**What are the EYFS Areas of Learning?**

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| **Prime Areas** | **Specific Areas** |
| Personal, Social, Emotional Development (PSED) | Literacy |
| Communication and Language | Numeracy |
| Physical Development | Understanding the World |
|  | Expressive Arts and Design |

**Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL)**

These characteristics are typical of the way children learn. You may find that your child regularly demonstrates many of these traits, alternatively you may find that your child is very much displaying one of these threads of CoEL.

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| **Playing and exploring** | **Creating and**  **thinking critically** | **Active learning** |
| Finding out and exploring | Having their own ideas | Being involved and  concentrating |
| Playing with what they know | Making links | Keeping trying |
| Being willing to ‘have a go.’ | Choosing ways to do  things | Enjoying achieving what  they set out to do |

**Personal, Social and Emotional Development - PSED**

* Making Relationships
* Self Confidence and Self Awareness
* Managing Feeling and Behaviours.

This is how children develop the skills that we so often talk about: confidence, self-awareness, positive self-worth, self-esteem, resilience, determination, independence, tolerance, and acceptance. This area of learning and development is about supporting your child to develop life skills needed to foster friendships, empowering children to share their thoughts and opinions, to celebrate their differences, understand and express their emotions, follow boundaries and behavioural expectations.

**Communication and Language**

* Listening and Attention
* Understanding
* Speaking

How children develop the skills to be good communicators, being able to express themselves effectively and showing awareness of listening to others attentively. It is also about learning how to follow instructions involving two or more steps, following a story or conversation without visual aids, and understanding questions revolved around “why and how” concepts. Here is a good link for parents regarding communication -

* <https://www.pacey.org.uk/Pacey/media/Website-files/school%20ready/Happy-Talk.pdf>
* <https://www.pacey.org.uk/Pacey/media/Website-files/school%20ready/Listen-and-Learn.pdf>

**Physical Development**

* Moving and Handling - developing gross and fine motor skills, good control and coordination and spatial awareness.
* Health and Self Care - supporting children to gain independence with basic hygiene and personal needs, how to keep themselves healthy and safe through eating healthily, exercising, and practicing safety measures.

**Literacy**

Reading is one of the areas that parents tend to worry about the most, thinking that their child should go to school already knowing their phonics, recognising the entire alphabet and able to write them. However, this is not the expectation of the teachers, far from it in fact. Every school subscribes to their own phonics programme and often teachers prefer children to start school as a blank canvas with regards to phonics. Obviously though, for some children especially the older children of the school year, they are becoming interested in the alphabet as they begin to observe the letters written in the environment so it would be inappropriate to not follow their lead by introducing them to this. For those children who are interested in phonics and blending and segmenting the sounds together to form simple words - like “c-a-t...cat” please see the link for an understanding of how to teach the sounds.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=120&v=IwJx1NSineE&feature=emb_logo>

If your child is not yet at this stage, which is more usual, they will quickly learn this when they start school. Concentrating on sharing books together and making observations on the illustrations helps to foster positive learning attitudes towards literacy. Learning how to handle a book carefully, turning the pages gently, looking at the book the correct way round. Discussing the structure of the story, describing the plot, characters, setting of the story, making predictions helps to deepen their understanding and joy of reading. Joining in with repeated refrains and rhymes, re-reading the same book several times in a week helps to consolidate their learning. Noticing logos in the environment, or familiar letters from their name in books or signs.

This all helps foster an important interest in books and reading. It helps create a sense of wonder and amazement which will encourage them to continue exploring books throughout their childhood, from the library and school, different types of books from bedtime stories to factual books. This in turn can help support communication as they add new words to their vocabulary and apply this to their experiences.

