

Getting the Curriculum right in the Early Years



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Aims of the session

To consider the implications and impact of the new EYFS reforms on the curriculum in EYFS

To allow think and reflect on your current practice

To plan for next steps



IF YOUR APPROACH
WAS PERFECT WHAT
WOULD IT LOOK
LIKE?

What is best practice in EYFS?

Intentions and outcomes

What is a successful learner?

What do we want children to know?

How do we want children to use their knowledge, skills and understandings?

How do we want children to be?



**Sharing
your vision
is crucial**

The EYFS states:

This framework does not prescribe a particular teaching approach. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.

Practitioners need to decide what they want children in their setting to learn, and the most effective ways to teach it.

Practitioners must stimulate children's interests, responding to each child's emerging needs and guiding their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning.

As children grow older and move into the reception year, there should be a greater focus on teaching the essential skills and knowledge in the specific areas of learning. This will help children to prepare for year 1

What the DFE says...

The EYFS framework **does not** prescribe a particular teaching approach. It recognises that effective teaching in the Early Years requires skilled use of a teaching practice repertoire which responds appropriately to the age and needs of the children being taught. In recognition of this the EYFS framework will reference the definition of teaching included in Ofsted's Handbook.

Different teaching interactions



ADULT LED
WHOLE GROUP
SESSIONS



ADULT LED SMALL
GROUP SESSIONS



ADULT LED
INDEPENDENT
SESSIONS



CHILD LED
INDEPENDENT
LEARNING



CHILD LED ADULT
SUPPORTED
LEARNING

‘Teaching should not be taken to imply a ‘top down’ or formal way of working. It is a broad term that covers the many different ways in which adults help young children learn. It includes their interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities: **communicating and modelling language; showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas; encouraging, questioning, recalling; providing a narrative for what they are doing; facilitating and setting challenges.**

It takes account of the equipment adults provide and the attention given to the physical environment, as well as the structure and routines of the day that establish expectations.

Integral to teaching is how practitioners assess what children know, understand and can do, as well as **taking account of their interests and dispositions to learn** (characteristics of effective teaching and learning), and how practitioners use this information to plan children’s next steps in learning and monitor their progress.’



Hidden Curriculum Can Be:

Negative

Positive

Unintentional



Thoughts on Curriculum

“Of course, we can’t put our entire focus on the curriculum. Much of young children’s best learning happens as they play and explore freely. As educators, we should make time and space for that, and judiciously intervene and challenge gently when helpful.”

Dr Julian Grenier, Author of Development Matters 2020

TES September 2021

“Planning an Early Years Curriculum that includes the Geography children will be learning in term two, week three in Reception, for example, is not sensible”

“It is useful to have a big picture of the learning children need to acquire from their time in the EYFS, but we must also remember the importance of motivation, building on children’s interests and learning through play. There is plenty of evidence to support play based learning in the early years... play is at the heart of an effective Early Education.”

Dr Julian Grenier
TES September 2022

Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years settings.



Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;



Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;

