

# Learning and Development

Children are developing all the time and their learning reflects this. So, for example, when a child can pull themselves up to stand they can suddenly reach things they couldn't get to before, or when they learn new words they begin to label objects such as a ball or a drink, or ask questions 'what's that?'.

The Revised EYFS uses the term Learning and Development to describe seven areas of learning. These are all related to each other; however they are divided into Prime and Specific Areas.

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## Prime areas

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

## Specific areas

- Literacy
  - Mathematics
  - Understanding the World
  - Expressive Arts and Design
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In addition the Revised EYFS refers to the different ways that children learn as the Characteristics of Learning:

**Playing and exploring:** children investigate and experience things and 'have a go';

**Active learning:** children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements;

**Creating and thinking critically:** children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Together with the Prime and Specific areas these comprise the knowledge, skills and experiences that are developmentally appropriate for children from birth to 5 years. Underpinning all areas are the EYFS Principles.

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## The Prime Areas:

### 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 how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

This area develops children's positive sense of themselves. It teaches about having respect for oneself and others, developing social skills and a good attitude to learning. To give children the best opportunities through Positive Relationships, adults form caring relationships with all children. In Enabling Environments opportunities for play and learning are created that help children embrace differences between themselves and others. Learning and Development experiences are planned to promote all round development.

PSED is made up of these aspects:

Self-Confidence and Self-Awareness

Managing Feelings and Behaviour

Making Relationships

### Communication and Language

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.

This area provides children with opportunities for speaking and listening and ignites children's interest in reading and writing. To give children the best opportunities for developing Communication and Language Positive Relationships support children to communicate their ideas and thoughts with each other and with adults. Enabling Environments contain signs, symbols, words, songs and notices. They also have books and pictures that take into account interests, backgrounds and cultures.

CL is made up of these aspects:

Listening and attention

Understanding

Speaking

## 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. This area provides opportunities for children to be active and develop their co-ordination, manipulation and movement. It develops understanding of the importance of being physically active and eating healthily. To give children the best opportunities through Positive Relationships children are supported in their understanding of exercise, sleep and eating to promote health. Activities in Enabling Environments both indoors and outdoors encourage energetic physical play. In Learning and Development, snack times promote social skills and the importance of making healthy food choices.

PD is made up of these aspects:

Moving and Handling

Health and Self-Care

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## The Specific Areas:

### Literacy

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

LD is made up of these aspects:

Reading

Writing

### 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.

This area supports children's understanding in different situations by providing opportunities to explore, practise, learn and talk. They practise skills and gain confidence and competence. To give children the best opportunities through Positive Relationships children use mathematical

words and ideas in their play. Enabling Environments have resources for counting, calculating and shape available indoors and outdoors. In Learning and Development, stories, songs and imaginative play help with mathematical understanding.

Mathematics is made up of these aspects:

Numbers

Shape, Space 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.

This area offers children opportunities to explore and observe the environment, living things and objects. To give children the best opportunities through Positive Relationships, parents' and carers' knowledge extend children's experiences of the world. In Enabling Environments, open-ended questions like, "How can we..?" and "What would happen if...?" are used. Learning and Development is based on first-hand experiences to observe, predict, make decisions and discuss.

UW is made up of these aspects:

People and Communities

The World

Technology

## Expressive Arts and Design

Involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology. This area supports children's curiosity and play. They explore and share their thinking, ideas and feelings in music, in art, movement and dance, role play and technology. To give children the best opportunities through Positive Relationships children value their own unique ideas and those of others rather than reproducing those of someone else. Enabling Environments are stimulating and originality and expressiveness are valued. Learning and Development experiences allow children to express themselves through various types of representation.

EAD is made up of these aspects:

Exploring and Using Media and Materials

Being Imaginative

# Play & Learning

Play underpins the EYFS. It also underpins learning and all aspects of children's development.

Through play, children develop language skills, their emotions and creativity, social and intellectual skills. For most children their play is natural and spontaneous although some children may need extra help from adults.

Play takes place indoors and outdoors and it is in these different environments that children explore and discover their immediate world. It is here they practise new ideas and skills, they take risks, show imagination and solve problems on their own or with others.

The role that adults have is crucial. Adults provide time and space and appropriate resources. These might include clothes, boxes, buckets, old blankets that will inspire play and fire children's imaginations. They observe play and join in when invited, watching and listening before intervening. They value play and provide safe but challenging environments that support and extend learning and development.

## **Learning through Play: Three to Five**

Providing high quality planned experiences for children's play is an important way for adults to support children's learning that is both enjoyable and challenging. When children play, they are learning at the highest level. Play can extend certain areas of their learning – for example, developing language skills by promoting talk between children or introducing new vocabulary that they use and act out in their play. One example of a planned experience for older children in the EYFS would be setting up a health centre in a classroom. Children enjoy finding out about stethoscopes and Xrays, role playing different jobs, diagnosing a sore throat and even bandaging a pretend broken arm.

Such a playful approach to learning builds on children's interests and responds to their ideas for play and also allows scope for structured activities to teach specific skills and knowledge.