through self-initiated, spontaneous play than they do verbally because they are more comfortable with play.’ Play therapy interventions are affective as it puts the child at the centre of the learning by ensuring they are comfortable throughout the process.

Another approach that is play centred that was included within Jade’s support plan was the use of Lego therapy in order to encourage her to socialise with groups of her peers at one time. Although Lego therapy was designed to assist the development of children with autism in this instance it would be beneficial to Jade’s social development. According to LeGoff (2004), the goal of Lego therapy that can be linked to Jade’s developmental needs was to ‘motivate pupils to initiate contact with peers, develop an ability to sustain interaction with peers for a period of time.’ This can be linked to the Curriculum for Wales (2022) ‘Health and Well-being’ statements of what matters specifically ‘Healthy

relationships are fundamental to our well-being' which states 'They (learners) will be encouraged to develop their abilities to form, nurture and maintain relationships.' Therefore, when planning Jade's interventions, it was important to include opportunities that encouraged Jade to interact with both her peers and the adults in her life. LeGoff (2004) also references Attwood (1998) and Greenspan and Wieder (1998) stating that they 'recommended utilizing a child's stereotyped interests or behaviours, and finding ways to adapt these and promote the development of social communication and play skills.' Again, this supports the use of Lego therapy as part of Jade's intervention as she enjoys 'building' as can be seen in part two. Although there is limited research to suggest Lego therapy has any major disadvantages to a child's development, practitioners must take precautions to ensure the pupils are comfortable at all times. In addition to this, practitioners must be wary as to whether the pupil is comfortable working in the groups and should adjust group numbers and the timeline of the intervention where necessary to ensure pupils do not become overwhelmed causing any previous progress to be lost.

'The crucial importance of early positive relationships between caregiver and child has led to the development of many parent training programs designed to strengthen the caregiver-child bond.'

(Duch et al., 2019)

Continuing with the theme of building relationships Jade's intervention plan also includes a session that involves her father in the hopes to strengthen their attachment. The inclusion of the parent into the intervention in this case also provides the opportunity for Jade's father to develop a better understanding in what he can do in order to support his child after the intervention has been completed. It also provides support for Jade's father and allows him to become more familiar with the intervention teacher so as to ensure he knows who is best to contact in case of any concerns for Jade's state of well-being. Kwok et al. (2005) highlights the research of Felner, Terre and Rowlinson (1988) stating that 'the stress children experience following parental death has been conceptualized as involving a cascade of negative changes in multiple domains'. Kwok et al. (2005) builds on this and addresses Worden (1996) who suggests that it likely to affect the relationship of the child and the surviving parent, their daily routines, and social networks. When taking this into consideration it was important to provide demonstrate to Jade the commonalities her and her father shared. Although this research is dated it does still provide an insight into some of the main concerns parents and practitioners have when a child has gone through a traumatic experience such as bereavement. Again, this can be linked to Bronfenbrenner's ecological system and the importance of securing a safe environment for pupils to develop. Wolchik et al. (2006) also suggests that the 'death of one's spouse includes a broad array of experiences that are likely to affect the quality of the caregiver-child relationship and diminish its protective ability.' This further solidifies my decision to include Jade's father into her intervention to ensure the family is supported. This will also provide the intervention lead the opportunity to share some resources that may be beneficial to their family situation.

As stated in in part two, it is imperative that the practitioners carrying out Jade's interventions keep track of her well-being so as to ensure Jade is not a risk to herself or others during this new transition. Therefore, the use of daily check-ins alongside pupil observation carried out by the intervention lead is detrimental to Jade's progression. Throughout the course of the intervention, the intervention lead will be using the 'Leuven scale' in order to assess both the child's participation and their well-being. Learning Journals, (2021) describes the Leuven scale as a '5 point scale that allows childcare experts, nursery practitioners and teachers to measure a child's emotional well-being and involvement.' Although, practitioners must take into consideration that using the Leuven scale alone has drawbacks

due to it being based on observation alone. Hence the decision to use it alongside the daily check-ins as this provides the opportunity for pupils to explore and express their emotions. This will benefit Jade during the transition as it allows her teachers to gain a deeper understanding of Jade's triggers and what can be done in order to support her when moving into her new class.

