

# Are You Sitting Comfortably?

## Physical Development and School Readiness

Dr Sue Allingham


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'Are you sitting comfortably?'

Physical Development and 'School Readiness'

Dr Sue Allingham

Early Years Out of the Box



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### The Three Lenses

- What?
- Why ?
- How?



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### What?

- What does school readiness mean to you?
- Does it mean the same in your setting? Other settings?

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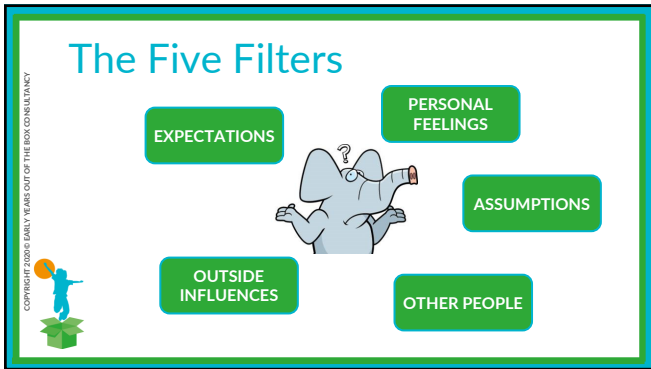
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For example, during play to be able to take turns and take some responsibility for their actions. We think that children should be able to focus on, and show interest in, their work and the world around them.

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To have enough language to be able to express themselves if they need something and be able to communicate something about what makes them who they are, such as name, age and something about family or relevant factors in their life. To be able to interact with an adult and/or a peer.

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'By four we would expect children to be ready to be separated from their parent or carer, to be able to demonstrate listening skills in being able to show interest and pay attention to a subject or stimulus.'

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To make observations, notice things and ask questions. To be able to hold a book, understand some aspects of narrative and respond to some boundary setting.'

*(Are you ready? Good practice in school readiness Published: April 2014)*

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### What?

**What does it mean for a child to be school ready?** Parents were asked what they thought children should be able to do by the time they started school. Answers varied but could be categorised into the following themes:

- 1. Life skills:** toileting, washing hands, using cutlery, getting themselves dressed.

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### What?

2. **Social skills:** being confident to separate from their caregiver, sharing with other children, finding friends and following a routine.

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### What?

3. **'Academic' skills:** basic reading and writing, knowing letters and numbers, recognising their name and being able to hold a pencil. While some parents did feel children should be able to write their name, a more common suggestion was that a child should be able to recognise their name or some letters and to generally be in a place ready to learn to read and write.

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### What?

The government uses the term 'readiness for school' as a finite construct, implying there should be a *fixed standard of physical, intellectual, and social development* that prepares children to meet school requirements and assimilate curriculum, typically embracing specific cognitive and linguistic skills.

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Activity



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What?

*Physical Development*

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility.

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What?

Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practise of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

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**Physical Development**

*ELG: Gross Motor Skills*

Children at the expected level of development will:


- Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others;
- Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing;

Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.

*ELG: Fine Motor Skills*

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases;
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery;
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing



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# It dazzles more than it illuminates



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# Why?



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Why?

- Affective
- Cognitive
- Physical



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Why?

Teach children how to do this right from Day 1

- Hand ready in a tripod grip
- Feet on the floor
- Bottom at the back of the chair
- Body one fist from the table
- Shoulders down and relaxed
- Lean forward slightly
- Left/right hand holds the page



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Keep up don't catch up...



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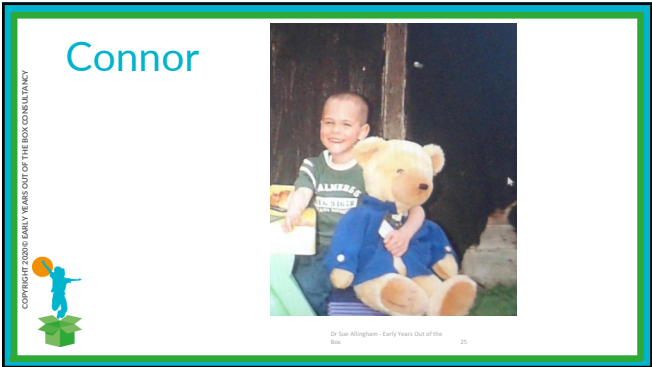
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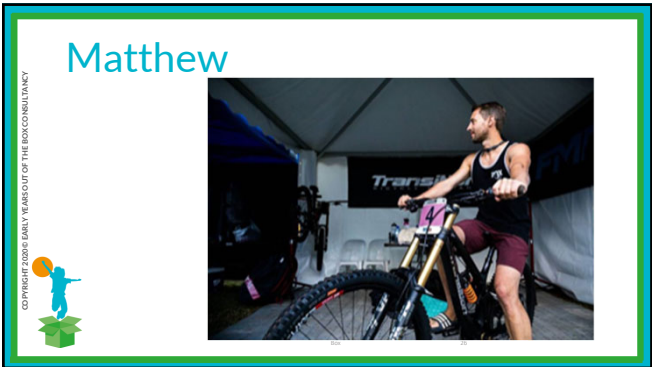
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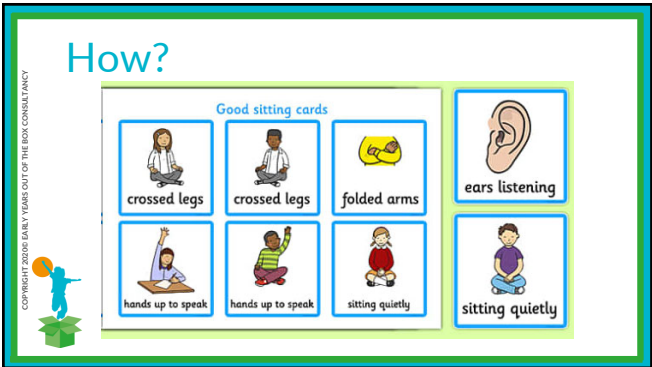
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How? Questions for reflection

How well do we know our children?

How much do we know about child development?


Have we considered the physical environments and what we expect of children?

How do we know how physically confident they are?

Do we understand the importance of Physical confidence to effective learning?

How much of what we ask of our children is appropriate for their individual stage of physical development?

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WE are TEACHERS

Children are not a distraction from more important work. They are the most important work.

-C.S. Lewis

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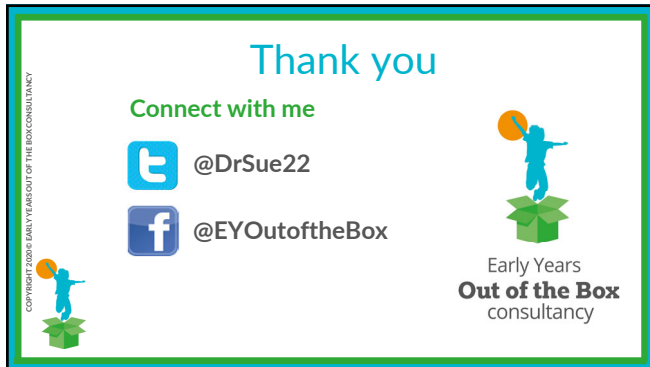
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