

**Nurture Intervention:**  
**A Guidance for Primary and Secondary**  
**Schools**



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## **Contents Page**

|   | Page |
|---|------|
| <b>What are Nurture Interventions (NIs)?</b>  | 6    |
| <b>Evidence for Nurture Groups</b>  | 9    |
| <b>The Graduated Approach</b>   | 14   |
| <b>Setting up a Nurture Intervention</b>  | 18   |
| <b>References</b>   | 27   |
| <br><b>Appendices</b>   |      |
| Appendix 1: Whole School Readiness checklist (From<br>Education Scotland: Applying Nurture as a Whole<br>School Approach) | 30   |
| Appendix 2: Poster of Nurture Intervention Session Structure  | 32   |
| Appendix 3: Tools to use to measure baseline and progress.  | 33   |

## What are Nurture Interventions (NIs)?

Nurture Interventions are based on the Nurture Group (NG) model. The intervention that forms this document are not NGs which would require accredited training. If schools wish to access the training, details are given on page 18. In this document when the term NI is used this is referring to the intervention based on NG. When the term NG is used in this document it is referring to the provision devised by Boxall. NIs are a small group intervention for children who experience social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. NIs provide a safe space for children to have nurturing experiences with adults and peers and to develop emotionally secure relationships with adults and peers.

NIs give children time to revisit 'missed' early nurturing experiences.

As well as supporting the development of children's emotional wellbeing, NIs support children to develop listening, sharing and turn taking skills. This supports children to be successful and make progress in the mainstream classroom.



### The Six Principles of Nurture Groups

From The Six Principles of Nurture (Nurture UK, 2023)

#### **1. Children's learning is understood developmentally.**

Children are at different stages of development socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically and need to be responded to at their developmental level. Responding to children just as they are, fosters feelings of safety and security.

The Boxall Profile helps staff track children's developmental level and respond to them at their developmental level and put strategies in place to support their development.

## **2. The classroom offers a safe base.**

An inviting and emotionally safe environment supports educational, social and emotional development. It supports the development of positive peer to peer and adult to peer relationships. Adults need to be reliable and emotionally consistent and understand the link between emotional containment and academic development. Children need predictable routines, clear expectations and adults to provide positive modelling of relationships and interactions.



## **3. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing**

A nurturing interaction is when adults and children listen and respond to each other, interactions are reciprocal and intentional. Adults engage in meaningful shared activities with children that align with children's interests and children feel valued and kept in mind. Children's achievements are noticed and praised no matter how small, and interactions are meaningful and not rushed.

Staff and student welfare and wellbeing must be considered.

## **4. Language is a vital means of communication.**

It is vital that children have a way to communicate their feelings. It is important that adults understand the importance of the language they use. Children need a method to communicate their feelings. Children will often act out their feelings if they have difficulty using language to communicate their feelings. A child will need both formal lessons that teach language skills and informal opportunities to practice their newly learnt skills.

Pupils' voices should be valued, and children should be presented with a variety of means to express their views., e.g., visuals, puppets or play.

Children should be taught to recognise emotions and early warning signs of emotions such as worry or anger.

Informal opportunities should be provided for children to share feelings and experiences with each other. This helps children understand the feelings of others.

Language skills should be assessed, developed, and embedded into the curriculum.

### **5. All behaviour is communication.**

The adult needs to support the child to understand their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. The adult should use supportive and non-threatening language to resolve situations with the child. After dealing with challenging behaviour safely, it is important that the adult tries to work with the child to understand what the child is trying to communicate.

It is also important to consider antecedents of behaviours. Adults need to be calm, consistent, and empathetic as children often communicate their feelings in a variety of different ways.

Adults also need to be reflective. Think why the behaviour may be occurring, consider what is known about the child and their development in order to fully understand the behaviour.

The trusted adult should give the child a quiet and private space to discuss their behaviour in order to model respectful interactions and maintain their dignity.

Finally, the adult should think about possible triggers that led to the behaviour and how these might be managed in future.

### **6. The importance of transitions in children's lives.**

Changes in routine are difficult for vulnerable children and young people. Adults working with these children need to help them manage these changes, for example, year group changes, transitions between home and school, even smaller transitions such as from break and lunchtime, changes in teachers or peers.

Both small and large changes can trigger emotions. Children need to be pre-warned about changes in routine and visual timetables can be used to support this.

Children should be included in the planning to help them manage transitions.

## **Evidence for Nurture Groups**

*“At the heart of nurture is a focus on wellbeing and relationships and a drive to support the growth and development of children and young people...”* (Education Scotland, 2017).



This section will explore the history, rationale and research for Nurture Groups (NGs), which this intervention is based on.

### **The incidence of mental health in childhood and the role of school**

The extent of mental health issues amongst school children is concerning. A recent report by The Children’s Society highlights that one in six school children experience mental health issues (The Children’s Society, 2023). The Boxall Childhood Project (Nurture UK, 2019a) found that of the 6800 children they surveyed, 10% of children presented with high levels of social emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, 26% of the 6800 children, had moderate needs. Boys were three times more likely than girls to have high levels of SEMH needs. Half of children permanently excluded from schools have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND, Nurture UK, 2019).

