

The Early Years Foundation Stage

Play is learning and learning is for life!

“Remember that what your child brings home in their head is more important than what they bring home in their hands.”

What is the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)?

- The EYFS is a framework for children’s development from birth to the end of their first year in school.
- The EYFS describes how your child should be kept safe and cared for and how all concerned can make sure that your child achieves the most that they can in their earliest years of life.
- The EYFS framework describes how early years practitioners should work with children and their families to support their development and learning.

The EYFS is based on four important principles:

Theme: A Unique Child

Principle: Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Theme: Positive Relationships

Principle: Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

Theme: Enabling Environments

Principle: The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children’s development and learning.

Theme: Learning and Development

Principle: Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and interconnected.

What does all this mean?

- Young children learn best through play and first-hand experience.
- Practitioners provide your child with a range of appropriate play and learning experiences for their stage of development and help them develop new skills.
- The activities that are provided for young children will underpin the skills they need to work towards the *Early Learning Goals* at the end of their reception year at school.

Parents as Partners

“When parents and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on children’s learning and development”

- It is important to remember that you know more about your own child than anyone else.
- Practitioners will ask you regularly about your child and share information with you about their progress.
- Information from home about your child’s interests, achievements and challenges are valued and we love to hear about them.
- The part you play in your child’s learning and the choices you make, will make a difference to your child’s future.

Meeting Your Child’s Needs

- The EYFS supports a fully inclusive approach.
- By getting to know your child, observing their play, talking and playing with them, practitioners can plan exciting experiences which are appropriate for developmental their needs and interests.
- Regular observations of your child are carried out in a range of contexts. These help practitioners to find out how to develop children’s skills and interests further.
- Observations inform practitioners what to plan next.
- Planning, although rigorous, is always flexible so practitioners can meet the changing needs and play interests of your children.

Why do children need to play?

It enables them to.....

- explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world around them

- learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules and boundaries
- practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills
- be alone and be alongside others
- take risks and make mistakes
- think creatively and imaginatively
- investigate and solve problems
- have fun!

“We don’t stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing”

George Bernard Shaw

What can parents and carers do?

You are your child’s first teacher. You can help your child to learn and develop anywhere anytime, for example through...

- Being generous with praise and cuddles
- Talking about pictures and reading stories together
- Playing games and singing nursery rhymes
- Talking about what you see in the park or on the street
- Counting the stairs as you go up and down

Look on our Learning at Home page of our website for more ideas.

Why Outdoor Learning?

It allows children to

- be noisier, messier and become involved in larger play than they can indoors
- be physically challenged and develop coordination
- express themselves and gain a positive sense of well-being
- become resilient to life, develop confidence and self esteem
- have space and freedom to move all their muscles
- develop play and learning which is memorable
- experience multi-sensory learning
- develop independence and their preferred ways of learning.