



Lillian de Lissa Nursery School:Curriculum

Our Vision, Values, Intent, Implementation, Impact and Key Documentation

Article 28 (The Right to Education)

Every child has the right to an education.

Article 29 (The Goals of Education)

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.

It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents,
their own and other cultures, and the environment.

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At Lillian de Lissa Nursery School the curriculum is designed to: recognise children's prior learning and to provide first hand learning experiences. We believe that high quality early years care and education is about supporting and developing strong, curious and confident children.

Our Statement of School Values

Our values underpin our practice and we want them to run through every aspect of our curriculum. The best interests and welfare of children are at the forefront of all that we offer.

Our provision is non-discriminatory, accessible and sensitive to race, gender, religion, culture, language, disability, sexuality and differing patterns of family life.

Creativity is at the heart of our school and is used every day to provide purposeful learning opportunities taking into consideration the rhythm, space and time needed for every type of learner.

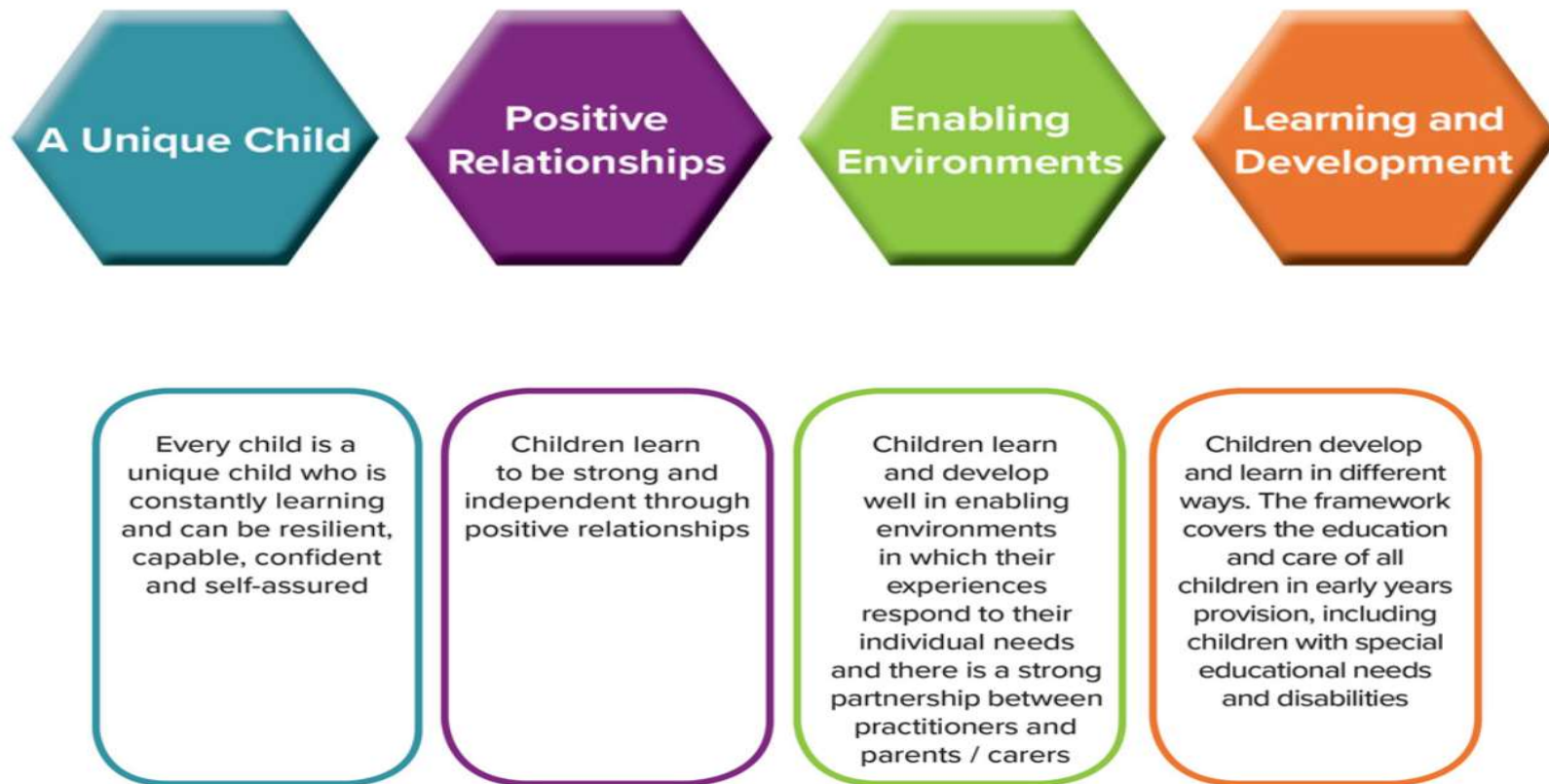
We want our children to

be: Valued, Confident, Curious, Communicative, Independent and Secure.

Key principles

Our provision is non-discriminatory, accessible and sensitive to race, gender, religion, culture, language, disability, sexuality and differing patterns of family life.

The Four Guiding Principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage



Curriculum Intent

Development Matters 2021 informs us what the children need to achieve by the end of the nursery year in each area of learning. For the 3-4 year olds, children who will meet age related expectations will be secure at 3-4 years by the end of their nursery year. For the 2- 3 year olds children who will meet age related expectations at the end of the year will be secure at birth to 3 years. However it is crucial to consider that children learn and develop individually and at different rates. It is also important to note that how children learn is just as important as what children learn.

