

Children's Voice in Early Years: Starcatchers' Wee People, Big Feelings





Scotland's Arts and Early Years Organisation

- Create and tour performances/installations/creative experiences for 0-5s
- Deliver programmes of community engagement with artists working alongside very young children and their parents/carers
- Deliver programmes of training for the Early Learning & Childcare (ELC) workforce and for artists
- Advocate for access to arts and cultural activities for Scotland's youngest children
- www.Starcatchers.org.uk

Voice of the Baby

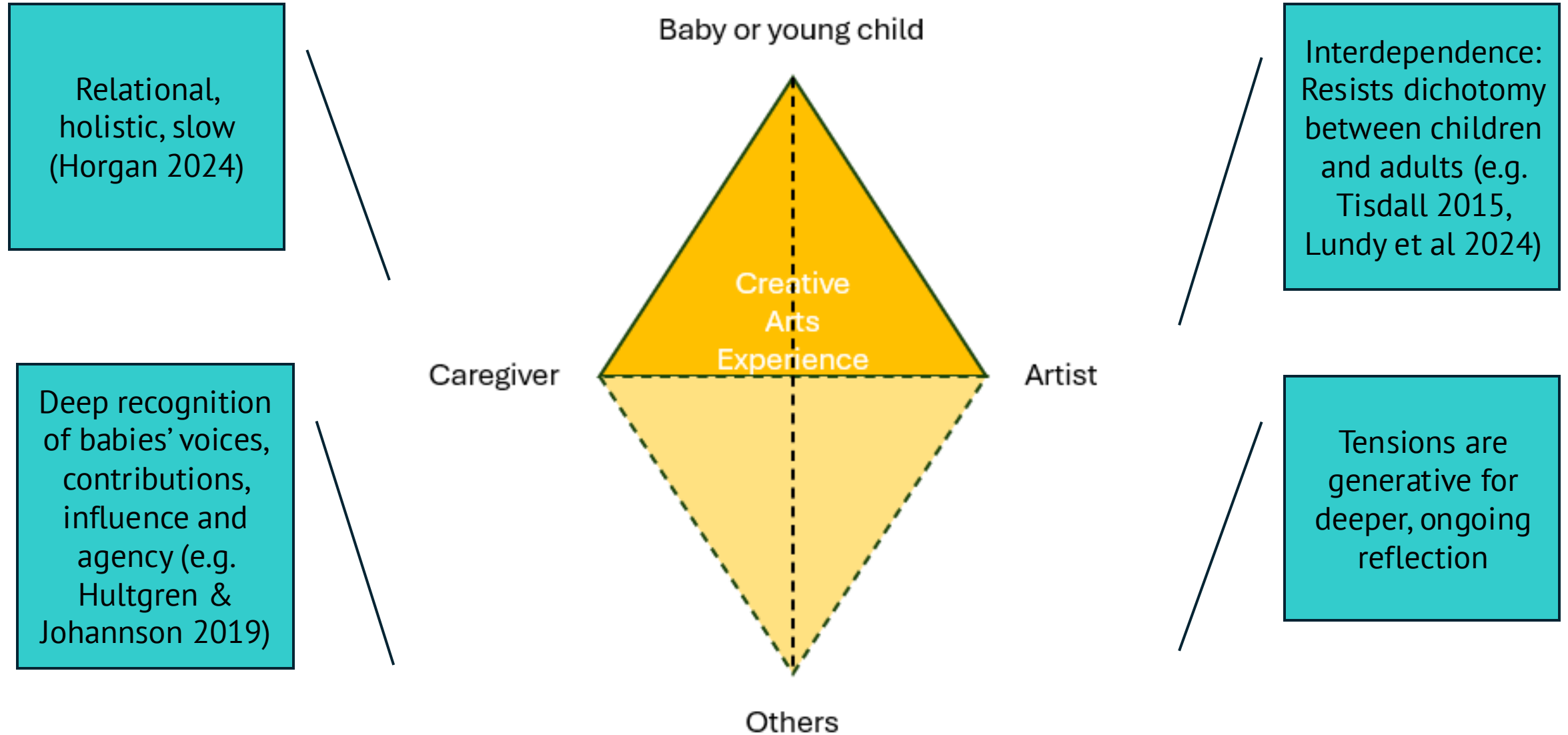
Refers to a wide range of communications including, but not limited to, verbal voice (semantic or otherwise), nonverbal communications like movement, expression, action, sound, gestures, and silences



Starcatchers Engagement Signals .