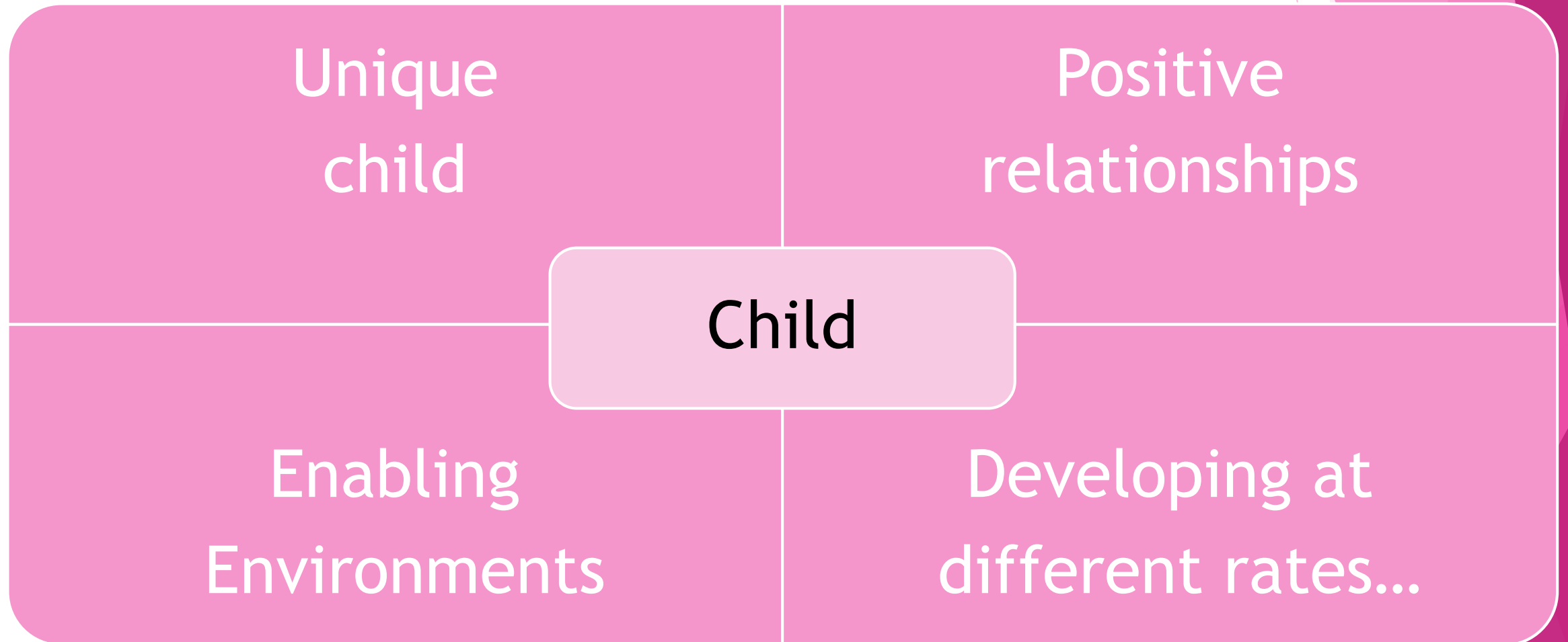


Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments** *with teaching and support from adults who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them build their learning over time*. Children benefit from a strong partnership between parents and carers.



Importance of learning and developing children develop and learn at **different rates**. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Appreciative enquiry : consider carefully, where does your current provision support...



Schools control..

- ▶ Routines
- ▶ Expectations
- ▶ How the curriculum is implemented
- ▶ Classroom layout
- ▶ Classroom organisation
- ▶ Adult interactions
- ▶ Resources
- ▶ Assessment

What do we
mean by
curriculum?

The curriculum is
the what

The pedagogy is
the how

What?

