How SSTEW Scale Supports Quality Improvement

Presentation by:

Ted Melhuish – University of Oxford & Birkbeck, University of London
Iram Siraj & Denise Kingston – UCL Institute of Education
Why the early years?

“ If the race is already halfway run even before children begin school, then we clearly need to examine what happens in the earliest years.” (Esping-Andersen, 2005)

“ Like it or not, the most important mental and behavioural patterns, once established, are difficult to change once children enter school.” (Heckman & Wax, 2004).
General Population - EPPE STUDY in UK

(3+ yrs)  

25 nursery classes  
590 children

34 playgroups  
610 children

31 private day nurseries  
520 children

20 nursery schools  
520 children

24 local authority day care nurseries  
430 children

7 integrated centres  
190 children

home  
310 children

School starts  
6yrs  7yrs  16yrs

Key Stage 1  
600 Schools  
approx. 3,000 chd

Key Stage 2  
800 Schools  
approx. 2,500 chd
Quality and Duration matter
(months of developmental advantage on literacy)
Social class and pre-school on literacy (age 7)

Mean year 2 reading level

- Pre-school
- No pre-school
- Expected minimum

Social class by occupation:
- Professional
- Skilled
- Un/semi skilled
Modelling later outcomes

Child development: e.g. literacy, numeracy, sociability, behaviour problems

- Family Factors
- Home-Learning Environment
- Pre-school
- Primary School
- Secondary School

Secondary School
Pre-school
Effects upon Age 11; literacy and numeracy

- Literacy
- Numeracy

- Family income
- Mother’s Education
- Father’s Education
- Socio-economic status
- Home learning environment
- High-quality pre-school
- Primary school

Effect size in standard deviation units
Pre-school Quality and Self-regulation and Pro-social behaviour (age 11 and 14)
Effect sizes for 16 year olds

- **Literacy**
- **Numeracy**
Effective Pre-schools

• The EPPSE study was able to identify which pre-school centres were having the most benefit for children’s developmental progress.

• Iram Siraj then conducted in-depth case studies of very effective and average centres to see what made a difference.

• Iram will tell you about that shortly.
Study of early education and development (SEED)

- Includes a longitudinal study of 5,000+ households with a two-year old child
  - Interviews with parent when child aged 2, 3 and 4
  - Questions on family, child’s health and development
  - Assessment of child cognitive, language and social development from 2 to 7 years
SEED Includes a Study looking at Quality in Early Years Settings

• 1,000 observations in early years settings

– Led by and Professor Ted Melhuish
– Settings will be those used by children in the study at age 2 and age 3
– All types of setting will be covered
– Rolling programme of setting visits (April 2014 to March 2016)
– Setting assessment integrates ECERS-R, ECERS-E and SSTEW
Two Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales

**ECERS-R**
- Based on observation – 7 sub-scales
  - Space and furnishings
  - Personal care routines
  - Language reasoning
  - Activities
  - Interaction
  - Programme structure
  - Parents and staff

**ECERS-E**
- Based on observation – 4 sub-scales
  - Literacy
  - Mathematics
  - Science and environment
  - Diversity

Harms, Clifford & Cryer (1998)  
Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford & Taggart (2003)
Quality: Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years (REPEY) study

- Adults have warm, responsive relationships with children.
- High quality interactions including SST.
- Setting has clear educational goals and planning.
- Staff have recognised early years qualifications.
- Trained teachers are amongst the staff.
- Parents are supported in involvement in children’s learning.

Siraj-Blatchford et al. 2002
Nature of the SSTEW Scale

• Builds on ECERS-R and ECERS-E/ITERS-R focusing on the pedagogy within the setting, the adult’s role in supporting learning and development.

• Considers high quality interactions with and between children. Some staff/settings may not be ready for all of the subscales; particularly those relating to critical thinking, assessment for learning and supporting and extending language and communication.

• Needs to be used by someone with knowledge of child development and appropriate practice.
How do we support children’s sustained shared thinking (Early Ed. SST Project)

They may include the adult:

• **tuning in:**
  
  Listening carefully to what is being said, observing body language and what the child is doing.

• **showing genuine interest:**
  
  Giving your whole attention, maintaining eye contact, affirming, smiling, nodding.