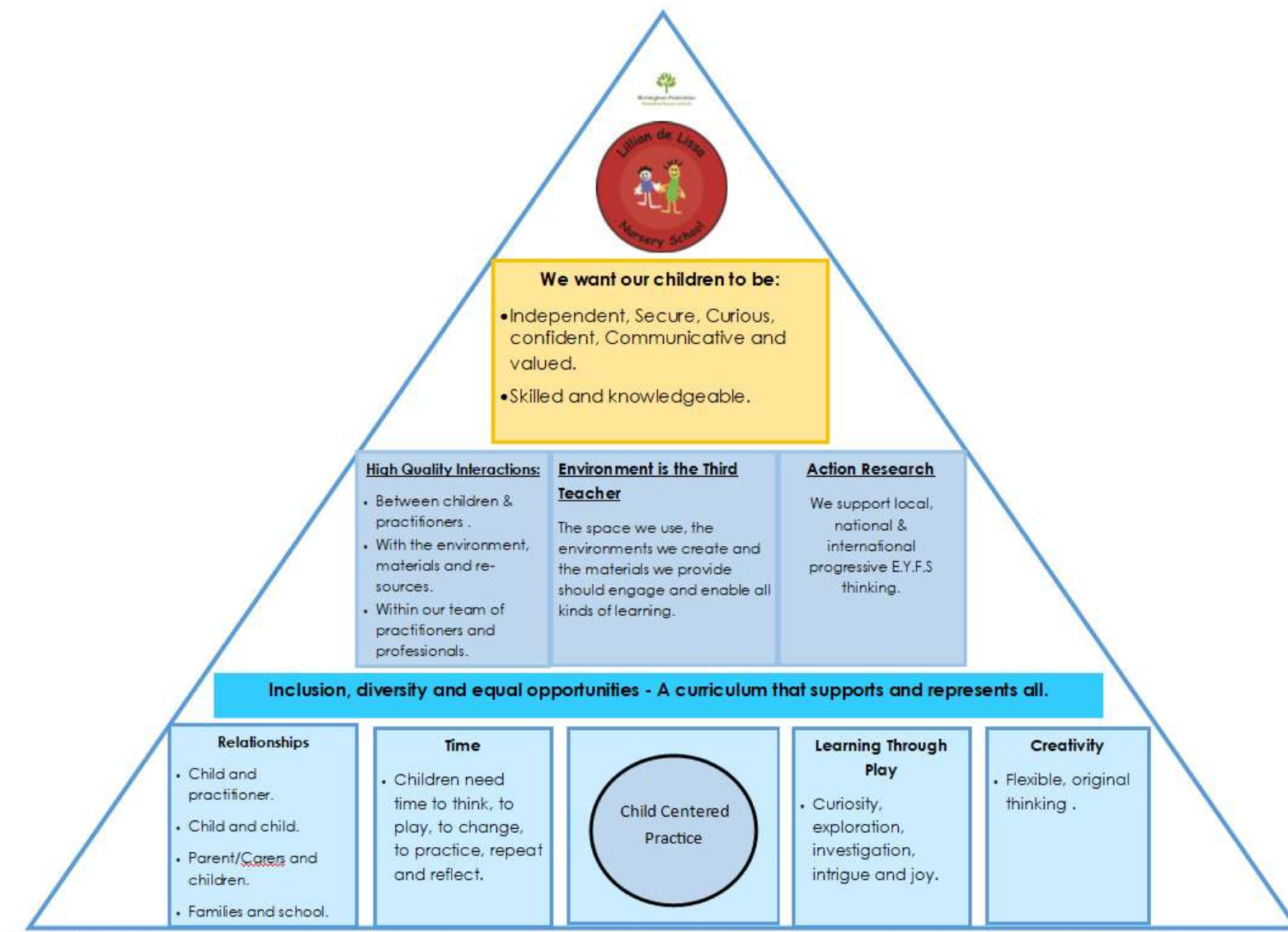
Birth to Five Matters 2021 is a comprehensive guide to Early Years. It has broken down each area of learning into individual components so we will use this as a guide for each area of learning. We feel that the Characteristics of Effective Learning are crucial - the behaviours children use in order to learn that interweave through all aspects of learning. In addition to this the Leuven Scales of Involvement and Well Being are important. If we have high level of involvement and wellbeing, children are highly absorbed in their learning. This enables them to learn on a deep and meaningful level.

Pedagogical Framework- Infographic

We feel it is important to set out a pedagogical framework for our Early Years Curriculum.

Practitioners need early years specific pedagogical knowledge based on how young children learn and develop. This knowledge is then transferred into key principles about young children's learning and is used continuously at Lillian de Lissa Nursery School.

The infographic below has been created by the teaching team at Lillian de Lissa Nursery School and represents our pedagogical ethos.



In order to understand what is important on how young children learn, the Characteristics of Effective Learning and the Leuven Scales of Involvement and Well Being will be considered.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

The Characteristics of Effective Learning describe behaviours children use in order to learn. To learn well, children must approach opportunities with curiosity, energy and enthusiasm. Effective learning must be meaningful to a child, so that they are able to use what they have learned and apply it in new situations. These abilities and attitudes of strong learners will support them to learn well and make good progress in all the Areas of Learning and Development.

The Areas of Learning and Development affect each other. For example, developing communication and language will support children to understand and explain mathematical ideas. Developing physical skills will allow children to be more active explorers and so enhance their progress in Understanding the World. The more concepts they develop within Understanding the World, the more they will be able to relate to what they find in books and so support their development in Literacy. Experiences and activities that relate to Areas of Learning and Development, when they offer children opportunities to have autonomy and develop their own ideas, can also provide the contexts for children to practise their learning behaviours and so reinforce the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

Prime areas of development and learning lay vital foundations in the early years. The three Prime areas, **Personal, social and emotional development (PSED)**, **Communication and language (CL)**, and **Physical development (PD)**, describe universal core aspects of early child development. They are time-sensitive because of biological factors that enable rapid brain connections, particularly in the first three years of life but continuing throughout early childhood. Developmental steps missed at this early crucial stage are much

harder to address later on, so it is crucial that children's interactions and experiences in the first few years support development in these fundamental areas.

All three Prime areas are always in action for a young child. In every activity, the child is experiencing feelings and developing a sense of self and others, is physically engaged through their senses and movements, and is learning to understand and communicate with others. It is through these aspects that a child accesses the world around them and relationships with other people, which in turn opens the door to learning in all areas. The Prime areas therefore strongly influence learning in the Specific areas of learning and development.

