



Curriculum

Close to Home delivers the *Early Years Foundation Stage* (EYFS) through two main types of activities, free play and structured activities. During free play children select activities and resources from a choice of educational equipment including creative materials, books, puzzles, constructional toys and imaginative play equipment. It is at these times that children's individual learning priorities are more easily provided for and monitored. In structured activities the aims and objectives are clearly identified during the planning stage and are designed to meet specific outcomes of value to all the children. The emphasis throughout the Close to Home is on learning through play within a relaxed environment.

Children's development and learning

The provision for children's development and learning is guided by The Early Years Foundation Stage (DCFS 2007). Our provision reflects the four key themes and 16 commitments of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

A Unique Child

Child Development: Skilful communicator, competent learner.

Inclusive Practice: Equality and diversity, children's entitlements, early support.

Keeping Safe: Being safe and protected, discovering boundaries, making choices.

Health and Well-being: Growth and developing, physical and emotional wellbeing.

Positive Relationships

Respecting Each Other: Understanding feelings, friendship, professional relationships.

Parents as Partners: Respecting diversity, communication, learning together.

Supporting Learning: Positive interactions, listening to children, effective teaching.

Key Person: Secure attachment, shared care, independence.

Enabling Environments

Observation, Assessment and Planning: Starting with the child, planning, assessment.

Supporting Every Child: Children's needs, the learning journey, working together.

The Learning Environment: The emotional environment, the outdoor environment, the indoor environment.

The Wider Context: Transitions and continuity, multi-agency working, the community.

Learning and Development

Play and Exploration: Learning through experience, adult involvement, contexts for learning.

Active Learning: Mental and physical involvement, decision making, personalised learning.

Creativity and Physical Thinking: Making connections, transforming and understanding, sustained shared thinking.

Areas of Development and Learning.

How we provide for development and learning

Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by Close to Home helps children to continue to do this by providing all of the children with interesting activities that are appropriate for their age and stage of development.

The Areas of Development and Learning comprise:

- personal, social and emotional development;
- communication, language and literacy development;
- problem solving, reasoning and numeracy;
- knowledge and understanding of the world;
- physical development; and
- creative development.

For each area, the practice guidance sets out the Early Learning Goals. These goals state what it is expected that children will know and be able to do by the end of the reception year of their education.

The practice guidance also sets out in 'Development Matters' the likely stages of progress a child makes along their learning journey towards the early learning goals. Close to Home has regard to these matters when we assess children and plan for their learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

Our programme supports children to develop:

- Positive approaches to learning and finding out about the world around them.
- Confidence in themselves and their ability to do things, and valuing their own achievements.
- Their ability to get on, work and make friendships with other people, both children and adults.
- Their awareness of, and being able to keep to, the rules which we all need to help us to look after ourselves, other people and our environment.
- Their ability to dress and undress themselves, and look after their personal hygiene needs; and

- Their ability to expect to have their ways of doing things respected and to respect other people's ways of doing things.

Communication, language and literacy

Our programme supports children to develop:

- Conversational skills with one other person, in small groups and in large groups to talk with and listen to others.
- Their vocabulary by learning the meaning of - and being able to use - new words.
- Their ability to use words to describe their experiences.
- Their knowledge of the sounds and letters that make up the words we use.
- Their ability to listen to, and talk about, stories.
- Knowledge of how to handle books and that they can be a source of stories and information.
- Knowledge of the purposes for which we use writing; and
- Making their own attempts at writing.

Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy

Our programme supports children to develop:

- Understanding and ideas about how many, how much, how far and how big.
- Understanding and ideas about patterns, the shape of objects and parts of objects, and the amount of space taken up by objects.
- Understanding that numbers help us to answer questions about how many, how much, how far and how big.
- Understanding and ideas about how to use counting to find out how many; and
- Early ideas about the result of adding more or taking away from the amount we already have.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Our programme supports children to develop:

- Knowledge about the natural world and how it works.
- Knowledge about the made world and how it works.
- Their learning about how to choose, and use, the right tool for a task.
- Their learning about computers, how to use them and what they can help us to do.
- Their skills on how to put together ideas about past and present and the links between them.
- Their learning about their locality and its special features; and
- Their learning about their own and other cultures.

Physical development

Our programme supports children to develop:

- Increasing control over the large movements that they can make with their arms, legs and bodies, so that they can run, jump, hop, skip, roll, climb, balance and lift.
- Increasing control over the small movements they can make with their arms, wrists and hands, so that they can pick up and use objects, tools and materials, and
- Their understanding about the importance of, and how to look after, their bodies.

Creative development

Our programme supports children to develop:

- The use of paint, materials, music, dance, words, stories and role-play to express their ideas and feelings; and
- Their interest in the way that paint, materials, music, dance, words, stories and role-play can be used to express ideas and feelings.

Our approach to learning and development and assessment

Learning through play

Play helps young children to learn and develop through doing and talking, which research has shown to be the means by which young children learn to think. Close to Home uses the practice guidance Early Years Foundation Stage to plan and provide a range of play activities which help children to make progress in each of the areas of learning and development. In some of these activities children decide how they will use the activity and, in others, an adult takes the lead in helping the children to take part in the activity. In all activities information from the practice guidance to the Early Years Foundation Stage has been used to decide what equipment to provide and how to provide it.

Assessment

We assess how young children are learning and developing by observing them frequently. We use information that we gain from observations, as well as from photographs or videos of the children, to document their progress and where this may be leading them. We believe that parents know their children best and we ask them to contribute to assessment by sharing information about what their children likes to do at home and how they as parents are supporting development.

We make periodic assessment summaries of children's achievement based on our ongoing development records. These form part of children's records of achievement. We undertake these assessment summaries at regular intervals as well as times of transition, such as when a child moves into a different group or when they go on to school.

Records of achievement

Close to Home keeps a record of achievement for each child. Staff and parents working together on their children's records of achievement is one of the ways in which the key person and parents work in partnership. Your child's record of achievement helps us to celebrate together her/his achievements and to work together to provide what your child needs for her/his well-being and to make progress.

Your child's key person will work with you to keep this record. To do this you and she/he will collect information about your child's needs, activities, interests and achievements. This information will enable the key person to identify your child's stage of progress. You and the key person will then decide on how to help your child to move on to the next stage.