Kite Model of Participation



The 5 Areas

Curating the Space

creating permission for play and creativity

Building Sensitive, Informed Relationships

warm, affectionate interpersonal interactions

Navigating Identity

of yourself as the artist, the space, and the people within it

Respecting and Validating

the complex communication of babies

Making Time

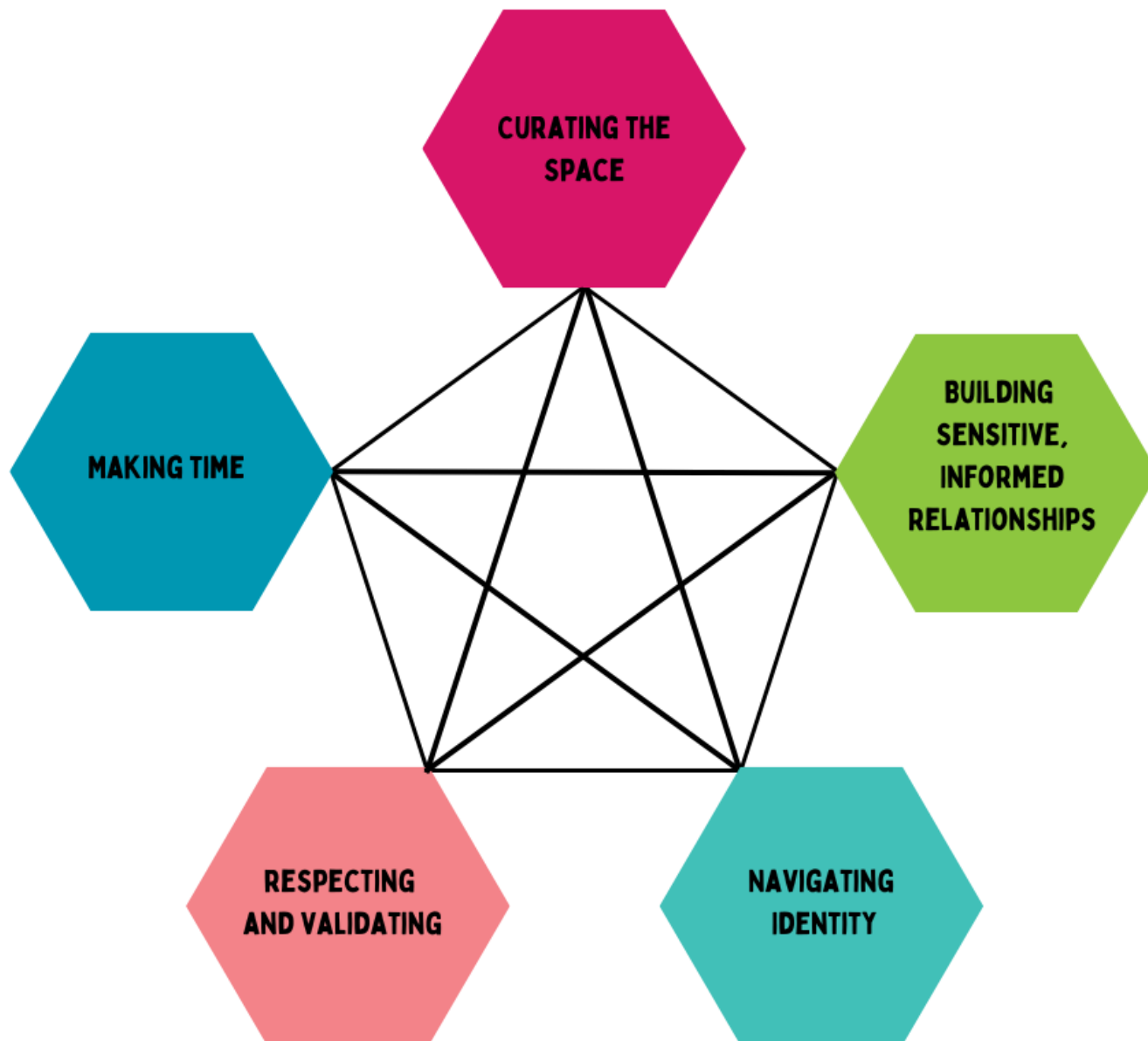
for young children to be heard



QR code for
Reflective Guide



QR code to give
feedback on the
Guide



QR code for
Reflective Guide



QR code to give
feedback on the
Guide

The Voice of the Baby Questions Framework



WHAT DID THEY TELL
US?