Development in each of the Prime areas affect the others: as babies and children develop their sensory abilities and movement, they can perceive and engage with others, and so develop in PSED. Engaging with others spurs more physical activity, and is the beginning of communication and language, which in turn helps build relationships, understanding of feelings and learning about health and physical wellbeing.

While the Prime areas are especially crucial to early year's provision during the first three years, they remain centrally important for children's development and learning throughout the EYFS and beyond, and should receive priority attention to ensure strong foundations in development and learning.

Rationale for Characteristics of Effective Learning, Tickell Review

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

Playing and Exploring- Engagement

Playing and Exploring (Engagement)

A Unique Child: What a child might be doing

Finding out and exploring

- Showing curiosity about objects, events and people
- Using senses to explore the world around them
- Engaging in open-ended activity
- Showing particular interests

Playing with what they know

- Pretending objects are things from their experience
- Representing their experiences in play
- Taking on a role in their play
- Acting out experiences with other people

Being willing to “have a go”

- Initiating activities
- Seeking challenge
- Showing a “can do” attitude
- Taking a risk, engaging in new experiences, and learning by trial and error

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

Active Learning- Motivation

Active Learning (Motivation)

A Unique Child: how a child is learning

Being involved and concentrating

- Showing a deep drive to know more about people and their world
- Maintaining focus on their activity for a period of time
- Showing high levels of involvement, energy, fascination
- Not easily distracted
- Paying attention to details

Keeping on trying

- Persisting with an activity or toward their goal when challenges occur
- Showing a belief that more effort or a different approach will pay off, and that their skills can grow and develop (growth mindset)
- Bouncing back after difficulties

Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

- Showing satisfaction in meeting their own goals (I can!)
- Being proud of how they accomplished something – not just the end result
- Enjoying meeting challenges for their own sake rather than external rewards or praise (intrinsic motivation)

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

Thinking Creatively and Critically- Thinking

Thinking Creatively and Critically (Thinking)

A Unique Child: how a child is learning

Having their own ideas (creative thinking)

- Thinking of ideas that are new and meaningful to the child
- Playing with possibilities (what if? what else?)
- Visualising and imagining options
- Finding new ways to do things

Making links (building theories)

- Making links and noticing patterns in their experience
- Making predictions
- Testing their ideas
- Developing ideas of grouping, sequences, cause and effect

Working with ideas (critical thinking)

- Planning, making decisions about how to approach a task, solve a problem and reach a goal
- Checking how well their activities are going
- Flexibly changing strategy as needed
- Reviewing how well the approach worked

Leuven Scales of Involvement and Wellbeing

The Leuven Scale is a form of assessment tool developed by Ferre Leavers and his team at Leuven University in Belgium. It is a five-point scale that allows practitioners to measure children's 'emotional well-being' and 'involvement' – two vital components of learning, development and progress in children.

Children's high levels of 'involvement' are characterised by curiosity, fascination, deep satisfaction and a genuine interest in what they are doing is an indicator of 'deeper-level', meaningful learning. These signs of a child's 'involvement' are also directly linked to the characteristics of effective teaching and learning as laid out by the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage).

Similarly, children who show high levels of wellbeing are comfortable in their environment, confident and eager to experiment and explore. Whereas, children with low levels of well-being often appear frightened, anxious and dependent, making it hard for them to learn in a sustained way and explore their potential.

Leuven Scales of involvement and Well Being

The Leuven Scale for Involvement

Level	Well-being	Signals
1	Extremely low	Activity is simple, repetitive and passive. The child seems absent and displays no energy. They may stare into space or look around to see what others are doing.
2	Low	Frequently interrupted activity. The child will be engaged in the activity for some of the time they are observed, but there will be moments of non-activity when they will stare into space, or be distracted by what is going on around.
3	Moderate	Mainly continuous activity. The child is busy with the activity but at a fairly routine level and there are few signs of real involvement. They make some progress with what they are doing but don't show much energy and concentration and can be easily distracted.
4	High	Continuous activity with intense moments. The child's activity has intense moments and at all times they seem involved. They are not easily distracted.
5	Extremely high	The child shows continuous and intense activity revealing the greatest involvement. They are concentrated, creative, energetic and persistent throughout nearly all the observed period.

The Leuven Scale for Well-being

Level	Well-being	Signals
1	Extremely low	The child clearly shows signs of discomfort such as crying or screaming. They may look dejected, sad, frightened or angry. The child does not respond to the environment, avoids contact and is withdrawn. The child may behave aggressively, hurting him/ herself or others.
2	Low	The posture, facial expression and actions indicate that the child does not feel at ease. However, the signals are less explicit than under level 1 or the sense of discomfort is not expressed the whole time.
3	Moderate	The child has a neutral posture. Facial expression and posture show little or no emotion. There are no signs indicating sadness or pleasure, comfort or discomfort.
4	High	The child shows obvious signs of satisfaction (as listed under level 5). However, these signals are not constantly present with the same intensity.
5	Extremely high	The child looks happy and cheerful, smiles, cries out with pleasure. They may be lively and full of energy. Actions can be spontaneous and expressive. The child may talk to him/herself, play with sounds, hum, sing. The child appears relaxed and does not show any signs of stress or tension. He/she is open and accessible to the environment. The child expressed self-confidence and self-assurance.

