

Teacher Forum: English

[in Welcome to the Forum](#)

This is a spot for teachers to ask questions about Bright Start and their practice. As always, others (e.g., therapists, researchers, trainers, parents) using Bright Start can also chime in just as long as the focus is on teachers.

Nov 20, 2021

A teacher in Italy asked, "Is it possible to form groups of more than six to seven children?"

Teachers, in their particular situation, can give oneself an answer by reflecting on what the small Bright Start group is. It is a moment of intense work, in which the mediator arouses cooperation between the children, the comparison of points of view, argumentation; in which he pays attention to thought processes and makes children aware of them; in which he asks questions about the ongoing activity and ways of dealing with it. In the small group, children must find an environment that helps everyone, in their differences, to think about what they are doing, to listen to their peers and the adult, to concentrate on the activity, to control the impulse to act without reflect, to give words to what they do and think. The teacher must be able to mediate the requests of the activity for each child and help each one to abstract rules and generalize them to other contexts.

Children benefit greatly from the attention that the teacher dedicates to each of them and this is one of the main reasons why they love to participate in the Bright Start activities. If too large a group makes good mediation difficult, the work of teachers and children may be less effective.

Nov 22, 2021

Our colleague from France added an important addition to this response "Since the size of the group must depend on the possibility of setting up quality mediation there is no absolute answer to the question. While it turns out that this is usually achieved with a group of 6 to 7 students, it is sometimes necessary, especially in special education, to reduce the size of the small group."

Nov 24, 2021

YOU ASKED I ANSWER!

Unit 1: Self-Regulation: Lesson 5.

Context: Mainstream School K4 (Ages 4-5 years). Group feedback session on Unit 1 and further training with Ruth Deutsch (Module 1.)

Present: This is whole school approach using Bright Start by all the pre -school teachers. From age 3 to first grade + some teachers working with children 1:1 who have additional learning needs.

Bright Start Activity: One child is asked secretly by the teacher to break a rule. The children will notice and discuss.

TEACHER: The children were not happy with this plan. They said it is wrong to break rules and didn't understand that it was pretend. It was clear that they were confused. How can our teacher teach us rules and then tell us to break a rule? How do we handle this?

RUTH: Choose an example of breaking a rule which is not personal to the children in this classroom right now. For example: Crossing the road without waiting for the traffic light to turn red or for the cars to stop first. Breaking the safety rules of the road. What's wrong? What could happen? Don't 'force' the children to break a rule in the classroom as at this age/stage, as it did not make sense to them.

By the way, when the children in Grade 1 did the same activity, they were okay with it. Note the difference in conceptual understanding between one school year and the next.

Two important points arise from this.

1. I notice often when teachers are new to Bright Start, they want to follow every suggested activity exactly as written in the manual. But you should not be rigidly bound by this. Remember, the activity and the generalisation and bridging needs to be carefully adjusted to the level and understanding of the children. That's the essence of the Mediation Teaching Style. Intentionality alone is not enough. You must adjust your choices and your mediation (reciprocity) according to the needs of the children.

2. It is sometimes better not to focus on the children themselves especially when we are discussing emotional or physical Self-Regulation. When addressing issues which are behavioural, de-personalise the discussion enabling the children to think about this issue in a more comfortable and general way.

So how do you do that?

(i) Always start with the Rationale of the activity. What is the goal of today's activities?

(ii) What are the Cognitive Functions which we are working on in this activity? Check this on the page.

Then jump to the end of the page and look at the Cognitive Mastery Criteria. What should the children be able to do by the end of this lesson?

(iii) Now choose an alternate activity that meets all these goals .

Final point for today: How do we deliver this in the time of Coronavirus?

We have Live sessions on Zoom; teachers make notes of their own BS sessions and send them to me. I look for themes that we will discuss.

In the next Live session, we discuss problems and share ideas to solve together as a group. Group feedback is very powerful, enabling teachers to hear and reflect on each other's experience.

Dr Ruth M Deutsch. ruthdeutsch@coged.net

Nov 24, 2021

From our colleague in Italy

How do I behave when children do not answer my questions?

Not always getting answers is a sign of children's involvement in cognitive work. Silence can also be accepted as a sign of reflective participation. This value should be reflected, for example by saying "it is good not to talk if you don't know what to say, but you are thinking". This means acting as a "generous mirror", as Carl Haywood used to say, and helps children have a good self-image and not be in competition with others.

