Flexible Childcare Services Scotland

Guidance on Assessment and Delivery for Centres

Flexibility Within the Childcare Environment

SCQF level 6

J62F 33

Version: 01 (February 2022)

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date

Unit Specification

Unit: Flexibility Within the Childcare Environment

SCQF level 6

Why do we need flexibility within the childcare environment?

The need for more flexible early learning and childcare has never been more prevalent than it is now, the post COVID-19 lockdown and changes in the way people manage their work will create a situation where childcare providers are required to remodel their delivery to move to a much more flexible model. Parents returning to the workforce will be required to follow social distancing, start times will be staggered, there will be increased homeworking to support reduced numbers in workplaces and childcare providers will be required to work on reduced capacities to reduce the spread of infection.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic there was a clear need for more flexible childcare services. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 introduced a requirement on local authorities to offer more flexibility and choice over how funded hours are offered, and to do this following local consultations with parents and carers every two years. This requirement is in place to ensure that flexibility and choice continue to increase year on year. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Modification) Order 2021 places a statutory duty on education authorities to make 1,140 hours of funded ELC available to eligible children. The Order came into effect on 1 August 2021.

The Blueprint for 2020; The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland, says that flexibility within settings should offer 'support for parents and carers in work, training or study and a commitment to offer patterns or provision better aligned with working patterns whilst delivering this in a way that ensures a high-quality experience for the child' (annex page 2) and estimated up to 20,000 additional workers may be required for the expansion. With this expansion, the need for flexibility of provision has been accelerated and the sector requires support to make this transition.

What is this unit about?

Completion of this award will ensure that childcare workers have a sound understanding of contemporary theories about attachment, transitions, supporting and documenting children's care, learning and development, and working with others within a flexible service, and that whole-staff teams have a cohesive approach to delivering a high quality, flexible service.

This unit supports the workforce to fully understand how they contribute to the delivery of high quality, flexible services with positive outcomes for children and young people.

This unit, together with Flexible Childcare Services Scotland's free software (Caerus) that support settings in managing and administering flexible provision, can be used by whole-centres to introduce flexibility within their early learning and childcare settings.

Who should do this unit?

This stand-alone unit at SCQF level 6 is for anyone working in early learning and childcare as:

♦ Continuous Professional Development for qualified staff:
— part of a staff induction programme
— a whole-team training for Early Learning and Childcare (EL&C) centres transitioning to a flexible childcare model
— an enhancement to existing courses

Learners must have access to a workplace to provide the work-practice evidence required to complete the full unit.

What should I know or be able to do before I start?

This unit is designed as a stand-alone unit that both experienced practitioners and those new to the childcare workforce will find beneficial, however course tutors might consider delivering this in a holistic way as an enhancement to another award, for example NC or SVQ.

For learners who are new to the sector, as a minimum they must understand and agree to the SSSC Codes of Practice and have worked through the Reflective Questions to Consider in the Early Learning and Childcare National Induction Resource https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/3528/early-learning-and-childcare-national-induction-resource.pdf to establish a baseline of knowledge and understanding to build upon.

How do I get this unit?

You will gain the relevant **underpinning knowledge**, including access to Caerus, Flexible Childcare Services Scotland's (FCSS) free Nursery Management System, through either of the following:

♦ FCSS's online learning portal
♦ Class tutorial by your course tutor
♦ Other methods provided by your training provider/employer

which should cover:

- Child-centred Pedagogy, for example Realising the Ambition, Being Me.
- Current Theories relating to Attachment, for example Susan Zeedyk's Sabre-tooth Tigers and Teddy Bears.
- Current Theories relating to Transition, for example Scottish Early Childhood and Families Transitions Statement.
- Effective Communication and Teamwork: activities that help learners to recognise how teams work, for example Bruce Tuckman's Storming, Norming Performing, Belbin, Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), and the importance of effective communication.

You will complete either the FCSS online test-your-knowledge quiz or an open-book assessment provided by your class/course tutor. A pass of 80% is required and you can repeat the assessment if required.

To complete this full unit you will need to:

Complete a Reflective Account explaining how you contribute to the care, learning and development of children within a flexible childcare setting for **three** separate sessions.

