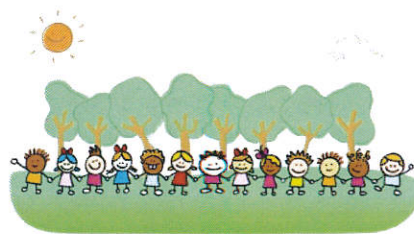
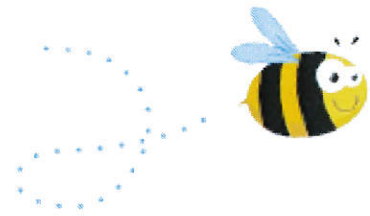


The Early Years Foundation Stage





Parents' Guide to the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

Exciting times ahead for you and your child

What is the Early Years Foundation Stage?

Welcome to the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**, which is how the Government and early years professionals describe the time in your child's life between birth and age 5.

This is a very important stage as it helps your child get ready for school as well as preparing them for their future learning and successes. From when your child is born up until the age of 5, their early years experience should be happy, active, exciting, fun and secure; and support their development, care and learning needs.

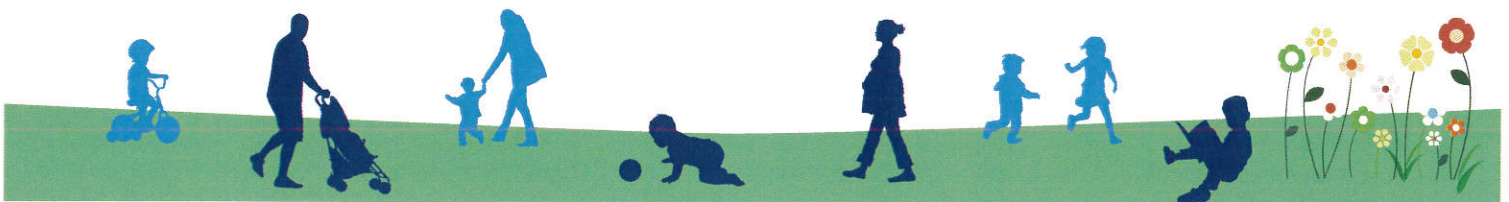
Nurseries, pre-schools, reception classes and childminders registered to deliver the EYFS must follow a legal document called the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

What is the EYFS Framework – why do we have one?

The EYFS Framework exists to support all professionals working in the EYFS to help your child, and was developed with a number of early years experts and parents.

In 2012 the framework was revised to make it clearer and easier to use, with more focus on the things that matter most. This new framework also has a greater emphasis on your role in helping your child develop.

The framework has been revised again with changes to the statutory guidance coming in to effect in September 2014.



It sets out:

- The legal welfare requirements that everyone registered to look after children must follow to keep your child **safe** and promote their welfare
- The 7 areas of **learning and development** which guide professionals' engagement with your child's play and activities as they learn new skills and knowledge
- Assessments that will tell you about **your child's progress** through the EYFS
- Expected levels that your child should reach at age 5, usually the end of the reception year; these expectations are called the "**Early Learning Goals (ELGs)**"

There is also guidance for the professionals supporting your child on planning the learning activities, and observing and assessing what and how your child is learning and developing.



What does it mean for me as a parent?

Ensuring my child's safety

Much thought has been given to making sure that your child is as safe as possible. Within the EYFS there is a set of welfare standards that everyone must follow. These include the numbers of staff required in a nursery, how many children a childminder can look after, and things like administering medicines and carrying out risk assessments.

How my child will be learning

The EYFS Framework explains how and what your child will be learning to support their healthy development.

Your child will be learning skills, acquiring new knowledge and demonstrating their understanding through **7 areas of learning and development**.

Children should mostly develop the **3 prime areas** first. These are:

- Communication and language;
- Physical development; and
- Personal, social and emotional development.

These prime areas are those most essential for your child's healthy development and future learning.

As children grow, the prime areas will help them to develop skills in **4 specific areas**. These are:

- Literacy;
- Mathematics;
- Understanding the world; and
- Expressive arts and design.

