

First Steps (Bath) Learning through Play Policy

Policy statement

First Steps Bath believes that all children learn through first-hand experiences and through opportunities to play inside and out and explore at their own rate, and that children should have the opportunity to learn through play. Our approach is based on the research-based evidence that young children learn through play, including recent research on brain development, which highlights the importance of play in developing young children's brains.

We use the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) as a framework and guide to ensure that children are learning and developing well and are kept healthy and safe.

The EYFS consists of seven areas of learning that shape learning and development within the nursery. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. The three prime areas are particularly crucial for sparking children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

First Steps considers that the information flow between the setting and parent/carer is crucial to supporting children's development and to identifying children who may need provision which is additional to that which is normally offered.

Prime Areas of learning:

1. Communication and language.

Giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment, to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves, and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

2. Personal, social, and emotional development

Helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others, to form positive relationships and develop respect for others, to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings, to understand appropriate behaviour in groups, and to have confidence in their own abilities.

3. Physical development.

Providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their coordination, control, and movement, also helping children to understand the importance of physical activity, to make healthy choices in relation to food, and self-care.

Specific Area of Learning:

4. Mathematics.

Providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding, and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems, and describing shapes, spaces, and measuring.

5. Literacy

Encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write, providing children with a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

6. Understanding the world.

Guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology, and the environment.

7. Expressive arts and design

Enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas, and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

Supporting Risky Play

First Steps believes that children should have the opportunities and freedom to push the boundaries of their physical abilities.

When creating a safe environment for children, practitioners consider their legal duty to identify and reduce or eliminate risk with their duty to support children's learning and development through risk-taking to test their abilities and strengths. The role of the practitioner is to enable this approach without placing children in actual danger, using a risk-benefit approach to play.

Procedure. (How First Steps Bath Supports and Challenges Children's Learning and Development)

During trial sessions, parents/carers will talk with an allocated key person to determine where they think the child is in their learning and development.

Observations over the following weeks will inform a starting point from which practitioners will continually monitor a child's learning and development to ensure that progress is being made at an expected rate. Extra support will be put in place to support children to ensure they remain in their expected development bracket. (See Inclusion Policy and procedure).

Following our pedagogical approach, practitioners will devise a curriculum with a clear intent for children's learning and development. Children will have daily rich, intermingled learning opportunities, allowing children to play and explore to stimulate their imagination, creativity, critical thinking, and active learning.

Practitioners use their knowledge of child development to progress children's learning through interaction, engagement, and challenge. They will use a variety of methods, including Parent Link/ Parent Blog/In the moment planning, sharing information regularly with parents and carers.

How will First Steps Bath plan for your child

First Steps practitioners follow a child-led ethos, believing that children learn best when they are ready to learn and are showing high levels of engagement.

- Practitioners and leaders plan an ambitious curriculum based on the EYFS and individual children's needs, experiences, and interests.
- Early Years Practitioners implement environments inside and outside with incitements to extend children in their learning and development, using the children's interests, experiences, and their knowledge of child development.
- The child is observed by the practitioner, who notes the levels of involvement in an activity and then assesses how to support, enrich, and develop each child's learning and development, measuring the impact.

- The Practitioner will observe, engage, and teach the child following the child's lead, using a variety of language techniques, such as open-ended questions, descriptive words and conversation to support and develop communication.
- The Practitioner will seamlessly scaffold learning for the child, identifying areas to develop to extend the children's thinking.
For example, the child is playing in the sand alongside a Practitioner who is describing the textures and prompting ideas, role modelling and posing open-ended questions, then offering suggestions to add different resources to extend learning.

How FSB will observe and monitor your child's learning and development

Early Years Practitioners use the Parent App to record snapshots of children's learning. Parents can view these observations through a password-protected log in.

The key person will refer to the EYFS stages of development and will make a judgement to see if the child is within an appropriate stage of development. This process highlights if the child needs challenging or needs support in their learning and development.

Security

- Parents logging onto the Parent App are only able to see their own child's learning diary
- When adding photos, staff ensure that any children other than the child the diary belongs to are not recognisable or gain parents' permission for their child to be included in group observations.
- Any other children referred to in observations are not named
- The Learning Journal System is hosted on secure, dedicated servers.
- Link to First Steps Nursery Management Software privacy policy.

[P](#)

[Famly's Privacy Policy effective from 23rd of December 2024](#)

Linked to

- Inclusion policy
- Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy
- Parent Involvement Policy

Policy written by SMT August 2021
Received by Trustees October 2021

Reviewed by staff June 2022
Reviewed by SMT May 2024
Reviewed by SMT May 2025