# Lesson 2: Professional behaviours

This lesson will explore the behaviours that should be displayed by an early years practitioner. This includes maintaining professional boundaries and being mindful that the children will look to you as a role model.

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| **Learning outcomes** | Icon  Description automatically generated |
| By the end of the lesson, you must be able to:   * **Describe** the expected behaviours for an early years practitioner. * **Provide examples** of professional boundaries.   You may also be able to:   * **Explain** the importance of maintaining professional boundaries. | |

## Reading Task:

## Professional boundaries

Professional boundaries are the code of conduct that ensures that the relationship between the early years professional and the child’s family remain professional and do not become personal.

It is maintaining professional behaviour that safeguards everyone involved.

Early years practitioners should always ensure that they maintain professional boundaries and do not become personally involved in anything relating to the child or their family.

Do you agree that maintaining professional boundaries enables you to:

* Build trust and respect with the child and their family.
* Act as a role model to the child.
* Comply with legislation through policies and procedures.
* Demonstrate self-respect.
* Maintain good working relationships with other professionals.
* Keep your job.

**Explain in your own words what we mean by professional boundaries:**

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| **Activity 1: Professional boundaries when working with children and families** | Icon  Description automatically generated |
| **Identify how you can maintain professional boundaries when working with children and families with the following:**  **Relationships:**  **Confidentiality:**  **Mobile phones and social media:** | |
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Examples of how to maintain professional boundaries.

**Relationships:**

* Not being over familiar with the child’s family.
* Only use the name they have introduced themselves as. For example, do not shorten their name or use a nickname.
* Not asking personal questions.
* Not socialising with the family outside of the early years setting.
* Do not invite them to leave the child with you outside of the hours of the working day.
* Do not accept a date from a family member of the child.
* You should not accept expensive gifts or gifts that are of a personal nature such as underwear.

**Confidentiality:**

* Do not share information that you know is confidential.
* Do not provide hints about confidential information. For example, if they got bitten by a child you must not drop hints about who it is. That is as bad as naming the child.
* Do not leave confidential information lying around where others can see it.
* Do not share confidential information about yourself, such as where you live. This may be used by families to overstep the boundaries and may put you in a difficult situation.

**Use of mobile phones.**

* Mobiles should be turned off and left in the staff room or somewhere else that is secure.
* Never take photos or videos of children on your phone.
* Do not show parents photos of anything from your mobile phone.
* Do not give families your private number. Do not use theirs unless it is for a valid reason such as their child being ill.
* Do not record information about a child or the setting on your phone.

**Use of social media:**

* Do not accept families of the children in your setting onto your social media platform.
* Do not post personal information on your social media that might be seen by families of the children.
* Use a different version of your name so that you are difficult to find.
* Ensure you have privacy settings on your social media so that only accepted friends can see what you post.
* Do not post anything on social media about the early years settings, work colleagues, children or families.
* Think about whether the content on your social media portrays a professional image.

## Positive attitudes

Working as an early years practitioner can be challenging and there are times when you might feel tired or frustrated but you must maintain a professional attitude.

Let’s have a look at what that means.

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| **Activity 2: Staying positive** | Icon  Description automatically generated |
| Work in pairs to look at the case studies.  Can you identify what the early years practitioner did to maintain a professional approach? | |
| **Case study 1:**  Billy has snatched a Lego brick from Punjab and Punjab is crying. The early years practitioner comforts Punjab and makes sure he is not injured. She then speaks to Billy about how to be kind to friends. Billy says he needed the brick to finish his house. The early years practitioner says that she understands but explains to Billy that he needed to ask nicely rather than snatching.  What professional behaviours can you identify? | |
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| **Case study 2:**  Mavis is one of the three early years practitioners in the baby room. She is pregnant and is feeling tired. Another early years practitioner, David, suggests that she could go and have a break while the babies are asleep as they have enough staff to maintain the staff to baby ratios until the afternoon babies come in. He says they will call her if they need her.  What professional behaviours can you identify? | |
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| **Case study 3:**  It is John’s birthday, and he has brought in a cake. It is not vegan so Alice will not be able to have any. The early years practitioner fetches some vegan friendly cake from the kitchen and says she is going to share this with Alice. When the cake is handed out, the early years practitioner says “thankyou” for her piece.  What professional behaviours can you identify? | |
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| **Case study 4:**  Oliver, one of the early years practitioners, has had an argument with his girlfriend and is feeling very upset. When he gets to nursery, he puts a smile on his face and listens to one of the children telling him that she is going to be a big sister. He says, “Wow that’s so exciting” and starts to talk to her about babies.  What professional behaviours can you identify? | |
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As we have just explored, an early years practitioner can demonstrate professional behaviour by being:

* Caring.
* Enthusiastic.
* Patient.
* Using initiative.
* Motivated.
* Respectful.
* A positive role model.

