



Early Years Foundation Stage

What is the Early Years Foundation Stage? (EYFS)

The EYFS is the stage of education for children from birth to end of the Reception year.

It is based on the recognition that children learn best through play and active learning. The EYFS curriculum allows children to explore and learn in an environment that is secure and safe yet challenging.

It is developed around 4 themes that underpin the EYFS

1. A Unique Child – Observe what a child is learning
2. Positive Relationships – What adults can do
3. Enable Environments – What adults could provide
4. Learning and Developing – Children's achievements through the above

Areas of learning

The EYFS curriculum consists of 7 different areas of learning:

Prime areas

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development
2. Communication and Language
3. Physical Development

These are crucial for developing children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning

Specific Areas

4. Literacy
5. Mathematics
6. Understanding the world
7. Expressive arts and design

Each area of learning and development is implemented through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity both inside the classroom and outside. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1

“Adults who help children to play are adults who help children to learn.”

Bruce and Meggitt, 1999

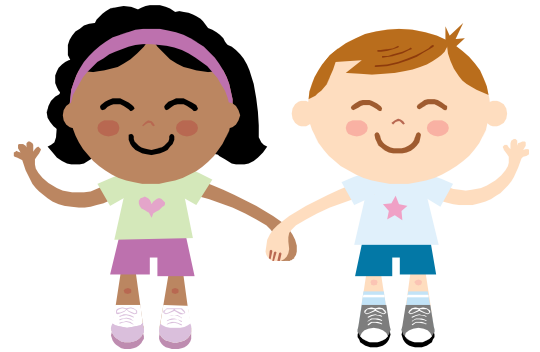
Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Managing feelings & behaviour

Self-confidence & self-awareness

Making relationships

During the first weeks of Reception, we concentrate a lot in this area: embedding the class rules and expectations at school. Children begin to develop an awareness of their surroundings and build new relationships with their peers and members of staff.



How can I help at home?

When you are out in the local area, look for guidelines, signs, and rules. The park and library are a great place to start. Discuss why the rules are there and why it is important to follow them. Explain to them that we have to follow special rules in our country and the word for these rules is 'laws'.

Talk to your child about what they are good at. Talk about how and when to ask for help should they need it. Encourage them to speak confidently, expressing their ideas, likes and dislikes with friends and family. Before a day out, talk about what they will need to take with them. After a day out, discuss what they enjoyed and what they might like to do next time.

Encourage your child to share resources when engaging with other children in various situations. Discuss which strategies they could use to ensure everyone gets a turn and encourage them to confidently ask other children to use resources, saying phrases such as, "When you are finished, can I have a turn please?"

Communication and Language

Listening and Attention Speaking Understanding

Communication and Language are the key skills your child will need in order to express themselves, discuss their learning and share their knowledge with others. Children will be encouraged to develop conversation skills in a rich language environment and in a range of situations. They will be helped to develop listening and concentration skills. Our learning environment encourages the children to express themselves and understand and act on instructions given to them.



How can I help at home?

When reading to your child, ask questions about what might happen next or how it might end. Encourage them to listen to others in conversation and help them to complete an activity before moving on to the next one.

Encourage your child to speak confidently, talking about the past, present and future using the correct tenses. Discuss the events of the day and what happened before and after. Ensure children are using the correct vocabulary such as 'yesterday', 'before', 'this morning', tomorrow' etc.

Challenge your child to follow instructions involving several parts, such as "Can you put your train away, put your shoes on and meet me at the door?" In discussion, use 'how' and 'why' to allow your child to explore the question further, such as "Why do we need to wear shoes?"

Physical Development

Moving and Handling

Health and Self-Care

Both aspects of this area of learning form a vital part of your child's development. From dressing and using the toilet independently, to using their spatial awareness and holding a pencil effectively. Children in Reception are taught Physical Education (PE) twice a week but their physical development is also supported in other areas of the learning environment, such as climbing equipment and fine motor activities such as scissors and threading.



How can I help at home?

In order to support your child with their fine and gross motor skills, there are several activities you can try at home: - Use clothes pegs to either help hang out the washing or even clip on to paper. - Jewellery making or threading: use string and beads or even dried pasta to create your masterpiece! - Playdough is great for making shapes, animals or just rolling into balls, or whatever they choose to make! - Using tweezers or fingers to pick up grains of rice or dried peas/ beans. Also, any physical activity which encourages movement into small spaces, changing direction and ball skills is equally important. Use your local park as much as possible, using the balancing equipment and obstacle courses.

Use breakfast, lunch and dinner time to discuss healthy eating. Talk about where food comes from, what healthy food looks like and why it is good for us. Discuss ways in which we can stay safe. When crossing the road, talk about why it is important to look left and right and why we need to wait for the green man at a pelican crossing.

Literacy

Reading Writing

The children are taught to read through systematic phonics lessons. They are taught corresponding sounds to letters or groups of letters, building on this to then segment and blend the sounds together in order to read a word. Please refer to our phonics and reading page for more information about how to help your child with phonics. Children also learn correct letter formation and pencil grip during these phonics lessons and apply these in their writing throughout their learning across the curriculum.

