



# Parents' Guide to the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

## Exciting times ahead for you and your child

### What is the Early Years Foundation Stage?

Welcome to the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**, which is how the Government and early years professionals describe the time in your child's life between birth and age 5.

**Your child has already been a part of this very important stage at their Pre-School or Nursery setting, which has helped your child get ready for school as well as preparing them for their future learning and successes. From when your child is born up until the age of 5, their early year's experience should be happy, active, exciting, fun and secure; and support their development, care and learning needs.**

Nurseries, pre-schools, reception classes and child-minders registered to deliver the EYFS must follow a legal document called the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

### What is the EYFS Framework – why do we have one?

The EYFS Framework exists to support all professionals working in the EYFS to help your child, and was developed with a number of early year's experts and parents.

In 2012 the framework was revised to make it clearer and easier to use, with more focus on the things that matter most. This new framework also has a greater emphasis on your role in helping your child develop.

It sets out:

- The legal welfare requirements that everyone registered to look after children must follow to keep your child **safe** and promote their welfare
- The 7 areas of **learning and development** which guide professionals' engagement with your child's play and activities as they learn new skills and knowledge
- Assessments that will tell you about **your child's progress** through the EYFS
- Expected levels that your child should reach at age 5, usually the end of the reception year; these expectations are called the "**Early Learning Goals (ELGs)**"

There is also guidance for the professionals supporting your child on planning the learning activities, and observing and assessing what and how your child is learning and developing.



## How will my child be learning?

The EYFS Framework explains how and what your child will be learning to support their healthy development.

There are four guiding principles which shape practice in the Early Years. These are:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.**

Children in the EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside.

Your child will be learning skills, acquiring new knowledge and demonstrating their understanding through **7 areas of learning and development**.

Children should mostly develop the **3 prime areas** first. These are:

- Communication and language;
- Physical development; and
- Personal, social and emotional development.

These prime areas are those most essential for your child's healthy development and future learning.

As children grow, the prime areas will help them to develop skills in **4 specific areas**. These are:

- Literacy;
- Mathematics;
- Understanding the world; and
- Expressive arts and design.



These 7 areas are used to plan your child's learning and activities. The professionals teaching and supporting your child will make sure that the activities are suited to your child's unique needs. The curriculum and planning is designed to be really flexible so that staff can follow your child's unique needs and interests.

During a week in Early Years your child will 'free-flow', choosing a range of activities to do, but, will also work with adults for directed activities from a number of the Learning and Development areas, either in small groups work or on a one to one basis, depending on the child's individual needs.

Your child will be allocated a "**key person**" after we have spent time getting to know them. There will be allocated time each week where the Key Person will spend time with their group of Key children, we call this Island Time and is where we talk about emotions, friendships and social skills.



## How can I find out how my child is getting on?

It is important that you and the professionals caring for your child work together. You need to feel comfortable about exchanging information and discussing things that will benefit your child. These conversations will either need to be with your child's class Teacher or Teaching Assistant.

Another important part of the EYFS Profile is your knowledge about your child's learning and development, so do let your child's class teacher know about what your child does with you. We have a 'WOW WALL' to enable you to do this on a regular basis. Outside in the Early Years garden area, we will have a portable 'wow wall'. There will also be a supply of 'WOW shapes'. If your child has done something fantastic at home or at a club outside of school, we want you to let us know. You can do this by writing the achievement on a 'WOW shape' and attaching it to the portable 'wow wall' outside. We will share the children's 'WOW moments' with the rest of their class and add it to our permanent 'wow wall' inside. You will then also be able to share and celebrate the WOW's on a Thursday after school, during our open door sessions. The 'wow wall' will help the adults within Early Years get to know your child as a 'whole person' and celebrate their success outside of school. The adults will also use this information for your child's assessments.

We have an open door policy here at Arthur Bugler and welcome your questions and involvement. On a Thursday afterschool you are welcome to come into school to talk to your child's teacher and see what your child has been learning. There will also be parent and teacher meetings at various times throughout the year when your child's progress and development will be shared with you.

## How do assessments work in Early Years?

Throughout the year the adults in the Early Years collect evidence and use this to find out what your child can do independently. The adults assess against the Developmental Matters, which your child's Pre-School setting would have also used. The Developmental Matters are statements that children should achieve in age related bands. For example a child could be working between 30 – 50 or 40 -60+ months.

A Baseline Assessment will be completed for your child within the first half term and this will then be reported to you as an age band. This is the level of development where your child is currently working. At the teacher and parent meetings throughout the year, you will get an update on what age band your child is working on.

In the summer term of the Early Years, in school; teachers complete an assessment which is known as the **EYFS Profile**, which has been on-going throughout the year. This assessment is carried out by the class teacher and is based on what they, and other staff caring for your child, have observed over a period of time. Children are assessed mainly by 'observations', where adults will watch the children and note down what they are doing, saying etc., the adult will also question the children to extend their learning and thinking. Children are also assessed by work they carry out independently or by work directed by an adult in 'group work time'.

All of the information collected is used to judge how your child is achieving in the 7 areas of learning and development. Finding out at this stage how your child is achieving will mean that the teacher your child has in their next school year – year 1 – will know what your child really enjoys doing and does well, as well as helping them decide if your child needs a bit of extra support, what that support should be and if they are already getting it.



## As a Mum, Dad, or Carer how can I help with my child's learning?

All the fun activities that you do with your child at home are important in supporting their learning and development, and have a really long lasting effect on your child's learning as they progress through school.

Even when your child was very young and was not yet able to talk, talking to them helped them to learn and understand new words and ideas. If you make the time every day to do some of the following things with your child it will make a real difference to your child's confidence as a young learner.





## **Where can I go for further information?**

The most important place to find out more is **your child's Class Teacher and Teaching Assistant** – do ask as many questions as you need to. We have an open door policy and welcome speaking with you.

Miss Glandfield the Early Years Manager and Deputy Headteacher is also on hand for any concerns that you may have.

You can find the **Early Years Foundation Stage** which includes the early learning goals at [www.foundationyears.org.uk](http://www.foundationyears.org.uk). The foundation year's website also includes a range of resources and contacts.

