

What does the Early Years Foundation Stage mean for my child?

“The EYFS is a play-based framework that acknowledges that every child is unique and that they learn and develop at different rates and in different ways.”

Beverley Hughes, Children's Minister

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) came into effect in September 2008. Ensuring the welfare and safety of children is a fundamental part of the EYFS. The standards made statutory by the EYFS will reassure parents that by using childcare they are doing the best thing for their child, who will be safe and well looked after. It also emphasises the importance of working closely with parents which will help to reassure them about the welfare of their child and also encourage them to get more involved with their child's development both at home and when they are at nursery.

The EYFS is based on four principal themes

- ☆ **A unique child** – every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable and self assured.
- ☆ **Positive relationships** – children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents/carers.
- ☆ **Enabling environments** – the environment plays a key role in supporting a child's development.
- ☆ **Learning and development** – children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates.



All areas of learning are equally important and interconnected

What does this mean for children at The Riverside Nursery?

At The Riverside we follow the children's interests. If a child is not interested in an activity then they won't learn as they need to be actively involved. We want ideas to come from the children so they will get the most out of the experience because it's unique to them.

How do we do this?

There are a number of ways we can find out about children's interests and their unique needs - the Key Person system, observing children and listening to what they tell us they enjoy.

The Key person

- ☺ A key person will be assigned to each child and will make a difference as to whether potential problems are caught early on or not.
- ☺ We value the contribution from parents and carers. Your contribution through discussion with your child's key person about what your child is enjoying at home will help us to plan around their interests.

Observing children whilst they play

- ☺ As nursery practitioners we can recognise children's strengths and needs best by observing them whilst we are playing with them.
- ☺ So, no need for bureaucratic processes to distract us from the children. Short notes and examples of children's work put into their records is all that is needed.
- ☺ Stepping back and watching what children are doing to see what they are getting out of an activity and how they like to learn, will ensure they get the most out of activities that are available.

How do we decide what activities to do at nursery?

- ☺ We have a good range of continuous provision. These are the toys and resources that are available to the children every day both indoors and outdoors.
- ☺ The children will develop independence as they make their own choices about what they want to do.
- ☺ We will enhance this provision by adding resources that are relevant to the children's needs and interests at the time.
- ☺ Careful assessment of observations we have made, along with input from parents, will inform our planning of these activities.

The activities we do at The Riverside are child centred.

There are no 'tick lists' for children's development

- ☺ The milestones set out in the *Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage* are to give nursery practitioners guidance and help to identify if a child may be having problems.
- ☺ Be assured, there is no obligation for any child to reach a particular standard and no 'ticking off' lists of 'goals' to be achieved.
- ☺ Children are not expected to do things at a set age, but at a rate that suits each child's development.
- ☺ Play is the important factor and for children to be having fun as this is how they learn best.

The EYFS will enable children to enjoy fun activities, teach them how to get along with other children and to develop their own personalities.

The Riverside Nursery School will work to promote each child's development across the six areas of learning.

- ☺ Personal, social and emotional development
- ☺ Communication language and literacy
- ☺ Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy
- ☺ Knowledge and understanding of the world
- ☺ Physical development
- ☺ Creative development

Further information about the Early Years Foundation Stage can be obtained from;
Dcsf publications (2008) *Early Years Foundation Stage - Everything You Need to Know*
Dcsf. (2008) *Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage* May 2008
Nottingham: DCSF Publications
www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/eyfs