There has been focus by the government on how schools can support children with their emotional needs. The green paper, *Transforming children and young people’s mental health provision* (DfHE, 2017) identified the need for schools to support children and young people’s mental health at a whole school level. This led to the creation of Designated Leads for mental health in schools and Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs). The paper, *Mental health and behaviour in schools* (DfE, 2018) was introduced to schools as a guidance for the prevention, early identification and support of mental health issues for pupils through the graduated response in relation to the SEND CoP (2014). In 2021, the Department for Education (DfE) provided funding for Mental Health Leads in school to access training to implement an approach to support pupil mental health and well-being across the whole school or college.

There is evidence that children who struggle with emotional well-being in childhood can experience mental health difficulties in adulthood (Seth-Smith, Levi, Pratt, Fonagy & Jaffey, 2010). Continuous and responsive relationships between children and their caregivers throughout childhood contributes to children's positive social emotional development, problem-solving and language skills (Seth-Smith et al., 2010). Children who enter the school system without these skills can find it difficult to adjust and access the school curriculum. It has been found that the quality of the relationship between children and their caregivers is a strong predictor of academic achievement in primary and secondary school (Bergin & Bergin, 2009).

### The History and theory of Nurture Groups (NGs)



Nurture groups were first introduced in the 1970s by educational psychologist, Marjorie Boxall in London to address gaps where children have not received nurturing care in the early years. Nurture groups (NGs) are rooted in the principles of Attachment Theory which was first developed by Bowlby (1969). NGs address the underlying causes of disruptive behaviour (Seth-Smith et al., 2010) through providing good quality relationships and supporting positive wellbeing.

Bowlby (1969) highlighted the importance of the first relationship between babies and their attachment figure (AF) on babies' psychological wellbeing. In Attachment theory, when an AF is attuned to the child, s/he is able to anticipate and respond to the child's needs (Bowlby, 1969). The securely attached child learns that the AF will satisfy his/her needs when s/he signals for it. Children learn from this interactional pattern that the AF is consistently available and will satisfy their needs. The pattern of interactions between AFs and children lead to the development of the internal working model (IWM) for children, of the self, others and the future (Bowlby, 1969). Children who receive consistent care develop secure attachments with their AF, perceive themselves to be loved and important, that others are trustworthy and helpful, and their environment is safe.

Children who experience inconsistent and unresponsive care from their AF may develop insecure attachments. These children learn that the caregiver does not fulfil their needs. Insecurely attached children may develop IWMs that they are unworthy, adults are untrustworthy, and that the world is not safe.

### How does children's attachment profiles affect their academic attainment?

Pupil relationships with teachers reflect their attachment styles (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2004; Geddes, 2006, Bomber, 2007, Bergin & Bergin, 2009) that they bring into schools. Children who have insecure attachments may have world views that contrast with those of teachers (Bomber, 2007). Due to previous experiences, children may not trust teachers who behave warmly and responsively to them. They may expect teachers to let them down. The relationship between teachers and pupils is linked to school performance (Bergin & Bergin, 2009). Bergin & Bergin (2009) suggest that school success is affected by children's strategies to regulate their own emotions when given difficult tasks. Children who have secure attachments are able to tolerate the frustrations of difficult tasks because they ask for help from teachers so that teachers can reduce their anxiety for them. Children with insecure attachment profiles may be overwhelmed by anxiety-provoking tasks and either refuse help from the teacher or be overly dependent on the teacher for help (Geddes, 2006).

### What do NGs do?

The premise of Nurture Groups is to help compensate for the missed opportunities for children who did not receive consistent nurturing relationships with caregivers in the early years (Boxall, 2002). NGs are designed so that children can re-experience missed early care and play opportunities. Children develop a close relationship with adults who are attachment-figures. This relationship is a vital component of NGs (Billington, 2012). NGs are predictable and structured. NGs are designed to be similar to home environments in the early years. NGs were first intended to be used in nursery and primary schools. NGs are being extended into secondary schools (Sanders, 2007).

### Research supporting the outcomes of NGs

There is lots of research indicating that NGs work. NGs have been recognised to be an effective preventative measure to escalating difficulties in school as well as its reparative effects on children's emotional wellbeing (Seth-Smith et al., 2010). Iszatt and Wasilewska (1997) found that children who do not receive NG intervention are three times more likely to receive a statutory assessment. The most common reasons for permanent exclusions in school is "persistent disruptive behaviour" which is an expression of emotional and mental health needs (Nurture UK, 2019b).

### What areas are improved by NGs





- Friendships, prosocial behaviour in the classroom and regulating feelings

Most research carried out to date show that NGs develop children's social functioning with peers and regulation skills within the classroom. Children learn to regulate their behaviour (Seth-Smith et al. 2010) and increase their confidence (Cunningham, 2019). All the studies reviewed reveal that NGs support children into re-integrating back into mainstream class.

Cunningham et al. (2019) carried out assessments and structured interviews with 16 children aged 6 to 9 years old who attended five primary schools with NGs. It was found that children who attended NGs developed their social skills and confidence. Specifically, their responses to hypothetical challenging social situations were more appropriate compared to their responses prior to the intervention. Teachers reported improvements in children's behaviour following NG intervention. Children also reported that they enjoyed NGs.

In Mackay, Reynolds & Kearney's (2010) study, children reported they felt happy and comfortable with other peers and adults in the NG. They reported learning skills like sharing, turn taking and initiating conversations with other children. Children reported enjoying making friends with other children in the NG groups. They reported a sense of belonging. The authors argue that feelings of being part of a group and interpersonal interactions support social emotional development.