• **respecting children’s own decisions and choices inviting children to elaborate:**
  
  ‘I really want to know more about this’
How do we support children’s sustained shared thinking

• inviting children to elaborate:
  ‘I really want to know more about this’

• re-capping:
  ‘So you think that…’

• offering your own experience:
  ‘I like to listen to music when I cook supper at home’

• clarifying ideas:
  ‘Right Darren, so you think that this stone will melt if I boil it in water?’
How do we support children’s sustained shared thinking

• **suggesting:**
  ‘You might like to try doing it this way’

• **reminding:**
  ‘Don’t forget that you said that this stone will melt if I boil it’

• **using encouragement to further thinking:**
  ‘You have really thought hard about where to put this door in the palace but where on earth will you put the windows?’

• **offering an alternative viewpoint:**
  ‘Maybe Goldilocks wasn’t naughty when she ate the porridge’

• **speculating:**
  ‘Do you think the three bears would have liked Goldilocks to come to live with them as their friend?’
How do we support children’s sustained shared thinking

• **reciprocating:**
  ‘Thank goodness that you were wearing wellington boots when you jumped in those puddles Kwame. Look at my feet they are soaking wet’

• **asking open questions:**
  ‘How did you? Why does this..? What happens next? What do you think?’

• **modeling thinking:**
  ‘I have to think hard about what I do this evening. I need to take my dog to the vet’s because he has a sore foot, take my library books back to the library and buy some food for dinner tonight. But I just won’t have time to do all of these things’
Format of SSTEW Scale

• Same structure as the ECERS-R
• Items assessed on a seven point scale
• Divided into five sub-scales:
  – Building trust, confidence and independence
  – Social and emotional well-being
  – Supporting and extending language and communication
  – Supporting learning and critical thinking
  – Assessing learning and language
Example of ERS Rating Scale

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Measuring Quality: Sustained Shared Thinking and Emotional Well-Being (SSTEW) Scale for 2-5 year olds provision

There are 5 Subscales and 14 items:

1. **Building trust, confidence and independence**
   - Self-regulation and social development
   - Encouraging choices and independent play
   - Planning for small group and individual interactions/adult deployment

2. **Social and emotional well-being**
   - Supporting socio-emotional wellbeing

3. **Supporting and extending language and communication**
   - Encouraging children to interact with others
   - Staff actively listen to children and encourage children to listen
   - Staff support children’s language use
   - Sensitive responsiveness
There are 5 Subscales and 14 items

4  **Supporting learning and critical thinking**
   – Supporting curiosity and problem solving
   – Encouraging sustained, shared thinking during story time
   – Encouraging sustained, shared thinking in investigation and exploration
   – Supporting concept development and higher order thinking

5  **Assessing learning and language**
   – Using assessment to support and extend learning and critical thinking
   – Assessing language development

**Authors:** Iram Siraj, Denise Kingston, Edward Melhuish
Trentham and IoE Press, February, 2015
(www.ioepress.ac.uk)
The Light-Up Shoes. Adult:child interaction

A few four-year-olds were sitting together. Three of the children were wearing trainers that would light up when they stepped down on them.

Teacher: Wow! Look at your shoes! That is so cool. They light up when you step down.

Child 1: Yes, they do this. [Jumps up and down several times]

Teacher: How does that happen? How does it light up?

Child 1: Because they are new.

Teacher: Um. Mine are new too but they don’t light up.

Child 2: No, because they light up when you step down on them. [Steps down hard several times]

Teacher: [Steps down hard several times] That’s funny. Mine don’t light up when I step down.

Child 3: No, no, no, you have to have these holes [points to the holes]

Teacher: [Pointing to the holes in her own shoe] But I have holes and mine still don’t light up, and Josh has holes in his trainers too and his do not light up either. I wonder why?

Child 4: I think you need batteries. Kids, you need batteries.

Child 1: Yeah, you need batteries to make them work. [Thinks for a while]. But I did not see batteries when I put my toes in.

Child 4: I think they are under the toes.

Child 2: I can’t feel the batteries under my toes.

Teacher: I wonder how we can find out about this?
Using the SSTEW Scale

- For 2 year olds use SSTEW can be used with ITERS-R

- For 3 year olds and above use SSTEW and ECERS-E (sometimes with ECERS-R)
Making Judgments on the SSTEW Scale

The scores need to represent an overall and professional judgement of staff behaviours, responses and interactions and the resulting children’s experiences within the setting.

There’s a child development section at end of SSTEW to support understanding of appropriate practice on:

- Social Development
- Emotional Development
- Cognitive Development (largely language)
- Progression in Play
Subscale 1 Building trust, confidence and independence

Item 1 Self-regulation and social development.