More than the children's answers, which depend on many variables, it is necessary for the mediator to focus on his own questions. Are they understandable to children? Are they adhering to the business they are doing? For example, do they invite the children to tell what they are doing, or what needs to be done, and why? Do they activate the memory of similar activities already carried out and ask you to try to say similarities and differences? Do they stimulate you to think of other possible ways of solving a problem and to compare them among peers? Other questions may be suggested by the cognitive function "of the day", which the teacher must highlight in the current experience to help children to generalize it and to see it as the "profound that unites" two different experiences.

Questions often need to be rephrased for everyone to understand. The children's attempts to respond must be welcomed and often reformulated by the adult, who, without altering their meaning, puts them back into play, making the discussion proceed.

[drrhodee fern](#)

Nov 29, 2021

generous mirror - what a wonderful concept!

[Sue Burns](#)

Nov 29, 2021

@drrhodee fern nice to see you on the FORUM Rhode. Sue Burns

[mt44it](#)

Nov 24, 2021

Thank you Ruth for your notes, they are very important!

Nov 24, 2021

agreed! and yours too Maria Teresa.

[Sue Burns](#)

Dec 28, 2021 · Edited: Dec 28, 2021

Hello-on December 19th my colleague Maria Teresa from Turin, Italy posted this item on the Italian FORUM. I translated with an electronic medium, rewrote some parts where the translation might have been off, but please speak up if any part needs clarifying.

Maria Teresa and I hope that others will comment in this very important discussion. These are delicate issues.

Thank you, Sue Burns.

A teacher asked if a child with relationship problems should participate in the small Bright Start group.

Children in difficulty are to be considered one by one, in their individual way of being and acting. This actually applies to all children, even if we must ask ourselves how to protect particularly fragile children, building a group around them that can welcome and support them. Bright Start is a program aimed at all children and is useful for supporting the intelligence of all, provided that the group can process the difficult moments of a particular child with the careful mediation of the teacher. A group "works" when children feel understood and "helped in helping" those in need; when they receive support in abandoning intolerance or sometimes the sense of superiority and competition. The creation of this warm and supportive atmosphere (which fortunately is sometimes breathed in entire schools) is the masterpiece of teachers, whose intentions and availability beyond words are understood by children. It is therefore important for the teacher on the one hand self-awareness, and on the other the search for precautions to make

group work possible and useful. Experienced teachers know that a warm, supportive learning environment have as a foundation that a problem of one child - of whatever nature - is a growth opportunity for all children in the group.

[jandmyeomans](#)

Dec 28, 2021

I agree that the decision is an individual one, based on the needs of the particular child. It would be difficult to have a general 'rule' about the inclusion or exclusion of children with relationship difficulties. Depending on the extent of these difficulties, some children might struggle to engage with cognitive challenges and might need to receive a more attachment/trauma informed approach. Group work can be a challenge for children with significant attachment or relationship difficulties. Individual delivery might work however, and might have the additional benefit of providing the child with the opportunity to develop a relationship of trust with an adult. The reciprocity characteristic of mediation would be particularly important. For example, where relationship/attachment is a challenge, mediation might focus on mediating feelings of competence and on the non intellectual factors such as persistence and frustration tolerance. Many children who experience relationship/attachment difficulties have problems with self regulation because they have missed opportunities to have co-regulation with a trusted adult (which is a key factor in attachment). Therefore the self regulation unit of Bright Start would be particularly relevant and helpful in promoting self regulation. Bridging mediation in this unit might be personalised to the particular child so that examples of self regulation in other contexts and settings reflect the specific needs of the child (reflecting the individuation criterion of mediation).

[Sue Burns](#)

Dec 28, 2021

Thank you Jane - a foundation in self-regulation is so important. My daughter teaches 5 to 7 year of children and she understands when going back to these activities in times of need can support a fragile child.

[Sue Burns](#)

Jan 31

Maria Teresa Mignone wrote the comment in Italian and Sue Burns translated

A teacher asks how Bright Start takes into account the emotional and affective development of children. I try to answer.

Bright Start was created to support the cognitive development of children, but mental activity is naturally not separated from emotions and affectivity. In the program, the social context is the learning group, which arouses a wide range of social interactions and the common search for solutions to problems. A "social understanding" develops in the group which helps the evolution of the theory of mind, that is, the ability to attribute beliefs, emotions, desires and expectations to ourselves and to others. A specific unit is dedicated to this aspect of children's growth, "Change of role", in which children are guided to pass from the awareness that things appear different depending on the position they are in, to the one that involves thoughts and the feelings of others: being able to put yourself from their point of view can change our behavior. The whole program, however, helps children to become self-aware, to self-regulate, to relate to others and to the context, to compare themselves with others, to see for example, as a five-year-old boy noted, that "being friends does not mean having the same tastes", since his best friend liked carrots so much that he hated them!