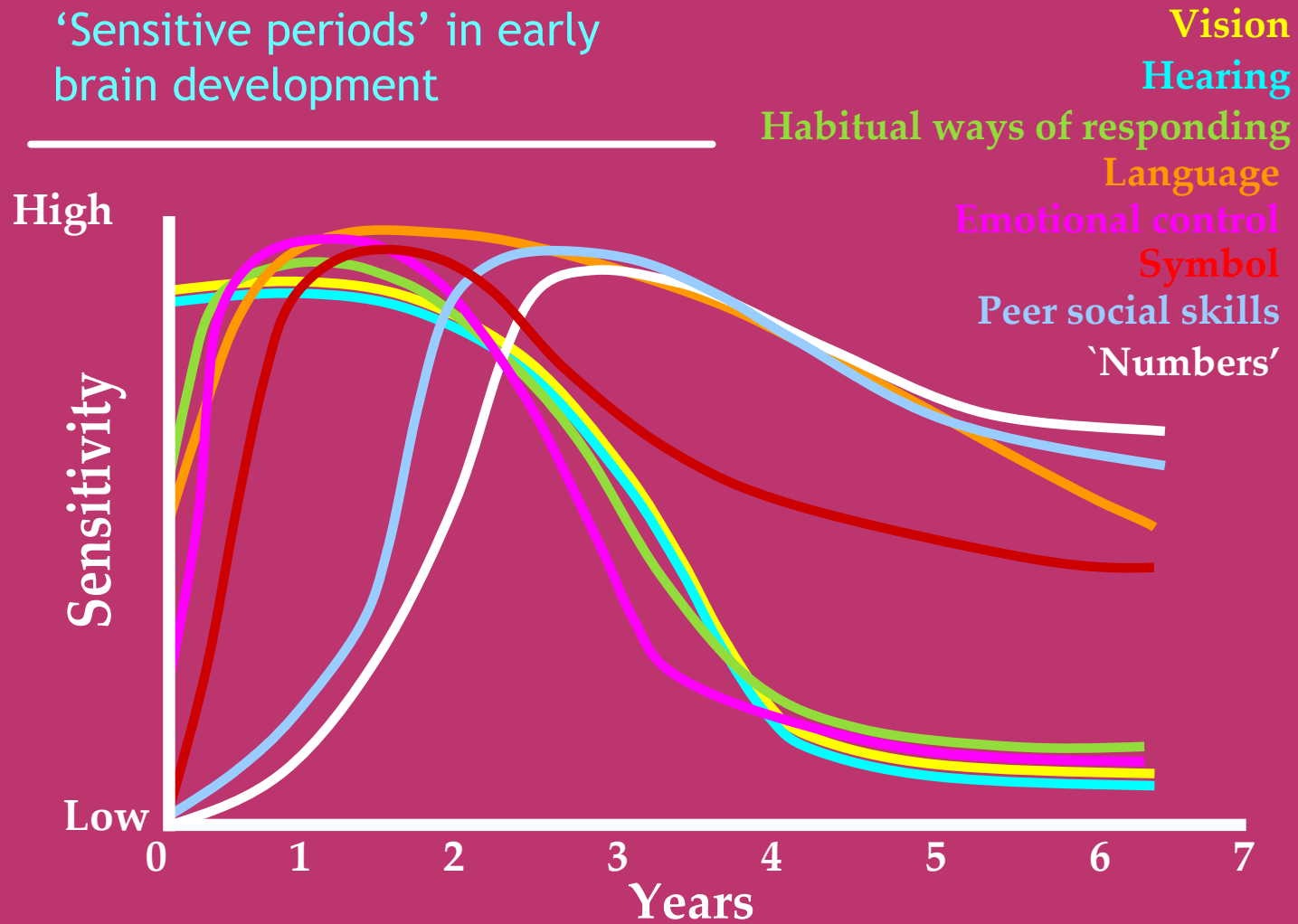
What knowledge do you want children to have by the time they leave you to go into Key Stage 1

What skills do you want the children to have?

What dispositions do you want the children to have?

What makes the most difference to young children?

'Sensitive periods' in early brain development



Graph developed by Council for Early Child Development (ref: Nash, 1997; *Early Years Study*, 1999; Shonkoff, 2000.)

Practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to ensure a strong foundation for children's development in the three prime areas.

The specific areas of learning provide children with a broad curriculum and with opportunities to strengthen and apply the prime areas of learning.

This is particularly important in developing language and extending vocabulary.

The coalition recommends that government act on the evidence in the report when conducting its review of the EYFS, and that any changes should be based on the following key principles:

Recognising the central importance of the **Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning** which has been emphasised by the growing body of research on self regulation and executive function.