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1.1 Staff do not appear to agree about the boundaries/rules/expectations or apply them consistently*.

1.2 Some children are left even though they are obviously confused or distressed.

3.1 Expectations and boundaries are made explicit and shared by all staff*.

3.2 Staff are respectful and professional around the children, parents/carers and each other*.
Item 1 Self-regulation and social development.

Good

5.1 Staff explain carefully to the children what they need to do and pre-empt any difficulties*.

5.2 Staff show empathy and understanding when children do not want to follow rules or get upset*.

5.3 Staff show an awareness of individuals and their needs, giving additional support and allowing some flexibility*.

5.4 Staff redirect inappropriate behaviour by stating what the children should do rather than what they should not.

Excellent

7.1 Staff congratulate children when they follow the rules well. E.g. I saw you help put the tractor away. And/or the children are encouraged to tell staff how they followed the rules etc*.

7.2 Staff have agreed processes that they follow when conflicts arise. The processes include engaging the children in problem solving and finding solutions to disputes together*. 
### Sub-scale 2: Social and emotional well-being

**Item 4: Supporting socio-emotional wellbeing**

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<td>1.1 Feelings expressed by the children are played down, ignored, dismissed or ridiculed.</td>
<td>3.1 Staff empathise with the children and help them to deal with feelings expressed*.</td>
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<td>1.2 Staff do not display a warm and welcoming body language to the children.</td>
<td>3.2 Staff encourage children to play alongside each other providing additional toys/props and resources to support continued play. As the children progress to playing together, staff support them in helping each other and sharing.</td>
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<td>1.3 Staff do not lay out the setting or organise activities to encourage social interaction*.</td>
<td>3.3 Positive individual attention is paid to most children at some point during the session*.</td>
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<td>3.4 Staff are warm, friendly and calm. They use calming gestures, physical proximity, pats and hugs when necessary and appropriate.</td>
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Item 4: Supporting socio-emotional wellbeing

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<td>5.1 Children are encouraged to express/say what they feel and need*.</td>
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5.2 Planning shows evidence of learning intentions that are designed to support social interaction, including encouraging collaborative activities and play* where appropriate.

5.3 Children are encouraged to seek an adult’s support when sharing or playing breaks down*.

5.4 Staff are responsive to the children’s needs, feelings and moods. They may play, show liveliness and have fun with the children supporting positive emotions*.

7.1 Staff provide opportunities for children to talk about feelings and needs - often using the children’s own experiences. They may use stories or props e.g. ‘puppet misses his family, how shall we make him feel better?’

7.2 Children are asked to show or say what they can understand from the non-verbal expressions of others in the group, from story books, photos, DVDs etc*.

7.3 Staff support children in communicating with, and recognising and responding to the feelings of others, including where children may have difficulty expressing their needs or wants*.

7.4 Staff look beyond the child to explain their feelings making changes within the environment/routine etc. when necessary*. 
Sub-scale 3: Supporting and extending language and communication

Item 6: Staff actively listen to children and encourage children to listen

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1.1 Staff stifle communication by e.g. being judgemental or by humiliating, ignoring or belittling the children.

1.2 Requests for help are ignored (whether the requests be direct or indirect, e.g., crying, withdrawal, inactivity).

3.1 Children’s verbal messages are understood.

3.2 Staff respond to verbal and non-verbal signs from children.

3.3 The body language of the staff shows that they want to communicate (open arms, inclined head, smiles, waiting and listening).
Item 6: Staff actively listen to children and encourage children to listen

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5.1 Staff position themselves at the children’s height when talking or listening to the children.

5.2 Rephrasing and/or repeating is used to check that the children have been understood.

5.3 Where meaning or speech is unclear, staff make an ‘educated guess’ rather than asking the child to constantly repeat her/himself. Then, if they have guessed wrongly, staff take the blame for it*.

7.1 Staff allow long pauses, so the children have time to think and respond. They also show how they allow different lengths of pauses with different children*.