Children in an outstanding setting are

**Happy, Engaged, Confident, Independent, Self-motivated,
Curious, Taking risks, Communicating, Empathetic, Creative
and Resilient**

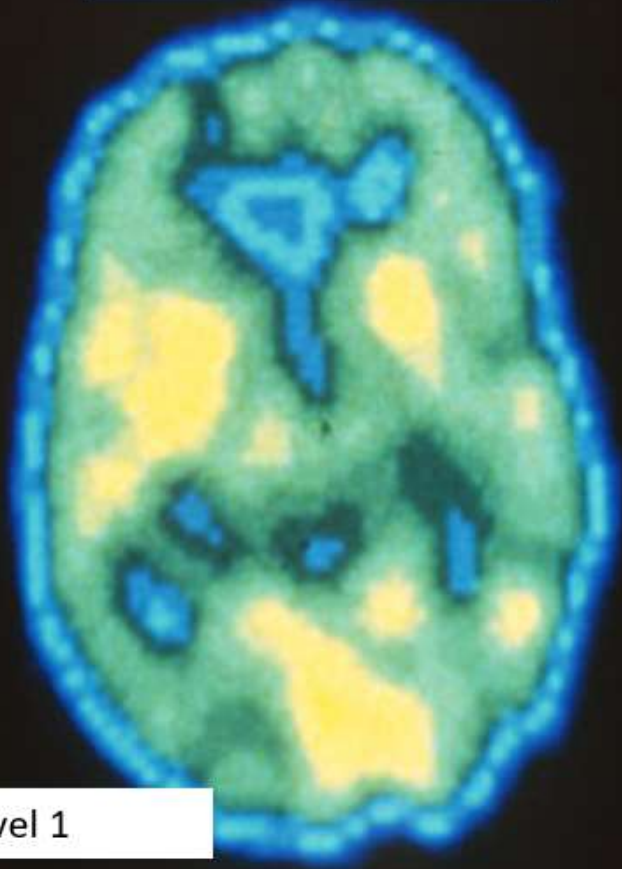
Vision - Children are **happy & ENGAGED**

Why is **engagement** so important?

What does it indicate?

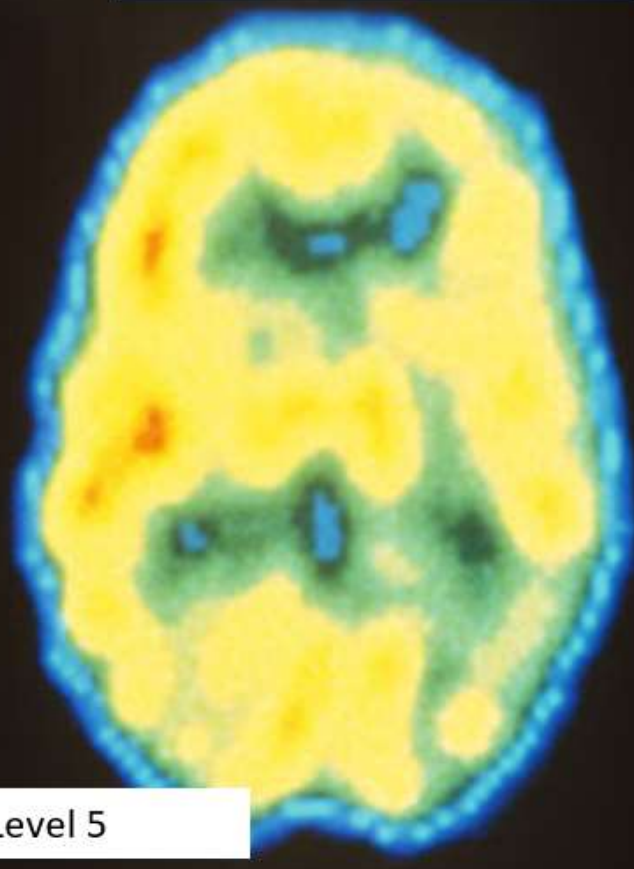
Engaged = Learning

Depressed/passive



Level 1

Happy & ENGAGED



Level 5

Implementation

We have a child led approach to the curriculum. A child led approach **enables rich learning across the curriculum for all children within a meaningful context**. Children are highly motivated and engaged when they realise that they lead their own learning. We take some inspiration from the pedagogy of Reggio Emilia and the pioneering work of Lillian de Lissa. However fundamentally, we match the learning in our curriculum to meet the needs of our children. Teaching staff have meaningful and continuous discussions about how we can meet the needs of our children within our curriculum. We are all very passionate about what we do for our children.

These three areas form the implementation of our curriculum

Observation, Assessment and Planning cycle

Planning in the Moment

Environment as the Third Teacher

Observation, Assessment and Planning cycle

Formative assessment is an integral part of teaching young children. Children's development and learning is best supported by starting from the child, and then matching interactions and experiences to meet the child's needs. The observation, assessment and planning (OAP) cycle describes what is frequently called assessment for learning, or formative assessment. On-going formative assessment is at the heart of effective early years practice. It involves observation of children as a part of all activity, which is most often held in the mind of the practitioner but may sometimes be documented, using this rich information to understand how a child is developing, learning and growing, and then planning the next steps for the adults in supporting and extending the learning.

Birth to Five Matters 2021

Planning

Decide how best to support, extend and teach children. Based on your observations and assessments, consider the following questions:

- Have you considered my/our interests in the planning? (child-led)
- Have you planned a specific experience or activity to teach a skill or knowledge? (adult-led)?
- How does the enabling environment and continuous provision support my/our next steps?
- What have you planned to support meaningful interactions and serve -and-return conversations?
- How will you support, extend and deepen play, interactions and learning in partnership with me/us? (Planning-in-action)

Observation

Observe children as they act and interact in their play, everyday activities and planned activities, and learn from parents about what the child does at home.

- How do you see me? On my own and with others?
- Am I involved in continuous provision?
- Have you observed while engaging with me/us? (Observation-in-action)

Assessment

Reflect on what you have noticed to help you understand the child/children.

Consider the following questions:

- How do you understand me?
- Do you understand how I feel? What I am interested in? What question may be in my mind?
- How am I approaching my learning? (Characteristics of Effective Learning)
- What have I learned and understood? (Areas of learning and development)
- What do you think is happening as you listen and engage with me/us? (Assessment-in-action)



Practice starts with the child, and grows in partnership. Effective practice begins with observation, tuning into the child and then building a relationship. Professionally informed knowledge of child development then supports understanding children's interests, development and learning, and planning for next steps. This process should involve the child, parents and carers, and other professionals.

- From the earliest age children should be involved in choices about their own learning. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 12 states the right of the child to express their views and have their views taken seriously.
- Parents are essential partners, sharing their views and observations about the child's development and being involved in planning what opportunities and experiences to offer the child next.
- Working in partnership with other professionals, community and support groups connects everyone who is involved with the child and family, bringing a clearer picture of the child's needs and rights.

