



Fundamentals of the EYFS Curriculum

Polly Calvert, Early Years Leader

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide. It features a dark blue vertical bar on the far left. A black arrow points to the right from the top of this bar. Several thin, light blue lines curve upwards and to the right from the bottom of the bar, overlapping the main content area.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

- ▶ A curriculum for children up to the age of 5
- ▶ There are 17 Early Learning Goals across 7 areas of learning that children are expected to meet by the end of the Reception year
- ▶ There are three Characteristics of Effective Learning that children should be supported to develop
- ▶ Play and age-appropriate approaches and experiences are crucial

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

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

Communication and Language

'This involves giving children opportunities to speak and listen in a range of situations and to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves.'

Three strands:

- Speaking
- Understanding
- Listening and Attention



Communication and Language – its importance

- We have to be able to communicate to learn, to make friends and to navigate the world around us
- 0-5 is a key period for language acquisition
- **'Reading and writing float on a sea of talk'** – Sue Palmer
- Children who are read to regularly by their parents from a young age achieve better long-term outcomes in all areas
- Language difficulties can impact on self-esteem and behaviour



Communication and Language

What can you do to help?



- Language skills are learned through interactions with **real people in meaningful contexts**
- Limit your own and children's screen time
- Focus on what your child is interested in and talk about it with them
- Walk and Talk, family mealtimes
- Bedtime stories
- Wordless picture books
- Continue to use and celebrate your **home language**
- Create good conditions for listening: give children processing time and a quiet space





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

Making relationships

Managing Feelings and behaviour

PSED – why is it important?



- Studies show that children who are “**emotionally literate**” or who have a high “EQ” succeed better in life – at relationships, at jobs, and more.
- Children who have **strong early attachments** are more able to form positive relationships of their own and regulate their own emotions
- Children who can **identify and manage their own strong feelings** are in a better position to solve their own problems.
- Those who can **recognise and empathise with others’ feelings** are more likely to be able to resolve differences with others.
- If children are unhappy, insecure or overwhelmed by their feelings, they are not able to learn well

Personal, Social And Emotional Development

What can you do?

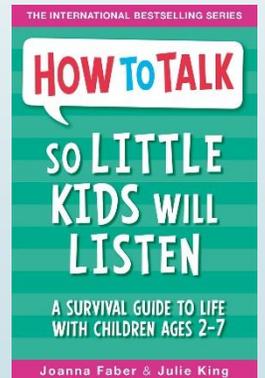
- Ensure children get enough sleep
- **Limit screen time**
- Have established routines with opportunities for choice
- Give time, attention and affection
- Support their growing confidence with **descriptive praise** and opportunities to try new things
- Let them pursue their interests
- Celebrate your special identities

- Support their friendships
- Give them opportunities to work out problems together
- Make some allowances for 'rough and tumble play'



PSED: Managing feelings and behaviour – What can you do?

- Talk about feelings – our own & the children's (happy, sad, angry and scared)
- Respect their big feelings! Try not to be dismissive
- Try to be consistent and proportionate in your responses to difficult behaviour
- Use a range of books, music, drama
- Teach ways of managing angry feelings (when children are calm)
 - Deep breathing
 - Robots and Rag Dolls (tense and release muscle tension)
 - 'Heavy work'
 - Mindfulness



Physical Development

'This 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
- Health and Self-Care





Physical Development – its importance

- Research suggests that we establish movement patterns for life before age 5
- Physical movement impacts on the structure of the brain – body and movement ‘maps’
- Children need to develop their proprioception and vestibular sense through physical activity, as well as balance, coordination and strength
- Children need plenty of activity to avoid obesity and related health issues

- Core and shoulder strength are necessary for sitting and writing
- ‘School readiness’ – physical activity supports concentration
- Taking risks physically supports emotional resilience



Physical Development

What can you do?



- ▶ Help your child to have **three hours of moderate to high level physical activity** per day (91% of children do not meet this guideline from the British Heart Foundation)
- ▶ Get outside into natural environments as much as you can
- ▶ Avoid too much sedentary time
- ▶ Allow for risky play in safe environments (avoid 'be careful')
- ▶ Allow for rough and tumble play
- ▶ Allow for unstructured time
- ▶ If your child appears to have a difficulty with any aspect of one of these prime areas, please discuss this with your class teacher so we can work together for the best possible support.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning



- ▶ Playing and exploring – engagement
- ▶ Active learning – motivation
- ▶ Creating and thinking critically – thinking

▶ Can I do this?

▶ Do I want to do this?

▶ How do I do this?



The Characteristics of Effective Learning - Key points

When you teach a child something you take away forever his chance of discovering it for himself.

Jean Piaget

Through others we become ourselves.

Lev S. Vygotsky

NEVER HELP A CHILD WITH A TASK AT WHICH HE FEELS HE CAN SUCCEED.

MARIA MONTESSORI

The goal of early childhood education should be to activate the child's own natural desire to learn.

Wendy Richman

“What a child can do today with assistance, she will be able to do by herself tomorrow.”

- Lev Vygotsky





The Characteristics of Effective Learning - Key points

- **Play** shapes the brain and rehearses skills for life – mirror neurons
- **Thinking skills and creativity** are developed through playful experiences – private speech and metacognition
- High Scope research: too much direct instruction in the early years is linked to negative long-term outcomes
- Research highlights the importance of a '**mastery orientation**'
- 'Our reach should exceed our grasp' to be successful learners
- Children need to be encouraged to become **self-regulated learners**

Growth Mindset

**Success consists of going
from failure to failure
without loss of enthusiasm.**



Winston Churchill

I am someone who can learn and improve. I am not put off by mistakes or failures. I am resilient and curious. I make choices about how I learn and do things. I ask for help if I need it.

The role of praise

- Too many rewards and too much **general and evaluative** praise makes children feel compelled to perform for adults – reduces their learning power
- Telling a child they are 'good' or 'clever' (or the opposite!) can lead to a fixed mindset and can make them risk-averse – often evident by age 5 (Carole Dweck)

Instead, we need to:

- Give specific and **descriptive praise/acknowledgement**
- Give only occasional and unexpected external rewards

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

What can you do?

- Give children opportunities to play and explore in an open-ended way
- Model learning for life and curiosity
- Allow children to develop their independence – give ‘just enough help’
- Use **growth praise** to develop a mastery orientation
- Give children the opportunity to pursue their own interests

Give children time and attention: **“The quality of your attention determines the quality of other people’s thinking.”**

Nancy Kline (1999)

Thank you!

- ▶ Internet search for:

- ▶ What to Expect, When

https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2015/09/4Children_ParentsGuide_Sept_2015v4_WEB1.pdf

- ▶ Foundation Years website

<https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/>

Polly.calvert@foxprimary.co.uk