Bright Start also tries to arouse intrinsic motivation in children on the path of learning: it helps them discover the joy of understanding, and doing it together with their peers. Understanding often also leads to being successful, but even when the path is not yet complete, understanding what you do, and why, and how, contributes to self-esteem and a sense of competence. If a child perceives himself in a positive way in the educational and social situation, he enjoys fundamental support for his cognitive, emotional and affective growth.

Furthermore, in the context of the cognitive education group there is no competition because, with the help of the mediating teacher, everyone contributes as much as they know and can in search of an answer or a solution. There is a serene relationship with the task, with others, with the teacher who does not judge, but "takes off his masterful habit" and becomes a traveling companion in an effort to understand and speak.

[ruthdeutsch](#)

Jan 31

Inclusion of young children with difficulties in relationships. Forum contribution

Those who already responded to this question stated that there is no definite yes or no answer. There are many factors to be considered. It's never a question of one size fits all.

Using the term 'relationships' covers a multitude of emotional and / or behavioural aspects.

1. What is the understanding that the teacher has about this child? I am not here referring to diagnosis and causes, but to functional presentation. Is the child disruptive or aggressive? If so, are there certain triggers which small group work may exacerbate or diminish? Type of activity? Time of the day? Physical or sensory aspects that affect behaviours and interactions? External factors, e.g. visitation rights of a parent?

2. Consider the specific activities of the BS lessons. Can these be differentiated even within the small group? Small group work may be just as challenging in terms of the need for differentiation than in a larger group. When the teacher prepares ahead for the Bright Start lesson, how will the activities be adjusted? Can there be mini group work within even a small group? E.g. activities to be done in pairs?

3. Consider your available human resources. Can there be another support worker/assistant within the group? Do you have parent volunteers who can assist under the teacher's direction? I advise teachers not to bring in a parent whose child is in that very same group. Volunteer parents should be assigned to classes or groups in which they have no personal connections.

4. Impact on other children: Depending on the nature of the child's emotional/ relationship issues, I think it takes years, self-confidence and a considerable degree of emotional maturity for children to offer the 'supportive nurturing' group setting that is possible to create with older children. Little children who are disruptive, given to attacking others or property, can cause a lot of anxiety and insecurity for very young children. They may be physically afraid, back off, and avoid the child who is unable at that point to regulate their own behaviour. Children look to their teacher for safety and stability.

5. Try group attendance first. If at a certain time, the child cannot manage this experience,

(i) assign an adult to selectively undertake BS activities in short sessions on a 1:1 basis. This will enable the child to experience some cognitive challenges outside the group setting. It also enables the child to keep up with the pace of the group work in the hope that the child can re-join the group as soon as possible.

(ii) Another strategy is to pre-teach the BS lesson to the child, so that when in the group they have already experienced the activity and gained some confidence.

(iii) Although Haywood often expressed his goals within BS as not compatible with behaviourist approaches, it may be possible to have a small chart with the child aiming for increased self-regulation for short periods (define time precisely) and very specifically described. Behaviour goals should be no more than 2, expressed positively. E.g. the Kind Hands Rule.. (See also Cognitive Behaviour Management as a Bright Start Goal. It is part of the BS practitioner

training programme and is discussed in the Introductory Concept papers) . Send home a merit note at the end of the week, thus involving parents in positive acknowledgement of the child's efforts and partnership with school.

Ruth M Deutsch 31st Jan 2022: Ruthdeutsch@coged.net

[Sue Burns](#)

Feb 05 · Edited: Feb 08

A Bright Start practitioner in the UK asked that I post this to get your feedback. [Remember, to give feedback, click on reply so that the feedback stays with the question (labeled comment).]

I was wondering whether the Bright Start Program addresses the concepts of Temporal Relations (Time). Taking IE for example there is a unit called Temporal Relations. Time is obviously a topic that kids really struggle with and it would be great to have a systematic cognitive approach to teaching this like the Bright Start program does generally. Perhaps some of the ideas are touched on in the Sequencing Unit, Numeracy? Multiple sources of information are used.

Can you share your ideas of how you address this when using Bright Start?

[Sue Burns](#)

Feb 07 · Edited: Feb 07

This response was prepared by Maria Teresa Mignone in Italian. I translated into English but can make some mistakes so included the Italian, then English.

E' vero, in Bright Start non c'è un'unità esplicitamente dedicata alle relazioni temporali.