Each child's own unique pathway of development and learning involves many elements woven together in a holistic form. Observation, assessment and planning (OAP) makes this holistic development visible, so children's thinking and understanding can be shared with parents and carers, other professionals, and with children themselves.

Responsive pedagogy is needed to recognise what children know, understand, and can do. In a supportive and challenging enabling environment children demonstrate their learning and understanding in a wide range of contexts that have meaning to them. Responsive adults tune into their play, interactions and thinking, identifying how best to support their ideas, interests and priorities. Sensitive interactions involve listening, guiding, explaining, asking appropriate questions and helping children to reflect on their learning in a playful, co-constructive partnership. The process of OAP is central to being attuned to children and to

understanding what they can do with support, as well as what they know and can do without adult direction. When children apply the skills and concepts they have mastered in a variety of different ways in their independent play and activities, their understanding is clearly embedded.

Children and adults construct the curriculum together. Keeping the OAP cycle at the heart of our practice enables practitioners to build on children's motivations and interests to support and extend their development and learning. The curriculum is co-constructed between children, practitioners and families through this process. Children bring funds of knowledge-based interests to the setting, and they are motivated to learn through connecting new experiences to what they already know and can do. Practitioners can support these interests while also keeping in mind that they need to introduce children to new ideas and knowledge and sensitively support and guide their learning in all areas, including the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

The curriculum will include attention to the Areas of Learning and Development which summarise some of **what** children learn. The curriculum must, however, be more than a list of skills and knowledge to be achieved. The EYFS principle says every unique child is "constantly learning". Children learn from all their experiences, not just those that have been planned or intended. The curriculum needs to take account of children's learning not just in the Areas of Learning and Development, but also in how they see themselves as learners and how they are building the strong foundations for lifelong learning described in the Characteristics of Effective Learning. How children learn, and how they learn about their own learning, should also be an integral part of the curriculum. Observing **how** children learn often helps practitioners to see **what** children understand.

Observation, assessment and planning is part of professional practice. Throughout the OAP cycle and summative assessment, informed decisions about the child's development, learning and progress need to be as objective as possible, calling on the variety of information about the child to make a "best-fit" decision. The OAP cycle is a reflective and ongoing process which enables consideration of children's development and how to support individual children through effective practice. It supports quality improvement as practitioners use their knowledge, skills and evidence gathered from OAP to reflect on the quality of education and care the children receive, and think about how to improve practice.

Summative assessment involves stepping back to gain an overview of children's development and progress. When daily interactions involve observing, reflecting and deciding how best to support a child, practitioners hold in their mind many details of each child's development and learning. At certain times it is important to step back, to pause and reflect, and create a summative assessment which takes a holistic overview of the child's development, learning and progress.

Summative assessments are made to provide a summary of a child's development and learning across all areas. There are two statutory summative assessment points in the EYFS – the 2-year-old progress check, and the EYFS Profile at the end of the EYFS. Settings may decide on further summative assessment points.

Reliable summative assessment grows out of formative assessment. Summative assessment should not be a time-consuming process. It should be a straightforward summary, pulling together insights from formative assessment and then making a professionally informed decision about the child's development and learning. It requires a pause to think about what is known about the child, together with reviewing any notes, photographs or other records that may be held, alongside what is known from the child, parents, colleagues and other professionals. This process is an excellent opportunity for professional reflection and discussions with colleagues to moderate decisions about progress and build a stronger understanding of children's development in all aspects of learning.

An informed professional decision is based on a holistic view of a child's development and learning. Young children's development does not follow a predictable step-by-step sequence, and each child will have their own unique pathway, progression and momentum. There are, however, some aspects of development which enable you to describe the child's progress in terms of whether it is typical for their age, for example learning to talk. Practitioners need to consider overall development within these aspects and not rely on matching every element in a list of statements to judge children's progress. It is important to take a holistic, professionally informed view to determine whether a child is roughly on track or developing more slowly or more

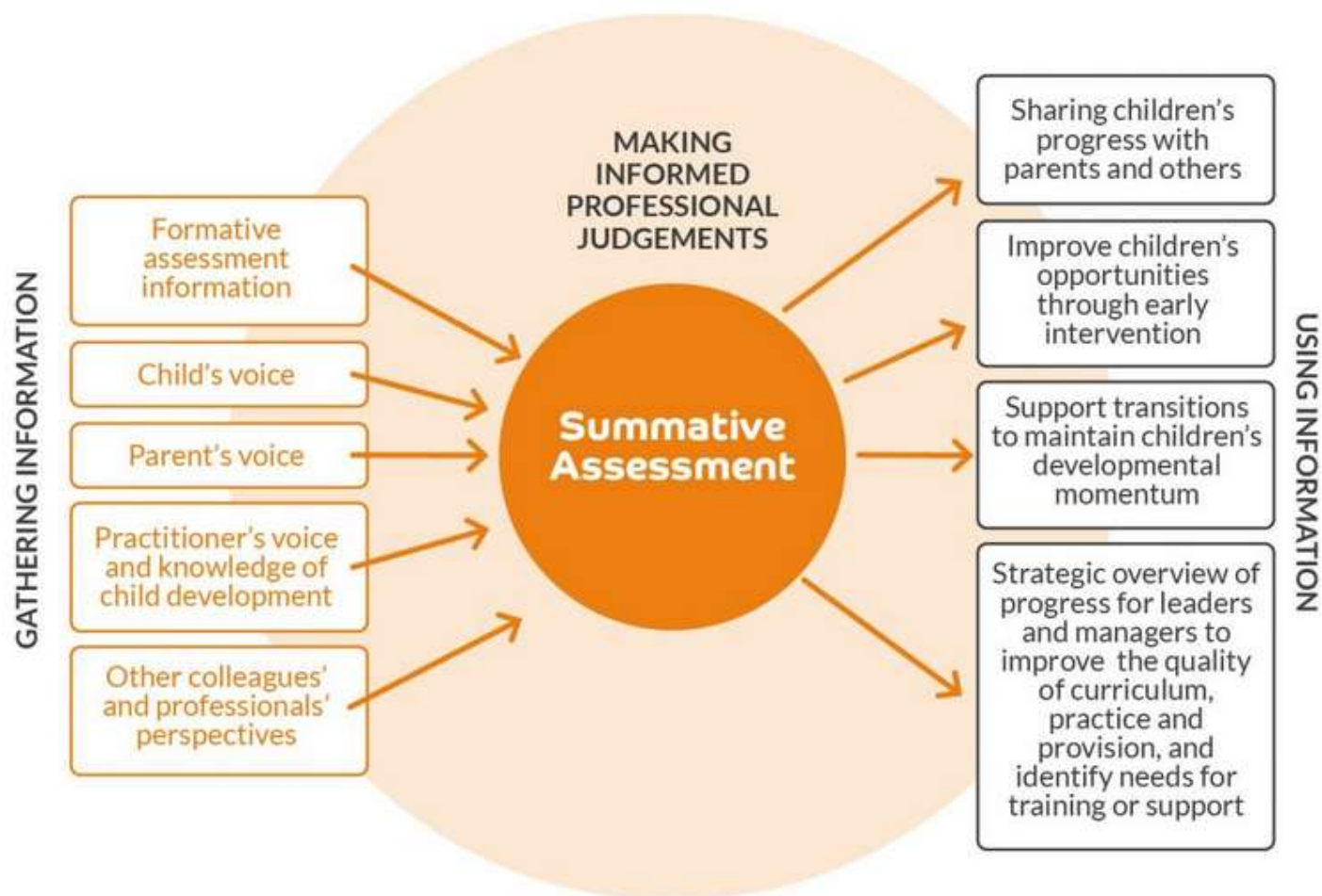
quickly in particular areas. A holistic summary will give attention not just to areas of knowledge and skills, but also to the child's emotional wellbeing and connections, and development of attitudes and dispositions for learning (Characteristics of Effective Learning).

