

# Curriculum

Welcome to the first newsletter in preparation for introducing the revised EYFS in September 2021.

In this issue we will be looking at your Curriculum. We are starting with the curriculum as the revised EYFS places the utmost importance on you knowing your children, what they need and why they need it. The seven areas of learning and development shape education programmes in the early years but are not the full curriculum in themselves. An effective curriculum in the early years provides structure and a sense of direction for practitioners and opportunities for all children to learn. It builds on the strengths of the children and introduces rich experiences which are crucial to good child development.

## • The Curriculum: What we want children to learn.

- The curriculum is a top-level plan of everything the early years setting wants the children to learn.
- Planning to help every child to develop their language is vital.
- The curriculum needs to be ambitious. Careful sequencing will help children to build their learning over time.
- Young children's learning is often driven by their interests. Plans need to be flexible.
- Babies and young children do not develop in a fixed way. Their development is like a spider's web with many strands, not a straight line.
- Depth in early learning is much more important than covering lots of things in a superficial way.

**Development Matters Features of effective practice (Sept 2020)**

## What you need to consider

You will need to consider how to devise a curriculum specific to the children in your setting. Children arrive with a wealth of different interests and are motivated to learn through connecting new experiences to what they already know and can do. In thinking about what to include in your curriculum you and your staff will need to consider gathering information from some of the following:

- Discussions with parents – parents know their children, their strengths, their interests and fascinations and what they need to develop.
- Children's interests – children arrive in your setting with different experiences and interests that drive their learning.
- Information about the community of your setting and local area – the general experiences that children are likely to have had (or may have missed) living in the area e.g. Is there a shop, park, woodland? Do children have books at home? Do children arrive with good language and communication skills?
- Understanding your role in the wider learning journey of the children – home/early years setting/school and beyond

The curriculum you devise needs to address the educational programmes from the statutory framework (p8-10). Children are not expected to move through content quickly. The revised EYFS emphasises embedding knowledge, skills and understanding. Therefore, your curriculum needs to allow children opportunities to revisit and experience learning in different ways to support a depth of understanding. It is important not to overload the curriculum with content. All children will need to be able to access the curriculum. Some children will need more support to do this. You need to ensure that the curriculum supports progression, so that children build upon previous experiences in gaining greater knowledge, skill and understanding. For example, in learning to write a sentence, the children first need to have learned to speak in sentences; they need to have the motivation to write, and they need to understand how print works. They also need to have developed the gross and fine motor skills to be able to hold a pencil effectively. This requires many rich and engaging prior experiences and each of these skills will need to be broken down further.

**You will need to think about introducing appropriate rich new ideas and experiences. Think about your children's life experiences outside the setting. Here are some general questions to ask yourself when thinking about devising a curriculum for the children coming to your setting (not an exhaustive list)**

- Do children generally arrive physically able or do they need experiences to support gross motor development?
- Do children spend time outdoors?
- Do children have experiences of spending time in the natural environment or is outdoor play space limited in the local area?
- Are your children familiar with books and stories? Do they have books at home? Do they need to develop a knowledge of a core of stories and books?
- Are children arriving with confidence and independence or do they need support to develop this?
- Do children generally experience a rich vocabulary? Lots of meaningful two-way interactions?
- Do you have children learning English as an additional language?
- Does your curriculum involve children in making their own choices?

## Curriculum insights from one of our Early Adopter Schools

We looked at the children who would be coming into us and the families that we already knew. We tried our best to get to know the new families (and the existing ones) by doing doorstep visits, finding out about children's interests and needs. We spoke to Nurseries that children were coming from to get an overview of the child and the family.

From this and the needs at the current time we planned the beginning of our curriculum. I find by having the beginning of the year as an all about me topic, it allows you to get to know the children and meet their needs as they come into school effectively.

Due to the pandemic, we ensured that we focussed on the prime areas as many of our children had missed a significant time from nursery settings. We have kept this focus throughout the year, ensuring there is designated time on top of continuous provision for the development of gross motor skills (e.g. riding 2 wheeled and balance bike on the large playground) and PSED (e.g. playing board games in small groups)

Our curriculum moved to real life superheroes (key workers) as this was prominent within the children's lives and we held several TEAMS meetings with parents who were key workers, to explain the jobs they do.

I have spent a long time looking out our curriculum, it is based on broad themes of seasons and celebrations which will allow us to follow children's interests as well. We have also a theme of traditional tales as we assessed this was something that many children did not have experience of at home and we wanted to ensure that children had a good grounding in these as they provide so many skills for story-telling and language as well as links to understanding the world.

You may find it useful to look at the policy document from Sheringham Nursery School, where Julian Grenier and his staff explain their eight curricular goals (see attachment).

You can access further vodcasts, webinars and information on Foundation Years website. The links below will take you to YouTube clips about curriculum in the revised EYFS.

[Build your curriculum](#)

[Curriculum next steps](#)

[Meaningful curriculum](#)

Continue to work through the Stepped Approach to EYFS Reforms document. Look out for our own webinar and virtual meetings about curriculum in the coming month.