Childhaven Community Nursery School

Learning For Life

Curriculum & Assessment

Ages 2 - 4

June 2026

High quality learning & development through core experiences and routines

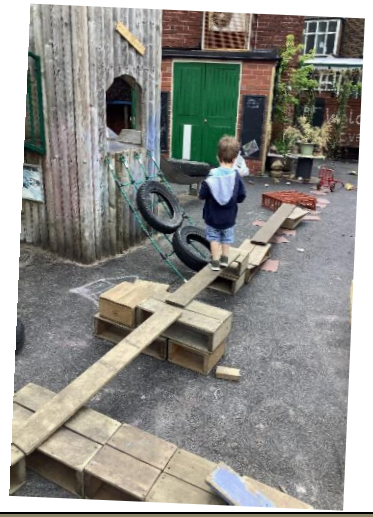
The key to rapid progress…..

High well-being and involvement

First and foremost, and before we expect children to be challenged in their learning, we need high levels of well-being and involvement. Each child's development is unique. They learn best when they are happy and secure. All children have a key person. The relationship starts with a home visit to put the child and family at ease. The key person ensures we are tailoring a child's experience to their emotional needs.

Well-being	Involvement
The child looks happy and cheerful, smiles, cries out with pleasure. They may be lively and full of energy. Actions can be spontaneous and expressive. The child may talk to him/herself, play with sounds, hum, sing. The child appears relaxed and does not show any signs of stress or tension. He /she is open and accessible to the environment. The child expresses self-confidence and self-assurance.	The child shows continuous and intense activity revealing the greatest Involvement. Stimuli, from the surrounding environment, however attractive cannot seduce the child away from the activity. In the observed period not all the signals for Involvement need be there, but the essential ones must be present: concentration, creativity, energy and persistence. This intensity must be present for almost all the observation period.

Long term planning



- Areas of provision – continuous provision is established and set up for the year offering open ended, curious resources for many different learning opportunities and ensuring excellent coverage of the educational programmes in the EYFS framework
- As part of the ongoing evaluation, environments are well resourced to support children's interests. Core resources look the same so that children can plan their learning and work at depth. We want to enable children to become experts as their fascinations grow and are supported.

Emerging skills	Mastering skills	Becoming experts
• Core routines • Language teaching • Establishing rules • Knowledge & skills teaching in each space	• Children investigating possibilities of resource and areas • Developing interests • Learning from others and with others	• Children developing own interests further • Becoming leaders • Engaging in research • Developing own projects over time

Time is driven by the needs of the child and children attend for between 1 and 9 terms. Children will also be at different stages of development over different interests and experiences.

We pride ourselves on providing a high quality curriculum which is broad, balanced and meets individual needs.

1 High quality interactions with well skilled adults around children's interests

We interact with children in their everyday play because we know this is where they are most highly motivated. We know that co-play is where the best learning happens.

2 An environment that promotes curiosity, awe and wonder and the widest possible range of possibilities

We challenge our thinking continuously and provide often unconventional opportunities to offer endless opportunities for independent thinking and planning.

3 A planned and purposeful introduction to core stories, songs and rhymes

Singing and sharing stories are central to our practice. A progressive introduction to learning stories and songs by heart is offered to all children.

4 A commitment to story-telling as a way of celebrating children as authors.

We use the Tales Toolkit to introduce children to the meaning of different elements of stories and enable every child to see themselves as a story teller. We incorporate elements of Helicopter Stories to give children confidence to act out their ideas.

5 Invitations to engage with nature through real experiences throughout the year

We use the outdoor environment throughout the year and take children through the year in nature through independent and guided experiences.

6 Learning beyond the nursery building in our wonderful town and beach areas.

We include regular 'out and about' sessions to broaden life experiences of the children.

Outcomes from core experiences

Children who come to Childhaven will be ….

