

ONLINE LEARNING JOURNALS AND THE EYFS POLICY

Clocktower Childcare ensures that all children attending the setting have a personal Learning Journal which records photos, videos, observations and comments, in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage, to build up a record of each child's achievements during their time with us. It will reflect children's developmental progress through the different age bands and areas of learning. We work in partnership with parents/carers to ensure every child is ready for their next stage in relation to their individual need and stage of development, so that they are ready to continue their journey through the EYFS in primary school, with the aim of reaching the Early Learning Goals.

THE CURIOSITY APPROACH

We follow this approach to bring curiosity, awe and wonder into our children's early childhoods. It combines our choice of resources, with our calm and tranquil environment, and passionate staff team. Some of the benefits to our children include:

- A rich, magical, beautiful, cosy environment
- Loose parts – objects and materials that have no specific purpose that children can move, manipulate, control and change within their play, providing a high level of creativity, imagination and freedom of choice. The play is open-ended as the possibilities are endless. Examples include but are not limited to tubes, gutter, boxes, crates, buttons, trays, pipes, cardboard, cable reels and all sorts of other treasure. This allows children the opportunity of HOW to think, not WHAT to think.
- Real, authentic, adult size resources show children how their play is valued – it is NOT pretend
- Natural materials such as wood, plants, flowers, shells, cones, logs, twigs, rocks etc. promote children's curiosity, wonder and appreciation of our world.
- Our resources promote problem-solving skills, critical thinking, investigation, exploration, communication and social skills, and risk taking.
- Consequences – our old plastic toys were pretty indestructible, so children knew they could throw them on the floor, or bash them against the wall with no consequence. This resulted in children having no care or respect for things around them. However, with a china tea pot, or a fragile animal ornament, they are not going to survive that treatment and therefore there is a consequence – they're gone. Obviously this aspect is going to take some time to embed, but we're confident that our children will grow into caretakers of our planet if they can learn to respect and appreciate it from such a young age.
- Recycling – our resources are now sourced mainly at bootfairs and charity shops! So our children are discovering that one man's trash is another man's treasure (literally in the instance of a little silver tray of thimbles found in the local charity shop being played with as pirate gold recently!)
- Independence, confidence, creativity, attention, concentration, exploration, investigation, use of senses, resilience and more – children are now creators of their own learning as they have the freedom of choice to lead their own play.
- New experiences – our passionate, adventurous, empowering staff team constantly discover new ideas and plan provocations for learning based on the children's interests and their previous learning. We aim to create intriguing, challenging opportunities for the children which they may not have ever experienced before. Last week, they were using (real) hammers to try and smash blocks of ice where a group of dinosaurs had been frozen inside! Children know we trust them, and we know their capabilities and potentials are endless.
- Process over product – our focus is on children finding their own unique style of learning through play they have chosen themselves, and being engaged in the joy of DOING rather than any end result.

RECORDING CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT

- Each child will have a Keyperson, who will be responsible for the compilation of that child's Learning Journal
- Practitioners consider individual children's needs, interests, and stages of development, and use this information to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences through the areas of learning
- Before a child turns three, we focus strongly on the three prime areas of learning and development, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas
- When a child is aged between 2 and 3, and settled with us well, we review their progress and development within the prime areas, and their strengths and areas of concern with the parents/carers and document it in their Progress Check at Age 2
- We encourage parents/carers to share the information from this Check with any health professionals involved, including their local health visiting team and/or children's centre
- We use an online system called Tapestry which allows staff and parents to access the information from any computer via a personal, password-protected log in
- Practitioners are trained to refer any concerns they have about a child's development to our SENCo – Tayla Williams
- Any photos/videos uploaded onto Tapestry will have been taken during session time, and uploaded via our setting's electronic devices on the premises
- Staff access allows input of new observations and photos/videos or amendment of existing observations
- Parent access allows input of new observations and photos or the addition of comments on existing observations or photos
- Parent log ins do not have the necessary permission to edit existing material
- Observations added by staff to the Tapestry system are approved by a Manager before being 'set live'
- Parents logging into the system are only able to view their own child's journal
- Parents are asked for signed consent via their Registration Form, giving permission for their child's image to appear in other children's journals and to protect images of other children that may appear in any photos contained in their own journal
- New observations will usually be uploaded within 2 weeks of the observation being made
- The Keyperson aims to add an average of one observation per child per week. This may be a photograph/video (including within a group), written, or artwork observation
- In all written observations, only the target child will be named