HOW DID WE KNOW?



WHAT DID WE DO
NEXT?

Curating the Space: Creating Permission for Play and Creativity

This area relates to the nature of the space itself, and the materials and experiences curated within it

“I felt very at ease in the space, it felt very safe and welcoming”

“I’m yet to see the artists tell the children that they can’t do something”

“Although the artists mentioned being behind in getting it prepped, that feeling did not seem to be passed on to the families who arrived”

Theme and Key Materials	What did they tell us? (What interests/ needs did we observe?)	How did we know? (which behaviours did we observe)	How did this inform the next week?
Containers and Loose Parts Silk scarves Slices of wood Plastic containers Bouncy balls Cardboard tubes Soft fabric balls Materials already present in space	Need for big gross motor play Expanded sensory offering Novel/surreal use of everyday objects Mark-making Animal toys and sounds Collecting and transporting	Repeated big exuberant, enthusiastic physical movements. Interest in everyday items being used in non-conventional ways. Interest in new textures, sounds, and visuals. Wanted to make marks on Claire's clipboard. Brought animal toys to the artists and liked when they were incorporated into offering. Repeatedly collected and transported materials which we brought.	We wanted to create a safe and more permissive space for children to explore big motor play, encourage silliness, and also incorporate animals into the play as the children consistently responded positively to play/ sounds/ songs regarding animals; we also made sure to bring some of the same items into week 2 as the children enjoyed collecting and transporting them
Gross Motor Play (loose theme of animals) T-shirts (used as costumes) Plant pot covers (used as hats and vessels for collecting/ transporting) Slices of wood (used as ears/eyes) Silk scarves Oven mits (used as hand puppets/ hooves)	Abstract imitation of animals Collecting and organising Big, exuberant movement and the attention this received On their level, face-to-face, interaction Artists copying their movements Physical, embodied play from the artists Trajectory schema play Mark-making	Children responded more positively to more abstract imitations of animals than literal costumes, found it a lot more funny and repeated movements/ vocalisations back at the artists. A lot of giggles, smiles, initiating, around offers of big exuberant movement. A lot of collecting and transporting. Strong positive response from several children when the artists copied their physical movements such as crawling, rolling, spinning around on the floor - call and response dynamic was popular here. Children were frequently stealing Claire's pens and making marks on her note paper.	We felt there was a strong interest in mark-making, and we decided a week based around this would allow artists to explore creative means of incorporating some of the other interests we were observing.
Mark Making: Large roll of easel paper Crayon eggs Paint sticks	Communal creative activity - everyone doing something together Large novel item in the room Invitation to interact with objects in non-conventional ways Ability to make big, noticeable marks Permission to get messy Novel sensory experience	Children were more engrossed and interested in the drawing when everyone was doing it together, with the staff actively engaging with the mark making alongside them. The children loved the big roll of paper even before the pens came out, they liked rolling on it, running down it, feeling the texture of it. Children enjoyed taking the crayon eggs and exploring the sounds they made when they rattled in different containers/ bounced off surfaces. Smiled and engaged for a long time when the paint sticks allowed them to make big, bold, pigmented marks without having to apply too much pressure. We were permissive towards children digging their fingers into the paint sticks, they seemed to like the texture of the pens on their fingers, and they enjoyed getting messy/ wiping the paint on their legs/clothes	We felt that we were more successful with the children and staff when there was a clear and obvious offering from the outset, which would allow the children to dictate where the session took us. There was also a definite storytelling element to the children's interactions with the mark making - artists would draw things and make up stories surrounding them, children would bring books and artists would use them as a springboard for play



