



## The Areas of Learning in Early Years

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in Early Years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three, the prime areas, are:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The Foundation Stage curriculum covers seven areas of learning:

Prime Areas - These are usually developed first and are essential for future learning:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Specific Areas - As children grow, the prime areas help them to develop skills in:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding The World
- Expressive Arts and Design

### **The Prime Areas of Learning**

**Communication and Language** development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment, to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves, and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

**Physical Development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive, and to develop their co-ordination, control and movement.

Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

**Personal, Social and Emotional Development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others, to form positive relationships and develop respect for others, to develop social skills and learn to manage their feelings, to understand appropriate behaviour in groups, and to have confidence in their own abilities.

### **Specific Areas of Learning**

**Literacy** development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials including books, poems and other written materials to ignite their interest.

**Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems, and to describe shapes, spaces and measures.

**Understanding the World** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

**Expressive Arts and Design** involves encouraging children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance role-play and design technology.

In Early Years, we encourage and support children to develop the following characteristics of learning:

- **Playing and Exploring** - children investigate and experience things and 'have a go'.
- **Active Learning** - children concentrate and keep trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** - children have their own ideas and they develop them. They make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.



## The Early Learning Goals

Each area of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum has an Early Learning Goal, which is the standard that a child is expected to achieve by the end of their Reception year. The Early Learning Goals for each area are explained below.

### The Prime Areas

#### Communication and Language

##### Listening and Attention

Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately while engaged in another activity.

##### Understanding

Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories and events.

##### Speaking

Children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.

## Physical Development

### Moving and Handling

Children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.

### Health and Self-Care

Children know the importance for good health of physical exercise and a healthy diet, and talk about ways to keep healthy and safe. They manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs successfully, including dressing and going to the toilet independently.

## Personal, Social and Emotional Development

### Self-Confidence and Self-Awareness

Children are confident to try new activities and to say why they like some activities more than others. They are confident to speak in a familiar group, will talk about their ideas, and will choose the resources they need for their chosen activities. They say when they do or don't need help.

### Managing Feelings and Behaviour

Children talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable. They work as part of a group or class, and understand and follow rules. They adjust their behaviour to different situations and take changes of routine in their stride.

### Making Relationships

Children play co-operatively, taking turns with others. They take account of one another's ideas about how to organise their activity. They show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings, and form positive relationships with adults and other children.

## The Specific Areas

### Literacy

#### Reading

Children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate an understanding when talking with others about what they have read.

#### Writing

Children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.

### Mathematics

#### Numbers

Children count reliably with numbers from 1 to 20, place them in order and say which number is one more or one less than a given number. Using quantities and objects, they add and subtract two single-digit numbers and count on or back to find the answer. They solve problems, including doubling, halving and sharing.

#### Shape, Space and Measures

Children use everyday language to talk about size, weight, capacity, position, distance, time and money to compare quantities and objects and to solve problems. They recognise, create and describe patterns. They explore characteristics of everyday objects and shapes and use mathematical language to describe them.

### Understanding of the World

#### People and Communities

Children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members. They know that other children don't always enjoy the same things and are sensitive to this. They know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions.

#### The World

Children know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They talk about features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one to another. They make

observations of animals and plants and explain why some things might occur and talk about changes.

## Technology

Children recognise that a range of technology is used in places such as homes and schools. They select and use technology for particular purposes.

## Expressive Arts and Design

### Exploring and Using Media and Materials

Children sing songs, make music and dance, and experiment with ways of changing them. They safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.

### Being Imaginative

Children use what they have learnt about media and materials in original ways, thinking about uses and purposes. They represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through design and technology, art, music, dance, role play and stories.