

Colleges Nursery and Family Centre

Physical Development Policy

At Colleges Nursery and Family Centre we believe that physical development is a crucial aspect of children's learning. They need to develop their large and small muscles. Therefore, we provide free access to indoor and outdoor play activities each day and in all weathers. This gives children plenty of time to explore, experiment and refine their movements and actions unhurriedly. We acknowledge that there is a wide variation in children's physical abilities. Every child's efforts are appreciated and every child is encouraged to progress at their own rate in order to reach their potential. We allow time for practising and consolidation and space and time for exploring.

The physical curriculum offers progression and flexibility in order to adapt to the variety of children's needs and interests. To this end careful observation and anecdotal records ensure appropriate planning for the free activity session and for small group time.

“What Physical Development means for children

- Babies and children learn by being active and Physical Development takes place across all areas of Learning and Development.
- Physical Development helps children gain confidence in what they can do.
- Physical Development enables children to feel the positive benefits of being healthy and active.
- Physical Development helps children to develop a positive sense of well-being.
- Good health in the early years helps to safeguard health and well-being throughout life. It is important that children develop healthy habits when they first learn about food and activity. Growing with appropriate weight gain in the first years of life helps to guard against obesity in later life.”

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

“Physical development in the foundation stage is about improving skills of co-ordination, control, manipulation and movement. Physical development has two other very important aspects. It helps children gain confidence in what they can do and enables them to feel the positive benefits of being healthy and active. Effective physical development helps children develop a positive sense of well-being.”

Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage, QCA and DfEE 2000

“The importance of play involving gross and fine motor skills is of paramount importance in children's movement development and must underpin the physical development and physical education curriculum. Indeed the school curriculum should be founded upon the natural movement vocabulary of the playing child.”

*P.M. Maude: Chapter 10 'From Movement Development to Physical Literacy'
Teaching and Learning in the Early Years (Reprinted 2002)*

Planning for Physical Development

Physical development is planned throughout the year and gives equal status to indoor and outdoor play. It is well planned and progressive encompassing a broad curriculum in which every child is given individual consideration.

Much thought is given to safety: providing a safe, clean environment, using and moving equipment safely, consideration for others with emphasis on stopping and listening.

Equal Access

Each child is entitled to free, equal access to the physical development curriculum. It is therefore important that children wear clothing which is practical and suitable for physical activity. Issues about appropriate clothing should be approached sensitively, particularly in terms of dress code for certain cultures.

Gender

Staff observe and monitor activities in terms of gender access e.g. ensuring that girls have access to large block play, the climbing frame, wheeled toys and football, as well as ensuring that boys have opportunities to take part in activities such as painting, sewing, collage and home play area. Staff play an important role in initiating and taking part in activities often seen as those traditionally carried out by members of the opposite sex.

Additional Educational Needs

Children with additional educational needs are encouraged to take part in all activities, not being seen as separate or unable to be included. Planning for these children is often carried out following advice from external agencies e.g. physiotherapists and occupational therapists.

Equally, if activities have been specifically planned and designed for children with physical disabilities, all children can be encouraged to take part.

Members of staff and children build obstacle courses with varying levels of difficulty to allow for every child to succeed. Staff are aware that modification of the learning environment/equipment may be needed to ensure equal access for children with a wide range of disabilities – visual, auditory or motor disabilities.

For children with a high level of ability, special provision must be made to meet their specific needs through planning indoor and outdoor areas to allow for increased choice and challenge.

Hand Dominance

Left-handed children live in a world dominated by right-handed people. Toys, tools and equipment should be offered so that children can easily use their naturally preferred hand. Whenever possible, tools should be ambidextrous or purchased especially e.g. left-handed scissors.

Safety Issues

Children's safety is of paramount importance (see Health & Safety and Outdoor Play Policies).

However children need to take risks and face challenges in physical activity, e.g. hammering nails into wood and climbing independently.

Health Promotion

We are a Health Promoting Centre and as such are very aware of the health and well-being of children, parents and staff.

A core group of staff, parents, governors and local community members has been formed in order to ensure that we plan, organise and promote positive attitudes towards a healthy lifestyle. In addition to nutrition and exercise, we want to encourage healthy life styles in a wider sense: self esteem, mental and emotional well-being. The positive attitudes of children are encouraged by a range of activities such as:

- healthy snack foods and cooking activities
- we garden and grow our own vegetables
- we organise visits from the dental hygienist

- we provide free access to fresh air and exercise daily in outdoor play
- weekly water play sessions for children and their families which take place at a local primary school

We plan two Healthy Eating weeks during the year to encourage parents and children to try a variety of healthy balanced snacks.

We also encourage walking or cycling to school rather than using cars.

