

Early Years Policy

Rationale & Aim

The setting aims to encourage all children to progress and achieve their potential through using the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework to observe, assess, plan, amend and evaluate each step of the way for every child's individual needs.

The setting aims to:

- provides high quality care and education for children primarily below statutory school age
- work in strong partnership with parents to help children to learn and develop
- add to the life and well-being of its local community
- offer children and their parents a service, which promotes equality and values diversity
- keep up to date with current guidelines and publications for Early Years.

As a member of the setting, your child:

- is in a safe and stimulating environment
- is given generous care and attention, because of our high ratio of adults to children
- has the chance to join with other children and adults to live, play, work and learn together
- is helped to take forward her/his learning and development by being helped to build on what she/he already knows and can do
- has a personal key person who makes sure your child makes satisfying progress
- in a nursery which sees you as a partner in helping your child to learn and develop
- and is in a nursery in which parents help to shape the service it offers.

Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by the setting helps children to continue to do this by providing all of the children with interesting activities that are right for their age and stage of development.

The nursery provides a curriculum for all children aged between 0 and 5 years called the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (EYFS). This curriculum is set out in a document, published by the Department for Education and Skills. All practitioners follow the EYFS Statutory Framework and the EYFS Development Matters guidance. The reformed EYFS is in place from September 2012 and the setting will ensure it is implemented and staff fully trained in its changes and developments as standard.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework provides a wealth of information on four themes which underpin the EYFS; A Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments, Learning and Development. Within these themes, there are principles and practice. All children of all ages must be offered and experience these themes. The final theme

is Learning and Development and this covers three prime areas of learning and four specific areas of learning that all children should experience and cover. There are aspects within each area as listed below.

These are:

Prime areas of learning and aspects:

- personal, social and emotional development (PSED - making relationships, self-confidence and self-awareness, managing feelings and behaviour)
- physical development (PD - moving and handling, health and self-care)
- communication and language (CL - listening and attention, understanding, speaking)
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Specific areas of learning and aspects:

- literacy (L - reading, writing)
- mathematics (M - numbers, shape, space and measure)
- understanding the world (UW - people and communities, the world, technology)
- expressive arts and design (EA&D - exploring and using media and materials, being imaginative)
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Within the reformed EYFS 2012 there are Characteristics of Effective Learning which move through all areas of learning. They are; playing and exploring — engagement; active learning — motivation; creating and thinking critically — thinking. Practitioners make reference to these characteristics and identify how children learn when observing children and assessing children. They are also shared with parents at each termly progress report along with the three prime areas of learning.

For each area of learning, the EYFS sets out development stages that children may follow as they progress. However, we recognise that all children are individual and develop at their own pace. The final development stages for children aged between 40 and 60 months are expected to be reached at the end of a child's first year at Primary School (Foundation or Reception class).

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

This area of children's development covers (although this list is not exhaustive):

- having a positive approach to learning and finding out about the world around them
- having confidence in themselves and their ability to do things in varying sized groups, and valuing their own achievements
- being able to get on, work and make friendships with other people, both children and adults; and develop resilience
- being acknowledged and affirmed by people in their lives and making secure attachments with a key person
- being made aware of where to go to ask for help if they are worried about their own safety or that of another child

- becoming aware of - and being able to keep to - the rules which we all need to help us to look after ourselves, other people and our environment including understanding, assessing and responding to risk
- being able to dress and undress themselves, and look after their personal hygiene needs
- and being able to expect to have their ways of doing things respected and to respect other people's ways of doing things.

Physical Development (PD)

This area of children's development covers (although this list is not exhaustive):

- gaining control over the large movements which we can make with our arms, legs and bodies, so that they can run, jump, hop, skip, roll, climb, balance and lift
- gaining control over the small movements we can make with our arms, wrists and hands, so that they can pick up and use objects, tools and materials
- learning about the importance of - and how to look after - their bodies
- building confidence in taking manageable risks in their play
- providing time to support children's understanding of good health.

Communication and Language (CL)

This area of children's development covers (although this list is not exhaustive):

- being able to use conversation with one other person, in small groups and in large groups to talk with and listen to others; and become skilful communicators
- adding to their vocabulary by learning the meaning of - and being able to use - new words
- being able to use words to describe their experiences
- developing their ability to understand instructions
- getting to know the sounds and letters which make up the words we use
- listening to - and talking about - stories and environmental sounds.

