

Learning in the Foundation Phase

A guide
for parents
and carers

A new approach
to the education
and care of
3 to 7 year olds



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Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



This leaflet is available in large print, braille or audio format.

Helping your child to learn and grow

If you are a parent/carer of a child aged 3-7, then this guide is for you. It tells you all about the new Framework for Children's Learning known as the Foundation Phase. It is being introduced into schools, local authority funded nurseries, playgroups, childminders and in the voluntary and private sectors across Wales from September 2008.

The Foundation Phase will combine what we currently call Early Years education (for 3 to 5 year olds) and Key Stage 1 (5 to 7 year olds) of the National Curriculum, to bring more consistency and continuity to the education of your child at such an all-important period in their development.



What is the Foundation Phase?

The Foundation Phase is about enhancing the learning experiences which enable children to be creative, imaginative and to have fun whilst learning.

Children will be given more opportunities to explore the world around them and to understand how things work through engaging in relevant practical activities which are fun and enjoyable and relevant to their developmental stages.

The Foundation Phase places greater emphasis on experiential learning, active involvement and developing each child's:

- skills and understanding
- personal, social, emotional, physical and intellectual well-being, so as to develop the whole child

positive attitudes to learning so that they enjoy it and will want to continue with their education for longer

self-esteem and self-confidence to experiment, investigate, learn new things and form new relationships

creative, expressive and observational skills to encourage their development as individuals with different ways of responding to experiences, and

activities in the outdoors where they have first-hand experience of solving real-life problems and learn about conservation and sustainability.



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Why introduce the Foundation Phase?

One reassuring aspect of the Foundation Phase for parents/carers is just how much thought, research and evidence gathering has gone into creating the curriculum and its learning and teaching strategies that are appropriate for your child. The curriculum focuses on the developmental stages through which each child progresses.

Planning for the Foundation Phase started in 2004, when the new approach was piloted in 41 schools/settings across Wales.

The Pilot has now been fully evaluated and the lessons learned during that period will be reflected in the arrangements that will be introduced from September 2008.

The enthusiasm and positive feedback that the Foundation Phase has generated in teachers, support staff, practitioners, parents/carers and, more importantly, children, has led to the Pilot being extended to a further 42 schools/settings, from September 2007.

A full list of the schools/settings that will be delivering the Foundation Phase from September 2007 can be found at the end of this booklet. These include the existing Pilot schools/settings that came on board from September 2007, known as Early Starts.



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Will your child still learn to read and write?

In the Foundation Phase great emphasis is placed on developing your child's communication skills.

Through appropriate focused activities your child will receive a solid foundation for the development of reading and writing.

Evidence shows that some children are not motivated to read or write because they have lacked stimulation or encouragement to develop their language skills. Other children will enter education with well developed communication, speaking and listening skills and practitioners will support them in moving their learning forward.

It is imperative that all children learn how to communicate their experiences and discover how to listen and interact with others... and the best way to learn these skills is by interacting with other children, peers and adults – enabling them to progress in their communication skills.



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Additional learning needs

Some children find it easier to learn than others and it is reassuring to know that the Foundation Phase has been

designed to help all children flourish, whatever their stage of development or learning ability.

Learning indoors and outdoors

Indoor and outdoor environments that are fun, exciting, stimulating and safe promote children's development and natural curiosity to explore and learn through first-hand, real-life experiences.

The Foundation Phase will promote discovery and independence, and place a greater emphasis on using the outdoor environment as a resource for children's learning.



Seven Areas of Learning in the Foundation Phase

The Foundation Phase has seven Areas of Learning, where stimulating structured play activities can be woven into the learning experiences.

The curriculum is built around these seven areas to support and encourage your child's personal, social, emotional, physical and intellectual well-being and development.

Personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity

This Area of Learning focuses on children learning about themselves, their relationships with other children and adults.

They are encouraged to develop their self-esteem, their personal beliefs and moral values.

The Foundation Phase supports the cultural identity of all children, to celebrate different cultures and help children recognise and gain a positive awareness of their own and other cultures.

Children are supported in becoming confident, competent and independent thinkers and learners.



Language, literacy and communication skills

This Area of Learning focuses on children being immersed in language experiences and activities. Their skills develop through talking, signing/communicating and listening.

