

Re: September 2021 – EYFS Reforms – Observations, Assessment and Planning

From September 2021, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is changing. As part of these changes, we will be making some adjustments to the way we observe, assess and plan for your children.

What is the EYFS?

The EYFS is the statutory Early Years curriculum. This is mandatory for all schools, settings, and childminders to follow from birth up to the end of reception. The EYFS sets out our legal obligations regarding things like adult: child ratios, suitable people, safeguarding and welfare, staff qualification, and learning and development.

What's changing?

- Most of the changes regarding Learning and development, with some minor adjustments to safeguarding and welfare.
- Fundamentally, what we teach children is very similar, but worded differently.
- The new framework also specifically talks about pressures of Early Years staff and wants to remove unnecessary paperwork requirements which result in time spent away from the children. It says the following: "Assessments should not mean prolonged breaks from interaction with the children, nor require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement and should not be required to prove this through a collection of physical evidence" – EYFS 2021

Changes to Safeguarding and Welfare

- The changes to Safeguarding and Welfare are largely wording based. For example, "Local Safeguarding Children's Board" has been changed to "Local Safeguarding Partners: to reflect some recent changes in structure.
- A requirement for promoting the good oral health of children has been added
- A specific requirement for promoting staff and children's online safety has been added. This reflects the technological advances we have made since the EYFS was last reformed in 2012.

Changes to Learning and Development – Educational Programmes

- The Educational Programmes lead up to the Early Learning Goals – a description of what we want children to know by the end of reception.
- These are divided in to 7 areas of learning. The "Prime" areas form the basis for all learning, the "Specific "areas build on those skills and broaden children's understanding, experiences, and knowledge. In playgroup, we always focus on the Prime areas in the beginning as they really do form the foundations for everything else.
- The 7 areas are divided below showing the changes that have been made

Current EYFS (2012)	New EYFS (2021)
Prime Areas	Prime Areas
Personal, Social, Emotional Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Relationships • Managing Feelings and Behaviour • Self Confidence & Self Awareness 	Personal, Social, Emotional Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Relationships • Sense of Self • Understanding Feelings
Communication and Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening and Attention • Understanding • Speaking 	Communication and Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening, Attention and Understanding • Speaking
Physical Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving and Handling • Health and Self Care 	Physical development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving and handling • Health and Self-care
Specific Areas	Specific Areas
Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Writing 	Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Writing
Mathematics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers • Shape, Space and Measure 	Mathematics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics
Understanding the World <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and Communities • The World • Technology 	Understanding the World <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and Communities • The World • Technology
Expressive Arts and Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring and Using Media and Materials • Being Imaginative 	Expressive Arts and Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating with Materials • Being Imaginative and Expressive

Please be aware that these headings are those of the Early Learning Goals for the end of Reception. In Playgroup/Preschool, we focus on learning the early skills that set children up to achieve these. For example, we build our gross and fine motor skills, mark making, excitement for learning, conversation skill, interest in books and print, strong sense of self and so on which eventually lead to mastery of reading, writing and all the other fantastic things your child will learn as they grow and develop.

All the learning we do here, and most of the learning in Reception is through quality, active play. “Teaching in the early years should not be taken to imply a “top down” or formal way of working. It is a broad term that covers the many ways in which adults help young children learn. It includes their interaction with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities, communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitation and setting challenges” – Ofsted

What does all of this mean at our setting?

“Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interactions with children, nor require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own professional judgement and should not be required to prove this through collection of physical evidence” EYSS 2021

These changes and the removal of the requirement for a lot of evidence-based tracking means that we are making some adjustments to the way we observe, assess and plan.

We as practitioners work hard to ensure we know your children extremely well, we observe their play, development, and interests, we assess what they know and what we want them to learn and then we plan activities and provision which will extend their development and teach them something new or help to bed in the skill they are already mastering. All these things are done by using our understanding of child development and our knowledge of your child as an individual person.

These observations were lengthy, time consuming and require staff to spend time away from doing what they do best every day. Up until now it has been a requirement for us to produce evidence-based tracking. Now this requirement has been removed, we have decided to use our Practitioners' time more effectively

We still want to keep parents up to date with their children's learning and development, so we plan to offer the following from September 2021...

- We will continue to take photos and make purposeful observations. These will be a mixture of group and individual updates.
- Each term we will send you a Progress Report for your child. This will tell you what we have been learning, what we've been enjoying, talk about their wellbeing and whether their development is as expected or if there is anything we need to work on. There are several non-statutory guidance documents to help with, we have chosen Birth to 5 for our setting, but will use additional documents if they are of benefit to you child, such as if they have additional needs or are learning English as an additional language.
- We will continue to complete the 2 Year Progress Check. This is a statutory progress check to be completed between 24 and 35 months.
- When your child goes to school, we will continue to produce Transition Documents to support this.