



A Parents' Guide to the Early Years Foundation Stage

Welcome to St Leo's and Southmead School Nursery

***This booklet is to tell you a bit about the
Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); what
your child will be learning and how you can
support them at home.***

This booklet will focus on the 7 areas of learning. If you want to know more about the EYFS there is a booklet produced by the Department for Education, which is also available from Nursery and on the schools website.

The revised version of the EYFS came into effect in September 2012. It covers the phase of children's development from birth to the end of their Reception Year (the academic year in which your child turns five).

When your child starts at St Leos and Southmead School Nursery they will already have learnt a great deal and you will continue to be their primary educator. When we work together we can provide the best learning experiences for your child. If you have any questions, please speak to your child's person

Frequently Asked Questions

What is my child learning at nursery?

There are several ways you can find out what your child is learning at nursery:

Talk to their key person about what they have been learning that day. It's always busy at the beginning and end of the session, but the staff are available to chat to and will make an appointment for you.

Read the newsletter - we will write about some of the learning and how you can support it at home. **Borrow your child's development folder and take more time to look at it at home.**

How can I share what my child is learning at home with staff?

Talk to your child's key person when you bring or collect them

Bring in picture, photos or little notes to add to their development folder.

Staff will use what you tell us to inform their planning. I've tried all these ideas

I want to support my child's learning more?

Talk to your child's key person who will be able to give you more ideas suited to your child.

Attend one of our parent workshops based on specific themes.

Tell us - if there is enough interest in a particular area, we may be able to run a specific workshop

Expressive Arts and Design

Expressive Arts and Design involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement ,dance, role-play, and design and technology.

At St Leo's and Soutmead Nursery we have a rich environment for encouraging creativity from using malleable materials such as the dough and clay, paint mixing, collage, block play, role play and using a range of materials inside and outside.

Children are encouraged to talk about their creations and these are valued - it is the process and not the product which is important in supporting children's learning.

What you can do to help your child:

Let your child listen to and sing songs and rhymes. Play different styles of music (listening to Radio 3, Classic FM as well as pop stations) and encourage your child to move to the music.

Value your child's creations. Talk to your child about what they have done and listen to their ideas. Use natural materials such as stones and twigs to create pictures

Explore different materials and tools, such as paint, glue, crayons, pencils, scissors and hole punches. Make play dough - staff can provide you with a simple recipe to use at home. outside.



The four principles of the EYFS

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances.” (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2012)

There are four guiding principles which shape our practice.

A unique child: Every child is a unique child, who is constantly 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 enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers

Learning and Development: children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The framework covers the education

and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Characteristics of Effective Learning: The ways in which the child engages with other people and the 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.

Playing and Exploring (Engagement)

This characteristic of effective learning involves:

Finding out and exploring Showing curiosity

Using senses to explore Engaging in open ended activities show particular interests.



Playing with what they know

Pretending with objects representing experiences Role play

Acting out experiences



Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment. At St Leo's and Southmead children explore changes in the garden, get involved in planting and hunting for mini beasts.

They take part in 'Forest' in the secret garden and notice changes in seasons and weather. They develop their understanding of other cultures as we celebrate different festivals throughout the year, and they use a wide range of technology from cameras, to programmable toys, to I Pads.

What you can do to help your child:

Answer the 'why?' questions as best as you can - and if you don't know the answer try and find out together using the library or internet. Young children are naturally curious about how things work and why things happen.

Plant with your child - cress is easy and quick to grow or try sprouting carrot tops on a saucer or planting sunflower seeds.

Notice changes in the natural environment, such as autumn leaves falling or the first signs of spring and talk about these with your child.

Look at photos of family and friends - talk about how we change as we grow older.

Provide bath toys and explore floating and sinking or watching the changes to the bubbles.

Use number rhymes such as five speckled frogs or ten in the bed. Staff will be able to provide you with rhymes if you need ideas, and we will sometimes print them on our newsletter.

Cook with your child - this involves lots of counting and measuring. Calculate in everyday activities - laying the table is always a good opportunity for working out how many more we need.

Look for shapes around the home and as you walk around the local area.

Talk about the number of edges and corners and use the proper names for shapes.

Mathematics

Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces and measures.

At St Leos and Southmead we provide opportunities for children to use mathematics through their play and real first hand experiences, as well as playing 'maths games'. Mathematics is in every day experiences, from measuring ingredients when cooking, to working out how tall to build a tower of blocks to filling a plant pot with compost.

What you can do to help your child:

Use as many opportunities as possible to count with your child - stairs, fruit, buttons.

Look for numbers around you e.g. house numbers, bus numbers, telephone numbers

Active Learning (Motivation)

This characteristic of effective learning involves:

Being involved and concentrating

Maintaining focus for a period of time.

