

## Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework Policy

At Happy Hours we strive to ensure that all children attain their maximum potential and that we meet every child's needs.

In September 2012 the newly reformed Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) was implemented in our setting, replacing the previous in 2008. This framework will be followed from birth to the end of the academic year in which a child has their fifth birthday.

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides equal opportunities and anti-discriminating practice to all children. All children will be included regardless of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender and ability.

The aim of the EYFS is to help children in our setting to achieve the five 'every child matters' outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being. All staff should take into account the children's needs, interests and their stages of development to help them plan an enjoyable, rich learning experience for all children.

The EYFS principles are grouped into four themes:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

The themes provide requirements for staff and illustrate how practitioners should support the development, learning and care of young children. The themes are then broken down into four commitments describing how practitioners can put these principles into place.

**A Unique Child** recognises that every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. The commitments are focused around development, inclusion, safety, health and well-being.

**Positive Relationships** describe how children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person. The commitments are focused around respect, partnership with parents, supporting learning and the role of the key person.

**Enabling Environments** explains how the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. The commitments are focused around observation, assessment and planning, support for every child, the learning environment, the wider context-transitions, continuity and multi-agency working.

**Learning and Development** recognises that children develop and learn in different ways and different rates, and that all areas of learning and development are equally important and interconnected. By following the EYFS, we set out to enhance every child's development and ensure that they make progress at their own pace. We take into account that some children may need extra support to fulfil their potential and support this by providing extra planned activities.

There are seven development areas that are covered by the reformed EYFS:

**The 3 prime areas:**

- Personal, Social and Emotional
- Communication and Language
  - Physical.

**The 4 Specific Areas:**

- Literacy
- Understanding the World
  - Mathematics
- Expressive Arts and Design.

The 3 prime areas are the main focus for children between the ages of 0 to 3 years although observations can be recorded in the 4 specific areas if applicable/when observed.

When the child reaches 3 years all seven areas are focused on equally. All areas should have recordings with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. The development areas in more detail are as followed:

**Personal, Social and Emotional Development:** Children must be provided with experiences which help them to develop a positive sense of themselves and of others, learn social skills and have a positive disposition to learn. Practitioners must ensure support for children's emotional well-being to help them to know themselves and what they can do as well as making them aware of their own feelings and behaviours as well as the others around them.

By providing them with these experiences and support we are encouraging children to build/form healthy relationships now and in the future.

**Communication and Language:** Children must be provided with learning experiences and opportunities with communicating through speaking, listening, attention and understanding. They must be provided with encouragement to use their skills in a range of purposes, and be supported in developing their confidence and disposition to do so.

**Physical Development:** The Physical development of babies and young children must be encouraged through the provision of opportunities for them to be active and interactive and

to build on/improve their coordination, control, manipulation and movement. They must be supported in using all of their senses to learn about the world around them and to make new connections between new information and what they already know. They must be supported in developing and understanding the importance of physical activity and show an awareness of their own personal health and self-care.

**Literacy:** Children must be provided with the resources which will encourage them to read and write in a fun environment. There should be a diverse range of books and tools in order for children to achieve their full potential.

**Understanding the World:** Children must be supported in developing their understanding to help them make sense of the world. Their learning must be supported and encouraged through offering opportunities for them to use a range of tools safely, encounter creatures, people and communities, plants and objects in their natural environment and in real life situations, undertake practical 'experiments' and work with a range of technologies.

**Mathematics:** Children must be supported in developing their understanding of numbers, shapes, space and measure in a broad range of contexts in which they can explore, enjoy, learn, practice and talk about in developing their understanding. They must be provided with opportunities to practice and extend their skills in these areas and to gain confidence and competence in their use.

**Expressive Arts and Design:** Children's creativity and imagination must be extended by the provision of support for their curiosity, exploration and play. They must be provided with opportunities to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings. For example, through a variety of media and materials, art, music and movement, dance, imaginative and role play activities, mathematics and design and technology.

We have now introduced quarterly 'Best Fit' checks which are completed by a child's key person. The 'Best Fit' profiles contain a detailed summary of what stage a child should be at within an age bracket. The bracket ages are; Birth to 11months, 8 to 20 months, 16 to 26 months, 22 to 36 months and 30 to 50 months. The age brackets overlap as child develop at different rates for their age, they should not automatically be expected to be able to achieve the same as others the same age. If a child's Best Fit is below their development age a play plan is put into place sometimes with the help of the settings SENCO, to focus on the areas they need support with. When a Play Plan is put into place all practitioners are involved with supporting and enhancing that child's development. Best Fits therefore provide us with a clearer understanding of each child's development stage and what areas they may need to focus on in order for them to progress.

All staff carry out ongoing assessments and day to day observations for each child, which are then placed in a child's individual learning diary. Each child is assigned a key person, who is solely responsible for recording observations into their diaries, providing planning and carrying out best fits however support is always given to practitioners if needed. It is essential for the key person to have regular contact with their key children. The role of a

key person is to also build relationships with their key children's parents so that all information and records of development can be shared. All activities that are planned for the children should be suitable for the stage that they have reached; therefore children should not be pushed beyond their capabilities.

We work closely with parents to form a good relationship. We promote good communication between all staff and parents to ensure that all individual needs of the children are met and to incorporate the home environment of the child into their nursery setting/routine. Any information that is passed from parent to key person will be confidential, unless the information is relevant for other staffs to be informed of.

Alongside the EYFS we also complete two year old checks. Two year old checks are a progress summary covering the three prime areas of the EYFS, these are usually completed by the child's key person but can be completed by other colleagues who know the child well, there is then a contribution from the parents/carers on how they feel their child's development is progressing. A child's two year old check will be filled in around the time they turn 2yrs - 2yrs 3months.

#### The progress summary:

- Identifies where a child is in their learning and development whether he/she is developing at a faster or slower pace than what would be expected for his/her age.
- Can support practitioners to identify the need for early intervention, actions to be taken and possible next steps for the setting and at home.
  - With parents/carers permission can be shared with other professionals.

#### Characteristics of Effective Learning:

At Happy Hours we have a process of Effective Learning which begins with observing how a child is learning (A Unique Child), we then look at what we can do as practitioners to enhance their learning (Positive Relationships); finally we look at what we as practitioners can provide for that child in order for them to achieve a rich learning experience across all areas (Enabling Environments).

The unique child reaches out to relate to people and things through the Characteristics of Effective Learning, which move through all areas of learning including; playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically. We use these characteristics in all areas of our planning and observing, as well as focusing on children's interests to promote effective planning. Each characteristic goes into more detail:

#### **Playing and Exploring - Engagement:**

Finding out and exploring  
Playing with what they know  
Being willing to 'have a go'

#### **Active Learning - Motivation:**

Being involved and  
concentrating  
Keeping trying

#### **Creating and Thinking Critically - Thinking:**

Having their own ideas  
Making links  
Choosing ways to do things