

## Learning Through Play

At Raised In we believe that children should have the opportunity to learn through play. Children learn through first-hand experiences and the opportunity to play and explore at their own rate.

At Raised In we use Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) as a framework and guide to ensure that children are learning and developing. Children's individual needs, interests and stages of development of each child will be highlighted by the children's key person and other Educators within the setting.

The EYFS consists of seven areas of learning that shape our nursery curriculum and enable children's learning and development to be supported. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. Three areas are particularly crucial for sparking children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

### Prime Areas of Learning:

#### 1. Communication and language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, Educators will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

## **2. Physical development**

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision help with hand-eye coordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

## **3. Personal, social and emotional development**

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their abilities, persist, wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, cooperate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

## **Specific Area of Learning:**

### **4. Mathematics**

Developing a strong grounding in numbers is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, and develop a deep understanding of the numbers up to 10, the relationships

between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding – such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting – children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, the curriculum must include rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, ‘have a go’, talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

## **5. Literacy**

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

## **6. Understanding the world**

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children’s personal experiences increase their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, fiction, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children’s vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

## **7. Expressive arts and design**

The development of children’s artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the

arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in are crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

## **Risky Play**

At Raised In we believe that children should have the opportunities and freedom to push the boundaries of their physical abilities. We enable children to take risks and not prevent them as risk-taking has large benefits for the children. It can be exhilarating and children want and need to take risks.

Our role as an adult is to make sure we enable this, without placing them in actual danger. We use a 'risk-benefit' approach to play. The goal is to not eliminate risk, but rather weigh up the risks and benefits.

An evaluation of the activities will be done there and then by the Educator and considerations such as how likely will the child get hurt? How serious would the injury be? Do the benefits outweigh the risks?

***"The goal is not to eliminate risk, but to weigh up the risks and benefits. No child will learn about risk if they are prevented from taking them." HSE***

## **How Raised In will support and challenge your child's learning and development:**

- During the settling in sessions, the parent/carer and allocated Key Person will sit down with the parent/carer and get to know the child. Through this process, the Key Person and the parent/carer will determine where they think the child is in their learning and development and have discussions about your child's routine, likes and dislikes. This is also an opportunity to talk through your child's development.
- Through the characteristics of effective learning, Educators will recognise how children learn through play and will use this knowledge of each individual child to support their learning.
- The Educator will continually monitor a child's learning and development to ensure that they are progressing and learning and developing at the expected rate.

- Extra support will be put in place to support children to ensure they remain in their expected developmental bracket. This can be through focusing on an area of need with ongoing planning or using support plans (see SEND policy).
- Children will have fun play experiences and provocations to learning set up daily to spark imagination, creativity, and critical thinking, and provide an opportunity to explore and be active in their own learning.
- Educators will use their knowledge of early years development to further children's learning to interact, engage, support and challenge children's learning and development daily.
- The team will use eyLog to monitor and record the child's learning and development journey.

## How Raised In will plan for your child

At Raised In we follow a child-initiated approach. We believe that children learn best when they are ready to learn and when children are showing high levels of involvement.

- Educators will observe the child looking at their levels of involvement in the activity and will assess how to support, enhance and further the child's learning and development.
- The Educator will go to the child and engage with the child following the child's lead.
- Once the Educator and child are engaging together, the Educator will use a variety of language techniques such as open-ended questions, descriptive words and conversation to enhance children's learning and development.
- The Educator then will instantly carry out the next steps for the children, through identifying 'Teachable Moments' and how they can extend the children's learning by extending the activity, creating new ideas and working together. For example, if a child is playing with play dough the Educator will provide support by describing textures, suggesting ideas, role modelling and asking open-ended questions, then make suggestions or provide different resources to further their learning.

## How Raised In will observe and monitor your child's learning and development

- We will use eyLog to record observations. This is an online learning system that enables Educators to write observations, link these to the EYFS, take pictures and videos and get parent/carer involvement.
- Each child will be a focus child at least once every four to six weeks, this is where the Educator will focus on the child's learning and development closely. The Educator will record observations, showing 'Teachable Moments' and the children's response to this.
- Educators will use characteristics of effective learning to record how children learn, which will enable activities to be planned to suit their individual learning styles.
- At each stage of development such as Baby Room, Toddler Room and Preschool the child's Key Person will make observations about learning and development, including a summative assessment highlighting what the child has achieved and noting the next steps for their future learning and development. The Key Person will refer to the EYFS stages of development and will make a judgement to see if the child is in their age and stage of development bracket. This will highlight if the child needs challenges or needs support in their learning and development.
- Parent/carer catch-up meetings will happen annually to talk through the child's learning and development, look at the next steps and review how the parent/carer can support the child at home. A parent/carer can request to talk with their child's Key Person at any point to discuss their child's learning and development and should not wait until the annual meeting if they have any concerns.

## Two-year-old progress check

At Raised In we will carry out a two-year-old progress check between the child's second and third birthday when they are settled at nursery and no big changes are happening in their life. The two-year-old check will be carried out with the parent/carer focusing on the prime areas of learning and looking at the characteristics of effective learning. The discussion will also include the child's progress and setting next steps to further its learning and development within the setting and at home. The Educator and the parent/carer will refer to the age and stages of development and make a judgement on where the child is in its learning and development.

**Signed:** Nicola Brimble, Head of Nursery

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**This policy links to:** Key Person Policy and Equal Opportunities and Inclusion Policy