Getting it right in the Early Years Foundation Stage: a review of the evidence

Authors: Chris Pascal, Tony Bertram, Liz Rouse of Centre for Research in Early Childhood



Literature review funded by:



	A Unique Child: observing how a child is learning	Positive Relationships: what adults could do	Enabling Environments: what adults could provide
Playing and Exploring <i>engagement</i>	Finding out and exploring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing curiosity about objects, events and people • Using senses to explore the world around them • Engaging in open-ended activity • Showing particular interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play with children. Encourage them to explore, and show your own interest in discovering new things. • Help children as needed to do what they are trying to do, without taking over or directing. • Join in play sensitively, fitting in with children's ideas. • Model pretending an object is something else, and help develop roles and stories. • Encourage children to try new activities and to judge risks for themselves. Be sure to support children's confidence with words and body language. • Pay attention to how children engage in activities -- the challenges faced, the effort, thought, learning and enjoyment. Talk more about the process than products. • Talk about how you and the children get better at things through effort and practice, and what we all can learn when things go wrong. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide stimulating resources which are accessible and open-ended so they can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways. • Make sure resources are relevant to children's interests. • Arrange flexible indoor and outdoor space and resources where children can explore, build, move and role play. • Help children concentrate by limiting noise, and making spaces visually calm and orderly. • Plan first-hand experiences and challenges appropriate to the development of the children. • Ensure children have uninterrupted time to play and explore.
	Playing with what they know <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pretending objects are things from their experience • Representing their experiences in play • Taking on a role in their play • Acting out experiences with other people 		
	Being willing to 'have a go' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiating activities • Seeking challenge • Showing a 'can do' attitude • Taking a risk, engaging in new experiences, and learning by trial and error 		

	A Unique Child: observing how a child is learning	Positive Relationships: what adults could do	Enabling Environments: what adults could provide
Active Learning <i>motivation</i>	Being involved and concentrating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining focus on their activity for a period of time • Showing high levels of energy, fascination • Not easily distracted • Paying attention to details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support children to choose their activities – what they want to do and how they will do it. • Stimulate children’s interest through shared attention, and calm over-stimulated children. • Help children to become aware of their own goals, make plans, and to review their own progress and successes. Describe what you see them trying to do, and encourage children to talk about their own processes and successes. • Be specific when you praise, especially noting effort such as how the child concentrates, tries different approaches, persists, solves problems, and has new ideas. • Encourage children to learn together and from each other. • Children develop their own motivations when you give reasons and talk about learning, rather than just directing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will become more deeply involved when you provide something that is new and unusual for them to explore, especially when it is linked to their interests. • Notice what arouses children’s curiosity, looking for signs of deep involvement to identify learning that is intrinsically motivated. • Ensure children have time and freedom to become deeply involved in activities. • Children can maintain focus on things that interest them over a period of time. Help them to keep ideas in mind by talking over photographs of their previous activities. • Keep significant activities out instead of routinely tidying them away. • Make space and time for all children to contribute.
	Keeping on trying <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persisting with activity when challenges occur • Showing a belief that more effort or a different approach will pay off • Bouncing back after difficulties 		
	Enjoying achieving what they set out to do <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing satisfaction in meeting their own goals • Being proud of how they accomplished something – not just the end result • Enjoying meeting challenges for their own sake rather than external rewards or praise 		

