



## The Aims and Ethos of First Steps Childcare

*“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up”.*

### **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2012:2)**

We provide a secure, safe and happy environment which is inclusive to every child. Through the promotion of the **Early Years Foundation Stage** we value each child as an individual, each of whom has unique abilities and capabilities to offer. Through careful planning of the environment, we provide a wide range of stimulating resources, activities and equipment to enable every child to flourish and thrive. We provide individual learning opportunities for every child across the seven areas of learning.

The prime areas of learning are: Personal, Social and Emotional development, Physical development and Communication and Language. These are the fundamental areas of learning.

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** - primarily we ensure that every child is valued and cared for within a safe and stimulating environment. By establishing secure relationships with every child, they develop their confidence and gain a sense of belonging.
- **Communication and Language Development** - we help every child to develop the skills to become a successful communicator. We value all forms of communication and expression and these are enhanced through activities such as music, dance, rhyming songs and role play, which all play a key part in language development.
- **Physical Development** - we support every child in developing their skills of co-ordination, control, manipulation and movement through the use all of their senses. We provide a clear understanding of the importance of physical activity and making healthy choices in relation to food.

The four specific areas are Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design. These provide the essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

- **Mathematics** - through play, we foster the mathematical concepts of patterns, numbers, counting, sorting, matching, shapes, space and measures. As these concepts are explored children begin to link these to their own experiences, connecting them to all areas of learning.
- **Understanding the World** - we support every child in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding, helping them to make sense of their world. By offering different opportunities for exploration of people, plants, objects in natural environments and real life situations children are able to experiment and work with a wide range of materials.

- **Expressive Arts and Design Development** - creativity underpins and supports every child's curiosity, exploration and play. We provide a wide range of media and materials so that children can explore their thoughts, ideas and feelings through activities such as art, music, movement, dance and role play.
- **Literacy Development** - we provide a wide variety of printed material for the children to explore at all times. Opportunities for rhyming and singing are shared in activities with the children throughout the day. Early writing and mark-making opportunities are available in all age ranges but a stronger focus is introduced with the older children in preparation for school.