Summative assessment informs improvements to provision and practice, to enhance children's development and learning. Leaders and managers can use the information strategically to improve provision and practice. For example:

- Are some children not as far along or significantly ahead in their development and learning compared to most children? How are we further supporting these children?
- Should opportunities, resources or support within some areas of the curriculum be improved?
- Is there a professional development need for individual staff members, or the setting as a whole?

Information can be communicated clearly in a summary form to inform discussions with parents, other agencies, or professionals involved with the child and family. Transitions can be supported so that children's journeys of development and learning continue smoothly.

Birth to Five Matters 2021



Planning in the Moment

What is planning in the moment?

“Let the children choose what to do, join them and support them in their pursuits. Then write up what has happened.”

– Anna Ephgrave, author of Planning In the Moment with young children.

We extend children's learning by using a 'planning in the moment' approach. Planning in the moment is all about seizing the moment for children to progress. When children learn in the moment, they have the opportunity to be highly engaged and motivated in their learning. This way of planning relies on skillful practitioners using high quality interactions to draw out the children's knowledge and build on it there and then (in the moment). This means that the practitioners have used skills to observe what the child is doing and needs to do next, assessed the teachable moment from the child's perspective and are skilled enough to know when to intervene and when to stand back and observe. Planning in the moment is all about capturing the moment of engagement and running with it to ensure the children progress.

This way of working means that all written planning is retrospective -there is little to no forward planning as the adults follow the interests of the children. Each practitioner records what they have done to help the children progress on target tracker observation, focus child observations and planning in the moment record sheets, displayed in our classrooms. This ensures that teaching is monitored and any reflected upon regularly. We also have regular Celebrating children's learning meetings as part of our staff meeting time. This is where practitioners discuss what is motivating their children to learn within the whole nursery environment. Both indoors and outside.

Environment as the third teacher

Our learning environments are set up to support play and develop child centred learning.

In the early years, young children learn through a wonderful mix of dynamic, hands-on learning experiences supported by highly skilled adults who have a thorough understanding of child development. The early years curriculum is continually delivered through the many experiences provided for children – the resources they use, the interactions that we build into their play and the moments of 'direct teaching' that occur throughout the day, every day. This means that the learning environment is inextricably linked to how and what children learn and can be valued as a 'teacher'.

This means:

We create environments that make children curious and want to investigate and interact. We provide opportunities to take part in sensory exploration - touching, feeling, smelling and responding. We use a wide range of provocations or invitations to explore which engage the children in many deep-level learning situations.

All around the nursery there are 'loose parts' or 'open-ended' materials which, by definition do not have a pre-determined use, so can be included in all types of play or investigation. These materials allow children to make choices and express their creativity. Playing with these materials fuels the imagination, engages the senses and differentiates to meet every child's needs.

These are some examples of loose parts, all kinds of materials with all kinds of properties:

Naturals - conkers, leaves, fir cones, flowers, stones, shells

Wood - twigs, bark, blocks, bamboo, feathers

Metal - washers, bottle tops, screws, paper clips

Plastic - bowls, pots, lids, discs

Fabric - samples scarves, clothes, rags, carpet pieces

This ethos allows us to up-cycle and recycle many materials from our households and in school. We talk to the children about this as being important for our local and the global environment.

High Quality Interactions

Important Considerations for Practitioners-High Quality Interactions

These interactions need to occur between practitioners and children which are back and forth exchanges.

The adult has an objective in mind which is planned or arising in the moment.

Practitioner interactions are skillful and will facilitate children's learning.

Open ended questioning and comments provoke open ended responses from children.

