

You may have already heard of **The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**. This 'early years' stage is vital and the quality of experiences hugely impact on children's future learning and successes throughout their lives, from Primary School and beyond.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework is the legal document which all nurseries, pre-schools, Reception classes and childminders registered to deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage must follow to ensure that 'all children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe'.
(Department for Education)

Young children learn best by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking, both indoors and outdoors, and this play based approach forms the basis of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The EYFS Framework outlines how and what your child will be learning to support their healthy and continuous development.

The EYFS Framework is specifically designed to be flexible to ensure those teaching and supporting. There are **7 areas of Learning and Development** within the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, through which your child will learn skills, acquire new knowledge and develop their understanding. There are 3 Prime Areas of Learning and 4 Specific Areas of Learning on which all learning experiences and activities are based.

The 3 Prime Areas of Learning and Development are absolutely essential for your child's healthy development and future learning, and those which should be developed first. These are:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – is about making relationships and getting along with other children and adults, having confidence and self-awareness, and being able to manage their feelings and behaviour.
- **Communication and Language** – is about developing good listening and attention skills, to have good understanding and being able to speak and express themselves clearly.
- **Physical Development** – is about making and developing large and small movements in a variety of ways, having good control and co-ordination and handling different tools and equipment well. It also covers health and self-care, looking at ways of keeping healthy and safe.

As children grow, the Prime Areas will help them to develop skills in **the 4 Specific Areas of Learning and Development**. These are:

- **Literacy** – is about stories, rhymes, books and reading, and also mark-making and writing.
- **Mathematics** – is about numbers, counting and shape, space and measure.
- **Understanding the World** – is about people and communities and helps children understand about the world in which they live. It also includes Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

- **Expressive Arts and Design** – is about developing different forms of expression, exploring music, dance and song, and encouraging children to be creative in all aspects of their play and learning. It also focuses on media and materials and imaginative ‘pretend’ play.

When planning children’s activities and experiences, we must reflect on the different ways that children learn, what motivates them, and how they engage with others and the environment.

As well as the Prime and Specific Areas of Learning, the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework also includes the **Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning**, which underpin learning and development across all areas and which are vital to children’s overall well-being. These Characteristics of Learning are:

- **Playing and Exploring** – is about children finding out and exploring, playing with what they know and being willing to ‘have a go’.
- **Active Learning** – is about being involved and concentrating, persevering and enjoying achieving what they have set out to do.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – is about children having their own ideas, making links and choosing ways to do things.