

Parents' Guide to the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

Welcome to the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**, which is how the Government and early years professionals describe the time in your child's life between birth and age 5.

This is a very important stage as it helps your child get ready for school as well as preparing them for their future learning and successes. From when your child is born up until the age of 5, their early years experience should be happy, active, exciting, fun and secure; and support their development, care and learning needs.

Nurseries, pre-schools, reception classes and childminders registered to deliver the EYFS must follow a legal document called the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

What is the EYFS Framework – why do we have one?

The EYFS Framework exists to support all professionals working in the EYFS to help your child, and was developed with a number of early years experts and parents.

This new framework also has a greater emphasis on your role in helping your child develop.

It sets out:

- ◇ The legal welfare requirements that everyone registered to look after children must follow to keep your child **safe** and promote their welfare.
- ◇ The 7 areas of **learning and development** which guide professionals' engagement with your child's play and activities as they learn new skills and knowledge.
- ◇ Assessments that will tell you about **your child's progress** through the EYFS.
- ◇ Expected levels that your child should reach at age 5, usually the end of the reception year; these expectations are called the "**Early Learning Goals (ELGs)**".

How my child will be learning

The EYFS Framework explains how and what your child will be learning to support their healthy development.

Your child will be learning skills, acquiring new knowledge and demonstrating their understanding through **7 areas of learning and development**.

Children should mostly develop the **3 prime areas** first. These are:

- ◇ Communication and language;
- ◇ Physical development; and
- ◇ Personal, social and emotional development.

These prime areas are those most essential for your child's healthy development and future learning.

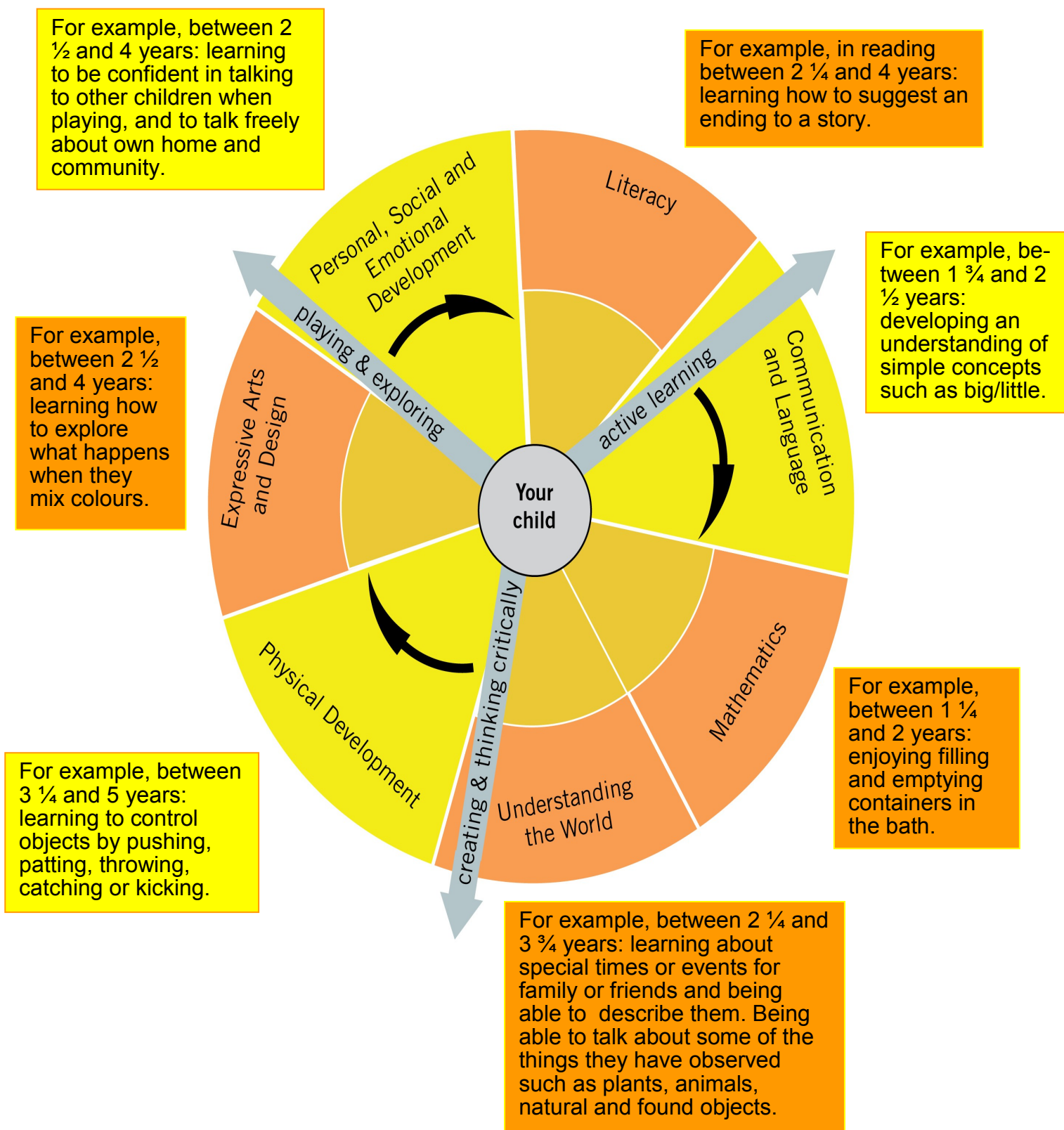
As children grow, the prime areas will help them to develop skills in **4 specific areas**. These are:

- ◇ Literacy;
- ◇ Mathematics;
- ◇ Understanding the world; and
- ◇ Expressive arts and design.

These 7 areas are used to plan your child's learning and activities. The professionals teaching and supporting your child will make sure that the activities are suited to your child's unique needs. This is a little bit like a curriculum in primary and secondary schools, but it's suitable for very young children, and it's designed to be really flexible so that staff can follow your child's unique needs and interests.

Children in the EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside.

The diagram below gives examples of the areas of learning and development and shows the links between the way in which your child learns and what they learn.



As a mum or dad, how can I help with my child's learning?

All the fun activities that you do with your child at home are important in supporting their learning and development, and have a really long lasting effect on your child's learning as they progress through school.

Even when your child is very young and is not yet able to talk, talking to them helps them to learn and understand new words and ideas. If you make the time every day to do some of the following things with your child it will make a real difference to your child's confidence as a young learner.

Cook / bake together.

Allow your child to cut out and stick pictures from magazines.

On a trip to the super-market, talk about all the different packaging shapes.

Share a book.

Sing and tell nursery rhymes.

Plant seeds or bulbs in a pot or garden patch.

Explore the park at a different time of the year—go off the beaten track.

Talk to your child at every opportunity—e.g. what you are doing that day.

Talk about the numbers, colours, words and letters you see when you are out and

Use the weather—shadows, rain puddles, snow, wind, mist