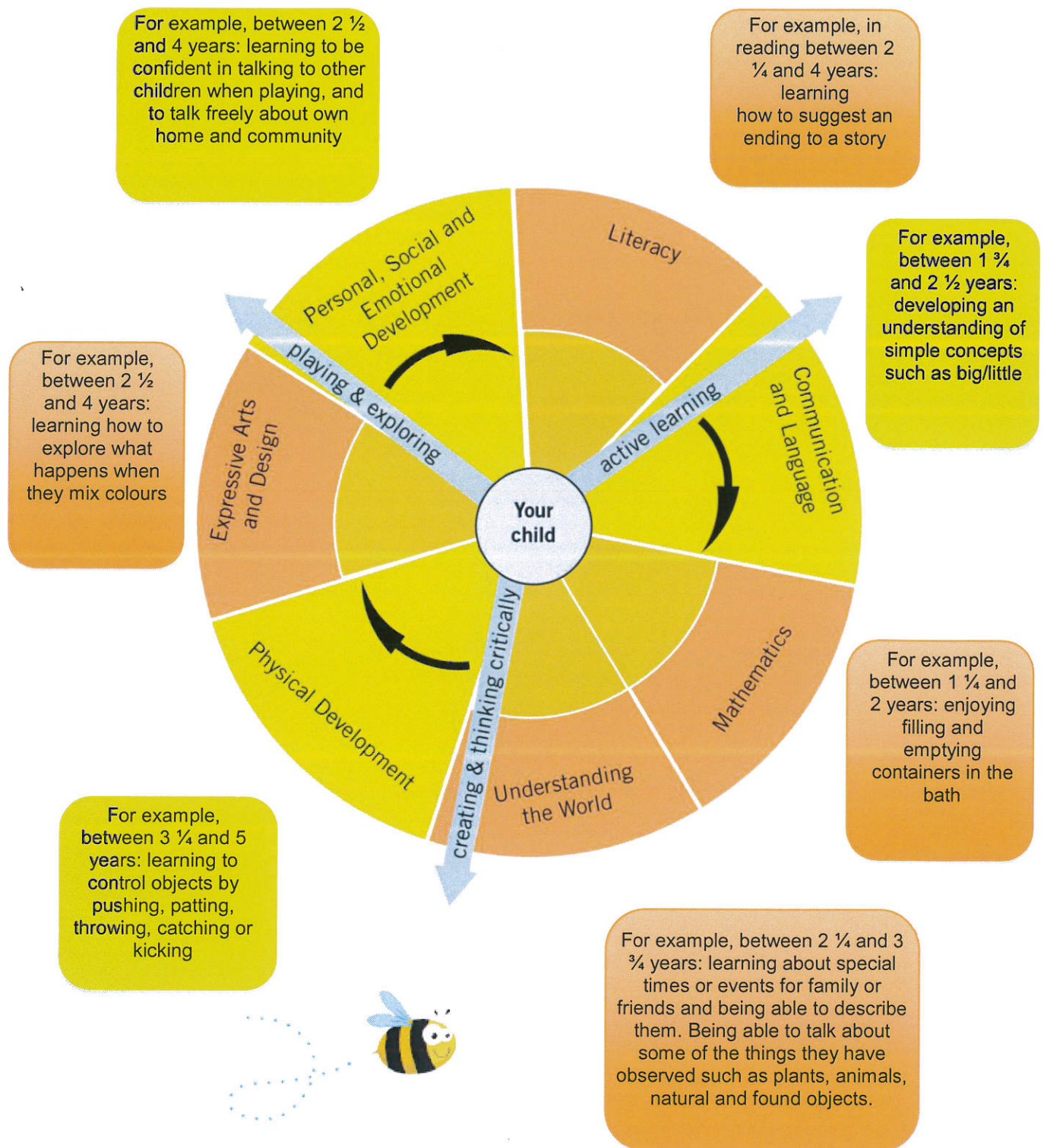


These 7 areas are used to plan your child's learning and activities. The professionals teaching and supporting your child will make sure that the activities are suited to your child's unique needs. This is a little bit like a curriculum in primary and secondary schools, but it's suitable for very young children, and it's designed to be really flexible so that staff can follow your child's unique needs and interests.

