

Meadowburn Early Years Centre



This Curriculum Rationale will outline the unique and fabulous pedagogy for learning, teaching and assessment through play in Meadowburn Early Years Centre.

It reflects the centre's improvement priorities, which are informed by National Improvement Framework and East Dunbartonshire Council's guiding principles.

The Framework includes:

- Vision, values & aims
- Play Pedagogy
- Partnerships
- Curriculum
- The Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Sustainability
- Outdoor Play
- GIRFEC
- Evaluating Practice



Our logo, designed by
one of the children in
2021

Our Vision

To create a warm, friendly and nurturing environment, where everyone feels welcome and included.

To inspire a love for learning, by creating an ethos where individual ideas, skills and achievements are valued and celebrated

Our values

Kindness, Inspiration, Care, Respect & Co-operation



We aim to:

- Provide a safe, stimulating and nurturing environment where all children are given opportunities to reach their full potential.
- Put the care & welfare of the children at the heart of everything we do.
- Promote independent thinking, by encouraging children to make choices in their learning.
- Have an inclusive approach to learning, taking into account all levels of ability and developing minds.
- Encourage positive attitudes to learning by implementing fun, interesting and challenging experiences for all children.
- Provide opportunities for Outdoor Play.
- Encourage children to explore, appreciate and respect their environment indoors and outdoors.
- Develop partnerships with parents/carers and families.
- Link with the local community



Play Pedagogy

Responsive and Nurturing Learning

By observing children carefully, we facilitate and guide learning, supporting and extending interests.

Responsive & Intentional planning process: involves an equal balance of adult led, adult initiated and child initiated.

Adult Led

- Response to planning
- Direct teaching – steer towards outcomes
- Practitioner in control of direction
- Planned outcome
- Specific outcome in mind

Adult Initiated – focussed, modelled, scaffolded & Encouraged

- Freely accessed
- Continuous provision
- Independent learning
- Consolidation or extension of learning
- Provision linked to skills development

Child Led

- No planned outcome
- Responsive to children's interests and conversations
- Spontaneous
- Unpredictable
- Evolves independently
- Adult should WAIT, WATCH & WONDER
- Child is in control of their learning – feels empowered

Observation & Assessment

- Observe
- Record
- Identify skills
- Scaffold
- Evaluate
- Plan Next Steps

Progress of learning and skills development is recorded on paper tracking logs and electronic learning journals. With parents invited as partners to contribute to learning stories from home.

Remember that all children learn at different paces in different ways!

At Meadowburn, we are inspired by Froebelian principles and theories.

Learning and experimenting through play is at the heart of Froebelian practice.

Pioneering educator, Friedrich Froebel (1782 - 1852) recognised the importance of play when he opened the first kindergarten in 1836 for children under the age of 7.

**Froebel believed that play is the principle means of learning in early childhood.
In play children construct their understanding of the world through direct experience with it.**
Froebel Trust

Partnerships

The relationship of a child with themselves, their parents/carers, family and wider community are valued and respected.

Parent/Carer Partners

We are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers to provide high quality learning and play opportunities for children. We believe that children benefit most from their early years' experiences when we work in partnership.

We strive to ensure that all parents/carers feel involved in their child's early years learning journey, by providing:

- Daily/regular dialogue
- Stay and play sessions
- Regular learning journal contributions
- Curriculum events
- Family workshops
- Regular updates through variety of media

Transitions

Transitions can be challenging for children, whether they are starting nursery for the first time, changing routines or moving on to school.

We strive to make this process as nurturing as possible for all children by getting to know what is right for them and putting it into practice.

Community links

We place great importance in children having access to and learning about their local community. All children will experience local walks, forest visits and local services visiting nursery.

We also have highly effective links with local schools and nurseries.

Agency supports

Some children may experience challenges during their time at nursery and we are very fortunate to work in partnership with agencies such as, Health Visitor, Speech & Language Therapist and Educational Psychologist as they can provide guidance and developmental supports to ensure supports are right for individual children.



Curriculum

Health and Wellbeing

Health and Wellbeing ensures that children develop the knowledge, understanding and skills they need for mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing now and in the future.

Children experience warmth, caring and nurturing approaches to support their overall wellbeing.

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) is used to develop social and emotional wellbeing.

Up, up and Away - Developing the inclusive, literacy rich environment through learning and collaborative working that will have positive impact on all children.