Your Reflective Accounts should include:

- A brief overview of the provision/your specific work area including age range and number of children.
- A brief explanation of the staff you worked with — their position within the team.
- An explanation of handovers you contributed to (either at the beginning of children's attendance or the end of their attendance) including what records/information you shared/or was shared with you, and what documents were completed in relation to the handover.
- An explanation of your handover with your colleague(s) at the beginning and/or end of your shift including what records/information was shared with you or by you and what documents were completed in relation to the handover.

Your Reflective Accounts will be assessed by your training provider or course tutor.

The learning outcomes for the unit are:

- Understand what flexibility within an early learning and childcare setting mean.
- Explain how effective working relationships with parents, colleagues, and others[i] supports flexible childcare delivery.
- Understand the theories that underpin the provision of a child-centred approach to flexible childcare.
- Demonstrate how to use relevant documentation to support children's learning and development in a flexible setting.

Guidance for tutors

A blended learning approach can be taken for the delivery of this award depending on the learners starting point and needs, for example whether the unit is being used as Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for an experienced practitioner or as staff induction for a new employee. Tutors might also incorporate this unit as an enhancement in an SVQ award, for example Social Services (Children and Young People) at SCQF level 6.

Policy and Guidance

1   **Early Learning and Childcare Providers: Delivery Support Plan** (Scottish Government, A Blueprint for 2020: The expansion of early learning and childcare in Scotland). In recognition of the need to increase the childcare workforce to support the expansion of early learning and childcare places, the Scottish Government provisionally estimated up to 20,000 additional workers may be required for the expansion to 1,140 hours for 3 and 4 year olds and eligible two year olds comprising practitioners, managers and support workers. The Scottish Government have introduced a number of incentives to attract more people into the sector and encourage a range of providers (Public, Voluntary, Private and Childminder) to work together to provide high quality flexible childcare that meets the needs of the child, parents, and carers. FCSS's Nursery Management software is free for all registered childcare providers across Scotland, enabling them to deliver a sustainable, accessible service that supports the diverse needs of the children and families that use it.

2   **Realising the Ambition, Being Me** (Scottish Government 2020): this national practice guidance provides key information about the characteristics of child development based on research and evidence and explores the range of interactions, experiences and spaces needed for young children to learn and grow in their early years.

3   The Scottish Children and Families Transitions Position Statement recognises the value of working together with children and their families - positive relationships, positive continuity, learning, play and wellbeing. It seeks to inform and support the further development of local policy and transitions practice. FCSS Caerus Nursery Management software supports the management of transitions between childcare providers and within childcare settings.

4   **Getting it Right for Every Child** (Scottish Government 2008b) (GIRFEC) places children's and young people's needs first, taking account of their current situation, ensuring early intervention, and requires that all services for children and young people work together to meet these needs. FCSS Caerus Nursery Management software supports the management of flexibility within services.

5   **Guide for Providers on Personal Planning**, **Early Learning and Childcare** (Care Inspectorate 2021) support staff in services to develop personal plans, sometimes referred to as care plans, for children attending early learning and childcare services registered with the Care Inspectorate, ensuring that meaningful planning for the needs of the child is at the heart of everything within the setting.

Assessment methods

1   Online test-your-knowledge quiz or open-book assignment.

2   Three Reflective Accounts endorsed by a senior staff member in the workplace.

3   Assessment of submitted Reflective Accounts by a course tutor or assessor.

Administrative information

Credit value

1 Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) credit point at SCQF level 6

Flexibility Within the Childcare Environment

Introduction

With the introduction of 1,140 hours of funded Early Learning and Care for all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds, providing 'support for parents and carers in work, training or study, and a commitment to offer patterns of provision better aligned with working patterns whilst delivering this in a way that ensures a high quality experience for the child', there is a Scotland-wide need to support existing and new staff to develop their knowledge, understanding and practice in the delivery of a flexible, high-quality childcare provision.

All training to support the learner demonstrate competence in achieving Flexibility Within the Childcare Environment unit should include:

♦ Teamwork and effective communication: An understanding of how teams work together, for example Tuckman's Stages of Group Development theory, team roles, for example Belbin, Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), and how effective communication is important when sharing the care of young children.
♦ Contemporary theories relating to:
  — attachment
  — transition
  — child-centred pedagogy
  — documenting children's care, learning and development
  — guidance on the practical aspect of the award and Reflective Account writing

and can be delivered:

  — online via FCSS online learning portal
  — in an holistic way as part of a wider course, for example NC or SVQ
  — as a stand-alone course by a course/college tutor

Reflective Accounts

On completion of the test-your-knowledge quiz/open-book assessment, three Reflective Accounts from work-based experience are required to complete the full award.