Children in the EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside.



The diagram below gives examples of the areas of learning and development and shows the links between the way in which your child learns and what they learn.



As a mum or dad, how can I help with my child's learning?

All the fun activities that you do with your child at home are important in supporting their learning and development, and have a really long lasting effect on your child's learning as they progress through school.

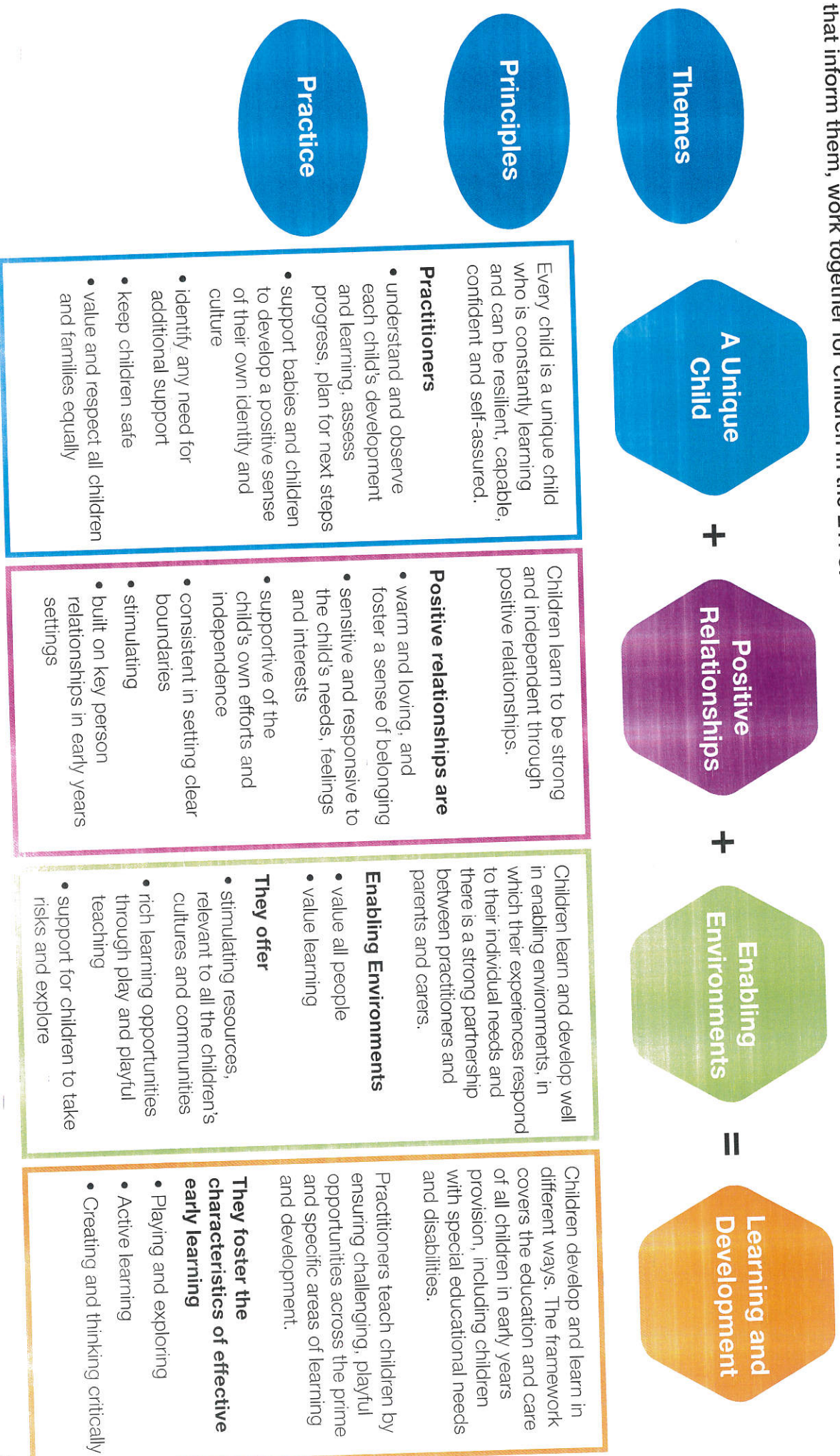
Even when your child is very young and is not yet able to talk, talking to them helps them to learn and understand new words and ideas. If you make the time every day to do some of the following things with your child it will make a real difference to your child's confidence as a young learner.