- Tapestry is not used as a general communication tool between our setting and home. A Learning journal is a document recording learning and development. Parents must contact us through the usual channels for any other day-to-day matters e.g. absence, queries
- Age-band Trackers and / or Summative Assessments are generated at the end of each term, to show the child's development level for each area of learning. It also shows any previous terms to ensure the child has made progress, as well as 'flagging up' any areas where the child is below their age, or above their age, in their development

SECURITY OF OUR ONLINE LEARNING JOURNAL SYSTEM

- The Tapestry web service and data are hosted in a cloud hosting environment operated by AWS in the EU (the largest provider in the world who provide a secure platform for some of the world's largest online service providers)
- Access to information stored can only be gained by a unique User ID and password
- Parents can only see their own child's information and are unable to log in to view other children's journals
- Staff and parents are encouraged to have strong passwords; a mixture of uppercase / lowercase letters and numbers
- Staff and parents are encouraged to change their password regularly
- Staff do not leave any electronic device they are logged onto unattended, and always ensure they log out afterwards
- Any photos/videos uploaded onto Tapestry will have been taken during session time, and uploaded via our setting's electronic devices on the premises
- We, the Account Manager, own the data we put on Tapestry (we are the 'Data Controller', Tapestry is the 'Data Processor') so it is processed inline with our legal obligations for Data Protection
- When a child leaves our care, their Learning Journal is exported into a PDF format, and made available to the parent/carer for download. The parent/carer's account is then deactivated
- When a staff member leaves the setting, their account is deactivated
- Please refer to the guidance leaflet published by Tapestry for further technical information (this can be found in our Safeguarding Support folder)

OUTDOOR PLAY

We are committed to the importance of daily outdoor play and the physical development of all children regardless of their age and stage of development.

- We provide outdoor play in all weathers
- We take part in The Daily Mile, and have access to a 'Forest Adventure' area and allotment
- Where possible and appropriate, we make outdoor activities accessible to children with learning difficulties and disabilities to ensure inclusive use of the outdoor area
- We recognise that children need regular access to outdoor play in order to keep fit and healthy, develop their large and fine motor skills, experience learning in a natural environment and access sunlight in order to absorb vitamin D more effectively.
- The outdoor areas, within the immediate setting grounds, school facilities and in the local community, have a wealth of experiences and resources which help children to develop in a variety of ways, including independence, exploration and investigative skills, risk taking and self-esteem, all of which support children to develop skills now and for the future
- We ensure all areas are safe and secure through close supervision and the use of robust risk assessments and safety checks
- Where possible and appropriate, we plan and encourage play that helps children understand and manage risks. This type of play allows children to explore and find their own boundaries in a safe environment with supportive practitioners
- Staff are informed of the importance of safety procedures and are trained appropriately to ensure these procedures are followed effectively
- We obtain parental permission via the Registration Form before any child leaves the setting grounds with us. This includes short outings into the local community
- We plan all outdoor play opportunities and outings to complement the indoor activities and provide children with purposeful activities that support and follow individual children's interests
- There is a balance of both adult-led and child-initiated opportunities to enable children to learn and practice new skills, knowledge and behaviours

TRANSITIONS

We recognise that young children will experience many transitions in their early years; some of these planned and some unplanned. We are sensitive to the impact of such changes to children and aim to fully support them and their families through such times. Some examples of transitions that young children may experience are:

- Starting pre-school – we provide home visits to aid smooth transitions, and additional advice in our welcome packs
- Moving between different key persons / groups within the pre-school – occasionally, we may have to change a child's Keyperson and group. This may be due to parent/carer request, staff leaving, staff changing working hours, children changing sessions, or children forming an unexpected bond with an alternative Keyperson. We work closely with the family to begin rebuilding a new relationship with the Keyperson, and can offer a new home visit too. Where possible, we will involve the old Keyperson in the handover process
- Starting school or moving settings - some children may feel anxious or distressed. We will do all we can to facilitate a smooth move and minimise any potential stresses. This following process relates to children going to school. However wherever possible, we will adapt this process to support children moving to another childcare provider e.g. childminder or another nursery. We provide a variety of resources that relate to the school, e.g. uniform to dress up in, a role play area set up as a school classroom, photographs of all the schools the children may attend. This will help the children to become familiar with this new concept and will aid the transition. We invite school representatives into the setting to introduce them to the children. Where possible we use other ways to support the transition to school, e.g. small group outings with the Keyperson to visit new schools, or practicing their new journey. Each key person will talk about the school with their key children who are due to move on and discuss what they think may

be different and what may be the same. They will talk through any concerns the child may have and initiate activities or group discussions relating to any issues to help children overcome these. We produce a comprehensive report on every child starting school to enable teachers to have a good understanding of every child received. This will include their interests, strengths, and level of understanding and development in key areas. This will support continuity of care and early learning. This document must be signed by a parent/carer.

