

## **Our educational programme**

### **Enhanced provision – Heuristic Play**

During daily Heuristic play, the babies play with real-life, everyday objects that provide them with an opportunity for open-ended discovery. When the babies are involved in Heuristic play, they are using familiar objects in different ways. It is the process of exploring the different ways to use the objects that is important in the play.

The word 'heuristic' comes from the word 'eurisko' which means to learn, discover or reach an understanding of something.

For our babies and toddlers, Heuristic play revolves around them using their senses and exploring a treasure basket filled with real-world objects made from any material (apart from plastic) that comes from nature and around the house.

It is through handling and exploring these objects that the babies and toddlers begin to make their own choices and decisions and start to gain an understanding of the world around them.

The practitioners role in Heuristic play is to sit back and be unobtrusive, interacting only when invited. The children are able to move freely and explore without any encouragement or distraction. As a result, they have a much richer and more stimulating experience as they explore at their own pace.

We never leave babies and toddlers alone, they are always closely supervised, especially when they are likely to put the items in their mouth and are susceptible to choking.



For the heuristic play session, a large floor area is freed for a specified period; an hour is good, allowing time for children to help pack away. One staff member makes heaps of the objects for play and distributes tins (at least three per child). It is important to provide large numbers of each item, so that the children do not feel compelled to protect 'their' things from each other. It is premature to expect children to share at this age.

Areas of learning covered during Heuristic play;  
Understanding the World, Numeracy, Personal, Social and Emotional, Physical development.