How can I help at home?

The most important thing you can do to support your child with their education, is read to them and with them. Do not feel like this is limited to just books. Encourage them to use their reading skills wherever you are – read road signs, instructions, catalogues, anything you can find! Join your local library. Membership is free and most libraries run sessions throughout the week specifically for families.

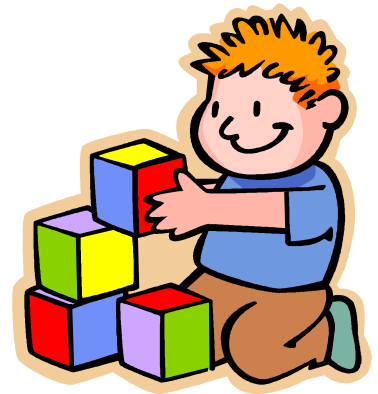


Allow your child to write their own lists to take with them on shopping trips. Get them to read their list to you, ensuring they can read what they have written before you go. Start a diary! This can be daily, weekly, or during the holidays. Encourage children to use 'robot talk' (sounding out) in order to sound out words when reading and before they write.

Mathematical Development

Numbers Shape Space and Measure

This area of learning covers many different aspects. Encourage your child to add and subtract objects around the house. Find numbers and shapes everywhere you go. Bake together! Get them to measure the ingredients and estimate how much you will need.



How can I help at home?

To embed the concept of number, we need children to understand that numbers can be represented in many ways. When finding numbers, try to make the number with fingers, objects and anything you can find. During shopping trips, ask your child to add pieces of fruit together, then take some away and ask for the answer. At the park, collect sticks, add, subtract, double, halve and share them and write the numbers in the mud. At home, use mathematical vocabulary during everyday tasks – “I need 6 forks and 6 knives, how many will I have altogether? Can you count them?” Where possible, use objects and pictures, then practice writing the answers using the correct number formation. Use the hooks “When I add, the number gets bigger”- “When I subtract, the number gets smaller!”

Get baking! Use this time to weigh and measure ingredients, estimate how much you will need for your recipe and use vocabulary relating to capacity such as ‘full’, ‘empty’, ‘half full/empty’ empty’ ‘almost full/empty’ to add liquids to your recipe. Look for 2D and 3D shapes in the environment, discussing the properties of each shape such as ‘a triangle always has 3 sides and 3 corners.’ Look for repeating patterns in the environment and discuss the shapes that make them. Ask them what comes next to continue the pattern. Give them their own purse or wallet to carry their own money when shopping and encourage them to identify the coins and what they represent.

Understanding the World

People and Communities The World Technology

We actively encourage our Reception children to share their experiences including cultures and customs with staff and peers alike. We look at the world around us, observe living things and look at the similarities and differences within the environment. All children have access to our interactive whiteboards, as well as other interactive equipment such iPads, torches and Bee Bots which use coding.



How can I help at home?

Discuss important events you may celebrate within your own families or any event that you consider special. Talk about what makes these events special. Encourage your child to understand the importance of respecting other people's beliefs when they are different to their own. When passing places of worship, talk about their similarities and differences and who might visit these places.

Get planting! Encourage your child to talk about the changes that they see and what the seed will need to help it grow. Discuss the issues that affect our environment and why it important to recycle. Talk about the differences between places you may visit or see on television and the similarities to the environment we live in. Visit a farm and observe the various types of animals and their young and discuss any differences and similarities they may see.

Whilst we know that children in the 21st century are extremely technologically aware, it is important that we keep abreast of current developments and changes within technology. Navigating their way around an educational game does require skill, but in order to develop this further, use games which use coding, to embed a love of programming. Another practical activity to try is to disassemble old equipment such as remote controls, phones and keyboards, in order to explore the components that make up these complex devices.

Expressive Art and Design

Exploring and using media and materials Being imaginative

Children sing songs, make music and dance, and experiment with ways of changing them. They safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.



How can I help at home?

Allow children to get creative in this area. Change the words in songs, create their own and find different ways to create music. Use water colour or poster paint to make their own designs using paintbrushes, cotton buds or even fingers. Mix colours and discuss what they have created. Get imaginative by using empty boxes, newspaper and any old household materials for junk modelling to create anything from cars to skyscrapers. Observe flowers and use coloured card, paper or tissue paper to create a collage.

Encourage your child to use their imagination to create their own role play, whether relating to the toy animals they may have – creating a farm enclosure with tractor rides and a playground or using their junk modelling to take the car they have made on a magical journey. This imaginative play helps to build your child's vocabulary and confidence which enables them to flourish in all aspects of their learning.

Assessment

From the moment the children start school they are continually tracked alongside the EYFS framework. Practitioners observe children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and then use these observations to shape future learning experiences.

At Holy Family we use *Tapestry* (Online Learning Journal) to support formative assessment in EYFS and record each learning step a child takes.

At the end of the summer term, each child's level of development is assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

For a full breakdown of the development stages per area please download the Development Matters PDF from our school website.