



# Home Learning

A Whimble guide for parents of children in the Foundation Stage.

Home learning is anything that children do outside the normal school day that contributes to their learning. It encompasses a whole variety of activities instigated by teachers and parents to support children's learning.

Home learning is a very important part of education and adds much to a child's development. We also see it as an important way to establish a partnership between teachers and parents.

## The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

There is a statutory curriculum which is specifically for children aged from 0-5. The emphasis is on learning through play and structured activities in a language rich environment. The curriculum covers seven areas of learning.

The **prime** areas begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in all other areas. The prime areas continue to be fundamental throughout the EYFS. There are 3 prime areas:

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

The **specific** areas include essential skills and knowledge. They grow out of the prime areas, and provide important contexts for learning. There are 4 specific areas:

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



Parents will receive feedback on their children's development in these areas.

## Characteristics of Effective Learning:

The ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment - playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically - underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner. The Characteristics of Effective Learning and the prime and specific Areas of Learning and Development are all interconnected.

Occasionally children will need some additional support in specific areas of their learning such as speech and language development or emotional and behavioural development. We work in partnership with a number of external agencies to ensure that children make good progress in school.

## Activities at home that prepare children for learning in school.

To learn effectively, children need their basic physical needs met. These are:

- Hydration
- Nutrition
- Sleep
- Movement
- Becoming ready to learn/concentrate



Children become very tired when they first start school. Even those children who have been in a full-time nursery setting can find the school day exhausting.

All of the above need to be provided so we give children free access to drinks throughout the day and regular snacks, mid morning and mid afternoon. The school day provides children with a balance of periods of activity and the opportunity for quiet, calm and peaceful sessions. We do notice that many children complain of being tired throughout the school day, especially towards the end of the week. We have found that children whose parents concentrate on helping them cope with the school day and limit after school activity settle better to work and make better progress.

Play and free time also have an important role in a child's growth and development. Play provides many benefits to children's development:

- It contributes to physical health and well-being.
- It helps children manage risks, safety and hazards.
- It promotes enjoyment and achievement and motivates children to persevere in their learning.
- It helps children to resolve conflicts, make good choices and feel that they belong.
- It enables children to develop flexible and creative approaches to learning and problem solving.



## Maths rich environments

Providing an environment where children can make links with, and use and apply the maths they do in school will also support learning. Try some of the following:

- Board games help with counting on and back - use two dice and you have addition
- Dominoes and card games for matching
- Clocks with hands - help children to understand the passing of time rather than just reading it - how long until?
- Money - name the change in my pocket
- Fractions with cakes or pizzas - use the language, halves and quarters
- Laying the table, putting the shopping away
- Cooking - counting, weighing and measuring
- Remember that children learn best when they are doing!



## Phonic Activities

We use the Jolly Phonics scheme where children learn 43 phonemes (letter sounds) with actions. These form the basis of all reading and writing activities. Children start by learning to identify the initial sounds in words, followed by the final sounds. When these are secure they then learn to recognise the middle sounds. Children start with simple CVC words eg cat, hen, pin, hat etc. Games and activities that support this are a great way to help children learn eg, eye-spy, matching pairs, magnetic letters etc. We are sure that you will enjoy learning the actions for the phonemes and joining in with your child at home!

# Reading Activities

There are two aspects that children need to develop:

- Reading the words - decoding
- Reading for meaning - comprehension

Decoding -To do this children need to:

- Know, use and blend their letter sounds
- Use picture clues
- Use context clues - think what word might fit

Comprehension -To do this children need opportunities to:

- Talk about the cover of a book and why they have chosen it.
- Talk about characters. Who? Why did they do that? What do you think they will do next?
- Predict story lines, link earlier and later events in stories
- Talk about their response to a book - did they enjoy it - why?



During the Foundation Stage we encourage the children to read by giving books to take home to share with their parents. We hear children read individually and as part of a guided group. Sometimes we ask children to find and collect things that we then use in lessons.

'Curriculum newsletters' give a guide to the work that children are doing in school.

## THE MOST IMPORTANT PART IS TO ENJOY BOOKS AND STORIES

It is really important that children still enjoy plenty of opportunities to have stories and books read to them. This gives children the opportunity to hear and discuss unfamiliar words, talk about a wider range of characters and discuss more complex storylines than in the reading scheme books which match their reading capability. Children should also be encouraged to read a wide variety of texts, fiction, nonfiction, sticker books, signs and labels. If they are reluctant to read provide them with reading that matches their interests. Just get them enjoying reading!