Cunningham et al. (2019) and Sanders (2007) suggest that more support could be given to children's interactions through structured play and staff understanding the importance of peer belonging and relationships. The authors argue that some children spend a large proportion of the school day in NGs, away from their peers and this could have an impact on children's feelings of being part of the classroom.



- Attainment

Although there are fewer studies showing how NGs can improve academic attainment, these studies show that attendance at NGs do improve academic achievement. Seth-Smith et al. (2010) found that children who attended nurture groups did better on national curriculum assessments compared to children who had been matched to them and who did not attend NGs. Mackay et al. (2010) reason that attachment security positively affects academic achievement. NGs are an attachment intervention therefore NGs lead to increased attainment through improving the quality of relationships or attachments between children and adults.



- Engagement in learning and co-operation

Following attendance in NGs, teachers reported that children improved in following instructions, in turn taking, initiating peer interactions and they had less angry outbursts in class (Sanders, 2007).

Seth-Smith et al. (2010) found that children who attended NGs showed improvements in peer relationships, regulated their movements and showed pro-social behaviour in the classroom. Significant changes could be found on the Boxall Profile of all children who attended the NGs. They did not show measurable improvements in emotional needs. The authors reasoned that emotional well-being takes longer to resolve than using more practical skills. They also found that where children with SEMH needs were identified by schools but did not attend NGs, these children showed increasing difficulties with emotional well-being and behaviour. Therefore, children who do not receive NG interventions are likely to have increasing SEMH difficulties.

All studies of NGs show that children improve their social functioning with peers through developing their social skills by modelling adults' appropriate responses and through discussion of social situations.

### The long-term impact of NGs

O'Connor and Colwell (2002) explored the long-term impact of NGs. They measured children's social emotional development on the Boxall profile two years after the children attended NGs and were re-integrated back into mainstream classroom. O'Connor and Colwell found that all the children were successfully re-integrated back into the classroom. The data for 16 children following the NG intervention was available after two years. O'Connor and Colwell found that the positive impact by NGs was maintained two years after children attended the intervention. They argue that NGs can mitigate the negative effects of a challenging home environment. O'Connor and Colwell's findings about the long-term effects of NGs are based on the available data of 16 only out of 68 children. However, of the 16 children who were followed up, all of these children sustained the gains from the intervention.

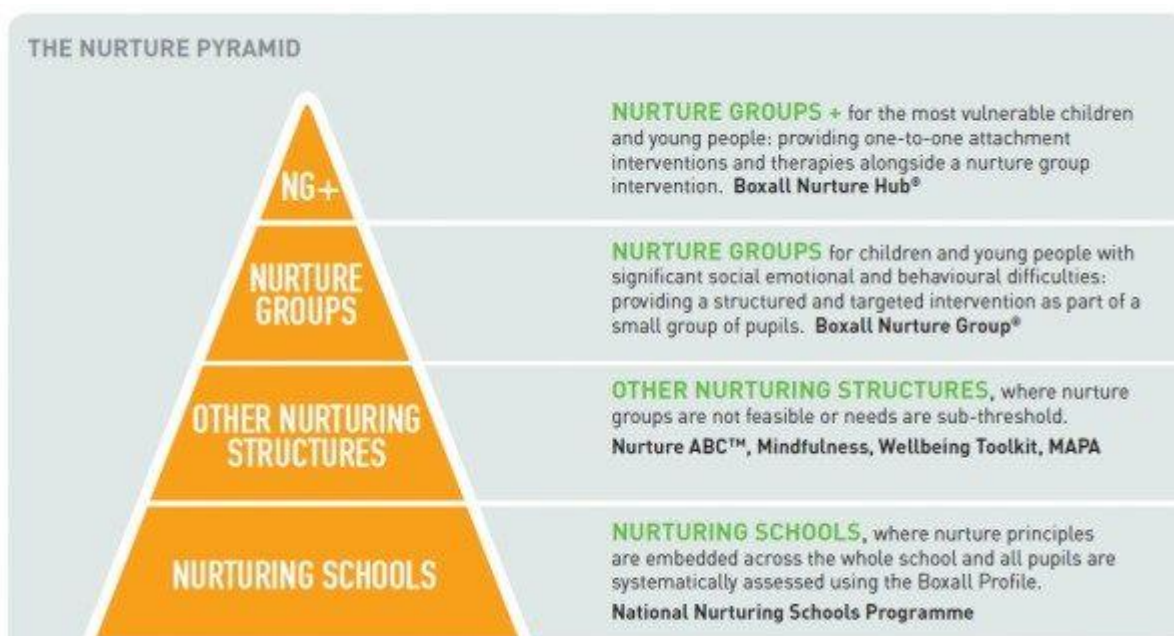
### Why do NGs work?

Research focussing on what aspects work in NGs show that:

- The communication styles of NG staff are more nurturing, with a higher ratio of positive verbal and non-verbal praise compared to mainstream classrooms (Hughes & Schlosser, 2010). Siegel and Bryson (2011) state that this more encouraging and warm style is similar to the parenting style that is associated with secure attachments.
- Seth-Smith et al. (2010) and Billington (2012) found that relationships with schools and parents improve following nurture groups. Billington (2012) interviewed 18 members of school staff including members of senior leadership, SENCOs and nurture group staff.
- Staff perceptions are more positive about children and their families.
- The staff in NGs are often dedicated and enthusiastic towards the children and their parents.

