



Killermont Early Years Curriculum Rationale

Our Curriculum Rationale outlines our positive ethos and pedagogical approaches to learning, teaching and assessment through play in Killermont Early Years Centre. It reflects our centre's improvement priorities, which are informed by National Improvement Framework and East Dunbartonshire Council's guiding principles.

The Framework includes:

- Vision, values & aims
- Play Pedagogy
- Partnerships
- Curriculum
- The Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Outdoor Play
- GIRFEC
- Evaluating Practice





Our EYC Vision

Nurturing and Inspiring Spaces

Where we can Play, Learn and Grow Together

Our EYC Values

Kindness

Honesty

Fairness

Respect

Our EYC Aims

- Actively give children time to talk about their emotions, ensuring their physical and mental health is at the heart of everything we do.
- Provide a safe, fun and nurturing environment indoors and out, where children are encouraged to reach their full potential.
- Create an inclusive ethos where our children are celebrated as individuals and their needs and beliefs are respected.
- Have a skilled and motivated staff team that takes an active role in their professional development journey to ensure high quality interactions and experiences for children.
- Provide a curriculum indoors and out that will facilitate fun, play based experiences that promote independence and foster positive attitudes to learning.



Play Pedagogy Fostering Nurture and Responsive Learning

Careful observation of children enables us to guide and support their learning, whilst nurturing and extending their interests. The responsive and intentional planning process maintains a measured approach between adult led, adult initiated and child led experiences.

Adult-Led Learning

- Focused sessions where an adult provides guidance or instruction to obtain a specific learning outcome
- These sessions respond to assessment data and evolving next steps.
- Balance adult direction with opportunities for exploration and practice through play.

Adult-Initiated Learning

- Adults create invitations to play or learning opportunities that spark curiosity and extend skills
- Children engage on their own terms, fostering independent learning, adapting and personalizing their play experiences.
- These moments encourage problem-solving and creative responses within a prepared environment.

Child-Led Learning

- Children choose, plan, and direct their own play and activities.
- Adults observe, listen, and follow the child's interests to support deep-level learning.
- Practitioners use sustained shared thinking—joining play to extend ideas and language.
- The adult's role is to Wait, Watch and Wonder, valuing the child's voice and agency.

Observation and Assessment

- Observation is central to understanding children's development, interests, and progress.
- Practitioners watch with purpose — looking for learning behaviours, skills, and dispositions rather than outcomes alone.
- Assessment is formative and continuous, informing planning and environment adjustments to ensure progress for all children.
- Each child's journey is documented through individual photographs capturing learning stories and observations
- Assessment focuses on what the child can do, celebrating both achievements from home and the EYC while identifying next steps.

Inclusion and the Unique Child

- All children learn in different ways and at different paces — through movement, talk, observation, imagination, or experimentation.
- Planning reflects this diversity by offering varied learning environments and opportunities for choice.
- Practitioners adapt teaching to meet the needs, interests, and developmental stages of every child, ensuring equity and belonging.

The Role of the Adult

- Serve as observer, facilitator, and guide and scaffold learning opportunities.
- Use language-rich interactions to build thinking and communication
- Respond to children's cues and interests, balancing freedom and structure.
- Model curiosity, resilience, and reflection



Partnership Working with Children and Families

Our Commitment

At Killermont Early Years Centre, we recognise that strong partnerships with children and their families are essential to supporting wellbeing, learning, and development. We value open communication, mutual respect, and shared responsibility in helping every child thrive.

We aim to:

- Build trusting, respectful relationships with all families
- Value parents and carers as children's first educators
- Promote inclusion, equality, and diversity
- Ensure every child feels safe, supported, and included

Daily Communication

We prioritise consistent, meaningful communication with families through:

- Daily feedback at drop-off and pick-up times
- Sharing information about children's experiences, achievements, and wellbeing
- Responsive conversations to support individual needs

Family Engagement Opportunities

We actively involve families in their child's learning through:

- Play and Share sessions to experience learning together
- Learning Journal updates to celebrate progress and next steps
- Curriculum events that showcase learning across the year
- Participation in Bookbug sessions to support early literacy and bonding
- Regular updates through various media platforms (e.g., SWAY newsletters, emails, noticeboards)

Supporting Transitions

We understand that transitions can be significant for children and families. We look for opportunities to support:

- Transitions from home to nursery, ensuring children feel safe and secure
- Small and large daily transitions, using consistent routines and nurturing approaches
- Transition from nursery to school, including sharing information and working with receiving schools

Supporting Children with Additional Needs

We recognise that some children may experience challenges and require additional support. We work closely with families and relevant professionals to ensure early intervention and appropriate support.



Community Partnerships

We believe community connections enrich children's learning and sense of belonging. Our links include:

- Local golf club – supporting outdoor learning and forest school experiences
- Local care home – fostering intergenerational relationships and social skills
- Monthly visits from a local librarian to promote a love of reading
- Strong partnerships with local church and mosque to support inclusion, diversity, and community understanding

Community Partnerships - Benefits for Children

Engaging with the local community helps children develop a sense of belonging and identity. Partaking in community experiences fosters an understanding of their local environment, culture, and the people around them, these activities additionally enhance their social and emotional development.

