



Parents' Guide to the EYFS

At Playalong we know that you are the most important person in your child's life. From you they will achieve their first steps in language and communication, develop their physical skills and become social and develop friendships. We are here to support you and your child and it is important for us to work together to help your child develop to their full potential in the early years. For you this means the opportunity to share information about your child's growth and development both at home and at nursery. We send home an orange 'diary' in which we tell you what your child has been learning in Playalong each week and equally, you can use to let us know of any achievements, strengths or areas for development.

What is the Early Years Foundation Stage?

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) looks at the stages of development from birth to the end of the child's first year in school (reception year). These years see the greatest growth and learning for your child.

This is a very important stage as it helps your child get ready for school as well as preparing them for their future learning and successes. From when your child is born up until the age of 5, their early years' experience should be happy, active, exciting, fun and secure; and support their development, care and learning needs.

The EYFS is based on principles which shape good practice in early years settings:—

A unique child

Every child is a unique. They are consistently learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Positive relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

Enabling environments

Children learn and develop well in environments where their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and yourself as a parent and/or carer.

Children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates

Nurseries, pre-schools, reception classes and childminders registered to deliver the EYFS must follow a legal document called the **Early Years Foundation Stage Framework**.

The framework covers the education and care of your child within the early years setting, including children with additional needs.

So what does this mean for you and your child?

The EYFS supports practitioners to provide play experiences that enable your child to expand their knowledge and skills to support their individual learning and development. As practitioners we recognise your child's strengths and areas they may need additional support with. This support may come from within the nursery or from other professionals.

It is important for your child to feel secure in their surroundings, this is aided by having a 'Key Person' within the setting who will get to know you and your child well and build a strong and interactive relationship with you both. Your child's key person spends quality time with their key children as individuals and in their group. If your child's key person is unavailable other practitioners in Playalong will be able to support you and your child as they will also have a good relationship with you both.

The activities and experiences that we provide for your child will underpin the skills they need to work towards the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception.

Your child will be learning skills, acquiring new knowledge and demonstrating their understanding through 7 areas of learning and development.

Children should mostly develop the 3 prime areas first. These are:

- Communication and language;
- Physical development; and
- Personal, social and emotional development.

These prime areas are those most essential for your child's healthy development and future learning.

As children grow, the prime areas will help them to develop skills in 4 specific areas. These are:

- Literacy;
- Mathematics;
- Understanding the world; and
- Expressive arts and design.

These 7 areas are used to plan your child's learning and activities. The professionals teaching and supporting your child will make sure that the activities are suited to your child's unique needs. This is a little bit like a curriculum in primary and secondary schools, but it's suitable for very young children, and it's designed to be really flexible so that staff can follow your child's unique needs and interests.

Children in the EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside.

Our staff are trained towards the highest qualifications in Early Years and use this knowledge and their experience to provide planned activities and projects. We extend your child's learning through these and your involvement is paramount to achieve this.

Your child has their own folder where we keep observations, photos, examples of 'work', individual trackers and other information that is kept as an on-going record of development. We share these with parents/carers when we meet to discuss your child's progress and look towards their future next steps.

Parents can apply for exemption for their child if they feel that the learning and development requirements of the EYFS, or some element(s) of it, conflict with their religious or philosophical convictions.

If you have any further questions about early education or the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) please talk to your child's key person who will be able to offer further information.

If your child attends more than one setting, we would like to work with them to discuss your child's development and work together to provide a cohesive care package for you and your child.

As a mum or dad, how can I help with my child's learning?

All the fun activities that you do with your child at home are important in supporting their learning and development, and have a really long lasting effect on your child's learning as they progress through school.

Even when your child is very young and is not yet able to talk, talking to them helps them to learn and understand new words and ideas. If you make the time every day to do some of the following things with your child it will make a real difference to your child's confidence as a young learner.



If you're looking for new ideas for things to do then find out what is on offer at your local children's centre. Many offer 'messy play' activities which you and your child can join in with, and many of the activities they provide are free. Staff can also give you advice about the kinds of books or other activities your child might enjoy at different ages.