## The Graduated Approach

Reports about NGs commissioned by UK governments for Wales (Welsh Assembly Government), Scotland (Education Scotland) and Northern Ireland (Nurture and Advisory Support Service, NASS) and Nurture UK recommend that schools adopt NGs within a whole school that operates nurture principles so that all children benefit from a nurturing approach. The Nurture Pyramid by the Nurture Group Network (NGN, 2018) maps out the interventions for schools for all children at the bottom of the pyramid to more intensive individual interventions for the most vulnerable children in schools.



The four levels of Nurture in school by the Nurture Group Network (NGN, 2018)

Level 1 – Whole school approach. Nurture in the classroom.

Schools should provide nurturing classrooms. This would be important to support the reintegration of children into mainstream classrooms. All staff need to understand the role and ethos of nurture interventions. It would be helpful if schools completed a Whole School Readiness checklist to explore what areas of nurture are in place and what needs to be put in place. See Appendix 1.

It is not necessary to screen all children universally at level 1. Derbyshire County Council suggest that teachers should use “behaviour as communication” as their first line of understanding and identifying children at risk who may need more nurturing approaches in the classroom.

- The focus in the classroom is to provide a safe space where the relationship between teachers and children is the focus.
- Use trauma informed approaches – understand behaviour in the context of children and young people’s backgrounds. For more details see Cheshire West and Chester Council’s Our Way of Working page which has training and resources on trauma. [Our Model – West Cheshire Children's Trust \(westcheshirechildrenstrust.co.uk\)](https://www.westcheshirechildrenstrust.co.uk)
- Take an interest in children’s backgrounds and interests. Children can feel accepted if we remember things about them.
- Have a classroom that celebrates difference. Have displays from different cultures. Encourage discussions about difference in a positive way.
- Use positive communication towards children including non-verbal check ins. Use emotion coaching.
- Promote emotional literacy e.g., Zones of Regulation [The Zones of Regulation | A Curriculum For Emotional Regulation](https://www.elsa-support.co.uk), feelings thermometers [Feelings Thermometers - Item 215 - Elsa Support \(elsa-support.co.uk\)](https://www.5pointscale.com), My Incredible 5-point Scale [THE INCREDIBLE 5-POINT SCALE - HOME \(5pointscale.com\)](https://www.5pointscale.com). Give children the option of talking about emotions.
- Teachers to match their behaviour to children’s behaviour – high intervention to high levels of behaviour and low intervention to low levels e.g., reminders of the rules for talking.
- Foster relationships with parents. Parents could be invited to attend some of the activities of NIs such as celebrations, stay and play activities. Information could be sent home to parents about NIs
- Monitor interactions in the playground and teach children prosocial and cooperation skills.
- Assemblies on different topics that are of value to the children i.e., culture and inclusivity.
- Peer support facilitating supportive peer relationships.
- It may be appropriate for staff leading NIs to disseminate their practice to wider school staff.

## **Level 2 – Targeted support**

This is where small group interventions designed to develop social emotional skills would fall. Children at this stage may not need intensive nurture interventions. Examples of these groups or interventions could be small group emotional literacy interventions, mindfulness interventions, emotional wellbeing toolkits, attachment approaches where children have opportunities to develop consistent relationships with staff, and small group interventions such as Lego Therapy.