Alla fine dell'unità "Seriazioni" i bambini lavorano metacognitivamente su alcune successioni nel tempo (il piano della giornata, della settimana, le sequenze temporali della giornata, il modello periodico dell'orologio in cui spazio e tempo si coordinano), mentre l'insieme dell'unità riguarda soprattutto le relazioni spaziali. Nella prima parte di "Relazioni quantitative" i bambini lavorano sulla successione ordinale dei numeri, utilizzando nelle attività un linguaggio analogo a quello che indica le successioni temporali: prima, dopo, tra, all'inizio, alla fine, punto di partenza, cominciare, finire, primo, secondo...

Il linguaggio che esprime lo spazio-tempo testimonia che l'agire si situa nel tempo. Questo linguaggio fa parte della vita quotidiana e anche delle interazioni tra adulti e bambini in ogni attività. Gli adulti che parlano con i bambini li sollecitano continuamente ad esprimersi "ordinando" nello spazio e nel tempo i dati dell'esperienza e le conoscenze che posseggono, dalla successione delle parole in una frase ("raccontami bene dall'inizio") a quella della serie dei

numeri, ai giorni della settimana, alla successione “giusta” delle azioni per ottenere un dato risultato.

Il valore aggiunto, in ogni unità di Bright Start, è portare i bambini nel corso delle interazioni a esplicitare questo ordine. Questo vuol dire che, partendo dalle conoscenze che già posseggono, i bambini sono aiutati a svolgere ogni attività riflettendo sulle procedure che adottano: “Che cosa fare/dire prima? E dopo? E perché? Quando avrò finito? Da che cosa lo posso capire? Potrei fare in un altro modo? Mentre faccio questa cosa, cosa succede?...”. O anche: “Cosa succede all’inizio di questa storia? E poi? E alla fine? Questa figura viene subito dopo quest’altra? O subito prima? Perché?...”.

Una consapevolezza sempre maggiore delle relazioni ordinate che essi stessi stabiliscono porta i bambini a diventare più autonomi e più strategici e contribuisce a evitare loro successive difficoltà quando incontreranno gli apprendimenti formali (lettura, scrittura, calcolo) largamente basati sul sistema relazionale dell’ordine.

E’ importante comunque mettere in comune le idee sull’opportunità di immaginare una specifica unità di Bright Start sulle relazioni spazio-temporali, in cui siano “declinate” le dimensioni sottili di queste relazioni e da cui gli insegnanti possano essere supportati in modo sistematico nel far evolvere le comprensioni dei bambini in questo ambito.

In Francia, Jean-Louis Paour l’ha fatto con “Ordo, comprendre le système relationnel de l’ordre”, strumento didattico nato da un insieme di sperimentazioni condotte da insegnanti di scuola dell’infanzia in collaborazione con l’università di Provenza.

English Translation

It is true, in Bright Start there is no unit explicitly dedicated to temporal relationships.

At the end of the "Seriations" unit, the children work metacognitively on some sequences in time (the plan of the day, of the week, the time sequences of the day, the periodic model of the clock in which space and time are coordinated), [see original in Italian]. In the first part of "Quantitative relations" the children work on the ordinal succession of numbers, in the activities using the words similar to the ones that indicates the temporal succession: before, after, between, at the beginning, at the end, starting point, starting, finish, first, second ...

The language that expresses space-time testifies that action takes place in time. This language is part of daily life and also of the interactions between adults and children in every activity. Adults who talk to children continually urge them to express themselves by "ordering" in space and time the details of the experience and the knowledge they possess, from the succession of words in a sentence ("tell me well from the beginning") to that of series of numbers, to the days of the week, to the “right” succession of actions to obtain a given result.

The added value, in each unit of Bright Start, is to bring the children to express this order during the interactions. This means that, starting from the knowledge they already possess, the children

are helped to carry out each activity by reflecting on the procedures they adopt: "What to do / say first? And then? And why? When will I be done? How can I understand it? Could I do it another way? While I am doing this, what happens? ... ". Or also: "What happens at the beginning of this story? And then? And at the end? Does this figure come immediately after the other one? Or just before? Because?...".

An ever-increasing awareness of the ordered relationships that they themselves establish leads children to become more autonomous and more strategic and helps to avoid subsequent difficulties when they encounter formal learning (reading, writing, calculating) largely based on the relational system of order.

However, it is important to share ideas on whether to imagine a specific Bright Start unit on space-time relationships, in which the subtle dimensions of these relationships are "declined" and by which teachers can be supported in a systematic way in to evolve children's understandings in this area.

In France, Jean-Louis Paour did it with "Ordo, comprendre le système relationnel de l'ordre", a teaching tool born from a set of experiments conducted by kindergarten teachers in collaboration with the University of Provence.