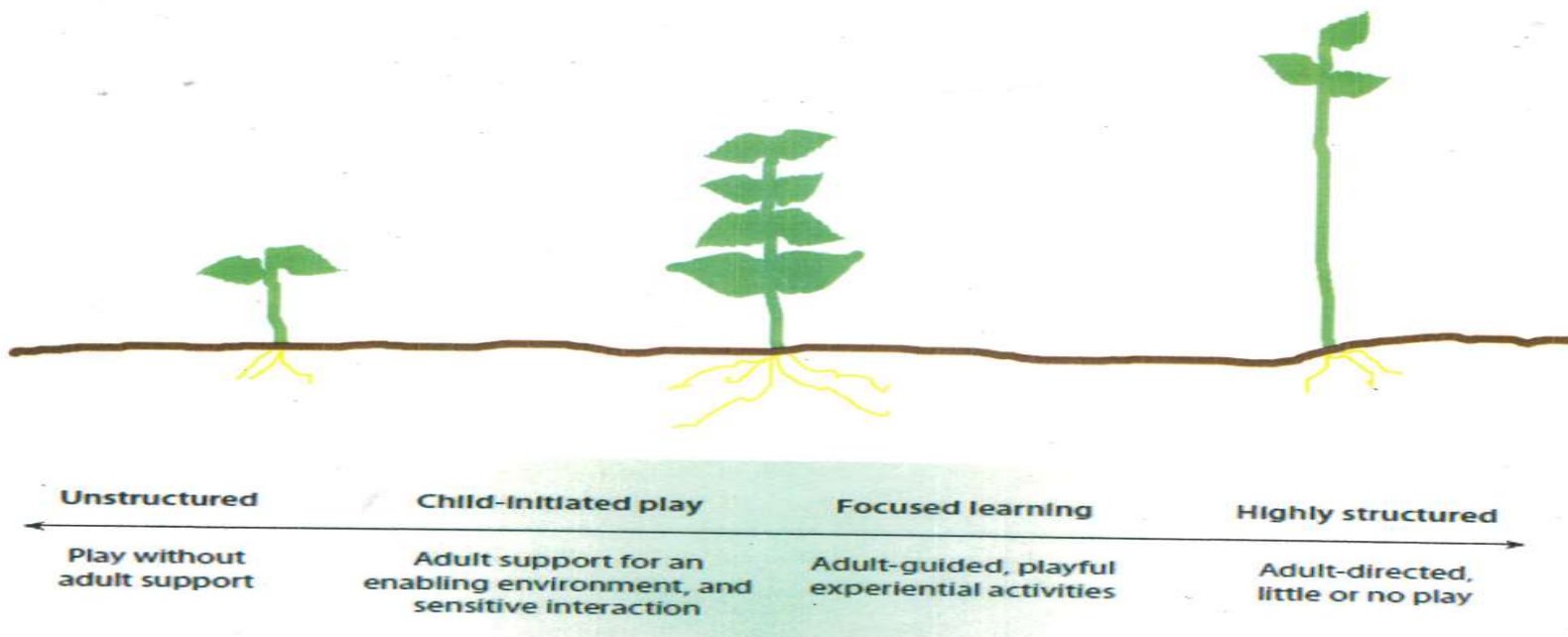
The child is in the lead.

This is a flexible activity to enable the interactions to be totally child focused.

The Benefits of Guided Play

There may be short term effects of direct teaching. The child may develop but they will not develop as a thinker.

Guided play develops the child as a thinker. Over time we will notice the difference, as the child will be highly motivated as a learner.



Impact

Children's progress is monitored closely from the moment they start and their journey is tracked throughout the year allowing appropriate support and challenge to be in place. Our assessments are integral to effective learning and teaching. The results of this are that our children and families have a sense of belonging and a positive disposition to learning. They transition into primary and special schools with confidence and with the strong character needed to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world.

Our child led approach to the curriculum enables children to show high levels of concentration, creativity, energy and persistence. Children develop a strong sense of self and peer to peer social skills are developed. Through our curriculum, our children learn to demonstrate our school values by the end of their time with us. These values enable our children to become successful and life-long learners.

We want our children to

be: Valued, Confident, Curious, Communicative, Independent and Secure.

Assessment data and reporting to Governors

At different points during the academic year attainment is assessed according to development matters on target tracker. These assessment points are at baseline in early October, at the end of the Autumn and Spring term and end of year assessments. These assessment judgments are moderated by the class teacher with the Deputy Headteacher and within the school team. These judgments are also moderated with Newtown Nursery School and St Thomas Centre Nursery School. We also moderate our assessment judgements with other local schools. Following these assessment points a Standards and Progress Report for Governors is compiled and presented to Governors on request.

Pupil progress meetings

Pupil progress meetings follow after each point of assessment. These meetings are focused discussions with Key workers. It is discussed where children are working in relation to their age related expectations. If children are working at below age related expectations, then strategic interventions are planned for and carried out.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Senior leaders monitor and evaluate teaching and learning through lesson observations, learning walks, planning and learning journal scrutinies. Senior leaders complete this work here as well as across the cluster of schools at Newtown nursery school and St Thomas centre nursery school.

Birth to Five Matters Guidance

Birth to 5 Matters provides comprehensive guidance, drawing on previous guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which has been updated in order to reflect recent research, to meet the needs of practitioners, to respond to current issues in society, to meet the needs of children today and to lay a strong foundation for their futures.

The purpose of the guidance includes reaffirming core principles which recognise:

- the child at the centre of practice
- the child's connections within family, communities, cultures and the natural world
- the need to consider the whole child: physical, social and emotional wellbeing, health, and learning
- the [child's rights](#) as a member of society under the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**, including:
 - Non-discrimination (article 2)
 - Best interest of the child (article 3)
 - Goals of education (article 29)
 - Right to be heard (article 12)
 - Right to play (article 31)
 - Right to freedom of expression (article 13)
 - Right to freedom of thought, belief and religion (article 14)
 - Right for children with a disability to live a full and decent life (article 23)
 - Right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family (article 30)
- the sector's responsibilities under the United Nations Sustainability Goals and UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development

Prime Areas of Learning

Communication and Language

Experiences in the womb lay the foundation for communication, and a baby's voice is evident from the beginning. Babies use their bodies, facial expressions, gestures, sounds and movements to seek connections and respond to those around them. Young children depend on back-and-forth interactions with responsive others to develop confidence as effective communicators and language users.

Communication and language development are closely intertwined with physical, social and emotional experiences. Communication and language lay a foundation for learning and development, guiding and supporting children's thinking while underpinning their emerging literacy.

Language is more than words. As children grow, they begin to be aware of and explore different sounds, symbols and words in their everyday worlds; a language-rich environment is crucial. A child's first language provides the roots to learn additional languages, and parents should be encouraged to continue to use their home languages to strengthen and support their children's language proficiency as they join new environments.