## **Level 3 – Nurture intervention**

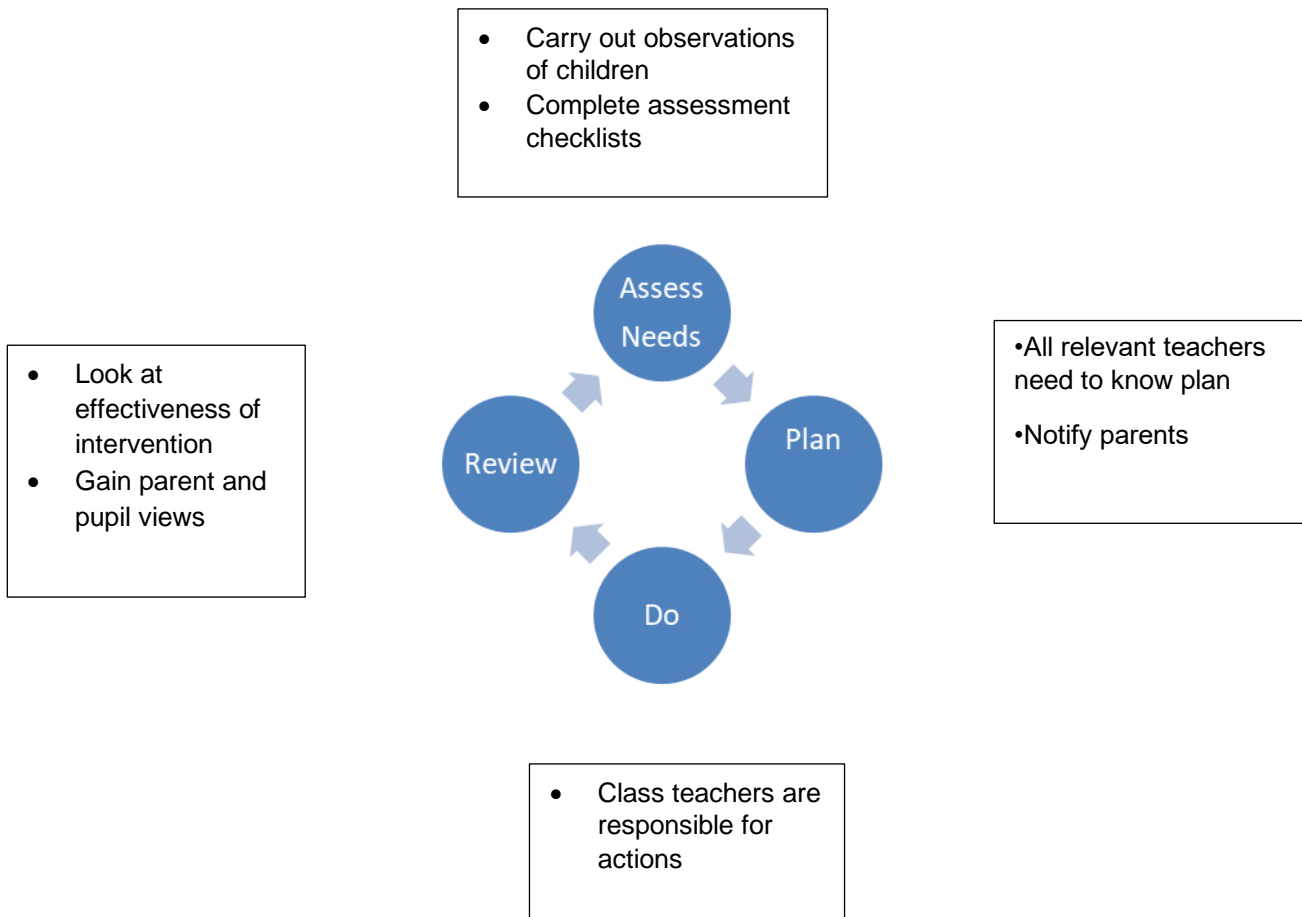
The decision to select children to attend nurture interventions should be guided by the Graduated Approach in the SEND Code of Practice (2014) - see below. Children need to have experienced a nurturing classroom first, where the principles of nurture are in place and preferably a targeted intervention if appropriate, before they attend nurture interventions.

The Graduated Approach is cyclical so it is likely that children will go through several cycles of the process. Each stage informs the next stage.

## **Level 4 – Nurture Group + (NG UK)**

Some children may need nurture groups plus therapeutic interventions and attachment-based work on a one-to-one basis. It is usual that children go through the first three levels before entering Level 4 however, there may be some exceptional cases where children enter Level 4.

## **SEND Code of Practice (2014) The Graduated Approach**



The Graduated Approach follows a cycle of Assess-Plan-Do-Review.

### **Assess needs**

Use observations of children in the classroom.

Complete assessments using either the Boxall Profile or Goodman's Strengths, Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) [sdqinfo.org/py/sdqinfo/b0.py](http://sdqinfo.org/py/sdqinfo/b0.py). See Appendix 3 for SDQ.

### **Plan**

Make contact with parents/ carers to discover children's strengths and needs. It is helpful to have regular communication with parents to feedback on how children are doing. Parents/ carers should be updated regularly.

Gain parental views on what works well for their children and this information can be used within nurture groups.

## Do

Attendance in nurture intervention.

Formulate reintegration plans into the main classroom.

The Boxall Profile or SDQ can be used as a guide to when children should be reintegrated into the classroom.

**Review** *(To gather essential evidence for impact and effectiveness).*

Regular monitoring of progress using the Boxall Profile or SDQ.

Parental, pupil and teacher feedback.

## **Setting up a Nurture Intervention**

### **Things to consider:**

- Cost.
- Select the right staff.
- Select the right students.
- Select the right space and resources.
- Plan the session.
- Complete baseline measures.



### **Cost:**

- To run the accredited Nurture Groups, there is a three-day training course. [The Theory and Practice of Nurture Groups - NurtureUK](#) ideally for at least one of the staff members delivering a Nurture Group. The intervention described in this document can be run without this training, but it is not an accredited intervention and should not be called a Nurture Group.
- Consider accessing outreach support from local schools who have successfully used Nurturing Interventions e.g. [Archers Brook School: SEMH Specialist Outreach Support](#).
- Staff time.
- Resources e.g., games, toys, Lego, books, pens, pencils, activities.
- Juice and snacks.

### **Before you begin:**

- All school staff need to be made aware of the purpose of the Nurture Intervention, the graduated approach (SEND Code of Practice, 2014) and the whole school approach to nurture.
- Arrange for staff to visit and observe an existing nurture group/intervention.

- Fit the model into the whole school development plan (relational behaviour policy/ attachment aware behaviour policy).
- Establish funding, quality assurance and methods to record and track outcome data.

### **Selecting the right staff**

- Choose two staff who are compassionate, kind and nurturing with the children they work with. Staff should have an understanding or be willing to learn about Attachment Theory or Trauma Informed Practice. See Core Programme [Training for you – West Cheshire Children's Trust \(westcheshirechildrenstrust.co.uk\)](http://westcheshirechildrenstrust.co.uk)
- Choose staff who can form good relationships with school staff and parents.
- Choose staff who know how to work creatively and compassionately with children and young people.
- One member of staff will need to be able to plan and implement the day-to-day running of the Nurture Intervention.
- At least one member of staff will need to be able to observe children and complete checklists (in the Appendix 3) to monitor progress. They will need to be able to interpret the results.
- Staff need to be able to work closely and share progress with class teachers so that successful reintegration can be planned.
- It is suggested as good practice that at least one of the staff members attend a three-day certificate course on 'The Theory and Practice of Nurture Groups. [The Theory and Practice of Nurture Groups - NurtureUK](http://NurtureUK)

### **Selecting the right students**

6-12 pupils are the ideal size for the Nurture Intervention group.