Multi-Agency Partnerships

We collaborate with a range of agencies, including:

- Health Visitors
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Educational Psychologists
- Supporting Families Team

These Partnerships Enable Us To:

- Identify and respond to children's needs at the earliest stage
- Develop tailored support plans
- Ensure a holistic approach to each child's wellbeing and development



Our Curriculum

In the Early Level (nursery and Primary 1), children learn through play, exploration, and relationships. We focus on building confidence, curiosity, and key life skills across all areas of learning supporting the children to become Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens, Successful Learners and Effective Contributors.

Health and Wellbeing

We support children to feel safe, happy, and ready to learn.

Emotional wellbeing

We use PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) to help children:

- Understand feelings
- Build Self-esteem
- Build friendships
- Children learn to talk about emotions and make positive choices.

Up, Up and Away – Developing an Inclusive Literacy Rich Environment

This framework enables all staff and carers to identify children who require support to develop their literacy skills. The aim is to provide practical, stage-appropriate early intervention to meet individual literacy needs as early as possible.

The Promise – “All Scotland’s children and young people will grow up loved, safe and respected so they can realise their full potential.”


We follow The Promise by:

- Listening to children’s voices
- Putting relationships first to achieve the best outcomes for children
- Making sure every child feels valued and included
- Ensure children are receiving the best care

Healthy Snack and Lunch

Using Setting the Table guidance, we:

- Encourage healthy eating habits
- Offer balanced snacks and meals
- Promote independence (pouring drinks, choosing foods)
- Foster good manners and social skills



Literacy and English

At Killermont Early Years Centre we explore strategies and experiences to enhance children's skills in listening and talking, turn taking, mark making and reading. We recognise that developing good foundations in literacy is crucial, as it fosters the skills to develop an understanding in all areas of the curriculum.

Literacy Development is promoted through:

Talk for Writing

- Children learn stories through actions, repetition, and play
- Builds confidence in speaking and storytelling

Word Aware

- Introduces new vocabulary in a fun, structured way
- Helps children understand new words and concepts

Songs and Rhymes

Songs and rhymes have a hugely positive impact on a child's language and literacy development. Children love rhyme, rhythm and repetition. These three things found in songs and rhymes can naturally help to boost a child's language and literacy skills.

Numeracy and Maths

Numeracy and Mathematics helps children develop the confidence and competence in using number which will assist them to solve problems, analyse information and make informed decisions based on calculations. Children develop their numeracy skills throughout the nursery by experiencing high quality play activities and accessing a variety of resources and materials.

Woodwork

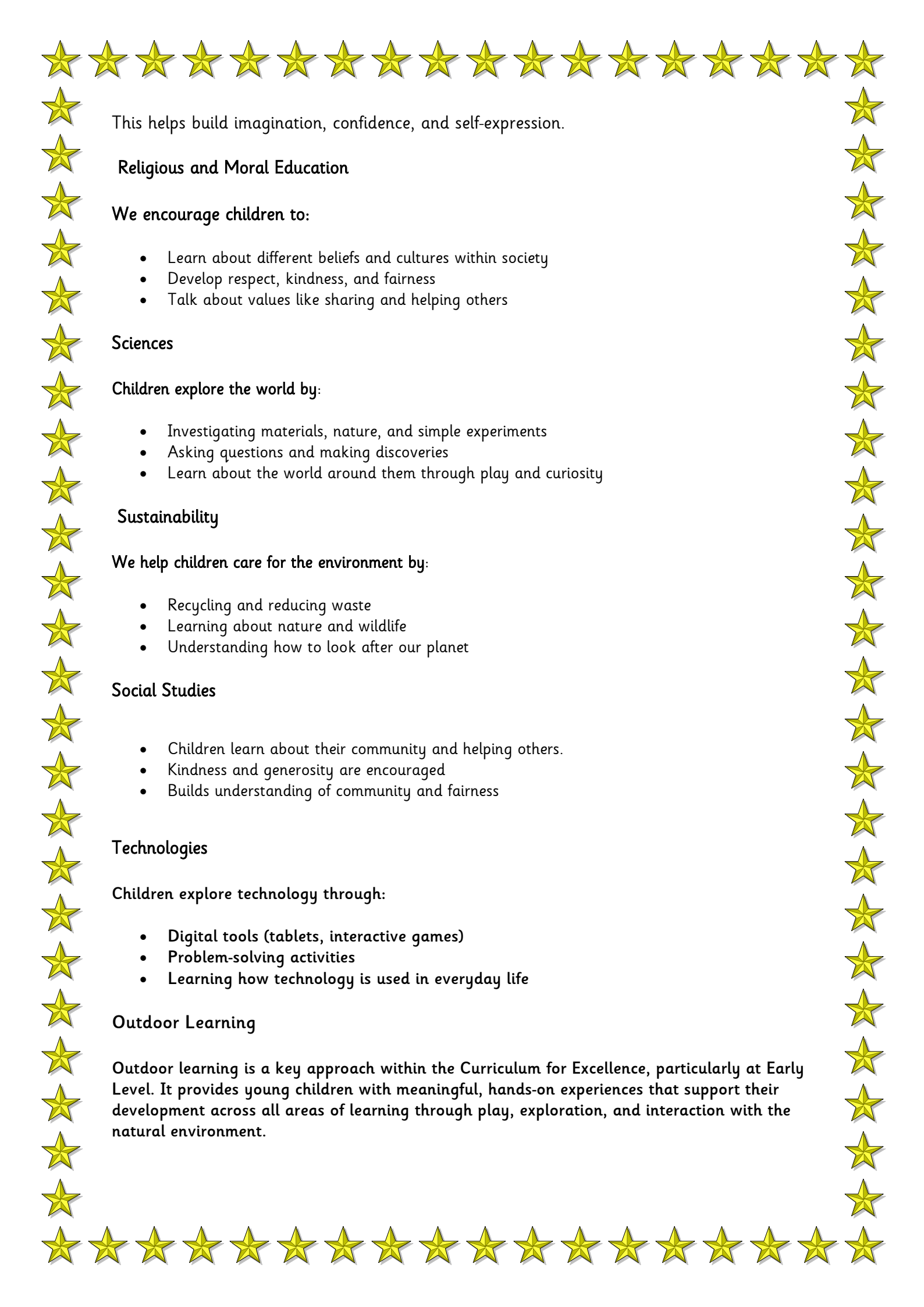
- Builds problem-solving and promotes mathematical concepts
- Encourages creativity and safe tool use
- Fosters awareness of controlled risks