	A Unique Child: observing how a child is learning	Positive Relationships: what adults could do	Enabling Environments: what adults could provide
<p>Creating and Thinking Critically</p> <p><i>thinking</i></p>	<p>Having their own ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking of ideas • Finding ways to solve problems • Finding new ways to do things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the language of thinking and learning: <i>think, know, remember, forget, idea, makes sense, plan, learn, find out, confused, figure out, trying to do.</i> • Model being a thinker, showing that you don't always know, are curious and sometimes puzzled, and can think and find out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In planning activities, ask yourself: <i>Is this an opportunity for children to find their own ways to represent and develop their own ideas? Avoid children just reproducing someone else's ideas.</i>
	<p>Making links</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making links and noticing patterns in their experience • Making predictions • Testing their ideas • Developing ideas of grouping, sequences, cause and effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage open-ended thinking by not settling on the first ideas: <i>What else is possible?</i> • Always respect children's efforts and ideas, so they feel safe to take a risk with a new idea. • Talking aloud helps children to think and control what they do. Model self-talk, describing your actions in play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build in opportunities for children to play with materials before using them in planned tasks. • Play is a key opportunity for children to think creatively and flexibly, solve problems and link ideas. Establish the enabling conditions for rich play: space, time, flexible resources, choice, control, warm and supportive relationships.
	<p>Choosing ways to do things</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning, making decisions about how to approach a task, solve a problem and reach a goal • Checking how well their activities are going • Changing strategy as needed • Reviewing how well the approach worked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give children time to talk and think. • Value questions, talk, and many possible responses, without rushing toward answers too quickly. • Support children's interests over time, reminding them of previous approaches and encouraging them to make connections between their experiences. • Model the creative process, showing your thinking about some of the many possible ways forward. • Sustained shared thinking helps children to explore ideas and make links. Follow children's lead in conversation, and think about things together. • Encourage children to describe problems they encounter, and to suggest ways to solve the problem. • Show and talk about strategies – how to do things – including problem-solving, thinking and learning. • Give feedback and help children to review their own progress and learning. Talk with children about what they are doing, how they plan to do it, what worked well and what they would change next time. • Model the plan-do-review process yourself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognisable and predictable routines help children to predict and make connections in their experiences. • Routines can be flexible, while still basically orderly. • Plan linked experiences that follow the ideas children are really thinking about. • Use mind-maps to represent thinking together. • Develop a learning community which focuses on how and not just what we are learning.

School readiness, a critical review of the evidence

Whitebread and Bingham (2014)

- ▶ Argue that children's knowledge base and their capacities for metacognition and self-regulation develop from infancy .
- ▶ The development of language is central to the whole process; as a symbolic system, and through the channels of pretend play and the imagination, very young children can think and reason about experiences and ideas in sophisticated ways.
- ▶ Central to development are the executive functions of the brain, which encompass cognitive flexibility, inhibition and working memory, as well as more complex functions such as capacities to problem solve, reason and plan.
- ▶ Self-regulation is the primary characteristic of these higher mental functions.

Curriculum planning - some thoughts

- ▶ The curriculum plan should show that the statutory requirements of the curriculum are being met - look at the educational programmes and make sure you are covering these over the course of the children's time with you.
- ▶ You need to be able to show that you cover the STATUTORY curriculum and that there is breadth and balance
- ▶ Curriculum plans should identify the concepts, skills, knowledge and attitudes you intend to teach the children
- ▶ The HOW is the pedagogy, your curriculum plans need to reflect the WHAT and you need to think about the WHY
- ▶ Any Topics are the vehicle for the learning rather than the purpose of it



Young children learn by...

Feeling secure

Watching, imitating and being supported by the adults around them

Self regulating

Real - life experiences

Cognitive and physical challenge

Articulating their own learning

Consider...

- How is the day organised?
- Are there periods both in the morning and the afternoon for children to become deeply involved in their self-chosen activity?
- Do children have access to a wide range of resources?
- Is planning flexible and built on needs and interests of the children as well as providing a structure for direct teaching?

Different approaches - entirely up to you

- ▶ Planning in the moment
 - ▶ Topic based learning
 - ▶ Language based approaches
 - ▶ Enquiry based learning
 - ▶ Separate subjects
-
- ▶ Ofsted judges ...the extent to which leaders and providers plan, design and implement the EYFS curriculum
 - ▶ the extent to which the curriculum and care practices that the setting provides meet the needs of the range of children who attend, particularly children with SEND

Communication and Language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the **conversations** they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a **language-rich environment is crucial**.