The Promise – The foundations at the heart of keeping the promise to care experienced children in Scotland are:

- Listening to children's voices
- Supporting families' needs to ensure the best outcome for children
- Ensuring children are receiving the best care possible
- To develop positive relationships with people who care for children
- Responsive supports available to scaffold and guide appropriately

Healthy Snack and Lunch – children learn valuable social and independence skills for life during the snack and lunch routines. Sharing a meal together has so many benefits beyond nutrition, such as developing communication and language skills, sharing space and co-operating with others.

Literacy and English (Languages)

Literacy is fundamental to all areas of learning, as it unlocks access to the wider curriculum. The Literacy and English framework promotes the development of critical and creative thinking as well as competence in listening and talking, reading, writing.

Literacy development is promoted throughout the nursery and children are developing their skills through a variety of experiences, such as:

Talk for writing - The Talk for Writing approach enables children to internalise the language of a story so that they can imitate it, innovate on it and create their own effective stories independently.

Word Aware – Word Aware is an approach to improve vocabulary. Children learn new words and concepts through story, rhyme and repetition.

Song and Rhyme – Songs and rhymes have a hugely positive impact on a child's language and literacy development. Children love rhyme, rhythm and repetition. These three things found in songs and rhymes can naturally help to boost a child's language and literacy skills.

Numeracy and Mathematics

Numeracy and Mathematics helps children develop the confidence and competence in using number which will assist them to solve problems, analyse information and make informed decisions based on calculations.

Children develop their numeracy skills throughout the nursery by experiencing high quality play activities and accessing a variety of resources and materials.

Wood work – Children have the experience of working with real tools, developing their knowledge of risk and physical co-ordination. They will learn mathematical concepts and thinking skills, such as shape and measurement.

Lego Play – There are many benefits to lego play, such as:

- Improved eye/hand coordination.
- The development of spatial skills.
- Persistence and patience.
- Enhanced fine motor skills.
- Problem solving skills.
- Achieving a sense of accomplishment

Block Play - Blocks provide opportunities to learn about size, shape and measurement - by beginning to use a standard unit, to equivalence, quantity, sorting, matching and problem-solving

Expressive Arts

The inspiration and power of the arts play a vital role in enabling children to enhance their creative talent and develop their artistic skills. By engaging in experiences within the expressive arts, children and young people will recognise and represent feelings and emotions, both their own and those of others.

Children are encouraged to freely express their ideas and creative minds in many ways, for example through role play, art & crafts and loose parts

Block play - Children can create structures in play with the blocks, developing their imaginations in relation to the world around them.

Religious and Moral Education

Learning about ourselves and the world around us, develops children's awareness and appreciation of the value of each individual in a diverse society. We are a Rights Respecting Nursery and acknowledge and celebrate each child as an individual.

Sciences

Through learning in the sciences, children develop an understanding of, the living, material and physical world.

Outdoor Play – The garden is a place where children grow and learn at their own pace with adults who are responsive to their interests and learning. Children learn best when participating in high quality first-hand experiences, whilst playing and socialising. Within our centre, children have access to three outdoor spaces and also the local area.

Sustainability – Through gardening, exploration and play outdoors, children develop an understanding of the natural world, begin to appreciate its beauty and learn to take care of it. (Froebel Trust)

We are an Eco school green flag awarded nursery.



Social Studies

Through social studies children develop a sense of the world around them in the past, present and future.

Fair Trade - The concepts of Fair Trade are extremely relevant in the nursery setting. Many nursery practitioners will hear the words 'that's not fair' every day. Children will learn the concept of fair and unfair by asking questions and engaging in co-operative play experiences. They will also learn about trading and swapping through shared activities and games.

Technologies

Technologies and ICT offer children opportunities to develop curiosity and problem solving skills, co-operation, creativity and innovation, skills in using tools, equipment, software and materials.

The Rights of the Child



We are a Rights Respecting Nursery

“Rights are not an addition to learning, they are part of the ethos and pedagogy of the service. Staff interactions with children are loving and caring and support children to understand their rights, not as an activity to be planned but as everyday experiences” (Care Inspectorate)

12 of the 54 Articles are particularly relevant to early years!

- **Article 2** (non-discrimination) The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.
- **Article 3** (best interests of the child) The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.
- **Article 9** (separation from parents) Children must not be separated from their parents against their will unless it is in their best interests (for example, if a parent is hurting or neglecting a child). Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this could cause them harm.
- **Article 12** (respect for the views of the child) Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.
- **Article 13** (freedom of expression) Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions and to access all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law.
- **Article 14** (freedom of thought, belief and religion) Every child has the right to think and believe what they choose and also to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents to guide their child as they grow up.
- **Article 17** (access to information from the media) Every child has the right to reliable information from a variety of sources, and governments should encourage the media to provide information that children can understand. Governments must help protect children from materials that could harm them.
- **Article 19** (protection from violence, abuse and neglect) Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.
- **Article 28** (right to education) Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.
- **Article 29** (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.
- **Article 31** (leisure, play and culture) Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.
- **Article 42** (knowledge of rights) Governments must actively work to make sure children and adults know about the Convention.

