

Rainbow Pre-school

Rainbow Pre-school Spirit



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Rainbow preschool Southampton Limited 'Spirit' is a thread that flows through everything we believe in, and do. It is the foundation and building block of every child's learning and care that they experience while attending our preschool.

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance" (DCSF, 2007 – revised 2017).

Introduction

At Rainbow Preschool we strive to offer every child the best learning experience, and aim for them to build on these early learning experiences to develop into confident & competent lifelong learners. We provide this by offering a curriculum that is tailored to every child.

We base our Curriculum and foundations to learning on 3 inspirational theorists. The first, Abraham Maslow, an American 20th century psychologist, who put great emphasis on creating the optimum environment in which we are ready to 'take on the world'. Believing that by providing the basics in life, food, water, warmth and shelter. Then building on the basics by providing a safe and secure environment, next offering a secure key person who understands the child and installs a sense of belonging, and finally promoting the child's self-esteem. A culmination of all these factors, in the order they are listed allows the child to fulfill their full potential. Thus being able to fully access the preschool curriculum and all it has to offer.

The next two theorists place their beliefs in the importance of play and learning. 'Jean Piaget' a 20th century Swiss Psychologist placed great emphasis on the child as an individual learner, learning through first hand experiences through exploration & investigation. Our play rooms are set up for children to be independent learners, who are able to self-select activities and resources.

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And thirdly theorist, 'Lev Vygotsky' a 20th century Soviet Psychologist who identified that children have a pre-disposition to learn from interacting and watching more able children. This supports our practice for mixing children's age groups, rather than segregating them.

Building on these theorists findings we are able to offer a curriculum that balances environmental needs, child led activities with adult directed activities, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to learn, develop and thrive.

We develop our curriculum in line with The DfE Revised Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) & Developmental Matters 2021.

Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a framework produced by the DfE and sets the standards for learning and development of children from birth to five. At pre-school children can join us from the age of two years up to the age of five years. The revised EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

A Unique Child

At Rainbow we recognize that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognize that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals. All children at Rainbow are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our pre-school.

In our pre-school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of the children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Children with special educational needs are identified and supported in liaison with the special needs coordinator and/or appropriate outside agencies where relevant.

We aim to meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

It is important to us that all children in the pre-school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries and golden rules to enable them to make appropriate choices. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of all children.

Welfare

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them".

We understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012.

We understand that we are required to:

- Safeguard children, and train all practitioners in doing so.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure all practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Promote the welfare of children and ensure each child is assigned a key person.
- Meet the minimum requirement for adult: child ratios.
- Promote the good health of children attending our setting, promote a healthy diet and prevent the spread of infection and take appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behavior effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose.

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- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Promote equality of opportunity for all children.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

We endeavor to meet all these requirements.

Positive Relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We acknowledge that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating their children.

We do this through:

- We offer a visit to all children in their home setting prior to their starting pre-school;
- The children have the opportunity to spend time with their pre-school before starting during 'get to know us' sessions.
- We invite all parents to an induction meeting before their child starts pre-school.
- We offer a formal parental consultation meeting for parents twice a year at which the key person and the parent discuss the child's progress in private.
- We organise activities that encourage collaboration between child, parent and pre-school.

All practitioners involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At Rainbow pre-school the EYFS team are organised as 'Key Person's' who are the first point of care for individual parents. We have good links with local schools. Regular visits are undertaken by the EYFS teachers and staff from local schools are invited to pre-school to visit at any time. Where possible practitioners will visit local schools when invited and staffing levels permit.

To ensure continuity of care between home and pre-school we liaise with all childcare providers involved with individual children, this may include childminders, pre-school and nursery settings.

Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

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The planning within the pre-school is based on the 'rhythm of the year'. Our medium term plans (MTP's) are based around a familiar focus. Our weekly plan is based on the children's individual needs and interests.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves all of the early year's practitioners. These observations are recorded on Tapestry.

From our ongoing observations we are able to identify if a child is at risk of falling behind. All children will have a 'next step' in their learning, these next steps can be as broad as 'riding a peddle bike' or as fine in detail as 'to exchange a PECs card for a toy'. These next steps are unique to the child and designed to support their current developmental needs. Some children will require longer than others for them to meet their 'next steps', so there are no time restrictions, the key person will monitor and review the child's progress regularly.

The Learning Environment

The pre-school room is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The rooms are set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The pre-school has its own covered outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore using their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning.

Learning and Development

We recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected.

Our policy for learning is based on 'learning through play'. We provide a range of adult led and child led activities.

- The partnership between pre-school and parents is so that our children feel secure at pre-school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- The understanding that practitioners have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- The range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;

- The support for learning with appropriate indoor and outdoor space and resources;
- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents;
- The good relationships between our pre-school and the settings our children experience prior to joining school.

Play

“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development”.

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning

“Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods” (DCSF 2007).

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

Children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources. They discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. At Rainbow pre-school we aim to support this process and enhance the children’s ability to think critically and ask questions.

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. During child initiated play, children have free access to a range of resources both inside and out.

Areas of Learning

The revised EYFS is made up of 7 areas of learning, of these 7 areas, 3 are ‘Prime’ areas consisting of;

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

The remaining 4 are ‘Specific’ areas, consisting of;

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive Arts and Design

The 'Prime' areas begin to develop first through relationships and experiences and support learning in all other areas. The 'Specific' areas develop out of the 'Prime' areas and provide important contexts for learning (DFE, 2012).

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Children learn by three main 'Characteristics of Effective Learning';

- Playing and exploring – engagement, actively being willing to 'have a go'
- Active learning – motivation, being involved and concentrating;
- Creating and thinking critically – thinking, having their own ideas;

We will observe, record and share with parents how and when their child moves through the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

Assessment

Children's achievements will be recorded then shared with parents during parent consultation meetings, these can be face to face, via video calls or telephone appointments. However when children are 2 years old they will have their learning and development progress recorded either by Rainbow Pre-school or by another childcare provider if applicable. A written copy of the assessment will be provided to parents. This 'Progress Check at Age Two' will be undertaken for every child throughout their second year. The progress check will identify the child's strengths, and any areas the child's progress is less than expected. If there are significant emerging concerns, or identified as 'At risk of delay', practitioners will develop an individual plan to support the child and where relevant will involve other professionals.

Special Dispensation

During periods of exceptional circumstances i.e. Covid-19, the Government may introduce measures that mean some or all of the above may be relaxed in order to provide flexibility, so a provider can respond to changes in workforce availability and potential fluctuations in demand for service while ensuring children are kept safe.

Any special dispensation will be authorised from government.

This policy was adapted at a meeting held at Rainbow Pre-school in September 2021

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Signed on behalf of Rainbow Pre-school:

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