



Stowey Bears – A parents guide on how we learn

Here at Stowey Bears we use several forms and ways of learning with your child, as no child learns in the same way we adapt for all. Our planning, next steps and assessments are based on all our areas of learning.

Continuous provision – This basically is setting the room up into different and having the resources in that area for children to explore and extend their learning. We enable the environment for them to investigate, create and chose It includes maths, literacy, construction, small world, creative/arts and crafts, malleable, home corner, book corner.

zones



Loose parts play – in most areas of the room there are loose parts, non-descriptive objects and toys, this enables the children to use their imaginations. E.g. a toy house is always a toy house, but with loose parts they can turn it into a house, a road, a tower etc



Curiosity approach – This is using normal household and familiar items, telephones, computers, china and glass, real food, natural items. This allows investigation and exploration, and covers lots of areas of learning. It ties in with the loose parts play well and can be used in all areas of learning.



Two-year olds - We also have to plan for our two-year olds, they sometimes still need toys and objects to be more descriptive to start building their knowledge to move onto loose parts, and the 3 prime areas of learning are more of a focus for 2-year olds (PSED personal, social, emotional development, Communication and language, Physical development)

ITMP (in the moment planning) – This basically means we may plant a seed, or put activities out, or children choose – and we watch, observe (mostly) and intervene to cover a learning objective or extend the learning that's happening. This can happen with all types of activities, we plan in that moment, if the children steer the learning we adapt and follow and empower the learning

Adult led – These activities are very often focused on themes or next steps. We plan in a way that the activities can be more child centred with an adult watching and recording, and they usually tie in with a theme or next steps planning

Child Led – children are able to ask, get and play with what they want, children usually have a specific reason for wanting a toy/game/activity out and we try to accommodate if we can or improvise with the child's help.

Outdoor Space – Our outdoor area has several different areas, ranging from construction site, park, nature reserve, tool bench, art area, literacy, maths resources. The whole outdoor is such an enabling environment for all types of learning and the staff are quick to recognise these and expand and encourage exploration



Next steps and Assessments – We are continually observing the children and planning their next steps to learning, we have to witness all areas of learning more than once to know it is fully embedded. We like to work with our parents as partners and rely on you passing on information and milestones, to help with our planning. We do 2-year-old checks which is a statutory requirement, and constantly check and track our children to ensure that we are providing the correct activities and stimulation for them.

Maths – Maths is found all around us, numbers, shapes, counting, sorting in everyday life so as well as adapting activities to include maths we also set up maths activities with certain learning goals in mind. Our aim in preschool is to concentrate on the numbers 1-10, so the children learn all the number bonds, adding on, taking away, sorting and grouping, once the numbers 1-10 number bonds are embedded maths is much easier for children to learn bigger numbers in school. We use numicon, blocks, counters, natural items, number lines to name a few. We also work with basic concepts, weight, capacity, shape, height, length, floating sinking and using mathematical language. Maths is learnt though the Concrete, Pictorial and abstract. In preschool we mainly use the concrete using objects to count sort and add, and we go into the pictorial when adding number recognition.



The CPA Approach

CONCRETE - using physical objects to solve maths problems.

PICTORIAL - using drawings to solve maths problems.

ABSTRACT - solving maths problems using only numbers.

$1+4=5$
 $2+3=$

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Literacy – literacy is basically in two sections reading and writing, both have stand alone learning and some have linked learning

Ready to write...

We live in a culture that measures the success of a child by their ability to read, write and understand numbers. However, allowing children to play, explore and discover in early years means that they WILL be ready to learn.

CORE MUSCLES

Before a child can even begin to think about holding a pencil correctly and writing, they need to be given lots of opportunities to strengthen their muscles. First, they need to concentrate on developing their core strength so that they will be able to sit comfortably at a desk; climbing, balancing, jumping and generally just exploring outside.

GROSS MUSCLES

Next you need to develop their gross motor muscles. Children benefit from engaging in activities that require them to use large arm movements such as vertical mark making; rollers, paintbrushes, chalk. Giving children time to develop their hand to eye coordination through ball games, target throwing and hammering.

FINE MUSCLES

Once children have strengthened their gross motor muscles, they can concentrate on developing their fine motor muscles so that they will be ready to begin writing. This can be done using tweezers to pick up small objects, cutting with scissors, using their pincer grip to pick up and placing objects.

HAVE FUN MARK MAKING

Finally have fun making marks in different ways. Children love messy play and instinctively make marks and patterns. Thinking outside the box to encourage mark making; under the table, in sand, using brooms on the ground. The possibilities are endless.

Once children are ready to write they need to be provided with opportunities that will spark their imagination and allow children to

Writing – before we think about forming letters with a pen we work on the pre-writing activities, developing core muscles through yoga and physical activities, then the shoulder muscles through gym ribbons, sweeping, throwing balls, then the elbow and wrists muscles drawing or painting on an easel, mixing, sand play, hammering (these are all gross motor skills) then fine motor skills like playdough, clipping clothes pegs, peg boards, pipettes, picking up any small items and sorting (fine motor skills) Alongside all of this we have a literacy table which is full of pens, pencils, felt tips, books, post it notes and paper so they can begin to mark make. For older children we start to work on correct posture, grip and technique to get them ready for writing skills when then go to school.

Reading – we like the children to form a healthy interest in books and have a couple of story times a day. We start thinking about phonics as pre reading activities and we use the letters and sounds guidance from the department of education. We use Phase 1 and the programme goes up to phase 6 by the end of year 2

Letters and sounds – Phase 1

It is broken up into 7 aspects the first 3 being General sounds and discrimination, they all encourage children tuning in and listening to sounds.

Aspect 1 – Environmental – We encourage this by doing listening walks, drumming of different objects and making different sounds. Comparing sounds, Sound lotto

Aspect 2 – Instrumental – Using instruments and noise makers, Comparing sounds, and matching sounds

Aspect 3 – Body percussion – singing songs, rhymes with actions. Listening to music, following the beats and repeating beats

Aspect 4 – Rhythm and rhyme – Rhyming stories, rhyming bingo, clapping syllables, finding the odd word out,

Aspect 5- Alliteration - Initial sounds of words, playing sound I Spy, matching and grouping initial sounds of objects,

Aspect 6 – Voice sounds – Using sounds like going down a slide *weeee*, quiet *shhh*, a snake *sssss*, a bouncing ball *boing boing*. Using mirrors to watch that our mouths are making the same shape as adult's mouths as we say words. Dancing tongue moving our tongue in different ways making different shapes, up down side etc. (children who struggle with speech really benefit from the voice sounds)

Aspect 7 – Oral Blending and segmenting – This is basically what it says we sound out words and the children try to put them together e.g. c-a-t- cat, t-o-p we then can make it more complicated by using longer words but we break down the sounds not the letters so *sheep* becomes sh-ee-p *boat* b-oa-t

We are currently working with the school in our lesson planning for the more adult led/school readiness activities, we feel it is important for us to work on the 'same page' as the school when it comes to pre reading, writing and maths activities, that way there will be no confusion for the children when they get to school, as it will all be taught in the same way.

**We feel that children learn best through play,
they also learn more efficiently if we intervene at the correct time
and we ask questions rather than supplying answers.**

We use the words HOW? WHAT?, WHICH? WHY?

And positive words like WELL DONE, GREAT JOB, GOOD TRY,

**We also use the power of the word YET, i.e. you cannot do it YET,
let's give it another go.**

**All these words are very empowering for children and promote
positive thinking, Can do attitude and Wellbeing.**