If you're looking for new ideas for things to do then find out what is on offer at your local children's centre. Many offer 'messy play' activities which you and your child can join in with, and many of the activities they provide are free. Staff can also give you advice about the kinds of books or other activities your child might enjoy at different ages.

Children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They actively reach out to interact with other people, and in the world around them. Development is not an automatic process, however. It depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments.

The four themes of the EYFS underpin all the guidance. This document - Development Matters - shows how these themes, and the principles that inform them, work together for children in the EYFS.



| Characteristics of Effective Learning | |
|---|--|
| Playing and exploring – engagement Finding out and exploring Playing with what they know Being willing to 'have a go' | |
| Active learning – motivation Being involved and concentrating Keeping trying Enjoying achieving what they set out to do | |
| Creating and thinking critically – thinking Having their own ideas Making links Choosing ways to do things | |

| Area of Learning and Development | | Aspect |
|--|--|---|
| Prime Areas | | |
| Personal, Social and Emotional Development | | Making relationships |
| | | Self-confidence and self-awareness |
| | | Managing feelings and behaviour |
| Physical Development | | Moving and handling |
| | | Health and self-care |
| Communication and Language | | Listening and attention |
| | | Understanding |
| | | Speaking |
| Specific areas | | |
| Literacy | | Reading |
| | | Writing |
| Mathematics | | Numbers |
| | | Shape, space and measure |
| Understanding the World | | People and communities |
| | | The world |
| | | Technology |
| Expressive Arts and Design | | Exploring and using media and materials |
| | | Being imaginative |

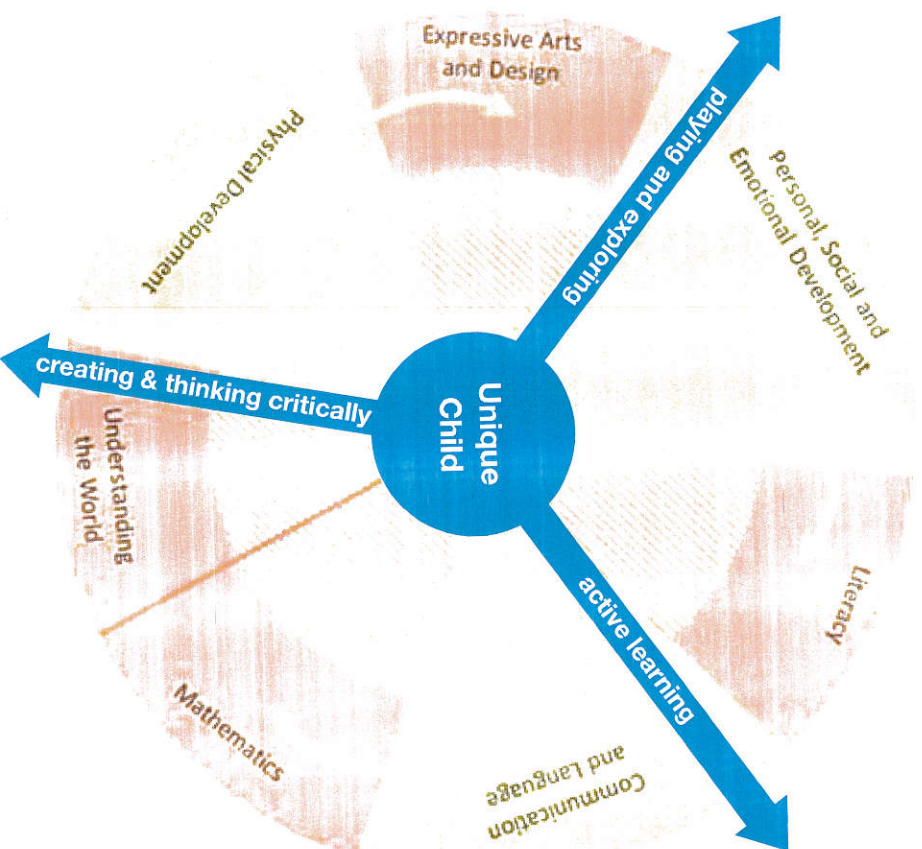
The Characteristics of Effective Learning and the prime and specific Areas of Learning and Development are all interconnected.

