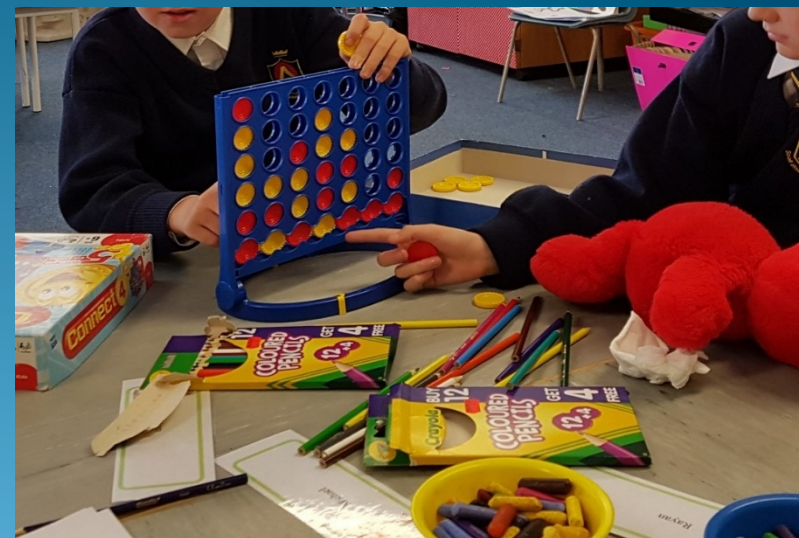


Nurture Groups in Irish Primary Schools

Avila Donegan
Queen of Angels PS, Dublin





What is a Nurture Group?

- Classroom laid out like a home.
- Focus on acceptable behaviour
 - through discussion
 - working together
- Eating together – breakfast, lunch, fruit break
- Run by Resource teacher and SNA
- Works well in Special School setting also



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NCSE commissioned a document in 2011 entitled “**Evidence of Best Practice Models and Outcomes in the Education of Children with Emotional Disturbance/Behavioural Difficulties: An International Review**” by Professor Paul Cooper and Barbara Jacobs, University of Leicester
From page 112 there is detailed discussion on Nurture Rooms

Layout of a Nurture Group

- Five important areas

Kitchen and dining area



- Quiet Area

-A calm place for the children to just relax!



Sitting Room

Discussion, story time, board games



Play Area



Learning Area

- Literacy, numeracy, discussion



Who attends Nurture Group?

- Children who meet criteria set out in Boxall Profile.
- Children who have low self-esteem/self-confidence.
- Children who have difficulty socially, have anger management problems or cannot express how they feel.
- Often they are children who are disruptive in class.
- Children who upset/cannot get along with others.



The Six Principles Of Nurture

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally
2. The classroom offers a safe base
3. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing
4. Language is a vital means of communication
5. All behaviour is communication
6. The importance of transition in children's lives

Ref: Lucas,S., Insley,K. and Buckland,G. (2006) *Nurture Group Principles and Curriculum Guidelines Helping Children to Achieve*, The Nurture Group Network.

Celebrating Festivals

Halloween- celebrated with games, pumpkins, art and dressing up!



Christmas

Writing letters to Santa, decorating the classroom and meeting Santa and his elves and making figures from recycled materials.



Feelings

- Often the children do not have the language to express how they feel
- Angry and happy are generally used to describe all feelings
- Lessons on feelings help to develop language skills



What do I teach in Nurture Group?

- S.P.H.E Curriculum mainly



S.P.H.E

Keeping Clean

Good / Bad Habits



- Emphasis on manners, anger management
- Simple things we take for granted like sitting at a table, using cutlery, asking for things and how to make conversation.



Social Skills – turn taking, working together, sharing, asking for help



Art Activities- Teaching children to share, take turns and work together through art activities.



Maths

Often the children who attend nurture group have gaps in their learning. Fine motor skills and early maths activities like threading and sorting are taught. Baking is used to teach measurement.



Outdoor activities to encourage co-operative learning and experiences



- Training to be rolled out in March from Blackrock Education Centre
- Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.
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