Children who benefit from Nurture Intervention may present with the following difficulties:

- Difficulty regulating their emotions.
- Low-self-esteem.
- Difficulty building relationships and trusting others.
- Difficulty with sharing and turn taking.
- A fear of failure.

To ensure the success of your Nurture Intervention it will be important to consider the following when forming your groups:

- A roughly equal distribution of girls and boys if needed.
- The age range, ideally no more than 2 years apart in age (e.g., a mix of students from Year 1 and Year 2, or Year 3 and Year 4 or Year 7 and Year 8).
- Sibling rivalry if you have siblings in the same group.
- A suitable mix of students who experience difficulty managing inhibitions and those who present as more withdrawn. Include some children who may need



some support but who can act as good role models such as more popular, influential children.

### **Selecting the right room space and resources**

The room space will need the following:

#### **KS1/2**

- A worktable.
- A food preparation area.
- Access to developmentally appropriate resources to carry out games and activities.
- A soft seating area for informal activities.
- A space large enough to have different zones of developmentally appropriate activities.

#### **KS3**

- A room with chairs in a circle or around a desk
- An indoor or outdoor space for sports activities (such as table tennis, basketball, volleyball, parachute game).
- A desk for tabletop activities such as arts and crafts, mindful colouring or writing.
- A food preparation area.
- Comfortable seating or a space to lie down to carry out mindfulness meditation.

### **Baseline and Outcome measures**

- The Boxall Profile is an assessment tool that identifies barriers to learning. More information on using The Boxall Profile can be found in *The Boxall Profile; Handbook for Teachers*, published in 1998 by the Nurture Group Network. In 2010 a new Profile in the Handbook *The Boxall Profile for Young People* was published aimed at secondary schools. The Boxall Profile Handbook is available to purchase at [www.nurturegroups.org](http://www.nurturegroups.org). Additional forms can also be purchased on the website.
- The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ, Goodman, 1999) (see Appendix 3) can be downloaded at [www.sdqinfo.org](http://www.sdqinfo.org). The SDQ measures emotional well-being, prosocial behaviour, hyperactivity and difficulties with peers.
- Qualitative feedback and observation. Direct observation and recording verbal feedback from the child is a person centred and contextually relevant method of data collection.
- Target Monitoring and Evaluation Form (see Appendix 3). This approach directly involves the child in the target setting and review process, enabling them to track their own progress.

### Session structure

- An hour and a half once a week over one to two terms.
- Complete baseline measure prior to the intervention starting.
- Complete two outcome measures. The first at the end of the intervention. The second at the end of the following term.

### **Example session structure for KS1/2 nurture intervention**

| Time   | Learning Objectives  | Activities  |
|--|--|---|
| Introduction – (5-15 minutes on the carpet)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop speaking and listening skills</li> <li>• Improve attention.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome</li> <li>• Circle Time – Something that made me happy this week was ....</li> <li>• Show and tell activity</li> <li>• Introduce 5 activities for the session</li> </ul>  |
| Free flow learning (20-30 minutes)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop self-regulation skills and improve behaviour by choosing from a limited range of play activities</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading in the book corner</li> <li>• Small world toys</li> <li>• Construction / trains/Lego</li> <li>• Playdough</li> <li>• Colouring/writing/maths</li> <li>• Sand /water</li> <li>• Role play / dressing up</li> <li>• Home corner</li> </ul> |
| Group Activity led by an adult (10-15 minutes) – optional since some children may still need to play individually / alongside other children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop turn taking skills</li> <li>• To develop social interaction skills</li> <li>• Extend vocabulary</li> <li>• Teach manners</li> <li>• Model language</li> <li>• Praise good behaviour</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board game</li> <li>• Jenga</li> <li>• cards</li> <li>• Art activity</li> <li>• Cooking</li> </ul>   |
| Tidy up (10 minutes)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To take on a position of responsibility</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tidy away activities</li> </ul>  |
| Snack time (10-15 minutes)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To take on a position of responsibility</li> <li>• To improve language skills by speaking and listening to other children</li> <li>• To encourage good table manners</li> </ul>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a rota to set the table, serve the fruit / drink and clear away.</li> <li>• Discuss rota and rules at the first session</li> </ul>  |

|                      |  |  |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Plenary (10 minutes) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop listening skills</li> <li>• Positive reinforcement and praise to enhance self-esteem</li> <li>• Develop empathy and an awareness of others</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to story / song</li> <li>• Say what they enjoyed and / or learnt from the session</li> <li>• Children give another child a complement</li> </ul> |
|----------------------|--|--|