[orothamizrach](#)

Feb 09

Many thanks for your reply

[ruthdeutsch](#)

Feb 13

Teaching Temporal Relations using Bright Start: A Forum Contribution.

There are four aspects of understanding and teaching Temporal Relations:

- Time -as in learning to tell the time on a clock.
- Concepts of time- and its associated language. E.g. A long time ago; before, after, first , later, yesterday, last week, tomorrow, next month etc.
- Sequencing- placing items or concepts in an order
- Seriation- an application of sequencing - pattern recognition / progressions

There is one unit which addresses Seriation specifically - Unit 6 – Sequence and Pattern. We will come to that, but first let's understand this developmentally and consider what is the role of the teacher and the family in fostering this awareness.

1. The beginnings: Biological rhythms and sequences within our own bodies.
 2. In our immediate environment - Day -light, followed by night -darkness, followed by day.... light.
 3. Growing awareness and stability of daily routines – mediated to the child at home and at school and named using the language of temporal concepts. Personal passage of time, birthdays, ages of people; young (me); older (my older siblings); my parents; very old, my grandparents: as related to passage of time.
 4. Begin the idea of time as numbers on the nursery visual timetable;
- 8.40: *First*, we come into school hang up our coats. *Then* we have Free Play till 9.15. *After* that, we have Circle time till 10am. And introducing the *idea* of a clock that shows us the passing of time without expecting a pre -school child to be able to read the clock.
5. The essential difference between the mechanics of reading the time and the concepts of the passage of time. Use of narratives; Introducing historical time. Events which happened a long time ago, when Dad was a little boy; before Grandma was born; National Holidays and events. Long, long ago when the world was young.
 6. Days of the week, related to personal activities. *Today* is Friday it's the end of the week. *Tomorrow* we all stay home.
 7. Beginning to understand linear time- Baby... to old man. and cyclical time- Holidays that occur at the same time each year (more advanced).

Key: Adult conscious awareness and deliberate selection of which temporal goals you want to teach, shared across school and home and deliberately opportunities to teach and bridge across contexts.

Key: Multi -sensory teaching; Visual, pictorial, experiential, auditory -stories and songs, related to familiar life events.

Cognitive functions

What are the **cognitive functions** needed by young children in beginning to understand concepts of time, order and sequence of activities and events?

Teachers: Think about the cognitive functions required for different types of temporal relations E.g. for Perceptual and Conceptual sequences; - Comparison; conservation; Language,

understanding the criteria of the order and the concept of what changes over time and why? What order are we using? e.g., change of size, colour, number, age etc. This is emphasised in the last Unit 8, Transformation where we deal with abstract and arbitrary rules that govern a change. For Concepts of time: Comparison, Conservation; Receptive and Expressive Language, Working Memory.

Temporal relations within the Units.

Numerical Relations-: Ordinal number – sequence of numbers.

A higher concept (when the children are ready): Sequences that can only go in one direction (e.g. baking a cake) and sequences that can be reversed (going up or down the stairs, reversing numbers and order. *I can line up these shapes from smallest to biggest, but I can also line them up from biggest to smallest.*

Sequence and Pattern: Understanding the difference between Sequence and Seriation.

The need for teachers to be clear on what they are teaching. These terms are often used interchangeably (wrongly!)

What is a sequence?

An arranged order, which does not have to be repeatable. Can be personal, cultural, changeable. Not necessarily governed by a rule or defined process. Example. What is the order of activities, we are doing on the first day of our summer vacation?

What is a series?

An order which is governed by a defined rule or principle which can then be predicted and repeated. Example. An ascending or descending order of alternate numbers. 1,3,5,7 --, --.

12, 10, 8, 6, --, --. Red, blue, green; red blue, green, red -- , --.

Bridging

Deciding which of the above teachers and family want to explicitly emphasise by bridging. Remember the Bright Start principles of Bridging: Keep it

- Simple and straightforward;
- Familiar -connected to the life of the child(ren);
- Help the children generate their own bridging examples if they can, but come prepared with your own.

Ruth M Deutsch Feb.2022. ruthdeutsch@coged.net

[orothamizrach](#)

6d

@ruthdeutsch Thanks Ruth for your reply. That's very comprehensive and a great structure to keep in mind when mediating time. I wonder if anyone would ever create a whole Bright Start Unit on it (!). Or perhaps there is a reason for not doing one.

I was wondering also about organisation and planning having a connection to time. Apart from the sequencing and systematic exploration, awareness of how long events really take eg task analysis of making a sandwich or getting dressed and how many steps are really involved and the time they really take.

0

[Sue Burns](#)

@orothamizrach Great idea, so many of the best units come from the initiations of those practicing Bright Start! Sue