

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the statutory framework that sets the standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to five. This has recently been revised to offer more effective guidance for observational assessment and early intervention, where necessary. As a Pre-school, we are legally required to follow the EYFS to ensure that your child receives a quality experience; that supports their care, learning and development.

With the new progress checks for children aged 2 now being undertaken by practitioners it is hoped that every child will receive the best start to their educational journey, with additional support being put into place where significant emerging concerns are identified.

What does the Early Years Foundation Stage do?

The EYFS ensures:

- children learn through play
- providers work closely with parents
- you are kept up to date on your child's progress
- the welfare, learning and all-round development of children with different backgrounds and levels of ability, including those with special educational needs and disabilities



EYFS Principles

The EYFS looks at your child from a holistic point of view and the principles of practice that guide their learning have been grouped into four themes:

- **A Unique Child** - every child is individual and with support they can be confident, capable and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships** - by having a secure emotional base from which to explore, provided by the parent/carer and the key person, a child can learn to be strong and independent.
- **Enabling Environment** - by providing an interesting and stimulating environment we can enhance children's learning and development.
- **Learning and Development** - all children are individuals who learn and develop at different rates and in different ways. By recognising this we can ensure all children reach their full potential.



These themes are further separated into 7 learning areas. The revised EYFS focuses on 3 Prime Areas and 4 Specific Areas. Let's take a look at the importance of each area.

Throughout your child's time at the setting they will be observed and evaluated as they play and explore. These observations show us, as practitioners, how your child is developing or where they may need a little extra support. We look at their development within the 7 areas of learning, as laid down in the EYFS. It is recognised that each child develops at different rates within these areas, with their achievements being closely monitored as they progress and their individual needs being catered for.

The Seven Areas of Learning

The 3 Prime Areas are deemed to be of particular importance for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. They also build on their capability to learn, make relationships and thrive.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)



By providing each child with a secure emotional base, via the key person system, we allow your child the opportunity to explore - not only their environment but also their feelings. Every child is individual, with a variety of family dynamics, likes, dislikes and interests. By valuing these traits and providing activities focused around the children's lives and interest we can encourage and nurture their confidence and emotional well-being. Children also need good role models and the opportunity to socialise with both adults and their peers, allowing them to learn vital life skills such as forming relationships. By observing the way a child plays we can provide support, if necessary, to allow every child to participate. We celebrate the children's birthdays, festivals and talk about families and the community to ensure each child has a sense of belonging and worth.

Physical Development (PD)



As your child grows they will begin to take control of their bodies. This may be in controlling their limbs and negotiating the space around them; or in controlling one-handed tools with confidence in mark-making, self feeding and hygiene. Once your child has learnt to control their own toileting needs this will give them the confidence to take an active part in activities and take pride in what they can do. By teaching the children the importance of a healthy diet we can instil healthy habits from an early age - teaching them about food and exercise, promoting good health. As muscles and co-ordination develop the way in which they participate in activities will change. They will go from being passengers to drivers; from walkers to runners. As your child becomes more adventurous they will build their confidence in taking manageable risks, with the support an adult where necessary.



Communication and Language (C&L)

By spending the time to talk and listen to every child we can encourage this most basic area of development. For those who find it difficult to make themselves understood, it can be frustrating. We ensure that each child's language skills progress at the rate that suits them, using stage and age appropriate language/instructions and offering support. Reading stories and singing simple songs and rhymes give your child the building blocks they need to go on to speak fluently and with confidence.



The more time we spend talking, and listening, to our children the wider the vocabulary we allow them access to, enabling them to express their feelings and ideas in a variety of ways; confidently.

The 4 Specific Areas are those deemed to strengthen and extend the prime areas. These areas give us the opportunity to practice and enhance the skills they have learnt.

Literacy (Lit)

Reading stories and singing simple songs and rhymes to the children allows them to make links with letters and sounds. By giving them access to a wide range of materials (books, poems, magazines, etc) is possible to nurture a love of books and knowledge. As the children explore books and see words written on the page they will begin to experiment with their own mark-making. This is the start of the basic handwriting skills that will grow with them throughout their educational lives.



Mathematics (Maths)



Children love to explore their environment and whilst doing this tend to see patterns and make connections with other parts of their lives. By using these reasoning skills they can extend their learning by asking questions and recognising relationships. We have all, at one time or another, sang number songs to our children or counted the stairs as we climb, this is the beginning of their understanding of the usage of numbers and numerical language. This language will be taken into every activity that your child undertakes - e.g. 'more than', 'bigger/smaller' and using number names in role play. As the children's understanding of numbers grows they will begin to introduce numbers into play and be able to make simple calculations, adding and subtracting objects.

This language also leads into the world of shape, space and measuring. Construction activities involve a degree of problem solving too! "Which piece comes next?" or "Which way round does it go?" are all questions that your child has to answer. By supporting the children with their development in this area we can enable them to navigate this area with confidence.

Understanding the World (UW)

The world around us is a fascinating place and the more your child explores it the more fascinated they will become. Asking questions is how children learn; and by sharing their experiences with their peers they can enhance the learning of the other children. The answers to these questions can also come from other sources, such as family, friends, books and what they experience for themselves. This area focuses on everyday life, community and the world around us. By giving the children the opportunity to learn about other ways of life, and being given positive and accurate information, they will be able to gain a positive and caring attitude to others around them. The everyday routines that the children experience at home can be recreated in setting through role play, e.g.



cooking a meal in the home corner using play-dough or washing up their own plates after snack. These activities build self-esteem and allow your child to make choices and decisions, leaving them in control of their experiences. Exploring the outside world nurtures a caring nature for plants and animals too. When your child finds a ladybird on a plant it opens up a whole new world to explore: where do they live, what do they eat and how should we treat them. These all foster a respect and caring for all living creatures and plants.

Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

Creative activities allow your child to explore their own ideas and express themselves through a variety of media and materials, such as paint, music or model making. These activities allow your child to explore the processes that turn their ideas into reality. There are decision-making skills that need to be put into play, as well as social skills involved, e.g. "what should I use today - paint or crayons?" or "can you pass me that please?". These are all vital skills that will be used throughout your child's life. By being creative and letting

their imaginations run away with them they can make sense of their own experiences and the world around them, and explore the possibilities that life may offer. Through role play and imaginative play your child can act out first-hand experiences, adding story lines and narratives as their imaginations grow.

Active Learners

The skills your child develops in these areas will be used across all of the areas of development and learning. They all go to extend and enhance your child's life experiences and impact on each other. By supporting your child in understanding their feelings (PSED) we will build their confidence in speaking (C&L); so allowing them to feel capable enough to join in with a group music activity (EAD). So what looks like 'just play' is a valuable way for your child to learn and grow!



Further reading: www.foundationyears.org.uk/parents