Writing also tends to be an area that parents are concerned about, worrying that their child cannot yet write their name, or that their letters are not neat, or the letters are not formed correctly. Please do not worry about this! Children are not expected to be able to do this as they enter school, if they can then that is great but if they cannot then they will very quickly learn. Put simply, they key to writing, lies in the marks that your children make when creating. Whether that is scraping a stick in the mud, or a finger in gloop, driving a toy car through a tray of flour, “scribbling” on paper with a pencil, paint brush strokes on the walls. These are all precursors to developing the skills needed to form letters. This is how children develop those fine motor skills required to support them in concentrating on forming identifiable letters. Creating elaborate circles in the flour soon lead onto being able to form the letter ‘p’ in their name, or the squiggly lines in the gloop soon develop into the letter ‘s’, or the zigzags in the mud soon make their way into the letter ‘z’, this is how children learn so if this is “all” they are interested in the minute then FANTASTIC, go with it! It is also worth noting, that that boys are less inclined to sit and write so if they are a little reluctant to put pen to paper then try introducing a different way of mark making, normally the messier the opportunity the more inclined they are to give it a go! Here is a great link for parents regarding mark making:

<https://www.pacey.org.uk/Pacey/media/Website-files/school%20ready/Make-a-mark,-make-a-start.pdf>

**Mathematics**

Numbers - This area of learning focuses on developing children’s recognition of written numerals 1-5, counting to 10, beginning to count beyond 10, matching numerals to quantity, representing numbers with objects.

<https://www.pacey.org.uk/Pacey/media/Website-files/school%20ready/The-Numbers-Game.pdf>

Shape, Space and Measure focuses on developing an understanding of mathematical concepts such as size, shape, and the language of time. Comparing and ordering items based upon size, weight, capacity. Using positional language and describing relative position such as below, behind and under.

**Understanding the World**

People and Communities - supporting children in talking about their families and significant people in their lives, recalling past events or experiences in their own lives and of their family members. Encouraging children to recognise the similarities and differences between themselves and others among families, traditions, communities.

The World - supporting children in developing an understanding of their environment and the world in which they live in. Observing changes, similarities, and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. It is encouraging them to show care and concern for living things in the environment.

Technology - supporting children to develop an interest in technological toys to help them understand that some things require skill to operate and to learn how to operate simple equipment and making things work.

**Expressive Arts and Design**

Exploring using Media and Materials - supporting children to explore and experiment through singing songs, making music, dancing, and moving. Encouraging children to explore variety of materials, tools and techniques, colour mixing and construction.

Being Imaginative - to express and represent themselves through design, art, music, dance, role play and stories. Children build storylines or narratives around their play often influenced by their own first-hand experiences. They play alongside their peers cooperatively as part of a group and compromise and respond to ideas expressed by their peers.

**How can parents support their child in getting ready for school?**

● Encourage independence with dressing, putting on their shoes, packing their bookbag / backpack.

● Support independence with managing toileting needs.

● Support independence with hand washing.

● Practice carrying a dinner tray in preparation for school dinners.

● Encourage the use of a knife and fork for mealtimes in preparation for school dinners.

● Try to encourage them to unpack their lunch by themselves.

● Talk with your child about their lunch options. Will they be having school dinners or packed lunches?

● Provide activities that involve turn-taking and sharing.

● Talk about their friends that may be going to their school, new friends that they will make. Have they got any questions they want to ask their new teacher?

● Discuss what their favourite games and activities are. Will these be things they can also do at school?

● Talk about the rules, boundaries, and expected behaviour for when they are in school.

● If there will be a change to their typical daily routine either side of school then discuss it now, for example there may be no tv before they are dressed, this could be introduced gradually now.

● Practice using scissors.

● Recognising their own name both when spoken but also when written. Do they know their surname and how to pronounce it? This may be particularly important if there are several children with the same name.

● Resist the temptation to offer help too early as it is important for your child to learn to overcome challenge. Instead, try to encourage them to always “have a go” but reassure them that they can always ask an adult for help if it is still too difficult. This develops determination, persistence and a sense of achievement and self-satisfaction when they manage to complete that task.

● Talk with your child about school - what are they excited, happy, nervous, scared about?

● Encourage the use of words that help children to express their opinions.

● Pose carefully framed open-ended questions such as “how can we…?” This provides opportunities for thinking and further child-led questioning.