- The ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment – playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically – underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

- The **prime** areas begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in all other areas. The prime areas continue to be fundamental throughout the EYFS.

- The **specific** areas include essential skills and knowledge. They grow out of the prime areas, and provide important contexts for learning.

- The Unique Child reaches out to relate to people and things through the **Characteristics of Effective Learning**, which move through all areas of learning.
- playing and exploring
 - active learning
 - creating and thinking critically



- Specific** areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.
- Literacy
 - Mathematics
 - Understanding the World
 - Expressive Arts and Design

Children develop in the context of relationships and the environment around them.

This is unique to each family, and reflects individual communities and cultures.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

| Characteristics of Effective Learning | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| 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"> • 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"> • 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 | |

Children develop at their own rates, and in their own ways. The development statements and their order should not be taken as necessary steps for individual children. They should not be used as checklists. The age/stage bands overlap because these are not fixed age boundaries but suggest a typical range of development.

| Characteristics of Effective Learning | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| Creating and Thinking Critically <i>thinking</i> | A Unique Child: observing how a child is learning | Positive Relationships: what adults could do | Enabling Environments: what adults could provide |
| | <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 <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 <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"> 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. 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. 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"> In planning activities, ask yourself: <i>Is this an opportunity for children to find their own ways to represent and develop their own ideas?</i> Avoid children just reproducing someone else's ideas. 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. 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. |

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Why Early Years Matters



“The EYFS is a play-based framework that acknowledges that every child is unique and that they learn and develop at different rates and in different ways.

“The aim of the EYFS is to support schools, nurseries and childminders to make sure that children from all backgrounds have the same opportunities and life chances as the most advantaged.

“With the EYFS, parents will be sure that their children, irrespective of the type of setting they attend, will get the same excellent standards of learning and care.”

*Beverley Hughes,
Children’s Minister*

Every parent knows that a child’s experiences in their first few years are crucial, which is why the Government is making the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory as of 1 September 2008. The EYFS will ensure that all under fives in childcare benefit from a safe, secure and happy environment where they can play and develop.

Experiences in their early years can benefit children in developing social skills and their ability to learn and good quality childcare has been shown to benefit children right through primary school. The EYFS is aimed at providing the help teachers and professionals have told us they need in order to give children the best start in life.

At the heart of the EYFS is the principle that young children need to play in order to have fun, make friends and to begin to learn and understand about the world around them. The EYFS is already in action in many settings. Those who have already started using it have received it with enthusiasm.

“Tuning into young children is not just about what they are telling us verbally but also watching for non-verbal cues and picking up on when children are not engaged in an activity. This is what the EYFS enables us to do well.”