They are encouraged to communicate their needs, feelings and thoughts and retell experiences. Some children will communicate by means other than speech.

Children refer to their intentions by asking questions, voicing/expressing opinions, reacting to situations and making choices through a variety of media.

They are encouraged to listen and respond to others.

They have opportunities to choose and use reading materials, understand conventions of print and books and are given a wide range of opportunities to enjoy mark making and writing experience.



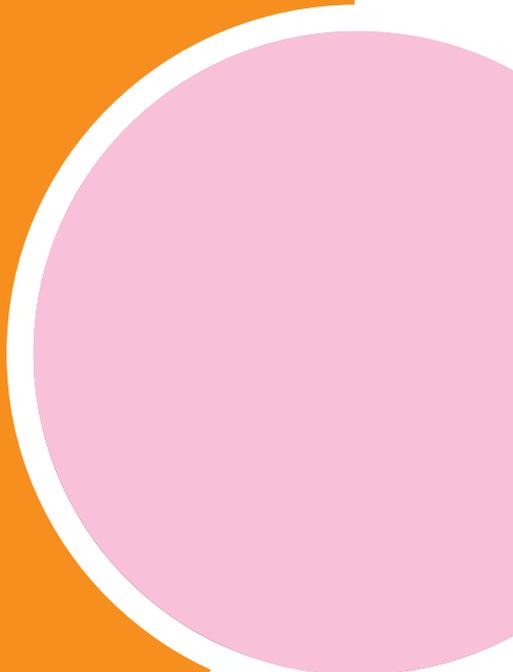
Mathematical development

This Area of Learning focuses on children developing their skills, knowledge and understanding of mathematics by solving problems.

They use numbers in their daily activities and develop a range of flexible methods for working mentally with number, in order to solve problems from a variety of contexts, moving onto using more formal methods of working and recording when they are developmentally ready.

They investigate the properties of shape and sort, match, sequence and compare objects and create simple patterns and relationships.

They use appropriate mathematical language to explain their reasoning and present their work in a variety of ways using objects, pictures, diagrams, words, symbols and ICT.



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Welsh Language Development

This Area of Learning focuses on children learning to use and communicate in Welsh to the best of their ability.

Skills are developed through communicating in a range of enjoyable, practical planned activities and using a range of stimuli that build on and increase children's previous knowledge and experiences.

The children's oral experiences should be used to develop their reading skills. They should listen to a range of stimuli, including audio visual material and ICT interactive software.



Knowledge and understanding of the world

This Area of Learning focuses on children experiencing the familiar world through enquiry and investigation.

Children are given experiences that increase their curiosity about the world around them and to begin to understand past events, people and places, living things and the work people do.

They learn to demonstrate care, responsibility, concern and respect for all living things and the environment. They learn to express their own ideas, opinions and feelings with imagination, creativity and sensitivity.



Physical development

This Area of Learning focuses on children's physical development. Enthusiasm and energy for movement is continually promoted through helping them to use their bodies effectively, by encouraging spatial awareness, balance, control and coordination and developing motor and manipulative skills.

Children are encouraged to enjoy physical activity and their developing sense of identity is linked closely to their own self-image, self esteem and confidence.

Children are introduced to the concepts of health, hygiene and safety and the importance of diet, rest, sleep and exercise.



Creative development

This Area of Learning focuses on children developing their imagination and creativity through the curriculum.

Their natural curiosity and disposition to learn is stimulated by everyday sensory experiences.

Children engage in creative, imaginative and expressive activities in art, craft, design, music, dance and movement.

Children explore a wide range of stimuli, develop their ability to communicate and express their creative ideas and reflect on their work.



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How will I know if my child is progressing?

An initial assessment should be made when your child enters education to determine what he or she can do and understand.

This information will help to ensure that each child's first experience of education is appropriate to their stage of development and the activities and experiences planned for them will help them to move forward in their learning.

Staff will assess each child's progress through observing them in their everyday activities and use the information to plan the next stage in their development.

You will receive a report each year on your child's progress in the seven Areas of Learning. At the end of the phase, the report will include the teacher's assessment of your child's achievements during the Foundation Phase.