Delivery and assessment strategy

Underpinning knowledge delivery including the test-your-knowledge quiz or open-book assessment should be a notional 16 hours.

The open-book assessment should be undertaken directly after the training and marked by the course tutor.

Learners have 3 months in which to submit all three Reflective Accounts.

Learners should be encouraged to submit the first Reflective Account for feedback/guidance from their designated tutor before submitting the subsequent Reflective Accounts.

All Reflective Accounts must be endorsed by a senior member of staff who has completed the 'Expert Witness' form (Appendix A).

Flexibility Within the Childcare Environment

This unit has four outcomes:

♦ Understand what flexibility within an early learning and childcare setting mean.
♦ Explain how effective working relationships with parents, colleagues, and others supports flexible childcare delivery.
♦ Understand the theories that underpin the provision of a child-centred approach to flexible childcare.
♦ Demonstrate how to use relevant documentation to support children's learning and development in a flexible setting.

1 Understand what flexibility within an early learning and childcare setting mean:

— procedures for staff
— child register and attendance
— staff rota
— handover procedures

2 Explain how effective working relationships with parents, colleague, and others supports flexible childcare delivery:

— key workers and sharing the care
— effective communication and teamwork
— partnership working with parents/carers and others

3 Understand the theories that underpin the provision of a child-centred approach to flexible childcare:

— attachment theories
— contemporary guidance about transition
— current guidance relating to child-centred pedagogy

4 Demonstrate how to use relevant documentation to support a child's learning and development in a flexible setting:

— planning for, and supporting children's care, learning and development
— documenting children's care, learning and development
— sharing children's care, learning and development with others

Learning outcomes:	Assessment criteria:
The learner will:	**The learner can:**
1 Understand what flexibility within an early learning and childcare setting mean.	♦ Explain how the booking, registration and attendance of children is monitored in a flexible early earning and childcare setting ♦ Explain how staff rotas are matched against child registrations and legal requirements ♦ Explain the handover procedures for staff passing on the care of children at shift changes
2 Explain how effective working relationships with parents, colleagues and others supports flexible childcare delivery.	♦ Describe the role of a child's key workers and how they share's the care of individual children with colleagues and others ♦ Describe the role of a child's key workers and how they share the care of individual children with parents/carers and others ♦ Explain how effective communication and teamwork contributes to a successful flexible childcare provision
3 Understand the theories that underpin the provision of a child-centred approach to flexible childcare.	♦ Describe how Attachment Theories informs practice in a flexible childcare provision ♦ Describe how contemporary theories and guidance about transition informs practice in a flexible childcare provision ♦ Describe how current guidance relating to child-centred pedagogy informs practice in a flexible childcare provision
4 Demonstrate how to use relevant documentation to support children's care, learning and development in a flexible childcare setting.	♦ Explain how you are involved in planning for, and supporting children's care, learning and development ♦ Describe how you share children's care, learning and development with others ♦ Explain your contribution to the gathering, recording, storing, and sharing of information about children's care, learning and development

Assessment criteria for award

Assessment on Flexibility Within the Childcare Environment must adhere to the following assessment balance:

Criteria	Method	Marking	Overall course weighting	Pass criteria
Underpinning knowledge	♦ FCSS test-your-knowledge on-line quiz or ♦ Open-book assignment	80% required to pass	20%	Remediation: Learners can re-sit test to achieve 80%.
Three work-practice Reflective Accounts	♦ Endorsed by senior practitioner ♦ Assessed by course tutor	80% required to pass	80%	Remediation: Learner encouraged to submit first RAs to course tutor for feedback and guidance.
	♦			

Roles and responsibilities of those involved in the Training, Assessment and Quality Assurance Processes

Tutors/Assessors

Those involved in the training and assessment of this qualification must have knowledge and competency in children's care, learning and development as well as knowledge and competency to train and assess based on qualifications and experience. This award may be an opportunity for staff development, for example to gain a recognised Assessor award supported by an experienced assessor.

Tutors/assessors must ensure that the work-placement of the learner has submitted one Expert Witness Form confirming the qualifications of the designated person who will endorse the learners Reflective Accounts.

Internal verifiers

Those involved in the internal quality assurance of these qualifications must be occupationally competent and competent in internal quality assurance.

