



# Five to Thrive May 2022

## Newsletter

### Five to Thrive – Why people need people...

We all know that children need good food and healthy exercise for their bodies to grow strong. But recent research shows that brains need more than this to grow strong. Human beings need loving relationships for healthy brain development. Of course we have always known that children thrive better when they are loved, but now we know why this happens – it is because being with people who love us feeds our brains.

So what is it about loving relationships that helps brain development? There are five simple activities that parents do every day that help the brains of children to grow well. These have been described using five key words, one for each activity, so that we can notice this happening, and make sure our children get the brain food they need:

Respond • Cuddle • Relax • Play • Talk

These are the 'Five to Thrive' of healthy brain development. To find out more about Five to Thrive across Bristol look out for training and events on [www.bristolearlyyears.org.uk](http://www.bristolearlyyears.org.uk)

### Welcome to our first Five to Thrive Newsletter!

#### Our vision is:

'Through working collaboratively with a range of early years and family support professionals the Five to Thrive principles will be embedded in the work of integrated early years and family support practices across Bristol.'

26<sup>th</sup> MAY 2022 Five to Thrive  
Childminders 7 pm – 9 pm via ZOOM

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/five-to-thrive-for-childminders-tickets-313440708597>

Central to the Five to Thrive approach is the set of five key activities:

Respond · Cuddle · Relax · Play · Talk.

blocks for a healthy brain are drawn from research into the key processes of forge bonds between young children and their carers. The 5 building blocks are designed to support positive feedback processes; enabling practitioners to observe and reinforce positive interaction between parents and their children. This introduction to the Five to Thrive approach will look at building a healthy brain, attachment needs, and explore how best to use the approach in practice.





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## Lead Teacher Support- Five to Thrive

Sitting alongside our Lead Teacher roles some of us are now also Leading Practitioners for Five to Thrive. Across Bristol many Early Years staff have now attended our Network sessions promoting and supporting the theory into practice approach that Five to Thrive provides.

We wanted to share some of the work taking place across our city and celebrate how so many of you have embraced this opportunity to help Bristol families thrive, even though you are still wading through our post pandemic 'normal'!



### Early Years School leaders cluster meetings

Signposting to the Five to Thrive resources to support staff's thinking about self-regulation & executive function.

### Early Years Settings Manager cluster meetings

Exploring "What is Five to Thrive?" & during meetings exploring what each block represents, signposting to further reading & CPD

### Five to Thrive Transition leaflets have been created for parents and settings

The training gave me a framework for my work with parents. Nine parents attended a coffee morning to explore 'respond'. We were amazed at how topical & relevant it was to carve out time for themselves, sharing they felt selfish for doing this! They all bonded sharing their experiences.

### Early Years Settings QIF visits

During QIF visits we have been able to follow up with settings who attended the Five to Thrive Network CPD. One pre-school has been able to implement some support for parents with regard to the importance of routines.

### Lead Teacher Network CPD sessions





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### Childminder Support Team- Five to Thrive

Since the childminding team completed the KCA training, we have been keen to implement the strategies and key messages that Five to Thrive gave us. It was a slow start as the pandemic happened, but the ideas were always simmering in the background.

The training that we have so far delivered has been met with positive feedback from the childminders who attended.

One childminder fed back how they *had learnt a lot of things and it'll help me in my working practice.*

Another childminder, who Ofsted recently registered, commented how they hadn't really thought about explaining to a child before a nappy was about to be changed, to actually talk to the child to let them know of the intention.

Small changes can create the biggest impact!

We have offered the training twice and this will remain a core offer on our training plans. I have also introduced Five to Thrive on our childminding course for prospective childminders and when referring to brain development on the 'providing quality play' session.

On our home visits to childminders, we incorporate the Five to Thrive building blocks within our conversations. Helping childminders to embed the principles within their settings.

One example of the support given on a home visit was to an enhanced provision childminder. It was discussed how one child often throws the toys; the child's gets upset when anyone says 'no' even though the CM uses a soft voice, remains calm and talks about the risk that the incident creates. I advised turning the incident around, talk to the child and say I can see that you would like to do some throwing, how about we find something softer to throw so that no one will get hurt. Turn this into something that the child can do, demonstrating that you are listening and tuning in to his needs. He may, although this could be an assumption, often hear the word 'no,' the CM mentioned how the child is often referred to by the parent, in a less than positive way. This is being addressed by the CM.





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All of the Children Centre’s family support teams are doing Five to Thrive. Here is an example from the North Team

## The North Children Centre Family Support Team- Five to Thrive

Across the North Bristol Children’s Centres we have been continuing to run our popular Five to Thrive 7 week course for parents and their children under one. Throughout the course we have a look at each Five to Thrive building blocks and how we can use them to support our children, as well as ourselves. The course aims to be informative yet relaxed, giving parents and their children the opportunity to learn and play together. Here is what some parents had to say about our course: “It’s been a safe and open space. The knowledge and understanding behind their learning has been useful.”

“It gave me confidence to meet my child’s needs”

“I have really enjoyed the course, I have learnt a lot about engaging with H and also understanding her cues.”

As staff across the North we have been trying to widen our understanding of Five to Thrive and how we can promote it with the families we work with outside of the course too. We have had team meetings to share our knowledge and discuss ways we can intertwine it within our work in groups and 1-1, which has been a really useful exercise.

Our Five to Thrive course rotates across the North Centres, so get in touch to hear where our next one will be running!



**For more information** [Bristol Early Years | A source of information, guidance and support for the Early Years community in Bristol](#)