- Family breakdowns – we understand that this can be a difficult situation for all concerned, and aim to always strive for the best interests of the child
- New siblings or moving home – normally families have advance notice of this change, and we ask parents/carers to share this information with us, so that we can help prepare the child. The Keyperson can spend time talking to, and providing activities that may help the child to act out any worries they have e.g. through role play, stories etc.
- Death of a pet, family member or close friend – we recognise this is a very difficult time for children and their families, and we aim to offer support to all concerned if required

Staff are trained to observe their key children and to be sensitive to any changes in their behaviour and personality. We respectfully ask that parents/carers inform us of any changes in the home environment that may impact on their child so staff can be aware of the reasons behind any potential changes in the child's behaviour.

SHARED CARE

Where children are attending other early years settings or are cared for by a childminder, we will work with them to share relevant information about children's development. With parent/carer permission, we will add them onto the child's Tapestry account where they can view observations and summative assessments (where this is not agreed, we have a paper diary style leaflet to travel between settings). We will organise for the Keyperson to visit the other setting to observe the child in their other environment, and welcome them to visit us also.

SETTLING IN

We support parents/carers to help their children settle quickly and easily by giving consideration to the individual needs and circumstances of every child and their families. Our aim is for children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the setting and to feel secure and comfortable with all staff. We also want parents/carers to have confidence in both their children's continued well-being and their role as active partners, with the child being able to benefit from what the nursery has to offer. All our staff know about the importance of building strong attachments with children, and the reasons for our Keyperson system. We will work in partnership with parents/carers to settle their child into their new environment by:

- Allocating a Keyperson to each child who carries out a home visit prior to their start date
- The Keyperson is in setting on the child's first day to welcome them and look after the child, ensuring that their care is tailored to meet their individual needs
- Building a strong, professional, friendly relationship between Keyperson and the family, so that information can be shared in a timely and appropriate manner
- Providing parents/carers with relevant information about policies and procedures (via welcome pack and Registration form)
- Encouraging children and their families to attend Open Mornings, prior to their start date
- Welcoming parents/carers to stay with their child during the first few weeks until the child feels settled and the parents feel comfortable about leaving their child, where necessary
- Reassuring parents/carers whose children seem to be taking a long time settling in to the setting and developing a plan with them e.g. a longer settling in period, reduced hours, alternative drop off / collection times
- Encouraging parents/carers, where appropriate, to separate themselves from their children for brief periods at first, gradually building up to longer absences
- Assigning every child a 'Buddy' – another familiar adult in their group, to maintain consistency and a feeling of security for the child on sessions where their Keyperson may not be present
- Reviewing the Keyperson if the child is bonding with another member of staff to ensure the child's needs are supported
- Respecting the circumstances of all families, including those who are unable to stay for long periods of time in the setting and reassure them of their child's progress towards settling in
- Not taking a child on an outing from the setting until he/she is completely settled

CHILDREN'S LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

At Clocktower, we recognise that children learn in different ways and at different rates and plan for this accordingly. Our aim is to support all children in our care to attain their maximum potential within their individual capabilities. We acknowledge parents/carers as primary educators and encourage strong home links in order to enhance and extend children's learning.

- We provide a positive play environment for every child, so they may develop good social skills and an appreciation of all aspects of this country's multi-cultural society
- We plan learning experiences to ensure, as far as practical, there is equality of opportunity for all children and a celebration of diversity
- We maintain a personalised record of every child's development, showing their abilities, progress, interests and areas needing further staff or parental assistance
- For children whose home language is not English, we will take reasonable steps to; Provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning and support their language development at home; and; Ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language during the EYFS, ensuring that children are ready to benefit from the opportunities available to them when they commence Foundation Stage
- We ensure that the educational programmes are well planned and resourced to have depth and breadth across the seven areas of learning. They provide interesting and challenging experiences that meet the needs of all children. Planning is based on a secure knowledge and understanding of how to promote the learning and development of young children and what they can achieve, by the Keyperson for their individual children