External verifier

The external verifier must be occupationally competent in both childcare and education and internal verification. The role of the external verifier is to visit training providers to sample the assessment and internal verification of the award including learners submitted work and course marking.

Assessment and sources of evidence

Assessment centres

Assessment centres will be responsible for maintaining up-to-date information on trainers/assessors and internal verifiers and for ensuring the currency of the competence of all those involved in the assessment and internal quality assurance process.

Assessment

The assessments of underpinning knowledge and practice should determine a learner's ability to support the delivery of high quality, flexible childcare. All assessment criteria in the units must be achieved.

Flexible Childcare Services Scotland's online learning and test-your-knowledge quiz is designed specifically to meet the learning outcomes of this award.

Centres producing their own checklists and question papers are advised to seek prior verification from SQA prior to their use.

Certificates

The minimum requirements for certificates issued must contain the following:

♦ The Name: Flexibility Within the Childcare Environment
♦ Date of certificate issue
♦ The name of the training organisation(s)

Qualifying

Learners new to the sector should work towards the award required by Scottish Social Services Council for registration in relation to their role within the workplace.

Information about this unit

Unit approval date	
Unit review date	
Unit available from	
Unit code	
SCQF level	6
SCQF credit	1
Support for the unit from SSC or other appropriate body	Skills for Health
Assessment requirements and guidance	This unit must be assessed in accordance with the current SQA Accreditation.
Details of the relationship between the unit and relevant NOS and/or professional standards	This unit can be cross-referenced to some performance and knowledge and understanding criteria in SS(CYP) at SCQF level 6: ♦ SCDCCLD 0201 Support Effective Communication ♦ SCDCCLD 0205 Maintain Environments to Meet Children's Needs ♦ SCDHSC0023 Develop Your Own Knowledge and Practice ♦ SCDHSC0241 Contribute to the Effectiveness of Teams

Sample Registration Form

Flexibility Within the Childcare Environment

Learner/Participant Registration Form

College/Training Organisation:	
Address:	
Date of training:	

Name of Learner/Participant	Email	Telephone number

Tutor's name:	
Job title:	
Date given to participants for return of assignments	

Marking guidelines for Reflective Accounts

In each Reflective Account, learners might focus on a particular aspect of their role covering a particular time, for example settling in a new child, contributing to a planning meeting, sharing information with a colleague, etcetera, therefore, over the three Reflective Accounts the learner must provide evidence of knowledge and practice of:

♦ how booking, registration and attendance of children is monitored in a flexible Early Learning and Childcare setting.
♦ how staff rotas are matched against child registrations and legal requirements.
♦ the handover procedures for staff passing on the care of children at shift changes.
♦ the role of a child's key workers and how they share's the care of individual children with colleagues and others (this might not be the learner's role).
♦ how their practice reflects Attachment Theories.
♦ how their practice reflects best practice guidance regarding transition.
♦ how their practice reflects best practice guidance relating to child-centred pedagogy.
♦ the role of a child's key workers and how they share the care of individual children with.
♦ how effective teamwork contributes to a successful flexible childcare provision
♦ how they are involved in planning for, and supporting children's care, learning and development.
♦ how they share children's care, learning and development with others.
♦ their contribution to the gathering, recording, storing, and sharing of information about children's care, learning and development.

Feedback by the course tutor following submission of the first Reflective Account can include advising the learner to:

♦ focus on a different aspect of their work to meet all the required criteria.
♦ wait a few weeks until they have had experience of a different aspect of their work before submitting the next Reflective Account.
♦ add more detail to fully explain their knowledge and understanding.

Underpinning knowledge

Suggested topics that can be delivered as a stand-alone course or integrated into other training for childcare workers.