Examples of Learning Opportunities

The following list of equipment/activities provides some examples, which can be used outdoors:

- fixed or moveable climbing frame, slide, ladder, boxes, planks, rope ladder, barrel on stand, seesaw, simple pulleys, scramble net, tunnels, balancing bar, house/hidey hole/den, tyres, spools, rocking horse/swing-boat, mats, low balancing bench, sliding down muddy slopes, transporting logs at Milton Country Park (MCP)
- trundle toys, push and pull vehicles, scooters, bicycles, hobby horses, traffic lights and petrol pumps
- skipping ropes, goal posts, basketball nets, kites, streamers, parachute
- logs and fallen tree trunks, designated trees to climb at MCP
- every day objects for transporting e.g. tyres, crates, blocks, bricks, large boxes
- details of access to local resources e.g. swimming pool, nature reserve

Examples of small equipment/activities, which can be used indoors and outdoors:

- balls, bats, beanbags, hoops, quoits, skittles
- construction toys e.g. lego, bauplay, mobilo, wooden blocks and small world toys
- threading, stacking and screwing toys, peg boards, puzzles
- clay, dough, cooking and woodwork activities, drawing/painting/collage/model-making materials and tools, wind-up and mechanical toys
- dressing up clothes, dolls clothes, role play equipment and materials, puppets
- selection of books which portray physical activity, tape recorder and musical instruments

Recording and Assessment

Records of the children's development and progress in physical development are made following ongoing observations and assessments. Written records are kept on individual children and recorded in the Year One Foundation Stage profile*. Alongside these observations, staff make judgements about their achievements in relation to the descriptors and record these on the Foundation Stage profile matrix*.

Assessments of the children's experiences of the physical development curriculum are shared with parents verbally during the first term and in a written end of term profile in the third term.

*See Foundation Stage Profile Document file.

Appendix 1**Skills and attitudes developed in physical activities**

Free access to the indoor and outdoor areas offers children many opportunities. A selection are listed below:

Confidence	Independence, self help, initiative, self esteem, risk taking and problem solving
Positive attitudes	Healthy lifestyle, fitness, relaxation, expressing emotions, learning self control, understanding safety issues, persistence, fairness, co-operation, reflection, exuberance, enthusiasm, motivation, concentration and stamina
Mobility	Crawling, running, jumping, rolling, swinging, hopping, skipping and galloping
Agility	Stretching, climbing, balancing, twisting and dancing
Body awareness	Sensing what it feels like to be upside down, being aware of what part of the body is working, exercising particular muscles and joints, and sensing what it feels like to be out of breath or hot through exercise
Spatial awareness	Placing the body over, under, through, at the side of, behind and in front, inside and from a range of different perspectives
Temporal awareness	Judging speed, swinging or sliding fast, pulling up on the assault net slowly, running quickly or faster than a friend
Directional awareness	Sideways, backwards, forwards, climbing high, stretching down low, being aware, whilst moving, of others positions in relation to self
Projection skills	Grasping, releasing, rolling, throwing and catching, aiming and kicking
Construction skills	Building, assembling, lifting, carrying, placing and arranging objects
Communication skills	Non-verbal communication, gesture, expression, sharing ideas and plans, negotiating and extending their language
Movement vocabulary	Developing a vocabulary of movement words with understanding
Fine motor and manipulative skills	Appropriate and safe handling of tools, instruments, toys, objects in play activities
Rhythmic movement	Creative expression, responding to stimuli of music and stories. Singing in large and small groups
Strength	Pulling and pushing trucks, lifting and transporting materials, climbing trees, pedalling and riding trundle toys, climbing, pulling up/swinging on ropes
Balance	Walking along planks/low benches, beams, flower-pot stilts

Appendix 2**Processes that determine movement development****Cephalo-caudal development and proximo-distal development**

These two processes are crucial in determining movement development

Cephalo-caudal development

(cephale = head, cauda=tail)

“.....the head is already well developed at birth, in order that the brain can fulfil its role in controlling all bodily functions. By contrast, the feet and legs are relatively under-developed and are of relatively little importance at this stage, since their functions are not required until later in life when mobility and locomotion develop”.

‘Physical Children, Active Learning’ Patricia Maude 2001

Proximo-distal development

(proximal=close to the body, distal=further from the centre of the body)

“....motor or movement control emerges from proximal (close to the body) to distal, further from the centre of the body. In infancy the distal parts of the body, namely the arms, hands and fingers are relatively under-developed because they are not needed for body propulsion and manipulation. In this way the musculature to the shoulder girdle gains strength before that to the elbows, wrists, hands and finally to the fingers”.

Distinct lack of differentiation in the joints of the arms is evident for several months after birth and for several years in relation to the hands. Ability to use the hands and eventually the fingers effectively develops much later”.

‘Physical Children, Active Learning’ Patricia Maude 2001

Bi-lateral co-ordination and the importance of the mid-line of the body**Bi-lateral co-ordination**

Bi-lateral co-ordination means that we integrate both sides of the body, working together to achieve a movement. By nursery/reception age a child should have mastered this skill e.g. holding a piece of paper whilst drawing or cutting with the other hand, jump with two feet together or catch a big ball co-ordinating both hands simultaneously.

The mid- line

The organisation of movement around the mid-line of the body is vital for normal physical development. Much early movement learning takes place to develop control around the mid-line (a baby brings it's hands to the mid-line to grasp a rattle, a young child to catch a ball).

The mid-line is the focal point for establishing an upright posture and the infant develops stability mechanisms centrally in order to balance in the vertical position on bottom and later on feet. By nursery age, a child should have mastered crossing the mid-line i.e. reaching across the centre of the body. If this has not been achieved, a child will be directionally confused and will not cross their mid-line e.g. use the non dominant hand to grasp an object on that side or move their whole body in order to avoid crossing the mid-line.

It is important that adults in the nursery observe the above processes and provide a range of outdoor and indoor activities, which give regular opportunities to practice the above processes.

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