● Instead of always answering a “who, what, where, why” question immediately encourage them to think and contemplate, “I am not too sure, what do you think?”

● Walk by their new school, introducing it, make observations on what you can see.

● Introduce their school uniform into their dressing up box

● Provide a variety of opportunities for your child to engage in mark-making which will encourage early writing skills.

● Practise “good sitting” at home. We do this at pre-school so the children should be familiar with sitting with their legs crossed, their listening ears turned on, their looking eyes open, and their talking mouths closed.

● Having a dance! Whether this is to the radio, Alexa, You-Tube, or freestyling! This is a great way of developing that spatial awareness, or experimenting with different movements, expressing their emotions, promoting imagination, tapping out rhythm, singing familiar songs.

● Encourage children to experiment with words and sounds, for example in nonsense rhymes.

● Provide the opportunity for your child to draw a picture of themselves or take a ‘selfie.’ Talk about what makes them unique and support them in describing themselves in positive terms. Encourage your children to look in the mirror and make observations on what they can see, for example, is their hair brown or blonde? Is it curly or straight? This is particularly useful for when you will complete an “about me” form for the schoolteacher.

● Ask your children to help you “write” the shopping list. Children learn from example and enjoy imitating so by modelling writing information then they will want to copy. This will likely carry through to their imaginative play.

● Play games together that encourage turn taking and sharing. Games like snakes and ladders, snap, pairs.

● Share books together. Look at the illustrations, what can they see, what do they think the book may be about just by looking at the front cover. Encourage them to make predictions about the story. What is their favourite part? Were there any funny words in there? Can they hear any rhyming words?

● Give your children a task or challenge to complete using 2 or more instructions, for example “Can you go into your bedroom, find your yellow t-shirt and put it on, and then come and show me.”

● Ask silly questions, for example, show a tiny box and ask if there is a bicycle in it.

● Make musical instruments from the recycling. The children love the opportunity to be creative but with this comes problem solving, concentration, facing challenge, adapting their way of working, feeling proud of their achievement.

● Those homemade instruments can then be used to explore the different sounds they can make, to explore different ways of using the instruments, to develop rhythm.

● Singing lots of number songs together and representing these numbers in a different way, with fingers, with play food, with real food, with cuddly toys.

● Point out shapes when you see them, compare the shapes, or go on a shape hunt.

● Use descriptive mathematical language and positional language during day to day so that they become familiar with it.

● Help children to understand that one thing can be shared into pieces, for example a pizza.

● Play games like “what’s the time Mr Wolf” or “Granny’s footsteps”.

● Talk about your family, especially during our current situation. Look at family photos, of family members, or past family events. What can your child remember? What can they see in the photos?

● When outside talk about what you can see? Were those flowers growing in the woods last week when you visited? Can they smell the wild garlic? Have the fish in the pond grown bigger?

● Use correct terms so that children will enjoy naming things correctly if asked by their teacher.

● Encourage children to coordinate actions to use a technology, for example calling a telephone number.

● Teach and encourage children to use simple ICT programmes.

● Provide resources for exploring and experimenting with colour mixing. Encourage your child to make predictions.

● Demonstrate and teach skills and techniques associated with the thing’s children are

**Useful Links**

What to expect when - developmental guide -

* <https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/0778-What-to-Expect-When-2018.pdf>

Steps to starting school - building blocks.

* <https://www.pacey.org.uk/Pacey/media/Website-files/PACEY%20general/Steps-to-startingschool.pdf>

Getting ready for school checklist

* <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t-tp-365-my-starting-school-checklist>

Being school-ready -

* <https://www.pacey.org.uk/working-in-childcare/spotlight-on/being-school-ready/#readyforschool>

Please be reassured that Reception teachers are preparing for their September class and will be making allowances for the break in pre-school education when welcoming their class in September. They will be aware that some children will require more support with their learning and development, especially considering the disruptions over the past year. The EYFS framework recognises that every child is unique and develops at their own rate and ways. Remember, your child has already done this once before when they first stepped through the door of pre-school. Embrace this next step as they embark their journey through education. It is exciting even if a little scary!

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