- We implement the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) set by the Department for Education that sets standards to ensure all children learn and develop well. We support and enhance children's learning and development holistically through play-based activities
- We review all aspects of learning and development and ensure a flexible approach is maintained, which responds quickly to children's learning and developmental needs
- We develop tailor-made activities based on observations which inform future planning and draw on children's needs and interests. This is promoted through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated opportunities both indoors and outdoors
- Direct observation is supplemented by a range of other evidence to evaluate the impact that practitioners have on the progress children make in their learning including: assessment on entry, including parental contributions, two-year-old progress checks (where applicable), on-going (formative) assessments, including any parental contributions, and our transition to school documents

SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

At Clocktower Childcare, we aim to protect and support the welfare of the children in our care at all times. We ensure that children are supervised adequately at all times, whether children are in or out of the building through:

- Making sure that every child is always within the sight and/or hearing of a member of staff
- Monitoring staff deployment across the setting regularly to ensure children's needs are met
- Ensuring children are fully supervised at all times when using water play/paddling pools as we are aware that children can drown in only a few centimetres of water
- Taking special care when children are using large apparatus e.g. a climbing frame, and when walking up or down steps/stairs, including having one member of staff supervising large outdoor play equipment when in use
- Making sure staff recognise and are aware of any dangers relating to bushes, shrubs and plants when on visits/outdoors
- Sally Wingham is responsible for all staff, students, volunteers and relief staff receiving information on health and safety policies and procedures in the setting in order to supervise the children in their care suitably
- Supervising children at all times when eating
- Supervising sleeping children
- Never leaving children unattended during nappy changing times
- Supervising children carefully when using scissors or tools, including using knives in cooking activities
- Increasing staff:child ratios as necessary during outings to ensure supervision and safety
- Strictly following any safety guidelines given by other organisations or companies relating to the hire of equipment or services e.g. hire of a bouncy castle

'READY FOR THE NEXT STAGE'

The EYFS provides us with a general definition of School Readiness, though this term can be and often is widely interpreted. The EYFS defines School Readiness as 'the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life' (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2017). What School Readiness is **not** about, is compliant behaviour, such as the ability to sit still and to line up. Nor is it about embarking too early on a formal approach to learning. All development and learning for young children is underpinned by play. It is through play that children develop physically, intellectually, creatively, socially and emotionally and gain life skills. How children learn is set out within the characteristics of effective teaching and learning.

To become ready for their next stage, children need to be supported in opportunities to:

- feel socially, emotionally and physically secure to enable them to behave appropriately and become confident active learners using all of their senses
- develop their knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of learning
- initiate activities, showing their own initiative and making decisions
- have time to explore their own ideas and interests in depth, to make links and discuss their learning
- develop their concentration
- learn in different ways, at different rates, to recognise that they have learned something new and improved their understanding
- play and work co-operatively, learning to accept others' differences, to be resilient and to question
- play independently, at times without close supervision, taking responsibility, for example by caring for their environment
- know how to keep themselves safe and healthy
- follow instructions and respond to questions

To support children in becoming ready for their next stage, our practitioners:

- have a rich and sensitive understanding of each child's individual background and experiences and respect the value of each unique home learning environment
- develop meaningful and respectful relationships with parents/carers and families to foster their engagement and full involvement and participation in their children's learning
- provide effective care for children's physical, social and emotional needs, ensuring that high levels of well being and involvement are supported, enabling deep level learning to take place
- implement a robust Keyperson approach in which adults are sensitive to children's needs and ensure that needs of groups and individuals are well met
- practice a fully inclusive approach that meets the diverse needs of all children
- plan purposeful activities that engage and interest all the children, taking into account individual interests and needs
- offer a stimulating environment inside and out where continuous provision is sufficiently flexible to meet individual needs, interests and motivations through the different areas of learning
- offer a good balance between children making purposeful choices about their activities (child initiated), which consolidates learning, and adults initiating and/or directing what they do and teaching specific skills and ensuring progress

- provide opportunities to extend children’s speaking skills by modeling listening and language expression well, ensuring the needs of children who communicate in alternative ways are met
 - ensure opportunities for children to exercise independence, autonomy and resilience, rather than ‘doing things’ for them
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This policy was adopted at a meeting of Clocktower Childcare Ltd held on 30th August 2019. Latest date to be reviewed: 31st August 2020.

Signed on behalf of Clocktower Childcare Ltd:

J. Law

Jane Law, Director

S. Wingham

Sally Wingham, Director

L. Baverstock

Lara-Jane Baverstock, Director