

The Alliance has a wide range of short courses and workshops that can provide for specific and wider professional learning needs such as curriculum development, business management and engagement with parents and volunteers.

Our team of experienced and knowledgeable training and learning staff can offer programmes from our bank of existing courses and workshops. They can also customise training to meet needs identified by childcare staff, employers, local authority early years teams, children's centres and Sure Start projects.

## **Children from Birth to Five**

### **Developing good practice for two year olds in mixed age settings.**

As more and more sessional settings now cater for children from two years old, staff teams need to develop different approaches to the care and education of this age group that dovetail into the Foundation Stage for three and four year olds. Many full day care groups also integrate two year olds with the older children and need to ensure their programmes meet the development and learning needs of all the children across the age range. The Alliance has developed a range of programmes based on the publication ***Making Their Day-providing for two year olds in mixed age settings***. This approach to the care and learning needs of two year olds in mixed age settings is based on Birth to Three Matters, and shows how an integrated programme can dovetail into the Foundation Stage when children become three.

The Alliance offers a range of three programmes varying from one to 15 hours, designed for the varying needs of general practitioners, volunteers and advisory staff. The topics covered include:

- The developmental characteristics of two year olds and how these link to the Birth to Three Matters framework
- The importance of secure relationships for the well being and learning of two year olds
- How early years settings provide secure relationships for two year olds
- How understanding the characteristics of two year olds influence the provision made for them by early years settings.
- The importance of two year olds' use of language and interactions with the world around them as tools for learning

- Using an understanding of the developmental characteristics of two year olds to create an appropriate learning environment for them
- Using observation as a tool to inform record keeping and planning procedures
- Utilising action planning to enable the setting's managers and management committees to provide effectively for two year olds

In addition all our courses for staff working with 3 - 5 year olds are mapped to the key elements of effective practice (KEEP) requirements ensuring that practitioners are working to the principles and ethos of the foundation stage as well as its learning outcomes.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

From September 2008 all registered providers of services for children aged 0-5 will have to follow the Early Years Foundation Stage. This new structure brings together the welfare requirements of the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding with the learning frameworks Birth to Three Matters and the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage. As such it provides an over-arching structure within which children's care and learning takes place and represents a major change in the way early years provision is directed in England.

To help settings and their staff prepare for this change the Alliance offers a range of excellent programmes covering all aspects of the new framework. These include:

- How to review and reflect on own practice, and to how plan for improvement
- Why a strong partnership with parents is important and how to create an inclusive and effective partnership
- How to contribute to a system of evidence collection, assessment, record keeping and planning for each child, that will help them progress
- How to plan for the whole setting
- Understanding the ways children learn in their early years, and teaching strategies that help promote their development