### Example session structure for KS3 nurture intervention

| Time   | Learning Objectives   | Activities   |
|--|---|--|
| Introduction – (5-15 minutes sitting on chairs in a circle or round a desk)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop speaking and listening skills</li> <li>• Improve attention.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome and share any good news from the previous week.</li> <li>• Everyone spends a few minutes journalling three things they are grateful for this week and shares something they are grateful for with the group.</li> <li>• Introduce 5 activities for the session</li> </ul>       |
| Free flow learning and play (20-30 minutes)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop self-regulation skills and improve behaviour by choosing from a limited range of activities</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mindful colouring</li> <li>• Table tennis (or other indoor sports activity)</li> <li>• Puzzle</li> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Story writing</li> <li>• Journalling</li> <li>• Card game</li> <li>• Jenga</li> <li>• Art activity</li> </ul>   |
| Group Activity led by an adult (10-15 minutes) – optional since some students may still need to play individually / alongside other children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop turn taking skills</li> <li>• To develop social interaction skills</li> <li>• Extend vocabulary</li> <li>• Model language</li> <li>• Praise good behaviour</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor/ indoor sports activity</li> <li>• Meditation</li> <li>• Parachute games</li> <li>• Board game</li> <li>• Jenga</li> <li>• Cards</li> <li>• Art activity</li> <li>• Cooking</li> <li>• On going craft activity such as patch work blanket or personalised pillowcase</li> </ul> |

|                                 |  |   |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
|                                 |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Art activities that develop self-esteem</li> <li>• Building an emotional regulation toolbox</li> </ul>   |
| Tidy up (10 minutes)            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To take on a position of responsibility</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tidy away activities</li> </ul>  |
| Snack and drink (10-15 minutes) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To take on a position of responsibility</li> <li>• To improve language skills by speaking and listening to other children</li> <li>• To encourage good table manners</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a rota to set the table, serve the fruit / drink and clear away.</li> <li>• Discuss rota and rules at the first session</li> </ul>  |
| Plenary (10 minutes)            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop listening skills</li> <li>• Positive reinforcement and praise to enhance self-esteem</li> <li>• Develop empathy and an awareness of others</li> </ul>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to or children could read a story, song, meditation</li> <li>• Say what they enjoyed and / or learnt from the session</li> <li>• Students to give another student a compliment</li> </ul> |

***Please note this structure is the recommended structure for Nurture Interventions, but the activity ideas listed in the tables above can be built upon or amended as appropriate.***



### **Reintegration**

- The overall aim of the Nurture Intervention is to reintegrate the child back into the classroom. Therefore, from the outset of the intervention all children are expected to spend some time in the mainstream classroom.
- When the child has made enough progress and they are viewed as being ready to return to the mainstream classroom, the adults supporting the child will need to reconsider the assess, plan, do review cycle (SEND CoP, 2014 – see page 17). A new plan will need to be embedded that considers what

support the child will need next. The school should consider the following steps when reintegrating the child back into the mainstream classroom:

1. Specific guidance grounded in the principles of nurture that are appropriate for the child in question will need to be shared with the class teacher and any adults who work with the child (including support staff) as part of the child's One Page Profile.
2. Careful planning will be needed to consider how the schools whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing can be used to support the child's success in the classroom.
3. In the classroom, the child will need access to visual emotion check-ins and emotional wellbeing strategies (e.g., presented as a visual toolbox of strategies)- see page 15 for ideas.
4. The child will need a planned opportunities in place should they need to take wellbeing breaks from the classroom.
5. The school should consider additional targeted SEMH intervention as a follow on from the Nurture Intervention (e.g., The Zones of Regulation or other wellbeing/mental health intervention delivered by an appropriately trained professional such as a school-based counsellor or Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA).
6. Consider after school clubs such as pyramid clubs ([Pyramid Clubs for schools | University of West London \(uwl.ac.uk\)](#)).

### **Whole school approach**

- Senior leaders to embed an ethos that emotional well-being is a priority across the whole school to support mental health of all pupils in the setting. The DfE has provided funding for training to senior leaders to become Mental Health Leads in their school in order to provide support for mental health and well-being across the whole setting. This training equips schools to identify and meet the needs of pupils' well-being, support staff and parents/ carers in maintaining their own emotional well-being as well as creating a nurturing environment in school. See [Senior mental health lead training - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- Ensure that the principles of nurture are understood and embedded by all staff across the school.
- Develop a more nurturing environment through staff-to-staff interaction and exchange and staff to student interaction and exchange (for example, making sure children are kept in mind, greeting a child when they come into the classroom, ensuring kind interactions are modelled to each other).

### **Involving parents and carers**

- Parents must be informed if their child is taking part in a Nurture Intervention.
- Parents must be provided with an information leaflet outlining what the Nurture Intervention is and the key principles of nurture.
- Parents should be invited to take part in nurture sessions and provide feedback on the nurture session.

- Consider linking your nurture provision with your local parenting offer such as, the Triple P Parenting Programme.

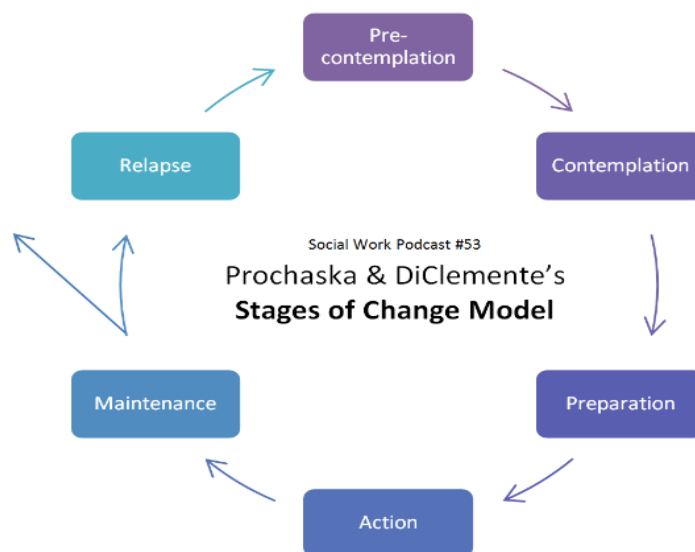
### Evaluation

- Schools may be asked to provide evidence on the impact their groups are having for the purpose of inspection or future funding.