By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively.

Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive.

Through **conversation, story-telling and role play**, where children share their ideas with **support and modelling** from their teacher, and **sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate**, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.



	9.00	9.05-9.30	9.30 – 10.40	10.40 – 11.00	11.00 – 12.00	1.00 – 3.00			3.00 – 3.30
M	Registration	Whole class/ small group literacy/ theme/ numeracy	Child Initiated	Phonics	Child Initiated	Child Initiated			
T		Whole class: literacy/ theme/ numeracy	Child Initiated	Phonics	Child Initiated	Child Initiated	P.E.		
W		Whole class: literacy/ theme/ numeracy	Child Initiated	Phonics	Child Initiated	Child Initiated			Whole school Assembly
T		Whole class: literacy/ theme/ numeracy	Child Initiated	Phonics	Child Initiated	Child Initiated			Story Singing Review session
F		Whole class: literacy/ theme/ numeracy	Child Initiated	Phonics	Child Initiated	Child Initiated			Whole school Assembly

	8.50-9	9-9.45	9.45 - 10.45	10.45- 11.25	11.25 - 11.45	11.45 - 12	12.-1.15	1.15 - 1.40	1.45 - 2.50	2.50-3.15
Monday	Self register	phonics	Reading groups	Continuous provision/ individual readers	Maths	Story time	Lunch	Topic /Curriculum input	Catch up phonics Continuous provision (outdoors if sufficient staff)	Story time
Tuesday	Self register	Phonics	Reading groups	Continuous provision/ individual readers	Maths	Story time	Lunch	PE (until 2pm)	Catch up phonics Continuous provision (outdoors if sufficient staff)	Story time
Wednesday	Self register	Phonics	Reading groups	Continuous provision/ individual readers	Maths	Story time	Lunch	Topic /Curriculum input	Catch up phonics Continuous provision (outdoors if sufficient staff)	Story time
Thursday	Self register	phonics	Reading groups	Continuous provision/ individual readers	Maths	Story time	Lunch	Topic /Curriculum input	Catch up phonics Continuous provision (outdoors if sufficient staff)	Story time
Friday	Self register	phonics	Reading groups	Continuous provision/ individual readers	Maths	Story time	Lunch	Topic /Curriculum input	Continuous provision	Story time

Think about routines...

How do they meet the needs of the children?

Are you allowed to focus on process rather than product?

Are there opportunities for children to practise skills that they have learned ?

Are there opportunities for children to revise and revisit learning?

How do you ensure that there are quality conversations in the continuous provision?

How do you ensure that all areas of learning are supported?

Having your cake and eating it!



Incidental opportunities

Interactions!

Direct teaching

Ongoing opportunities in provision

Role play...





Personal Social and Emotional Development

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development.

Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others.

Children should be **supported to manage emotions**, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary.

Through **adult modelling and guidance**, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently.

Through **supported interaction** with other children they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.



Alpa

COOK
kids can cook
over 100 delicious recipes for children

Children's
COOKBOOK
OVER 100 HEALTHY AND FUN
STEP-BY-STEP RECIPES



Physical Development

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives.

Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults.

By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility.

Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being.

Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination which is later linked to early literacy.

Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.











Literacy

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading.

Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading.

Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words.

Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

A lifelong love of reading...





Mark making outdoors





WHAT?



WHEN?



HOW?

Having your cake and eating it!



Incidental opportunities

Interactions!

Direct teaching

Ongoing opportunities in provision

Mathematics

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically.

Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers.

By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built.

In addition, **it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures.**

It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.









WHAT?



WHEN?



HOW?

Having your cake and eating it!



Incidental opportunities

Interactions!

Direct teaching

Ongoing opportunities in provision

Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community.

The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them - from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters.

In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world.

As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

The builders' yard











WHAT?



WHEN?



HOW?