Children's skills develop through a series of identifiable stages which can be looked at in three aspects – Listening and Attention, Understanding, and Speaking. While not all children will follow the exact same sequence or progress at the same rate, it is important to identify children at risk of language delay or disorder as these can have an ongoing impact on wellbeing and learning across the curriculum.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Who we are (personal), how we get along with others (social) and how we feel (emotional) are foundations that form the bedrock of our lives. As we move through life, we are continually developing our sense of self as we weave a web of relationships with self, others and with the world.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development is fundamental to all other aspects of lifelong development and learning, and is key to children's wellbeing and resilience. For babies and young children to flourish, we need to pay attention to how they understand and feel about themselves, and how secure they feel in close relationships: in so doing they develop their capacities to make sense of how they and other people experience the world.

Children's self-image, their emotional understanding and the quality of their relationships affect their self-confidence, their potential to experience joy, to be curious, to wonder, and to face problems, and their ability to think and learn.

A holistic, relational approach creates an environment that enables trusting relationships, so that children can do things independently and with others, forming friendships. Early years practitioners meet the emotional needs of children by drawing on their own emotional insight, and by working in partnership with families to form mutually respectful, warm, accepting relationships with each of their key children. *Birth to Five Matters*

Physical Development

- Intricately interwoven with emotional, social, cognitive and language development, physical development underpins all other areas of a child's learning and development. Extensive physical experience in early childhood puts in place the neurological, sensory and motor foundations necessary for feeling good in your body and comfortable in the world. The intimate connection between brain, body and mind must be understood; when they are viewed as one system, the impacts of active physical play, health and self-care are observed and the effects on a child's early brain development and mental health of adverse childhood experience, including malnutrition, illness or neglect, is recognised. Health, wellbeing and self-care are integral to physical development. Prioritising care opportunities and a collaborative approach with young children supports development of lifelong positive attitudes to self-care and healthy decision-making.
- Each child's journey relies on whole-body physical experiences. While biologically programmed, the unfolding of this complex, interconnected system requires repeated movement experiences that are self-initiated and wide-ranging. Fine and gross motor control must develop together in an integrated way, so that the child can achieve what they set out to do. We must ensure that children have movement-rich lives indoors and outdoors from birth. This includes the role of the adult's body as an enabling environment itself, embedding movement into everything, and encouraging each child's own motivations for being active and interactive with others. *Birth to Five Matters*

Specific Areas of Learning

Literacy

Literacy is about understanding and being understood. Early literacy skills are rooted in children's enjoyable experiences from birth of gesturing, talking, singing, playing, reading and writing. Learning about literacy means developing the ability to interpret, create and communicate meaning through writing and reading in different media, such as picture books, logos, environmental print and digital technologies. It involves observing and joining in the diverse ways that different people and communities use literacy for different purposes. Most importantly, literacy is engaging, purposeful and creative.

Developing literacy competence and skills is a complex, challenging yet rewarding journey that requires high-quality pedagogical activities to enhance learning. Young children need to be listened to by attentive adults who recognise and value children's choices. They need enjoyable, playful opportunities of being included and involved in the literacy practices of their home, early years setting, and community environments. They need experiences of creating and sharing a range of texts in a variety of ways, with different media and materials, with adults and peers, both indoors and outdoors, as well as learning about using different signs and symbols, exploring sound and developing alphabetic and phonetic skills.

Mathematics

Mathematics for young children involves developing their own understanding of number, quantity, shape and space. Babies and young children have a natural interest in quantities and spatial relations – they are problem-solvers, pattern-spotters and sense-makers from birth. This curiosity and enjoyment should be nurtured through their interactions with people and the world around them, drawing on their personal and cultural knowledge. Every young child is entitled to a strong mathematical foundation which is built through playful exploration, apprenticeship and meaning-making. Children should freely explore how they represent their mathematical thinking through gesture, talk, manipulation of objects and their graphical signs and representations, supported by access to graphic tools in their pretend play.

Effective early mathematics experiences involve seeking patterns, creating and solving mathematical problems and engaging with stories, songs, games, practical activities and imaginative play. Plenty of time is required for children to revisit, develop and make sense for themselves. This is supported by sensitive interactions with adults who observe, listen to and value children's mathematical ideas and build upon children's interests, including those developed with their families. It is crucial to maintain children's enthusiasm so they develop positive self-esteem as learners of mathematics and feel confident to express their ideas.

Understanding the world

Understanding the World provides a powerful, meaningful context for learning across the curriculum. It supports children to make sense of their expanding world and their place within it through nurturing their wonder, curiosity, agency and exploratory drive.

This development requires regular and direct contact with the natural, built and virtual environments around the child and engaging children in collaborative activities which promote inquiry, problem-solving, shared decision making and scientific approaches to understanding the world. Active involvement in local community life helps children to develop a sense of civic responsibility, a duty to care, a respect for diversity and the need to work for peaceful co-existence.

In addition, first-hand involvement in caring for wildlife and the natural world provides children with an appreciation of ecological balance, environmental care and the need to live sustainable lives. Rich play, virtual and real world experiences support learning about our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world and how to stay safe within it. They also cultivate shared meanings and lay the foundation for equitable understandings of our interconnectedness and interdependence.

Expressive Art and Design

Children and adults have the right to participate in arts and culture. Expression conveys both thinking (ideas) and feeling (emotion). Children use a variety of ways to express and communicate, through music, movement and a wide range of materials. Creative thinking involves original responses, not just copying or imitating existing artworks.

Expressive Arts and Design fosters imagination, curiosity, creativity, cognition, critical thinking and experimentation and provides opportunities to improvise, collaborate, interact and engage in sustained shared thinking. It requires time, space and opportunities to re-visit and reflect on experiences. Multi-sensory, first-hand experiences help children to connect and enquire about the world. Appreciating diversity and multiple perspectives enriches ways of thinking, being, and understanding. Skills are learned in the process of meaning-making, not in isolation.

Appendix 1

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