Teamwork and Effective Communication	Using tools such as Myers Briggs, Belbin or similar to explore the different roles we all have within teams and how effective communication: listening, responding, respecting, explaining, clarification, feedback, etcetera are essential tools for successful teamwork. Appendix C is a useful handout for communication.
Child-centred Pedagogy	Using Realising the Ambition, Being Me and associated tools https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/realising-the-ambition/ explore the role of the childcare worker in relation to flexibility of provision.
Attachment Theory	Watch Early Years Scotland/Pre-Birth to Three/ Attachment. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4RLUzbdnTTY Reference to Bowlby's Attachment theory and Circle of Security and current work of Suzanne Zeedyk's Sabre Tooth Tigers and Teddy Bears and what this means to the way we share the care of young children.
Transition	Watch Early Years Scotland/Pre-birth to three/transitions https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBj-FmpcBZ8 Explore Scottish Early Childhood Children & Families Transition Statement, in particular what this statement looks like in practice: *'Children are entitled to feel safe, secure and connected in environments that integrate attention to development and learning in an holistic way, when they change settings. Transitions may occur within the day, day-to-day, across time and between different providers, for example from home to nursery, from home to childminders, from home and childminders to the early years of school from ELC to school. Children are active in their own transitions and are entitled to continuity of relationships, play, learning, curriculum, resources and environments which are responsive to their needs and rights. They need to have their previous experience and contribution recognised in any new setting, building on what has gone before. Families and their children are entitled to quality,*

	flexibility, affordability and accessibility of services. They are entitled to be listened to and respected as collaborators in their children's ELC and early school experiences, learning and well-being. Every child and family is entitled to recognition of their own culture, identity, language and histories and to these being met by high quality, equitable provision in our ELC and school settings.'
Guidance on Reflective Account Writing	Using Example (Appendix B) support learners to structure their reflective account to include knowledge evidence and write in the first person. Support learners to identify suitable work-practice activities to write about. Agree a date for the first Reflective Account submission.

Appendix A: Expert Witness Form

Flexibility Within the Childcare Environment unit

Expert Witness Registration Form

Workplace:	
Name:	
Designation:	
Phone number:	
Email:	
SSSC Registration Number:	
Own Qualification:	
Signature:	
Date:	

Appendix B: Reflective Account Example

This is a section from a full Reflective Account. In this excerpt the learner has demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skills for criteria 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

I am a new member of the Happy Times Nursery and am aiming to begin my Modern Apprenticeship once my probation period is over. I am currently learning about the nursery by shadowing experienced practitioners in different rooms. This month I am working in the Baby Room, my line manager is Hazel and my Mentor who I am shadowing is Hannah. There are 6 members of staff working across the hours in the baby room with three staff on at any one time, this complies with the Care Inspectorates Adult Staff Ratio for babies of one adult for three children under 2 years as we have 9 babies attending each day. Some children attend part-days and some only on specific days each week and also all staff have varied work-hours with some working part-time and some full time. It is quite a skill to match the children and staff in a way that ensures that there is continuity of care for each child and that not too many staff are looking after each child, however my nursery uses Caerus which is an on-line staff management system designed specifically to support nurseries provide flexible childcare which I have had training on as part of my induction when I started work here. Caerus is used to register children for their specific day/time and configure the number of staff needed at different times during the day and create staff rotas. I am rota-ed to work the morning shift from 7 pm till 2 pm alongside four experienced practitioners (one working the same shift as me and the others working shifts on different days).

Looking at the rota, in addition to providing information about the children who will be attending and their hours, I can also see who Hannah and I am linked with to exchange information at handover time to the staff who are working in the afternoon. (See attached photo of the week's rota) As a fairly new member of staff, I find this rota particularly useful. Everyone is different in the team and am beginning to see how I fit in and work out how to communicate with the different characters e.g. Grace doesn't seem very confident at telling me what to do therefore often just does it instead so I have been paying attention to how things are done and offering to help her with tasks and asking her to explain things to me which she does very well. I think she is relieved that I ask her rather than for her to need to tell me, and Ray who has worked here the longest seems to think I know what he is saying but is good at repeating things more clearly when I ask him to e.g. last week he said I was on 'finishing duty' which I didn't understand until he told me it is the person who finishes of the tidying, etcetera before the end of shift. All the team I am working with are experienced practitioner and are helping me understand the transition paperwork which is great. I enjoy being part of a team and feeling that I am contributing to the care of our babies.
This past week Hannah who has worked in the baby room for over a year has been showing me how to complete children's records. I am now confident in completing the general care records (what the child has eaten, nappy change records, sleep records,