## Working within the policies and procedures of the setting to meet legislation

**Question: Can you remember some of the procedures that an early years practitioner has to follow?**

**Make a list:**

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| **Key term** | Icon  Description automatically generated |
| **Professional boundaries:** the code of conduct that ensures that the relationship between the early years professional and the child’s family remain professional and do not become personal. | |

| **Progress check** | Icon  Description automatically generated |
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| 1. Name three ways you can maintain professional boundaries. | |
| 1. Name four positive attitudes that an early years practitioner needs to show. | |
| 1. Explain why it is important to maintain professional boundaries. | |

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| **Learning recap** | | Icon  Description automatically generated |
| Can you now: | | |
|  | **Describe** the expected behaviours for an early years practitioner. | |
|  | **Provide examples** of professional boundaries. | |
|  | **Explain** the importance of maintaining professional boundaries. | |

# Lesson 3: Communication

This lesson will explore the importance of effective communication and the impact it has on everyone within an early years setting.

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| **Learning outcomes** | Icon  Description automatically generated |
| By the end of this lesson, you must be able to:   * **Describe** the types of communication that could be used in an early years practitioner role. * **Provide** **examples** of why effective communication is important for an early years practitioner role.   You may also be able to:   * **Explain** the importance of adapting your communication for different people. | |

## Lines of communication

In an early years setting, the practitioner will communicate with lots of different people; children, parents, other family members, other staff in the setting, visitors and other professionals such as a speech therapist, social worker or future teacher.

They need to be able to communicate effectively with all these people.

Remember: verbal and non-verbal communication was covered in content area 1.

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| **Reflective question** | Icon  Description automatically generated |
| Can you remember the definitions for verbal and non-verbal communication?  Verbal communication is… | |
| Non verbal communication is… | |
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| **Activity 1: Ways to communicate** | Icon  Description automatically generated |
| Work in pairs to write down as many ways to communicate as you can think of, using verbal and non-verbal communication. | |
| | **Verbal communication** | **Non-verbal communication** | | --- | --- | |  |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  |  | | |

Here are some types of communication that you may have included:

* Speaking.
* Listening.
* Facial expressions – for example smiling.
* Gestures – for example shaking heads.
* Writing.
* Sending emails.
* Photographs.

## Effective communication

Communication is only effective if people fully understand what is being communicated. If communication is not clear, it can harm the child’s learning and development.

Effective communication can include being a flexible communicator by being able to speak another language or to be able to use a signed language like BSL (British sign language) or Makaton.

Let’s look at some examples of how to communicate effectively and why it is important.

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| **Activity 2: Examples of communication** | Icon  Description automatically generated |
| Work in pairs and look at the communication examples in the table. You need to explain why it is important for the communication to be accurate and detailed.  Consider what might happen if you don’t use effective communication in these situations. | |
| | **Communication** | **Why is it important to communicate this effectively?** | | --- | --- | | Telling a parent when their child had their most recent dose of antibiotics. |  | | Recording the child’s early years foundation stage profile and emailing it to their reception teacher before they start school. |  | | Telling the staff member who is covering your lunch break which babies need a bottle or a nap and which have already had them. |  | | Telling the physiotherapist how often the child has walked without assistance. |  | | Uploading a child’s daily activities to the parent portal. |  | | Saying thank you to another staff member who passes you the ketchup at the dinner table. |  | | Shaking your head and waving your finger at a toddler who is about to climb on a chair which might cause them harm if they fall off. |  | | |

Examples to help you:

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| Telling a parent when their child had their most recent dose of antibiotics. | This keeps the child safe and healthy as it is important that they get the correct medication at the correct time to prevent an overdose or not getting enough to be effective. |
| Recording the child’s early years foundation stage profile and emailing it to their reception teacher before they start school. | This promotes the child’s learning and development as the teacher can see what they have achieved and what they still need to achieve so they can plan activities and resources to meet the child’s specific needs. |
| Telling the staff member who is covering your lunch break which babies need a bottle or a nap and which have already had them. | This ensures the needs of the babies are being met. It requires active listening and clear verbal communication. |
| Telling the physiotherapist how often the child has walked without assistance. | This supports the child’s development by working as a team. If the physiotherapist knows what the child has been doing, they can better understand their progress and provide appropriate support. |
| Uploading a child’s daily activities to the parent portal. | This builds good relationships with the parents as they can see what their child has been doing and it makes them feel more connected to the setting. |
| Saying thank you to another staff member who passes you the ketchup at the dinner table. | You are acting as a role model so need to be polite and respectful to everyone so that children will learn to do the same. |
| Shaking your head and waving your finger at a toddler who is about to climb on a chair which might cause them harm if they fall off. | Gestures are as important to small children as words. It reinforces what you are saying and can be effective even if a child does not fully understand verbal language yet. |

| **Progress check** | Icon  Description automatically generated |
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| 1. What is the difference between verbal and non-verbal communication? | |
| 1. Give three examples that show why effective communication is important. (Try to use different examples to those explored in the lesson). | |
| 1. Why might you need to adapt your communication for different people? | |

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| **Learning recap** | | Icon  Description automatically generated |
| Can you now: | | |
|  | **Describe** the types of communication that could be used in an early years practitioner role. | |
|  | **Provide** **examples** of why effective communication is important for an early years practitioner role. | |
|  | **Explain** the importance of adapting your communication for different people. | |

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| **Key terms** | Icon  Description automatically generated |
| **Verbal communication:** communication through vocal sounds such as words.  **Non-verbal communication:** communication without using vocal sounds. | |