Communicators……. with the confidence to start conversations with others (CL)

Happy and enthusiastic singers, knowing at least 10 songs (CL EAD)

Individual and independent learners in our environment (PSED)

Looking for opportunities to spread kindness in the world (PSED)

Drawing with enjoyment and using writing in their play to make meaning (PD W)

Happy children with a sense of joy and fun and a spring in their step (PSED)

Adventurers and adventure seekers within and beyond nursery, including walking to the beach and back again (PD)

Very eager to count (to at least 10), recognise groups of up to 3 objects and solve problems as they play (MD)

Engaging in the magic of story-telling, knowing at least 3 stories by heart and telling their own stories using the Tales Toolkit symbols (CL L)

Nurturing of plants and animals and curious about the natural world (UW)

Assessment

- All children are offered a home visit before they start. This starts the essential relationship forming process between the key person and the family. Parents are asked to complete 'This is Me' information about their child's usual behaviours at home.
- Children settle into nursery at their own pace. Once children are settled, the key person considers everything they have learned about the child and completes an entry assessment against key milestones. This also indicates where children are meeting age related expectations
- If a child is 2, the entry assessment forms part of the 2 year progress check.
- Where children are not meeting age related expectations, clear next steps are planned. Diagnostic assessment is used to enable difficulties, especially those in speech, language and communication to be defined so that support is targeted.
- At their 6 month and 12 month birthdays, a 'This is Me' spotlight is carried out with parents completing one at home and the key person completing one at nursery. These are shared, compared and used to plan the future experiences for the child.
- In nursery, 'This is Me' information is used to inform planning for interests, interactions and environments.
- In between the 6 and 12 month spotlight months, the staff gather significant 'wow' moments for children to add to their ability to 'tell the child's story'.
- The key person briefly reviews the child's progress in months 3 and 9 to ensure they are on-track and highlight any changes that are needed in provision.

High quality responsive teaching

Staff work together to adapt approaches and inspire learning based on immediate outcomes of interactions and assessments.

Group times – are planned for blocks of time based on summative assessments to suit children's emerging needs and to provide challenge and support.

Core books – are planned to support traditional story-telling, non-fiction, a focus on authors and also repetitive and rhyming popular children's texts. They are taught and also offered as provocations for independent story telling

Routines for learning– how the children are accessing provision is regularly reviewed. This is to ensure challenge in the areas increases the longer the children have been here and that core routines are establishing. If they are not…..we increase adult focus in our short term planning.

Assessment cycle

	MONTH 3	MONTH 6	MONTH 9	MONTH 12
ENTRY SPOTLIGHT **ENTRY SPOTLIGHT ASSESSMENT**	REVIEW MONTH **KEY PERSON REVIEWS AND ADJUST PLANS IF NEEDED / SHARES ADJUSTMENTS WITH OTHER STAFF / PARENTS**	SPOTLIGHT MONTH **KEY PERSON UPDATES SPOTLIGHT ASSESSMENTS AND CREATES A 'THIS IS ME AT NURSERY' STORY**	REVIEW MONTH **KEY PERSON REVIEWS AND ADJUST PLANS IF NEEDED / SHARES ADJUSTMENTS WITH OTHER STAFF / PARENTS**	SPOTLIGHT MONTH **KEY PERSON UPDATES SPOTLIGHT ASSESSMENTS AND CREATES A 'THIS IS ME AT NURSERY' STORY**
PARENTS COMPLETE 'THIS IS ME AT HOME' (entry version)		**PARENTS COMPLETE 'THIS IS ME AT HOME'**		**PARENTS COMPLETE 'THIS IS ME AT HOME'**
	Conversations with parents if concern arises	**Parent meeting to share what next…**	**Conversations with parents if concern arises**	**Parent meeting to share what next…**

Each key person gets to know their children very well

'This is me' enables us to tell the child's story

We use information from home in equal balance

Children are plotted onto an annual plan so that it is clear when their spotlight and review months are

Staff meetings discuss individual next steps and needs regularly and follow a four-weekly cycle

- CPD / learning to share
- Spotlights – what next for those children?
- Provision and practice – ongoing interests and routines – are we meeting children's needs?
- Closing the gap – additional and different provision

Each key person has PPA time to dedicate to completing observations and planning for their children's needs

Spotlight assessments are moderated with senior members of staff.