Literacy (L)

This area of children's development covers (although this list is not exhaustive):

- knowing how to handle books and that they can be a source of stories and information
- enjoying books and story/rhyme time activities through varied genres and means including books, CDs and other electronic forms
- developing their use of writing and mark making resources
- knowing the purposes for which we use writing.

Mathematics (M)

This area of children's development covers (although this list is not exhaustive):

- building up ideas about how many, how much, how far and how big
- building up ideas about patterns, the shape of objects and parts of objects, and the amount of space taken up by objects

- starting to understand that numbers help us to answer questions about how many, how much, how far and how big
- building up ideas about how to use counting to find out how many
- being introduced to finding the result of adding more or taking away from the amount we already have
- being given sufficient time, space and encouragement to discover mathematical ideas, language and real-life problems during their daily play
- being given opportunities for mathematical exploration both indoors and outdoors.

Understanding of the world (UW)

This area of children's development covers (although this list is not exhaustive):

- finding out about the natural world and how it works
- finding out about the fictional world and how it works
- learning how to choose - and use - the right tool for a task
- learning about computers, how to use them and what they can help us to do
- teaching children how to keep themselves safe on-line (if internet accessible for children) and parents are informed how to encourage safe access at home
- starting to put together ideas about past and present and the links between them
- beginning to learn about their locality and its special features
- learning about their own and other cultures thorough the local and wider community and parents/carers
- learning about the world them through exploration, questioning and stimulating indoor and outdoor environments.

Expressive Arts and Design (EA&D)

This area of children's development covers (although this list is not exhaustive):

- using paint, materials, music, dance, words, stories and role-play to express their ideas and feelings
- becoming interested in the way that paint, materials, music, dance, words, stories and role-play can be used to express ideas and feelings
- making connections and taking manageable risks during play
- children initiating their own ideas and making decisions/choices
- exploring different processes, media and materials to create new things as a result
- including children's specific religious or cultural beliefs relating to particular forms of art or representation
- using their imagination in all areas of play.

Play helps young children to learn and develop through doing and talking, which research has shown to be the means by which young children think. The setting uses the EYFS to ensure all children have experience of all prime and specific areas of learning and promote sustained shared thinking when appropriate. In some of these activities children decide how they will use the activity and, in others, an adult takes the lead in helping the children to take part in the activity. In most cases where an activity or idea is introduced to the children through an

adult led or directed activity, it will inevitably roll into a child initiated activity and the child will take control of their learning through their own unique play experiences! In all activities information from the EYFS has been used to decide what equipment to provide and how to provide it.

Observation, Assessment & Planning Overview in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

The Statutory Framework sets out the legal requirements that providers must ensure they meet; learning and development requirements and welfare requirements. The Development Matters guidance is an excellent resource for access to the development stages across all ages for each of the prime and specific areas of learning. Within the guidance, practitioners can use the Positive Relationships and Enabling Environments sections to help identify what they could do and provide to discover if a child has reached a particular stage of development seen in the Unique Child section or support a child through it. Practitioners should remember that all stages of development listed in the guidance can be flexible as children will develop in different areas at different times and ages. All staff have regular training and support on the EYFS.

The Process of Planning and the Essential Tools

Our new planning removes a lot of the historical paperwork, is shorter and more meaningful. It consists in:

A long term plan (i.e a yearly plan, divided by months, where we decide in advance about what broad themes we will follow each month). Routines are also part of the Long Term Plan and so there should be a note to go with the routines about what happens at circle time and details about our adult-led input. Ex: "our circle time consists of a welcome song, leaning about theme-related vocabulary, theme-related concepts, one of the medium term plan themes and a goodbye song."

A Medium Term Plan will be written each term for the following four months. This will contain a more detailed annotation of what will happen during that term. For example, if in September we plan to do a theme on All About Me, in the medium term plan we will describe what this entails (talking about our family, our community, getting photos of the children's home life, talking about belonging, golden rules, pets, settling in...). For the preschool unit, this plan will include a note about Jolly Phonics and Letters and Sounds (for example: "Our Jolly Phonics Program will start in the week of... and we will proceed by learning about.... for the next weeks"). This plan is divided into months and the theme/s planned for that month will form the base of our planning.

Focused Observations. These will be placed in the child's Learning Journeys. Once a term, each child will have **at least one** focused observation. These will be done on Tapestry and will have links to the EYFS and the Developmental Matters areas of learning and developmental stages. Possible Lines of Development (PLODS or Next Steps) will be devised to help the child progress. A rota will be placed on the planning board so each key person will know what child

they have to observe and when. If a child is absent that week, his/her name will be swapped with a child who is present. When doing a focused observation, a picture/film is taken and they will both be added to the child's Learning Journey on Tapestry.