To conclude, it is imperative practitioners allow the opportunity to meet with the child and any guardians where possible prior to beginning any intervention, in order to ensure they have all the information required to create a support plan that properly caters to the needs of the learner. In addition to this, it will also allow the pupils' guardians to be well informed about any progress the learner makes. Therefore, when planning and implementing any interventions I will be sure to take into consideration a wide range of interventions and adapt where needed. As well as this, I will also ensure to keep up to date with any resources outside of the school that can provide an additional support that the school cannot.

Social and Emotional development

Jade is seven year old girl that will be transitioning to year 3 in two weeks. Her mother has recently passed away after fighting cancer for the past 9 months. She now lives with her father and her brother Jordan (aged 5) in her childhood home where she is struggling to deal with her grief. Jade's father is concerned that Jade is having difficulty expressing her emotions and lacks the tools in order to properly express herself and often displays signs of anger and frustration. That being said in order to assist Jade with managing stress and emotions in a healthy way so as to avoid her ACEs having any major impacts on her now and later on in life, Jade's school has created an 'Individual Development Plan' that will follow her through her schooling, in addition to this, Jade's social workers may contribute and view it so as to ensure that all parties are well informed on Jade's progress.

Overview		- To begin with, this intervention will be carried out throughout the duration of 6 weeks and will be followed by a review in order to assess whether the intervention needs to be extended. - This intervention takes place at the end of the summer term in preparation for the new school year and will end after the allocated 6 week period provided - Week 1, 2, and 3 will look at mindfulness with an emphasis on understanding feelings (emotional development) in order to allow Jade the opportunity to properly process all of the changes that have recently occurred. During this time, she will be participating in these sessions with an ELSA - Week 4, 5, and 6 will focus on building meaningful relationships (Social development) this will assist Jade in developing more meaningful relationships. Jade will also undergo a number of meet the teacher sessions to begin to develop a familiarity in preparation for the new school year.		
Assessment		Throughout the duration of the intervention the child will be asked to complete a daily check-in which will allow the child to consider her emotions and visual aid such as images of the characters discussed in the book 'Daisy's Dragons', with the option for her to change how she is feeling throughout the day. The questions will be simple in order to suit the pupil's literacy skills and will be comprised of both open and closed questions allowing Jade to expand on her thoughts. The pupil will be assessed on her willingness to interact with her peers and her emotional wellbeing using the Leuven Scale.		
Week	Lesson Focus	Activity	Health and Well-being Curriculum Links (WG, 2020)	Next Steps/Parental Involvement <i>All work completed at home can be uploaded to ParentMail. This</i>

				<i>includes pictures, worksheets etc.</i>
Week 1	Narrative approach: Read a story that can be linked to emotions. Read a story that can be linked to grief.	Daily check-in. Read a story that can be linked to emotions in order to allow Jade to understand the different emotions. Ask Jade have a think what emotions is she feeling now? The teacher can also share in order to make her feel more comfortable. Take a minute to practice mindfulness and acknowledge that feeling. If she is feeling negative emotional this is only temporary. Picture yourself in a safe space, what does that place look like to you. Read a story that can be linked to grief. How do you think the person in the story felt? Why? (This will allow Jade to think about loss without triggering her own experiences.) Have you ever felt similar?	How we process and respond to our experiences affects our mental health and emotional well-being. Progression step 2: I can, with support, focus attention on my perceptions and thoughts.	The child will use the dragon's in order to identify her emotions. Jade's father will be encouraged to read with her at home and ask her about her thoughts and feelings. Develop healthy ways of expressing negative emotions and begin to work on self-regulation techniques.
Week 2	Play therapy: Emotional regulation	Begin with a recap of the previous session. Read 'The Stompysaurus' with the child. Allow the child the opportunity to explore a range of creative options whilst discussing how they are feeling. Have the child paint or draw what their emotion dragon looks like to them. This may include more than one emotion they may be happy but stressed etc. Think of the last time you felt angry. How did you show how you felt? Did you express yourself in a way that was safe for you and others? Explain that it's okay to feel this way and it's normal to feel angry. What's not okay is hurting yourself and others. Work with the pupil to develop coping strategies and safe ways to express this anger. Create a how to manual could be drawn like a leaflet or a mindmap.	Progression step 2: I can understand how and why my thoughts, feelings and actions change in response to different experiences. How we process and respond to our experiences affect our mental health and emotional well-being. Our decision-making impacts on the quality of our lives and the lives of others. Progression step 2: I can recognise that my decisions can impact on me and others,	Home: Small steps such as asking how school was. Can you tell me one thing about your day.