Short term planning

- Day-to-day provision is tweaked to fit the children who are using it – 'in the moment'
- Staff work in an observe-teach-outcome cycle
- Each week a focus will be planned in each space – not an activity – more importantly a focus on learning which will offer many possibilities. This will happen over time in order to build skills and let children come back, add their ideas, and have the opportunity to be an expert. These focuses will happen in the areas and be led by an adult in terms of the direction of the learning. They will have come from what the children were doing in that space in the previous week. The adult has to thread together interests and learning needs. The more open-ended the focus, the easier this is.
- The current month's spotlight children are brought to the attention of the whole team. Observations, teaching and outcomes are noted and then collated by the key person.
- Children have a physical 'learning story' book which is a record of observations and 'This is Me' information
- Staff include 6 key elements into their adult role in order to give a high priority to language development;
    - A curious and inviting provocation
    - A celebration of kindness
    - An episode of thinking together
    - A story (told or read)
    - Some mathematical language in context
    - A golden 15 minutes of co-play

We call this **'Every session counts'**

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The Curiosity Approach™ ACCREDITED SETTING

www.thecuriosityapproach.com

Is there a curious provocation? Is it inviting? Has it been maintained and refreshed through the session?

Every child is curious….let them know….

Have you celebrated kindness?

Every child is worthy….let them know….

Every session counts … 6 key ingredients……..

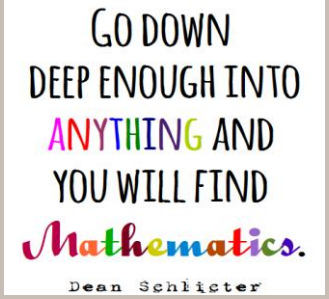
EXPLORE …….PLAY……LEARN

TalesToolKit

Everyone has a story

Have you told a story? Anywhere and about anything? You can even use a child's own story to tell to others.

Every child is an author….let them know



Have you used some mathematical language / problem solving or counting in a real context?

Every child is a problem solver….let them know…..

Have you used the word 'think' to have a good think together about something….anything…..?

Every child is capable….let them know…..

Have you had your 15 golden minutes of co play…..?

Every child wants to co-play….jump into their world…..

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Learning For Life

TalesToolKit

Communication and Language Reading frequently to ildren, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with xtensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to hrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become mfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures

Literacy Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read ith them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together.

nderstanding the world In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, echnologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their amiliarity with words that support understanding across omains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension

The Curiosity Approach™ ACCREDITED SETTING

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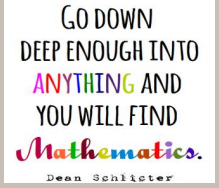
Characteristics of effective teaching and learning

- playing & exploring - children investigate & experience things, and 'have a go'
- active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

COVERAGE OF THE EYFS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES



Mathematics Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development - Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings an those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention a necessary. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably.

Communication and Language Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively.

PSED - Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently.

Children are supported with personal care at an individual level

Routines for eating healthily are established through snack routines and guided food activities

Physical Development - physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

Developmental movement play is a feature of practice

There is continuous access to the outdoors and a range of skills are developed

Fine motor skills are woven into the continuous provision offer to include sand, mud, dough, clay and woodwork

Understanding the World - Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters.

Children take part in an 'out and about' programme in the local area

Visitors are invited into nursery and links are made with families

Children have ongoing encounters with nature in a planned programme of work

Expressive Arts and Design - The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

Children have continuous access to a wide range of creative experiences from role play to art, clay and 3D work. This is a continuous high quality offer.

There are fortnightly music sessions with a musician where children rehearse and perform sounds as well and learning key skills in rhythm and listening.

Literacy - Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

Children are introduced to mark making in a wide range of forms, moving into message making and then emergent writing. This is ongoing work as part of the continuous provision and planning systems.

