

Celebrating Silliness: Unlocking Joy and Engagement in the Early Years

By LINC+ CPD Community of Practice Participants

"It made me ponder and appreciate the value of what we include without thinking in our everyday."

As early years educators, our days are filled with activities, observations, and care routines designed to nurture, educate, and inspire the little ones in our settings. But sometimes, it's the simplest moments—often unplanned and infused with sheer silliness—that create the most magical interactions. Children's natural sense of joy and curiosity thrives when we bring out our playful sides. Sharing these experiences with fellow staff has heightened our awareness of the power of these moments, and the profound impact of being intentionally silly. It's not just about fun; it's about building bonds, fostering creativity, and celebrating the boundless energy and freedom of childhood.

Singing Conversations: Setting the Tone for Joy

One morning, instead of the usual casual greetings, I decided to try something different. As the children arrived, I sang my conversations with them. Their faces lit up in surprise and delight. What followed was a morning filled with belly laughter and howling—not just from the children but from the adults too. This simple act of spontaneity set a joyful tone that carried throughout the day. It was a reminder that embracing our silly side doesn't just entertain the children; it uplifts the adults in the room as well. *(Anne, LINC+ CPD Participant)*

Finding the Magic in Everyday Interactions

As providers, we can often become distracted by the administrative demands of our roles—ensuring that activities and engagement align with inspection criteria, documenting proof, and meeting objectives. In these moments, it's easy to second-guess the richness of what we're already offering. This week, a return to basics—silly songs and nursery rhymes—helped me reconnect with the true magic of our work. One song, in particular, evoked a special place in my heart: "Shake Your Sillies Out." The title says it all. It's a song that invites children (and adults!) to unleash their pent-up energy, shake off stress, and embrace wild, carefree fun. Stretching, yawning, jogging, and shaking to the upbeat tempo turned our room into a whirlwind of giggles and movement. The children loved seeing their teachers let loose, and it made us more human in their eyes. There's no greater connection than shared joy. *(Jackie, LINC+ CPD Participant)*

Movement, Laughter, and Unleashing Our Inner Child

Children need movement—it's essential for their physical development and helps them focus better. Dancing, wiggling, and laughing together strengthens their bodies, minds, and relationships. For us, as practitioners, it's a chance to connect with our inner child and relish the freedom that silliness brings. Singing, dancing, and play also have lasting effects. Yes, you may find yourself humming "Shake Your Sillies Out" for the rest of the day, but you'll also carry the warmth and energy of those moments with you. It's a reminder that in our work, joy and connection are just as important as meeting milestones.

A Global Celebration of Children's Joy

On this International Children's Day, November 20th, let us reflect on the power of playfulness and silliness in our daily practice. Across the world, children embody the essence of joy and wonder. As educators and caregivers, we have the privilege of amplifying that joy through our actions. May we always strive to bring fun, unleash our inner child, and cherish these fleeting moments of laughter and connection. Let's dance, sing, and shake our sillies out with the precious children in our care. After all, these moments of wild abandonment and shared joy are what childhood—and our work—is truly about.

What are your favourite ways to bring out your silly side? How do you use humour and play to engage children in your care? Share your thoughts with us as we celebrate this special day dedicated to the magic of childhood.

If you would like to get involved in contributing to Blogs like this or becoming part of our wonderful Community of Practice contact LINC+ CPD Tutor Lorraine at lincCPD@mic.ul.ie