Spontaneous and Communication-focused observations are also made regularly. They consist in snap-shot observations of a child, contain a link to the EYFS and a PLOD. The PLODs are placed on the planning board, ready to be incorporated into the OAP cycle.

From the medium-term plan and the monthly theme plan, staff devise **Learning Provocatives and Challenges**. These will be usually led by adults, or at least introduced by adults. The Challenges and Provocatives can be linked to your planning, or can come from the children's interests. These activities/resources will be added to the planning board in the relevant areas.

Challenges can be: let the children build something in a group; see how the children respond to planting seeds; let the children figure out how to fill in a tray with water from a big bucket and some small receptacles (outside); see if the babies can work out how to make a tower; see if the babies can learn new vocabulary related to different textures...).

The planning "map" will be alive, things are constantly added and removed. Any activity, challenge or provocative that has happened in the room is then added to the Planning Book and evaluated.

This "whiteboard" planning enables us to bring the children's learning and development forward more efficiently.

The Learning Journey

The Learning Journey is a child's individual file illustrating their experiences, achievements and developments during their time at nursery and at home as the child's development outside of the setting can be built upon and practitioner's must work in strong partnership with parents or other settings where relevant, to fully enable a child to develop accordingly. It is an on-going record that is added to regularly and stays with the child as he or she progresses through the nursery. Parental input can be added into the Learning Journey when appropriate so that a more complete picture of the child can be seen through the diary.

Each child's Learning Journey must be added to when appropriate e.g. has slept in a nursery cot for the first time and has a photograph and/or reference with it, or has been developing their knowledge of the world by digging up mini beats in the garden and there is a note entered stating this and possibly a photograph to go with it. Every child's learning journey must be added to on a regular basis. Learning journeys when possible should be visual and include photographs of the significant moment or stage of development reached including the reference to the EYFS and stage of development.

At the end of the autumn, spring and summer terms, each key person will be responsible for writing a progress report on how a child has progressed within the three prime areas and

comment on their characteristics of learning. This will ensure a system of documenting, monitoring and evaluation of each child's individual stage of development. The child's parent will be invited to contribute to the progress report and with the child's key person, share and decide the next steps for future development. If a child attends another childcare setting and if permission has been sought from parents/carers, we will send a copy of the child's termly progress report to the child's other setting as a means of communicating with other settings. We hope this will add to the overall learning and development of the child if we work in partnership with such settings.

After careful consideration and many discussions with some Early Years staff members and colleagues who use this system, we have decided to start using an online Learning Journey software called Tapestry.

By logging on with a secure username and password parents/carers are able to access their child's learning journey. Parents/carers are only able to view their own child's file and all information is stored on a highly secure server, which is monitored closely.

Tapestry online learning journeys allow parents/carers to view their child's observations and photographs from their time at Little Nippers. Updates are done weekly and email notifications are sent. Little Nippers will also reference the children's learning to the EYFS profile. This will keep parents/carers informed of the areas of learning which their child is achieving, and the age band they were working in for the observed activity.

Tapestry allows parents/carers, as the child's primary educator, to add observations and photographs of your own as well as share comments. Our setting would love to hear about learning and WOW moments from home to share with the children at nursery. Parents/carers will also be able to share with keyworkers activities that their child has particularly enjoyed.

Because children play in close proximity with their friends it does not reflect a true picture of their time at Little Nippers if photographs are only of a single child. Therefore photographs of your child may appear on their friends learning journeys (Permission is always sought prior to publishing group photographs).

E-safety is extremely important to us at Little Nippers and we therefore ask you to provide us with the information included in Appendix 1 and to sign the agreement to show that you have read, understood and agree with our guidelines. Should parents wish to opt out of the online system, we can continue to use a paper-based online journey for their child.

When a child leaves Little Nippers, we will be able to provide parents with a CD or a printed version of the online journey.

Appendix 1: Agreed guidelines for accessing and using Tapestry 'Online Learning Journeys'

As a parent/carer I will:

- **Not** publish any of my child's observations or photographs on any social media site.

- Keep the login details within my trusted family.
- I accept that my child's photograph may appear on their friends learning journal account and I may see pictures of my child's friends on my child's personal account.
- I will speak to a member of staff if I experience any difficulties accessing my child's learning journey.
- I agree to the above guidelines and have read accompanying information sheets.

Name of child: Date of birth:.....

Print name:.....