PROGRESSION……CORE EXPERIENCES SUPPORTING PRIME AREAS OF LEARNING

Getting interested and involved

Enjoys coming to nursery
Starts to develop confidence to communicate with staff
Enjoys being with other children
Responds with words / gestures happily

Gaining confidence and accepting challenge

Joins in simple conversations with others
Answers simple questions
Talks or sings to self when playing
Readily comments on things that adults or other children do

Moving learning forwards

Is eager to chat and share news
Learns new vocabulary quickly
Joins in with enthusiasm during group stories
Remembers new words and relates them to new contexts
Asks questions to find things out
Answers questions from other children and staff
Introduces own ideas into a game with others
Plays imaginatively and in role with confidence

Communicators……. with the confidence to start conversations with others (CL)

Getting interested and involved

Enjoys hearing music and songs
Starts to move in response to songs
Enjoys singing together with others
Watches others with interest

Gaining confidence and accepting challenge

Joins a group happily for singing
Joins in – actions or words
Starts to recognise songs using picture / sign or hearing the words
Starts to hum and sing to self during play

Moving learning forwards

Is eager to sing
Links actions and words together
Joins in with enthusiasm during group singing
Sings to self during play
Starts to be able to change the words to songs
Has favourite songs
Enjoys repeating songs and singing in different voices
Taps out a steady beat whilst singing

Happy and enthusiastic singers, knowing at least 10 songs (CL EAD)

Getting interested and involved

Settles into nursery with adult support
Stays involved for a short while
Can move areas / activities without an adult

Gaining confidence and accepting challenge

Can choose own place to be
Uses resources that are immediately in front of them
Can say what they are doing when asked
Notices when others are upset and tried to comfort them
Can find an adult to help someone
Can label the emotions happy and sad

Moving learning forwards

Develops own ideas
Seeks out resources
Can answer 'what is your plan?'
Develops ideas over a few sessions
Asks questions to find out more
Can work in a group with others
Shows awareness of other's feelings
Enjoying helping adults in nursery
Shows care and concern for younger children
Offers and accepts help from friends
Talks about a wider range of emotions – happy, sad, angry, excited, nervous, scared

Individual and independent learners in our environment (PSED)

Looking for opportunities to spread kindness in the world (PSED)

Happy children with a sense of joy and fun and a spring in their step (PSED)

Getting interested and involved

Enjoys exploring a range of media using senses
Works on a large scale
Becomes interested in different marks that they make
Draws large circles and makes separate marks
Draws actions
Talks whilst drawing

Gaining confidence and accepting challenge

Starts to draw enclosed spaces and shapes
Works on a large and also smaller scale
Engages with mark making as 'writing' – 'reads' own writing
Uses the word 'message'
Makes own messages – gives meaning to marks
Makes a random mark to represent their name

Moving learning forwards

Drawing is representational -
Has a purpose to 'write' (e.g. in role play)
Uses the word 'writing'
Uses strings of letters to represent meaning
Starts to combine drawing and writing on the same page
Writes their name / the same letters from their name consistently
Confidently 'writes' in different contexts
Happily swaps pens with the adult during story scribing

Drawing with enjoyment and using writing in their play to make meaning (PD W)

Getting interested and involved

Says numbers during play
Enjoys joining in with counting
Starts to join in with counting songs
Interested in their own age

Gaining confidence and accepting challenge

Can show 1 or 2 fingers
Can instantly recognise groups of 1 or 2 objects
Counts randomly in their play
Knows how old they are
Starts to count things of importance
Starts to need a certain number of things
Recognises some numbers that are important to them

Moving learning forwards

Uses counting to solve problems
Uses some language such as ‘how many’ ‘more’
Counts things we can’t see (e.g. claps / jumps)
Can make up a game using dice
Counts objects with confidence, using own strategies
Instantly recognises 3 to 5 objects and groups
Shows 3 to 5 fingers easily
Represents 3 to 5 in different ways

Very eager to count (to at least 10), recognise groups of up to 3 objects and solve problems as they play (MD)

Getting interested and involved

Enjoys watching others singing
Is becoming interested in books
Moves in response to music and singing
Starts to recognise and sing familiar songs

Gaining confidence and accepting challenge

Joins in during singing sessions
Enjoys looking at books and listening to stories in groups
Knows a few songs by heart
Recognises familiar stories
Taps out syllables
Uses their voice in different ways

Moving learning forwards

Knows the Tales Toolkit symbols
Adds ideas to group story telling sessions
Tells their own stories
Acts out ideas with others
Recalls stories from books
Plays games such as I spy
Makes up own rhymes
Starts to blend sounds together and to segment sounds

Engaging in the magic of story-telling, knowing at least 3 stories by heart and telling their own stories using the tales toolkit symbols (CL L)