

Emotional intelligence – Daniel Goleman

Theorist(s)

Key aspects of the approach or theory relating to children's development and behaviour

Application of the approach for childcare practitioners and educators in schools and settings

Daniel Goleman

Key Words:

- **Empathy**
- **Intellectual**
- **Manage**
- **Regulate**

Daniel Goleman has brought much attention to the theory of emotional intelligence, and this has had a considerable impact on education today. It is now recognised that emotional intelligence is just as important as intellectual intelligence, and social and emotional learning is an important part of the school curriculum in Wales. Research has shown that being intellectually gifted does not always lead to success in education or the world of work and that other skills that are important for processing emotional information are needed for success, leadership and relationships.

Emotional intelligence includes recognising, expressing, understanding and managing emotions. Gaining these skills helps children develop empathy and social relationships. The ability to recognise and express emotions involves being aware of your own emotions and the emotions of those around you. This is an important part of building and maintaining social relationships.

The ability to understand emotions by accurately interpreting more subtle messages from verbal and non-verbal forms of communication helps in interpersonal relationships. It develops through recognising the reasons for emotions, evaluating the environment and the situation, and realising that situations can affect different people in different ways.

When children reach the age of 2 or 3, they start to realise that others will have feelings and thoughts that are different to their own. They learn to put themselves in the shoes of others and develop empathy and understand more complex emotions such as disappointment. As they get older, children are able to regulate their emotions. The ability to recognise emotions can be considered the basis of all emotional intelligence abilities. When children do not recognise emotions, they cannot be successful at understanding and managing them. Practitioners and teachers often plan activities around emotions, allowing children to identify both their own emotions and those of others, starting with basic emotions such as sad and happy (perhaps using images of faces) before progressing to a wider range of more complex emotions. With more social experiences, children become more able to recognise the emotions of others, to reflect and express the emotion appropriate to what they are experiencing and to manage and regulate emotions and how they express them in social situations.