

EARLY YEARS ECO - SCHOOLS

GUIDANCE

The EYFS (DfE 2014:9) notes that in planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

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

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early year's settings. All areas of learning and development are important and are inter-connected.

There are three Prime Areas –

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

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

Listening and attention: Opportunities can be created in both indoors and outdoors with a mixture of activities, discussions and texts. By provide a wide and diverse range of information and text for stories, rhyming games and songs it can challenge and offer alternative thinking around ESD. For example, children/babies in the settings can create their own Eco songs or raps giving them a sense of ownership and participation.

Understanding: Use a range of questions, instructions and debates, whilst discussing key environmental issues both local and global. Ensure opportunities for how and why questions generated by the children themselves.

Speaking: Recognise the diverse and cultural perspectives of the setting/community and offer opportunities for talking and developing ESD narratives.

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.

Moving and handling: Whilst indoors and outdoors the children/babies have opportunities to be physically active on a range of sensorial surfaces and textures. They will also utilise a range of equipment and develop confidence in handling tools, animals and plants, whilst understanding how to care for them and protect their environment.

Health and self-care: They understand why it is important to develop independent healthy lifestyles both through physical activity and nutrition. They have opportunities to grow and sell their own food and understand about hygienic practices.

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.

Self-confidence and self-awareness: Children have opportunities to develop their confidence through their own initiatives and entrepreneurial thinking, whilst trying new activities and participating in a democratic process.

Managing feelings and behaviour: Children develop an awareness of equitable practice through dialogue, listening and participatory practice. They embrace and value cultural and social justice, sharing ideas, knowledge and recognising the rights of all within the setting.

Making relationships: Children have opportunities to develop relationships within the setting, the community and globally. Through activities or stories children understand about social and cultural interdependence and intergenerational contexts.

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.

Reading: Having opportunities to read environmental print and texts, design posters and make setting big books, both inside and out. Utilise a selection of texts that embrace indigenous and cultural narratives.

Writing: Utilise a range of materials both inside and outside. They gain confidence designing resources, posters, text to support ESD activities within the setting and community. Develop sensorial experiences with a range of open ended materials and water, mud, sand and foliage.

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.

Numbers: Children have opportunities to use numbers and money in real life contexts, for example cake sales/children in need. They understand issues concerning fair trade and why they should shop locally to support their community. Use numbers to solve ESD problems or gather data.

Shape, space and measures: Children understand patterns and shapes in the environment (Plants, wildlife, animals). They understand about developing spaces for ESD and how they would be responsible for them. Use positional language in real life situations.

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.

People and communities: Children need to be aware of universal rights of all throughout the world and develop confidence to discuss and challenge. To be able to understand and recognise cultural differences through stories, visits, community participation and global practice. To develop community based practice locally.

The world: To observe and understand their world, locally, nationally and as a global citizen. To recognise and develop a bio-centric view of their world and how they are part of its future.

Technology: To recognise that technology leaves a carbon footprint and consider different ways to conserve energy both in the setting, at home and within their community. (For example, turning off lights, using recycled paper, generating less printing and limiting use of the dryer.)

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.

Exploring and using media and materials: Using open ended natural materials than provide sensorial experiences for babies and children. Ensure a wide and diverse range of practical activities are offered – For example, making musical instruments from recycled materials, dancing to cultural songs , cooking and baking using local indigenous produce and using their local environment to inspire (e.g. Natural wildlife and beach materials) .

Being imaginative: Recognise the diverse ways that children can express themselves and encourage participatory co-construction practice.