

# It's Not Just Play

It's sharing

It's using  
our  
imaginations

It's  
problem  
solving

It's  
collaborating

It's  
skill  
building

It's  
being  
creative

It's  
being  
resilient

It's making  
mistakes

It's  
time  
management

It's trying  
something  
new

It's  
being  
sociable

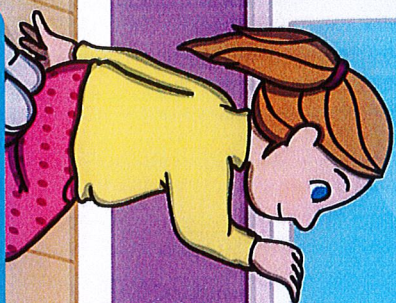
It's learning



# Stages of Play

## Unoccupied Play

Watching and moving without communication, usually for short periods of time.



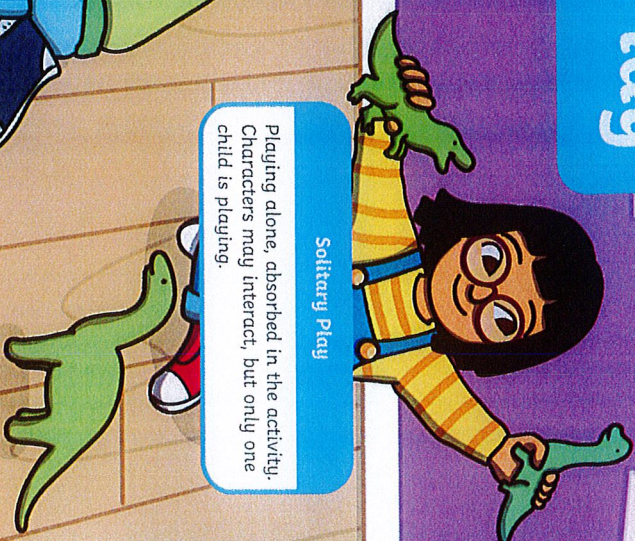
## Cooperative Play

Participants work together to achieve a shared goal, compromising and taking turns along the way.



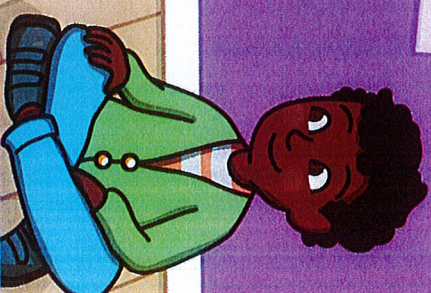
## Solitary Play

Playing alone, absorbed in the activity. Characters may interact, but only one child is playing.



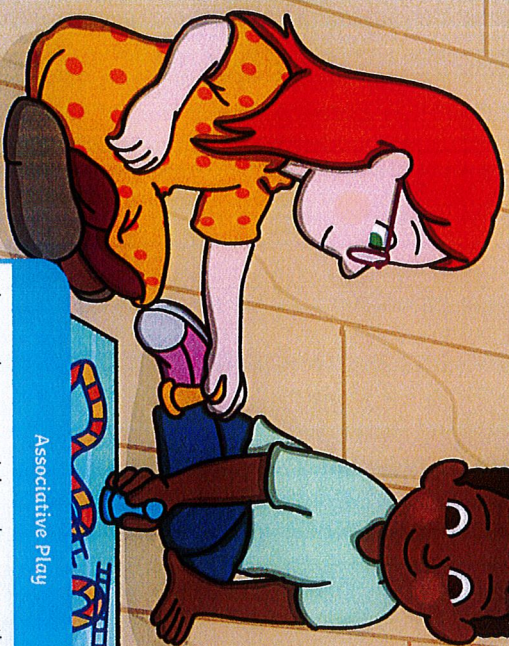
## Onlooker Play

Watching without taking part. May interact with the players without joining the game.



## Associative Play

Players share materials and may negotiate fair distribution, ideas and conversations. They are still working independently on their own projects.



## Parallel Play

Playing independently beside each other, often using similar materials or in the same area. Players may observe and mimic each other but have their own ideas and goals.



## Every Child Poem

In the garden of childhood,  
where the days are full of light,  
Our children sprout from little seeds,  
growing almost overnight.

Some plants grow very quickly,  
stretching upwards to the sun,  
While others take their own path,  
their time will also come.

A shoot emerges gently,  
growing upwards from the ground,  
And when it's ready, out it comes  
and spreads its leaves around.

Some children crawl and others walk,  
some run and others climb,

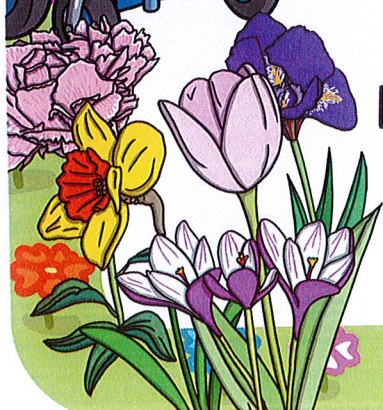
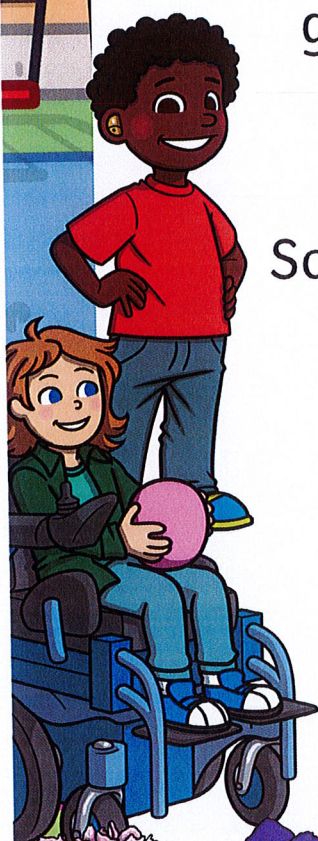
All live here in our garden  
and we have lots of time.