Signature:..... Date:

Email:

By signing and returning this form and providing us with an e mail address you agree to Little Nippers creating a Tapestry online learning journey for your child.

Appendix 2: Online Learning Journey – Parents' Guide

Introduction

All children attending Little Nippers can have a personal on-line Learning Journey which records photos, observations and comments, in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage, to build up a record of your child's experiences during their time with us.

We use Tapestry, a system which is hosted in the UK on secure servers. You will have secure access (via email address and password) to your child's Learning Journey and, in addition to viewing our contributions, we encourage you to add to it by uploading photos and comments, or commenting on observations made by us.

Where do I start?

Once you have given us an email address, we will set up an account for you. Go to <https://eylj.org> on your computer, or if you have an iPhone or iPad, visit the iTunes store and download the Tapestry app from the Education section (search for Tapestry Mobile). Login using your email address and the password we give you. We strongly recommend that you change your password on your first visit.

Changing your settings On the computer

At the top right of your screen you will see your name, and selecting this will give you the option to 'Edit Preferences'. Choose this option and you will be presented with a screen giving you the option to change your email address and password.

You also have the option to receive an email whenever a new observation is added to your child's Learning Journey – just tick or untick the relevant box if you would like to change this setting.

On iPhone/iPad

To change your settings on the iPhone/iPad app, click the 'cog' button on the bottom right hand side of the application. This enables you to change the password and/or email address.

Viewing my child's Learning Journey

Once logged in, you will see your child's observations on your home screen in a list – selecting any one of these will open up the observation for you to look at. You may add comments in the box at the bottom of the observation if you would like to - and we would love to receive such comments!

Adding an entry to my child's Learning Journey

Choose the 'Add Observation' option (or the 'plus' icon on your iPhone/iPad) and add the relevant information in the boxes on screen. Photos and videos may be uploaded by choosing the 'add media' option. When you have saved your observation, you may go back to the home screen at any time by choosing 'home'.

Progress Matters

At the end of each term, key persons will complete an overview of development for each child. This will include a description of how each child is progressing and developing across the three prime areas of the EYFS and the characteristics of learning. This will be stored in a child's Learning Journey on Tapestry. In addition the key persons will decide the stage of development for each child across all prime and specific areas of learning on a grid. This data will then be collated and transformed into visual charts for each area of learning on Tapestry.

These charts enable the key persons to clearly see how their children are progressing. It will highlight any areas that children are excelling in or falling below in. It will allow children to be identified at an early stage if they need additional support and it may identify staff that need additional training in assessing children's stages of development.

Staff are able to be more reflective practitioners using these graphs as they may need to bring in new challenges into their rooms/units and ensure their knowledge in all areas of learning are thorough.

The setting EYP/Manager will then oversee an action plan for each room/unit that will detail an analysis of the graphs and any future action that may come from this assessment, who will do it, when and how.

EYFS Coverage

The EYFS Coverage Sheets acts as a way of ensuring we observe a child across the whole seven areas of learning each year. Once a month, the Manager/EYP for the setting will download the EYFS coverage for each room from Tapestry, print it and discuss any relevant information with the room leaders. We can thus ensure we are delivering the EYFS effectively. This information is to be kept with all planning on display in the room next to the short term planning,

Baseline Assessment

Within the first month of a child starting their journey at nursery, a Baseline Assessment Sheet will be completed on Tapestry and be part of the child's Learning Journey. This initial assessment asks the practitioner to write a short statement across the three prime areas and comment on the child's characteristics of learning since they have known the child at nursery.

Progress Check at 2 years old

As part of the reformed EYFS 2012, we will carry out a progress check at age 2 years to provide for early intervention as and when necessary. We will endeavour to liaise with the child's health visitor so that the child's parent may share the setting progress check with the health visitor at the child's 2 year old check. This check is written on Tapestry, is saved as a termly progress report and will be shared with parents as standard and their input sought. We adhere to current guidance and requirements for the 2 year old progress check and work in close partnership with Plymouth Early Years to ensure consistency for all.

Transfer Document

At the end of a child's journey at nursery, usually before they go to school, a transfer document will be completed by the child's key person. It will detail information for the child's next teacher on their stages of development within the EYFS and aid the transition process between nursery and school. A copy will be sent to the child's school and a copy given to the child's parent/carer. We will write the reports on Tapestry and add them to the Plymouth City Council's Early Years pro-forma prior to sending them to school.

This policy was adopted at a meeting between John Chilton and Caroline Paternotte-Chilton held on: September 30th 2017

To be reviewed in the next 12 months.