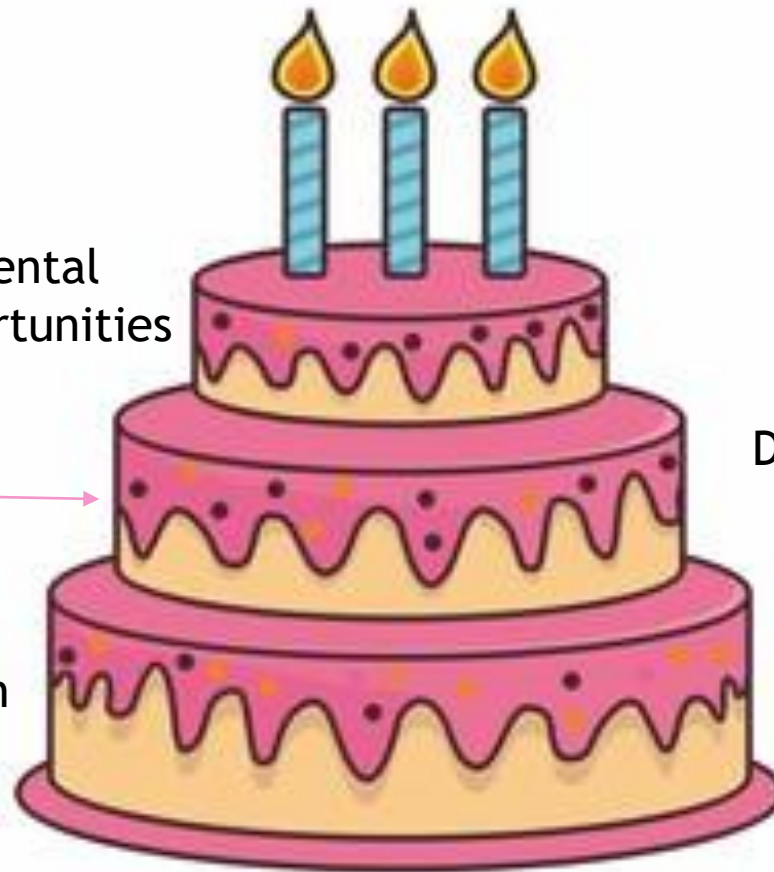
Having your cake and eating it!

Incidental opportunities

Interactions!

Direct teaching

Ongoing opportunities in provision



Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials.

The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts.

The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.







WHAT?



WHEN?



HOW?

Look through different lenses...



Does your curriculum:

- Meet the needs of disadvantaged children?
- Give children the vital skills they need to be lifelong learners?
- Reflect your children's community?
- Promote equality and diversity?
- Expose children to a wide range of opportunities and experiences?
- Develop children's engagement, resilience and motivation to learn?
- Provide breadth and balance?
- Focus on the right things at the right time?

Ofsted will....

when making judgements, take a range of evidence into account, including:

- discussions with leaders, staff and children; the joint learning walk; observations; speaking to parents and so on
- judge fairly providers that take different approaches to meeting the requirements of the EYFS;

Inspectors will assess any provider's curriculum favourably when leaders have built or adopted a curriculum with appropriate **coverage, content, structure and sequencing** and implemented it effectively.

Coverage

- ▶ What do you intend to cover with the children during their time with you?
- ▶ What key concepts and skills should the children have by the time they leave you?
- ▶ What emphasis are you going to place on different areas of the curriculum?

Content

- ▶ What lessons and skills have been taught by the time they leave you?

Structure

- ▶ How will this be taught ?
- ▶ How will this be organised?

Sequencing

- ▶ How will you ensure children's learning builds over time?
- ▶ How will you make sure that children know how it links to what you've taught before?

Don't forget

Vocabulary

Interactions

Time to revisit

Building independence and self regulation

[A closer look at curriculum development | Podcasts from the Foundation Stage Forum Limited \(simplecast.com\)](#)