Consider the following when completing an evaluation:

- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Grades
- Behaviour
- Social skills
- Relationships
- Feedback from teachers and parents

Consider the role of relapse in maintaining positive change. Prochaska and DiClemente's (1983) Stages of Change model describes relapse as one of the stages of change (see below).



**Pre-contemplative stage:** The child does not acknowledge that a problem exists.

**Contemplative stage:** The child is willing to consider the problem and the possibility that change might be desirable.

**Preparation stage:** When the child decides to take action and ceases engagement in the problematic behaviour and creates an action plan.

**Action:** Puts the plan into action.

**Maintenance:** the length of time the new helpful behaviours will be maintained following the intervention.

**Relapse:** once relapsed they may not re-enter the model at the pre-contemplative stage, they may go straight to action.

The child can move backwards and forwards through this cycle. Relapse is part of the cycle. The goal is to keep the child moving to the next stage at whatever stage they are at. When they are at maintenance, we want them to come out of the cycle and continue to maintain the helpful behaviours, but if they enter the relapse stage of the cycle the aim is to move them onto the next step.

### **Next Steps**

As a follow on from the nurture sessions and to ensure a successful reintegration back into the classroom some schools offer after school clubs such as Pyramid Clubs ([Pyramid Clubs for schools | University of West London \(uwl.ac.uk\)](https://www.uwl.ac.uk/pyramid-clubs-for-schools)) and school based counselling such as Place2be ([Improving children's and young people's mental health – Place2Be](https://www.place2be.org.uk/improving-childrens-and-young-peoples-mental-health)).

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Zones of Regulation [The Zones of Regulation | A Curriculum For Emotional Regulation](#)

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Whole School Readiness checklist (From Education Scotland: Applying Nurture as a Whole School Approach)

Please note this questionnaire should be completed by the Senior Management Team (SMT) or Implementation Team within the school (this might include partners).

Please circle **YES** or **NO**.

1. Our Senior Management Team (SMT) are willing to fully support and model the implementation of nurturing approaches. **YES** **NO**
  
2. Our SMT have had some awareness raising/training on nurturing approaches. **YES** **NO**
  
3. Nurturing approaches will be part of our school and early learning and childcare (ELC) settings improvement plan. **YES** **NO**
  
4. Nurturing approaches will be part of our early years/school improvement plan. **YES** **NO**
  
5. Our SMT have presented information to all staff about the approach. **YES** **NO**

If YES, what date did this take place: 

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

If not yet, when will this take place: 

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
  
6. We have discussed the needs of our school and feel that a nurturing approach is a good fit. **YES** **NO**
  
7. Opportunities for sharing/observing practice in nurturing approaches have been provided. If not, how will that/will those be provided? **YES** **NO**
  
8. We are confident as a school that we have the time, skills and resources to implement nurturing approaches effectively. **YES** **NO**
  
9. We are able to allocate time or already have allocated time for all staff to implement full training on the Nurturing Initiatives within the school/ ELC setting before we start the programme. **YES** **NO**
  
10. We have considered ways to inform parents/carers and involve them in nurturing approaches, and we will seek innovative ways of doing this. **YES** **NO**

11. Opportunities for sharing/observing practice in nurturing approaches have been provided. If No, please note how they will be built in to the on-going implementation. **YES NO**

12. We have an area within the school to display/pass on nurturing approaches information to parents/carers, for example, a notice board, leaflet or regular newsletter. **YES NO**

13. We recognise that nurturing approaches should be implemented as intended, and that if changes are made this could influence the effects and limit the benefits. **YES NO**

14. We have considered ways of providing coaching as an important part of embedding nurturing approaches, and have made plans to help staff engage in this. **YES NO**

15. We are aware that evaluation of impact is crucial and have made plans for what evaluation will be carried out to measure this. **YES NO**

16. We have identified support agencies who will help us to embed nurturing approaches. **YES NO**

17. We could accommodate an Education Scotland visit to support the implementation of nurturing approaches. **YES NO**

18. We have considered ways of involving children and young people in the taking forward of nurturing approaches. **YES NO**

19. We have explored how a nurturing approach fits with other key policies and approaches in the school. **YES NO**

20. We need more information before we can take forward a nurturing approach. **YES NO**

**I require...**(Please outline your requirements to implement nurturing approaches.)

# Nurture Intervention Session Structure



**Appendix 3: Tools to use to measure baseline and progress.**

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ)

SDQ form for parents and teachers to complete for CYP aged 4 – 17.



SDQ\_English(UK)\_pt4  
-17single.pdf

SDQ form for CYP to complete for CYP aged 4 – 17.



SDQ\_English(UK)\_s1  
1-17single.pdf

Target Monitoring Evaluation (TME) form



TME Form.docx