

Colleges Nursery and Family Centre

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY POLICY

At Colleges Nursery and Family Centre we believe that language develops in an environment where children have experiences they want to talk about and when they have a responsive adult involved in the dialogue. It is important that children have a responsive listener, who may be an adult or another child.

The home environment plays a large part in influencing children's early speech and language. We acknowledge that children speak a variety of languages at home and that we need to support children at nursery by valuing their home language and finding ways of sharing it.

"Although it is not known exactly how human beings acquire language, it is widely accepted that language is at the heart of children's learning. Through language children not only learn to communicate with other people for a variety of purposes but also learn to examine their own and other's experiences and ideas, giving them order and meaning."
Language & Literacy in the Early Years, British Association of Early Childhood Education

"Children's learning and competence in communicating, speaking and listening, being read to and beginning to read and write must be supported and extended. They must be provided with opportunity and encouragement to use their skills in a range of situations and for a range of purposes, and be supported in developing the confidence and disposition to do so."

Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfES, 2007

"Communicating and being with others helps children to build social relationships which provide opportunities for friendship, empathy and sharing emotions. The ability to communicate helps children to participate more fully in society."

Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfES, 2007

It is important to "show particular awareness of, and sensitivity to, the needs of children learning English as an additional language, using their home language when appropriate and ensuring close teamwork between practitioners, parents and bilingual workers so that the children's developing use of English and other languages support each other."

Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfES, 2007

Planning for Communication, Language and Literacy

Planning starts with observations and assessments of the children's interests and needs. Following assessments, staff use the 'Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage' to plan developmentally appropriate experiences to further the children's experience in the areas of communication, language and literacy. Staff may also use a variety of other documents to support their planning, including Cambridgeshire's 'Framework for the Foundation Stage' and Letter and Sounds guidance in the Primary Strategy.

Planning for the Environment

Planning is recorded onto indoor/outdoor planning sheets (see Planning Document file). All staff plan and evaluate together, discussing appropriate experiences based on conversations with the children and observations of their play and share good practice.

Some aspects of the curriculum for communication, language and literacy will be visited throughout the year as adult-initiated focused activities. These activities are planned for, recorded and evaluated onto the Focus Activity sheets (see Planning Document file), which informs the next steps. The focus activity involves differentiated group work with children to develop their learning and experiences.

Staff teams in blue group and yellow group plan together on a weekly group planning sheet. They plan together for specific activities incorporating talking times, large group stories, rhymes and songs according to their group's interests and needs.

Provision

We understand that the development of communication, language and literacy extends throughout the whole curriculum and we aim to provide opportunities for children to further their development in language for communication, language for thinking, sounds and letters, reading and writing by

- Providing rich and exciting experiences and environments that stimulate communication and develop shared sustained thinking.
- providing daily opportunities for children to communicate thoughts, ideas and feelings and build up relationships with adults and each other;
- incorporating communication, language and literacy development in planned activities in each area of learning;
- giving opportunities to share and enjoy a wide range of rhymes, music, songs, poetry, stories and non-fiction books;
- giving opportunities for linking language with physical movement in action songs and rhymes, role play and practical experiences such as cookery, gardening and forest environments;
- planning an environment that reflects the importance of language through signs, notices and books;
- providing opportunities for children to see adults writing and for children to experiment with writing for themselves through making marks, personal writing symbols and conventional script;
- providing time and opportunities to develop spoken language through conversations between children and adults, both one-to-one and in small groups, with particular awareness of, and sensitivity to, the needs of children for whom English is an additional language, using their home language when appropriate;
- planning opportunities for children to become aware of languages and writing systems other than English, and communication systems such as signing and Braille;
- early identification of and response to any particular difficulties in children's language development;
- close teamwork between, where appropriate, bilingual workers, speech therapists and practitioners;
- opportunities for children who use alternative communication systems to develop ways of recording and accessing texts to develop their skills in these methods."

Examples of Learning Opportunities in the Curriculum for Communication, Language and Literacy

At Colleges Nursery and Family Centre we provide an environment where communication, language and literacy are encouraged and valued by providing

- a quiet, comfortable library area for looking at books which are selected according to interest, season and levels of development
- book boxes for sharing in each group
- an office area with a wide variety of resources for mark-making
- portable writing trolley, white board, chalks, water painting for drawing and recording in the garden
- a wide variety of stories, told and read, rhymes, poems and songs
- opportunities for making books
- a special 'book week' (or fortnight)
- involving parents and carers in sharing experiences, reading stories and poems
- taking turns to talk and listen in a group
- opportunities to talk about activities they have done, describing and reflecting on what they have done
- a parent's/carer's library where children choose their own books to read at home
- opportunities for role play, both inside and outside
- opportunities for mark-making
- active hands-on activities and real experiences, including visits which encourage communication
- support for children with English as an additional language e.g. using games and bilingual books
- Support for children with identified speech and language needs through planned one to one or small group activities, with the support of a speech and language therapist where appropriate
- opportunities and encouragement for children to communicate at their own level, e.g. single words, gestures, facial expressions, signing
- opportunities to extend their vocabulary through practical activities i.e. gardening, cooking
- resources such as small world toys, toys and puppets to encourage language and story telling including multicultural puppets and rhyme sacks
- listening to stories on tape and CD with headphones in the library (including a range of home languages)
- adults who are patient, interested and supportive of children's attempts to communicate
- giving children opportunities to recognise their own names from self-registration cards, group activity bags and in the collage area
- adults modelling writing, reading and appropriate ways of communicating
- sharing Special Books with parents
- Language and Literacy group
- providing a library of Storysacks for parents and children, and families are given training on how to use them

Recording and Assessment

Records of the children's development and progress in the communication, language and literacy curriculum are made following observations and assessments. Written records are kept on individual children and recorded in their Profile with developing reference to the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the children's own Special Books.

Assessments of the children's experiences of the communication, language and literacy curriculum are shared regularly with parents through PICL, Partners in Children's Learning (see PICL file), one to one consultations at least two times a year and in a written end of term profile in the third term.

These observations and assessments are used to identify learning priorities and plan relevant and motivating learning experiences for each child. *Adapted from Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfES, 2007.*

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