7.2 Staff encourage the children to talk and listen to each other by suggesting they tell another person. Or by inviting other children to come and listen to what another child has to say or show*.
## Sub-scale 4: Supporting learning and critical thinking

### Item 10: Encouraging SST through storytelling, sharing books, singing and rhymes

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| 1.1 Very little individual interaction during story/book time, singing or rhymes. | 3.1 Staff respond to children asking for stories, books, singing or rhymes by helping them recall stories, locate and read books, singing with or engaging in rhyming, and word play as appropriate. |
| 1.2 Staff involvement with stories, books, singing or rhymes is limited to whole group time. | 3.2 Staff invite children (individually or in small groups) to join them to sing, engage in word and rhyme play, or tell stories or read books. |
| 3.1 Staff respond to children asking for stories, books, singing or rhymes by helping them recall stories, locate and read books, singing with or engaging in rhyming, and word play as appropriate. | 3.2 Staff invite children (individually or in small groups) to join them to sing, engage in word and rhyme play, or tell stories or read books. |
| 3.3 Staff engage children in choosing songs, rhymes, stories or books and ask them about their choices. | 3.4 Staff show that they know the children’s preferred books, stories, songs or rhymes*. |
**Item 10: Encouraging SST through storytelling, sharing books, singing and rhymes**

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5.1 Staff encourage the children to hold and ‘read’ books or retell familiar stories including their own ‘stories’, sing songs or join in with rhymes and word games.

5.2 Staff use props/puppets/the children themselves to support storytelling, engagement with songs or rhymes.

5.3 Children are given access to props and puppets to support retelling stories and use in free play.

5.4 Staff sing and engage in rhyming and word play while playing and interacting with the children during other activities.

7.1 Staff use factual books to support children’s understanding of concepts*.

7.2 Staff engage children with stories, singing etc. They support anticipation of familiar words, actions etc, make comments, evaluate stories/songs etc, and ask a few simple open-ended questions*.

7.3 Staff encourage children to make links between the story, book, song or rhyme and their previous experiences.
Current research using SSTEW

Quasi–experimental repeated measures designs:

• Baseline measure: ECERS-E/ITERS and SSTEW (some studies child measures)
• Training and control groups (matched)
• Training group receive bespoke PD on areas identified by ECERS-E and SSTEW
• Repeated measure: ECERS- E and SSTEW all settings (and child measures)
Positive Behaviours, Responses and Interactions

Subscale 3: Supporting and Extending children’s language and communication.

**Item 6:** Staff actively listen to children and encourage children to listen.

- Indicator: 7.1 Staff allow long pauses, so the children have time to think and respond. They also show how they allow different lengths of pauses with different children.

- Indicator: 7.2 Staff encourage the children to talk and listen to each other by suggesting they tell so and so. Or by inviting other children to come and listen to what another child has to say.
Negative Behaviours, Responses and Interactions

Subscale 2: Social and Emotional wellbeing.

**Item 4:** Supporting socio-emotional wellbeing.

Indicator: 1.1 ‘Feelings expressed by the children are played down, ignored, dismissed or ridiculed’
The Role of the Observer
An observer should be:

• Looking at/for interactions between children and adults, as well as children and children.

• Considering how the adult/s support and extend learning which will include their responsiveness to individual children as well as to small groups and all of the children.
Clip 1: Adult supported role play

Francesca (aged 2 years 11 months) with educator Lisa

As you watch think about the role of the adult.

What does Lisa do to support and extend play?

How might Lisa’s philosophies/views about how young children learn, influence her practice?
Role Play

“In play a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behaviour; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself. As in the focus of a magnifying glass, play contains all developmental tendencies in a condensed form and is itself a major source of development”

(Vygotsky, 1978: 102)
Clip 2: Problem solving to support relationships

José supports the problem solving of children aged 3 – 5 years old (6 Steps to Conflict resolution). As you watch consider:

How does José support children in solving the problem when conflict arises?

What does this tell you about the philosophy and practice within the setting?
6 Steps to Conflict Resolution

- Step one: approach calmly stopping any hurtful actions
- Step two: acknowledge children’s feelings
- Step three: gather information
- Step four: restate the problem
- Step five: ask for solutions and choose one
- Step six: be prepared to follow up

Highscope, 2014
Child-minder: Mark Shepherd
What does Mark do to encourage conversation with babies and toddlers?

How does he support language development and sharing of meaning?
Areas identified for professional development (PD)

ECERS-E:
1. Language and Literacy
2. Maths and number
3. Science and the environment
4. Diversity (meeting and planning for the needs of individuals and groups)
Areas identified for PD

SSTEW:
• Building trust, confidence and independence
• Social and emotional well-being
• Supporting and extending language and communication
• Supporting learning and critical thinking
• Assessing learning and language
For further information on SSTEW training, professional development or evidence based evaluations or action research in settings and LAs contact:

Birth to Seven Matters:
Denise Kingston denise@b27matters.co.uk