We value every moment,  
each step and every stage,

Each child's journey is their own,  
regardless of their age.

So, let's enjoy the voyage,  
life is much more than a race,

Let every unique child  
find their own special place.



# Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

## Information for Parents and Carers

### What Is the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework?

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework is a government document that all schools and Ofsted-registered early years providers in England must follow. It sets standards for the learning, development and care of your child from birth to 5 years old. The standards ensure your child will learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.

### ★ What Will My Child Be Learning?

The EYFS framework outlines seven areas of learning and development and educational programmes. There are three **prime** areas of learning, which are particularly important for your child's development and future learning:

communication and language

personal, social and emotional development

physical development

There are four **specific** areas of learning, through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied:

literacy

mathematics

understanding the world

expressive arts and design

Early years practitioners also use your child's needs and interests to plan challenging and enjoyable activities and experiences.

### ★ How Will My Child Be Learning?

The EYFS framework identifies the essential role of play in your child's development. It is through both child-led play and play guided by an adult that your child will develop confidence and relationships with others. Through play, EYFS practitioners will help your child to extend their vocabulary and develop their communication skills.

The EYFS framework identifies three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

playing and exploring

active learning

creating and thinking critically

A greater focus on teaching specific skills will occur as your child progresses through their reception year, which will help them to prepare for year one.

### ★ How Will I Know How My Child Is Doing?

Each child in the EYFS has a key person who will work in partnership with you, sharing information about your child. EYFS settings may also use observations to share your child's key achievements.

EYFS practitioners use their professional knowledge to understand your child's level of development. If they have any concerns about your child's progress, they will discuss these with you.

Three formal assessments take place during the EYFS:

- Two-Year Progress Check (this will happen between the ages of 24 to 36 months)
- Reception Baseline Assessment (at the start of the reception year)
- Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (at the end of the EYFS)

Your child's Early Years Foundation Stage Profile will be shared with you at the end of the EYFS. This will inform you of your child's progress and whether they have met or are continuing to work towards their early learning goals (ELGs). There are 17 ELGs your child is expected to achieve by the end of the EYFS.



## Why the EYFS Prime Areas Are So Important

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), we focus on three prime areas of learning:

- ✦ Communication and Language
- ✦ Physical Development
- ✦ Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

These areas are called prime because they build the strong foundations every child needs for future learning and success.

### Communication and Language

Talking, listening, and understanding are at the heart of early learning. Through songs 🎵, stories 📖, and conversations 💬, children:

- Build confidence to express themselves
- Learn to listen and understand others
- Develop the skills needed for reading and writing later on

### Physical Development

Children learn best through active play and movement! By running, climbing, balancing, and exploring, they:

- Strengthen their muscles and coordination
- Develop fine motor skills (like holding a pencil ✏️ or using scissors ✂️)
- Learn healthy habits and independence in daily routines

### Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

Feeling safe, happy, and confident helps children thrive. In this area, they:

- Build friendships and learn to share 🤝
- Manage feelings and develop self-control 😊
- Gain confidence to try new things and solve problems

### Strong Foundations for Future Learning

The prime areas work hand in hand to support your child's growth. When children are confident communicators, physically capable, and emotionally secure, they are ready to build on these skills in reading, writing, maths, and beyond!

## Why the Prime Areas Underpin Everything

The prime areas of learning — Communication and Language, Physical Development, and Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) — are at the heart of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). They are called prime because they underpin all other areas of learning.

### What Does “Underpin” Mean?

It means that the prime areas provide the foundation for everything else children will learn. Just like a house needs strong foundations before you can build walls and a roof, children need strong prime area skills before they can develop more specific knowledge like reading, writing, and maths.

### Communication and Language

Children need to listen, understand, and express themselves before they can learn to read, write, or follow instructions. When children can communicate confidently, they are more able to ask questions, share ideas, and take part in learning.

### Physical Development

Good physical skills support all kinds of learning:

- Gross motor skills (like running and balancing) build strength and coordination.
- Fine motor skills (like holding a pencil  or using scissors ) prepare children for writing and creative tasks.

Physical development also builds independence and self-care skills, helping children feel capable and confident.

### Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

Children learn best when they feel safe, happy, and valued. PSED helps children manage their feelings, build relationships, and develop confidence — all essential for exploring and trying new things. A child who feels secure is ready to take on challenges and enjoy learning.

### The Foundation for Future Learning

When the prime areas are strong, children are ready to learn in the specific areas — Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, and Expressive Arts and Design. That's why we spend so much time supporting communication, movement, and emotional well-being in the early years: they are the roots from which all learning grows. 