Sustainability



We are an Eco Schools Green Flag awarded Nursery

Our children's Pledge to the Planet!

"We will always put rubbish in the bin or recycling."

"We will put seeds in the ground and make our own food."

"We need to look after the flowers and give them a drink."

"We will pick up litter from outside with litter picks and put it in the bin or recycling."

Curriculum link –

- HWB 0-50a I am learning about where living things come from and about how they grow, develop and are nurtured.
- RME 0-02a As I play and learn I am developing my understanding of what is fair and unfair
- SCN 0-01a I have observed living things in the environment over time and I am becoming aware of how they depend on each other
- SCN 0-03a I have helped to grow plants and can name their basic parts. I can talk about how they grow and what I need to do to look after them

Outdoor Play & Learning

Children have daily opportunities to participate in outdoor play and learning. They can access a variety of experiences within any three of our outdoor areas.



Children have the freedom to explore and investigate, developing their curiosity and imaginations. They learn to co-operate with others, managing risk and problem solving.

‘Children’s experiences and their capacity to learn and develop are enhanced by being able to experience nature first hand. Simply being outside in fresh air is beneficial, but when children are helped to actively explore nature themselves the dividends for improving outcomes are exponential’

My World Outdoors

At Meadowburn we believe that:

- Outdoor play is a key component to young children’s learning.
- Indoors and outdoors is viewed as one combined and integrated environment.
- Outdoors is both a teaching and learning environment for children to extend their knowledge, skills and concepts.
- Outdoor design and layout is given careful consideration.
- The outdoor environment develops all senses through experiences that the indoor environment cannot provide
- Play is open-ended with fabulous opportunities for breadth and depth of learning
- Children develop feel a sense of empowerment in the environment that they care and respect

We aim to:

- Enable children to develop an appreciation of natural beauty and a sense of wonder about the world
- Be responsive to children’s interests and needs – observe, wait and listen (respond and record)
- Encourage children to respect the outdoor environment and to care for living things
- Ensure that children enjoy energetic activity outdoors and the feeling of wellbeing that it brings
- Ensure that the outdoors offers the children the opportunity to investigate and explore, problem solve, developing their imaginations and creativity
- Promote nursery safety rules for children to understand and follow
- Plan local area outings throughout the year
- Link with the local community
- Promote family learning opportunities and partnerships



Getting It Right for Every Child



We put HEALTH & WELL BEING at the heart of everything we do!
thriving towards all children being confident individuals, effective contributors,
responsible citizens and successful learners

We are a Nurturing Nursery and follow The Six Principles of Nurture to ensure all children's individual needs are supported

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally
2. The environment offers a safe base
3. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing
4. Language is a vital means of communication
5. All behaviour is communication
6. The importance of transition in children's lives

It is important that parents, nursery staff and other professionals work together to support children's learning. By doing this we are ensuring that each child receives the right care at the right time to support and meet their individual needs.

Evaluating Practice

Continual evaluations of practice and policy are key to ensuring we are providing a quality service for all children and their families. We value the contributions all stake holders make to improvement and always take on board any suggestions and comments.

How Good is our Early Learning & Childcare – The term ‘self-evaluation’ is used to cover the way in which individuals and settings explore their progress, development and practice to identify what has improved and what still needs to improve. It is a way of using evidence to assess achievements and success and areas that still need action. The significant relationship between effective self-evaluation and improvement might also be understood to help settings answer the familiar three questions, which remain at the heart of self-evaluation:

- How are we doing?
- How do we know?
- What are we going to do now?

A Quality framework for day care of children - This framework is framed around key questions. To try and understand what contributes to wellbeing, the key questions are:

- How good is our care, play and learning?
- How good is our setting?
- How good is our leadership?
- How good is our staff team?

Each quality indicator has a small number of key areas and short bullet points which outlines the areas of practice covered. These have been developed to help answer the key questions.

Realising the Ambition – Reflects principles and philosophy of Building the Ambition and compliments the current policy direction. It aspires to support practitioners in delivering what babies and young children need most and how we can most effectively deliver this in Scotland to give children the best start in life.

We strive towards a quality practice, where the evaluation process will highlight progress and achievements and contribute to improvements.