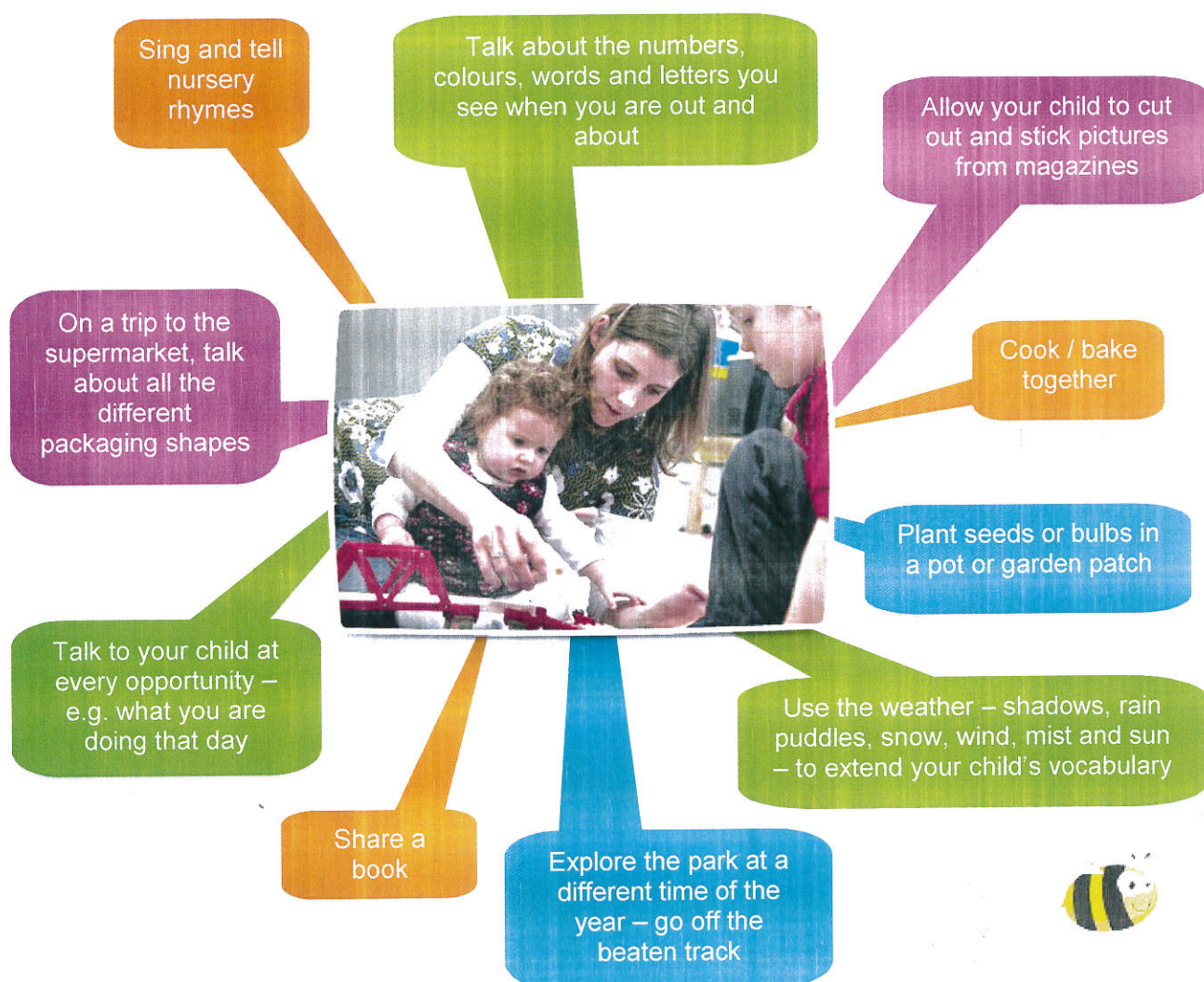
*Bev Hanson, Rowanfield Children’s Centre,
Cheltenham*

Ensuring the welfare and safety of children is a fundamental part of the EYFS. The standards made statutory by the EYFS will reassure parents that by using childcare they are doing the best thing for their child, who will be safe and well looked after. It also emphasises the importance of working closely with parents which will help to reassure them about the welfare of their child and also encourage them to get more involved with their child’s development both at home and when they are at nursery or with a childminder.

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