etcetera) which each child's Key Worker maintains, and my new task is to write short observations on children's learning and development to share with each Key Worker. A few days ago I wrote about Blair spending a lot of time concentrating on running a car back and forward along a road track, then inspecting the wheels, making them spin with his finger, and repeating this. Hannah agreed that it was the wheels turning that was attracting his attention and that we should share this at shift handover with Joan who will be his key worker for the afternoon. Joan then shared my observation with his dad when he collected him. It turns out that Blair was with his dad when he was fixing the lawn-mower wheels which were sticking and this seems to have sparked his interest in wheels. The next morning, having read the handover notes from Joan, Hannah suggested that I set out the 'cog board' activity. I wasn't sure what this was so asked Hannah who explained that it is a board with lots of colourful cogs that can be fitted on and they all link and turn each other. We looked at the board and discussed how this is an appropriate 'Next Step' for Blair, following his interest. Hannah explained how I should introduce the activity to Blair and help him to see how turning one cog makes all the others turn as well. I was then to observe how Blair engaged with this activity and report back to Hannah so that we can discuss Blair's learning & development further. Hannah explained how this is 'Planning in the Moment' and ensures that we are tailoring Blairs learning to support him, but that other children might engage with the Cog Board too and so the pattern of observing, reporting, planning continues. Hannah explained that 'promoting curiosity' is important for all children and that I will learn more about this when I begin studying and looking more closely at Realising the Ambition; Being Me which is a national guideline.

When Blair arrived yesterday morning, I was the person who greeted him and his mum. I was pleased that he recognised me (as a fairly new member of the staff team) and he happily came into my arms. I talked with his mum who explained that he had slept well last night but had not been very hungry this morning and hadn't eaten or drunk much and asked that we give him a drink. We discussed the wheel turning observation which she and her husband had found interesting and included Blair in our chat – telling him he was a great helper for Dad, mending the lawn-mower. Once Blair was settled in the baby room, I wrote up Blairs notes about sleeping well and not having had much to eat and fetched him a feeding mug with water.

Appendix C: Effective Communication

If we agree that an important way to ensure we know what others are asking of us is to ask questions, and not just hope we know what is required or take a guess, then we must make sure that we are skilled not only at asking questions but listening effectively.

Asking questions:
The first thing is to consider is, 'do I need to ask an open-ended question or a close-ended question?'

Open-ended questions are broad and can be answered in detail. For example 'How would you like me to set up this activity?' while closed-ended questions are narrow in focus and usually answered with a single word or phrase 'Do you want the door open or closed?'

Listening:
Listening is considered the least important of all our social skills, so it's hardly surprising that most of us are not very accomplished at it.

One of the difficulties we often experience when listening to someone is trying to be helpful and finding that we block the speaker rather than smooth the way.

Reflective listening involves using the speakers' own words to help them clarify their thoughts.

1   **Simple reflection**: repeat back the last few words used by the speaker

    "…….and it was going well until I became ill"

    Reply "became ill"

2   **Selective reflection** involves repeating back words or phrases that seem significant

    "……..until I became ill I was really enjoying the job"

    Reply "became ill"

3   **Reflecting feelings** involves repeating a feeling word said by the speaker

    "….until I became ill I was really enjoying the job and doing well"

    Reply "enjoying".

Use reflective listening before you act, before you argue, before you set goals.

Barriers to listening

Every message has a sender and a receiver. When we want to send a message, we know what we want to say and who we want to receive it so, it should be easy to send messages clearly. The receiver wants to hear from us so it should be easy to receive our message exactly as we sent it out, why then do so many things go wrong?

Here are some barriers to effective listening that prevent us communicating well.

Sender	Receiver
Use of words	Different meaning
Use of jargon	Lack of understanding
Tone of voice	Misinterpretation
Distraction	Distraction
Hurried delivery	Difficulty in hearing
Length of message	Boredom/day-dreaming
Cryptic message	Lack of comprehension
Assumptions	Assumptions
Timing	Too busy to pay attention

Many things get in our way even when we believe we want to listen to another:

Knowing what's coming next: We don't bother to listen because we think we know what the speaker will say next.

Rehearsing a reply: We start framing a response before we have heard the message.

Message anxiety: We don't listen because we don't want to hear something we don't like.

Hearing what we want to hear: We select out the bits we want.

Conflicting messages: The words and signals are contrasting.

Confusing person with the message: We dislike the speaker and therefore the message.

Investing the speaker with hostility: We expect the speaker to be antagonistic.

Stereotyping voice, accent and looks: We know what people like that are like!

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[i] Others might be other professionals, for example Speech Therapist or Health Worker, or other ELC providers who contribute to the child's care, for example Childminder.