			both now and in the future.	
Week 3	Mindfulness: What matters to me	Check-in session. Have you recently felt any negative emotions? How did you manage them? During this session, the child will be asked to take part in a short mindfulness session that will focus on what matters to me. It will highlight the things and people that mean the most to her and will encourage her to consider how these things make her feel. She will be encourage to write them down could be through drawings, mind map or digital powerpoint. Are there things that make you think of your mum? How does that make you feel? Acknowledge those feelings but also encourage the child to understand that this is only a temporary feeling.	Progression step 2: I can notice and communicate my feelings.	Home: As a family collect things that remind you of your mum. May be photos or objects etc Encourage Jade to write or draw a picture showing a time with her mam that made her happy.
Week 4	Parent Involvement: Memory Box	During this session, we will invite Jade's dad into the session in order to create a memory box for Jade to look back on. Whilst creating the box, Jade and her dad will take the time to explain what each object means to them. In addition to this, the memory Jade chose to draw/ write about can be described and put into the box. Jade can then paint the box any colour that makes her happy. This will give Jade and her father a chance to bond and provide Jade with something to remember her mother by as she grows up. Jade can also take home her memory box and add to it whenever she likes.	Healthy relationships are fundamental to our well-being. Working towards: Progression step 3: I can communicate my needs and feelings, and respond to those of others. I can make and maintain relationships that matter to me, identifying conflict and taking steps to resolve it. I can reflect on characteristics of safe relationships and I can seek support when needed.	Begin interacting with my peers again.
Week 5	Play therapy 2:1	Allow the child the opportunity to explore a range of creative options with a small group of their peers.	Healthy relationships are fundamental to our well-being	Meet the teacher. Group lego therapy

		During this time, the children will be encouraged to play games that require more than one player. i.e. snap, connect 4 etc. The purpose of this session is to slowly begin reintegrating Jade into her old friendship group.		
Week 6	Lego Therapy: Group	This session will be led by Jade's new year 3 class teacher. During this whole class session, Jade will be required to work in small groups in the class in order to complete a lego model. During this task, Jade will have to participate in a small group task that requires her to listen and communicate with her peers. At the end of the session, the children have some free time to create their own model as a group. They must continue to collaborate as a group and make decisions together. As a whole class activity the pupils will be split into groups. The groups will be determined by who works well together and can often be seen playing together. In these groups the children must design their own bridge using only lollipop sticks and glue. Each group must take into consideration the design and the stability of the design and should meet the requirements of the success criteria created as a class. Each child must have contributed in some way.	How we engage with social influences shapes who we are and affects our health and well-being. Progression step 1: I can recognise and follow rules and norms in the groups and situations in which I take part.	Daily check-ins with the class teacher will carry on and check-ins with the intervention lead will be less frequent but will still be available to Jade when required.

Jade

What makes me happy?

Music
Colours
Reading
Structure and planning
Cuddles
Patterns
My dog teddy
Building
Watching Disney Movies

What people at school like and admire about me:

My smile
I am kind.
I am creative.
I am a good dancer.
I make beautiful drawings.
I like building things.

What do I dislike?

Sitting down for a long time
Trying new things
Playing with others

My Small Steps Targets:

I can share how I feel.
I can work with others.

How I like to be supported:

I like having a visual plan of my day so that I know what to expect.
I need help understanding how I feel.
I also need help expressing how I feel.
I like to have a quiet, safe space for when I am overwhelmed.
I like having check-ins with my teacher.



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