Showing high levels of energy or fascination

Paying attention to details



Keeping on trying

Persisting with challenges

Showing belief that a more effort or a different approach will help

Bouncing back after difficulties

Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Showing satisfaction

Being proud of their effort, not just the result

Enjoying challenge for its' own sake, not for extrinsic rewards

Changing strategy when needed

Reviewing how well their approach has gone



Creating and Thinking Critically

This characteristic of effective learning involves:

Having their own ideas

Thinking of ideas

Finding ways to solve problems

Finding new ways to do things

Making links

Noticing patterns in their experience

Making predictions

Testing their ideas

Developing ideas of cause and effect

Choosing ways to do things

Planning, making decisions, solving problems and reaching a goal

Checking how well their activity is going

Literacy

Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

At St Leo's and Southmead School Nursery we provide a literacy rich environment, with plentiful opportunities for sharing fiction and non-fiction texts, and mark-making both inside and outside, using traditional materials such as pens and pencils, but also brushes and water, or sticks in the sand. Children's early marks are the basis of writing.

What you can do to help your child:

Children who are read to and enjoy books from an early age are most likely to be successful readers in the future.

Try and share a book with your child as often as possible. Encourage your child to turn the pages, talk about the book and notice familiar

letters, such as letters from their name. You could point to the words as you read.

Give your child lots of opportunities for making marks using different materials, e.g. writing shopping lists together, making cards, or drawing with chalk outside.

Notices print in the environment *shop names, food labels and car logos are often instantly recognisable to young children. They are already readers!*

Physical Development

Physical development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

At St Leo's and Southmead School Nursery children have the opportunity to use large and small equipment inside and outside every day. They are encouraged to take risks, learning how to keep themselves safe, for example, when climbing or using tools like scissors. There a range of healthy snacks provided every day.



What you can do to help your child:

Allow your child to use tools such as scissors. Talk about the food you eat at home, what is healthy and what is an occasional treat.

Discuss other ways of staying healthy such as getting enough sleep or drinking plenty of water. Find different ways for your child to move when they are going home—can they hop or skip some of the way?

Discuss what happens to their body when they exercise eg getting warm, heart beating faster. Go to the park regularly—it gives your child space to explore different ways of moving as well!

Planning the curriculum

“Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child.”

“Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.”(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2012)

At St Leo's and Southmead School Nursery the inside and outside environments are carefully planned into workshop areas, which allow children to make choices, develop independence and re-visit experiences to reinforce their learning. We follow the seasonal patterns of the year, carefully planning challenging and enjoyable experiences for children, from looking for signs of change during Autumn , to feeding the birds in the winter, to planting in the spring and celebrating all that Summer can bring.. Staff also evaluate Learning and plan

on a daily basis so that they can follow and support the individual interests of children.

The three prime areas are:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Communication and Language

Physical Development

The four specific areas are:

Literacy, Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

This prime area of learning involves:

helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; to have confidence in their own abilities.

What you can do to help your child:

Play turn taking and sharing games with your child. These can be very difficult concepts for children to learn. Give lots of praise when your child shares to encourage this positive behaviour.

This could be playing a board game, or taking turns to kick a ball to each other.

Talk about and name feelings with your child e.g. "I'm feeling cross because ..." or "I'm feeling excited because we're going to the park". This will help children to understand their emotions and how to react.

Talk about and explain rules and boundaries. Children need boundaries BUT need to understand the reason for them, e.g. We don't throw blocks because it might hurt someone, but it is OK to throw balls outside. Recognising you have similar boundaries at home will help children settle at school.

Encourage your child to tidy away their toys. They will be expected to help at nursery and it helps children learn about the value of caring for resources.



Communication and Language

Communication and language development involves: giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; to speak and listen in a range of situations.

At St Leos and Soutmead School Nursery some of the ways we do this are by providing a wide range of first hand experiences which introduce children to new language; having lots of opportunities for high quality interactions with adults and with other children; and by sharing lots of stories and rhymes at keyworker and circle time .

What you can do to help your child:

Speaking and listening are the foundations of reading and writing.

Everyday activities, such as preparing a meal, going shopping or walking to and from nursery give you a chance to talk to your child, explaining what you are doing. If English is not your home language, use your home language to talk to your child. This will support their language development.

Books will have lots of new words for your child. Share a story every day, talk about the pictures and ask your child to tell you about the story. Reading the same favourite story everyday may get boring for you, but helps your child's understanding of language.

Listen to your child telling you about a favourite activity or the painting they bring home which just looks like a blob of colour. "Tell me about your picture" will often lead to a long explanation! Ask 'why?' - it's your child's favourite word, so try asking it back! It will encourage your child to think about what they are saying and to use reasoning.