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Over the next few years

The introduction of the Foundation Phase is well and truly underway. It will be rolled out across Wales from September 2008 in all schools and local-authority-funded nurseries, playgroups and to childminders in the voluntary and private sectors that provide education for our 3 to 5 year olds.

Rollout will continue in September 2009 when 5 to 6 year olds will experience the Foundation Phase and in September 2010 rollout will be complete for the full 3 to 7 age range.

During 2007 the Foundation Phase will continue in the existing Pilot and, from September 2007, be extended to include another 42 schools/settings across Wales.

This will bring the total number of schools and settings being given the opportunity to introduce the Foundation Phase ahead of statutory rollout to 84. Check the list to see if there is one in your area.

ANGLESEY

Cylch Meithrin Stryd Y Bont

Little Dragon's Playgroup

Ysgol Tŷ Mawr

Ysgol Y Graig

BLAENAU GWENT

Acorn's Nursery

Cylch Meithrin ABC

Deighton Primary School

St Mary's Church in Wales Primary

BRIDGEND

Blaenllynfi Infants

Caerau Nursery School

St Mary's RC School

Village Playgroup Aberkenfig

CAERPHILLY

Cylch Meithrin Rhymni

Little Peeps Playgroup

Pontllanfraith Primary School

Upper Rhymney Primary

CARDIFF

Cylch Meithrin Pila Pala

Herbert Thompson Primary

Kitchener Primary

Meithrinfa Si Lwli

CARMARTHENSHIRE

Bigyn Community Primary

Cylch Meithrin Ffairfach

Myrtle House Nursery

Ysgol Gynradd Ffairfach

CEREDIGION

Cylch Meithrin Aberteifi

Cylch Meithrin Llanarth

Ysgol Plant Bach Aberteifi

Ysgol Y Dderi

CONWY

Cadwgan Playgroup

School Lane Playgroup

Ysgol Babanod T Gwynn Jones

Ysgol Y Gogarth

DENBIGHSHIRE

Bodnant Playgroup

Playdays Playgroup

Ysgol Emmanuel

Ysgol Y Llys

FLINTSHIRE

Brynford Primary

Gwynedd County Primary School

Nippers Nest Playgroup

Strawberry Patch Childcare
(Childminder)

GWYNEDD

Cylch Meithrin Maesincla

Margaret Barnard Playgroup

Ysgol Bro Tryweryn

Ysgol Gynradd Maesincla

MERTHYR TYDFIL

Funtazia Day Nursery

Goetre Infants School

Gurnos Nursery School

Troedyrhiw Infants

MONMOUTHSHIRE

Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni

Deri View Primary and Nursery School

Goytre Fawr Primary

Jack & Jill's Playgroup

NEATH PORT TALBOT

Sandfields Primary

Ysgol Gymraeg Castell Nedd

NEWPORT

Castleton Baptist Church Playgroup

Duffryn Infants

Pillgwenlly Primary

Tiny Tots Day Care Nursery

PEMBROKESHIRE

Bright Start Day Nursery

Mount Airey Community Nursery
and Infant School

Pembroke Dock Community School

Tabernacle Kindergarten

POWYS

Llanfyllin Pre-school
Playgroup

Maesyrrhandir Community
Primary

Trehafren Children's Centre

Ysgol Rhiwbechan

RHONDDA CYNON TAFF

Cylch Meithrin Y Ddraenen-wen

Heol y Celyn Primary School

Littlefolk Playgroup

Llanilltud Faerdref Primary

SWANSEA

Cadle Primary

Townhill Community Primary

TORFAEN

Buzzy Bees Day Nursery

Hollybush Primary

Penygarn Infants School

Poppies Day Nursery

VALE OF GLAMORGAN

Cadoxton Nursery School

Cadoxton Primary School

Cylch Meithrin Y Bontfaen

Holton Primary

WREXHAM

Bradley Playgroup

Caia Park Nursery

Playgroup Plus (Ysgol Deiniol)

Ysgol Y Gaer



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Keeping you informed

We want you to be totally reassured that your child is receiving the very best possible start in life. So we are determined to give you all the information you need

regarding the Foundation Phase and how your child's learning will develop and flourish.

If you want to find out more you can go to the following website or contact your child's school.

www.wales.gov.uk/foundationphase



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