Block Play Fosters Skills in:

- Mathematical concepts
- Shapes and patterns
- Early engineering skills
- Imagination and creativity

Expressive Arts - Children explore creativity through:

- Art, painting, and crafts
- Music and movement
- Role play and drama



This helps build imagination, confidence, and self-expression.

Religious and Moral Education

We encourage children to:

- Learn about different beliefs and cultures within society
- Develop respect, kindness, and fairness
- Talk about values like sharing and helping others

Sciences

Children explore the world by:

- Investigating materials, nature, and simple experiments
- Asking questions and making discoveries
- Learn about the world around them through play and curiosity

Sustainability

We help children care for the environment by:

- Recycling and reducing waste
- Learning about nature and wildlife
- Understanding how to look after our planet

Social Studies

- Children learn about their community and helping others.
- Kindness and generosity are encouraged
- Builds understanding of community and fairness

Technologies

Children explore technology through:

- Digital tools (tablets, interactive games)
- Problem-solving activities
- Learning how technology is used in everyday life

Outdoor Learning

Outdoor learning is a key approach within the Curriculum for Excellence, particularly at Early Level. It provides young children with meaningful, hands-on experiences that support their development across all areas of learning through play, exploration, and interaction with the natural environment.



Benefits of Outdoor Learning

Outdoor learning supports children's development in a holistic way:

- **Health & Wellbeing:** Promotes physical activity, resilience, and emotional wellbeing
- **Confidence & Independence:** Encourages risk-taking, problem-solving, and self-esteem
- **Communication & Social Skills:** Builds teamwork, language, and collaboration
- **Creativity & Curiosity:** Inspires imagination through open-ended natural resources
- **Real-life Learning:** Makes learning relevant and engaging through practical experiences

Beliefs in the Importance of the Environment

We believe that:

- The environment is a powerful teacher that supports curiosity and discovery
- Early connections with nature foster respect and responsibility for the planet
- Children should have regular and sustained access to outdoor spaces in all seasons
- Experiencing nature supports understanding of sustainability and care for the world

These beliefs align with developing environmentally responsible citizens within Curriculum for Excellence.

As an early years service, we aim to:

- Provide regular, high-quality outdoor learning opportunities
- Encourage child-led exploration and inquiry
- Support risk-aware, not risk-averse, play
- Foster respect for nature and living things
- Develop skills for life, learning, and work
- Ensure inclusion so all children can access outdoor experiences

Links with the Community

Outdoor learning is enriched through strong community connections:

- Use of local parks, green spaces, and woodlands
- Partnerships with community groups and environmental organisations
- Opportunities to engage with local experts (e.g., rangers, gardeners)
- Participation in community events and environmental projects

This helps children feel part of their local environment and community.

Promoting Family Learning

We actively encourage family involvement by:

- Sharing ideas for outdoor play at home
- Organising stay-and-play outdoor sessions
- Providing guidance on appropriate clothing and outdoor learning benefits
- Encouraging families to explore nature together

This strengthens home–setting partnerships and reinforces learning beyond the setting.

Forest Visits

Regular visits to local woodland or forest areas are a key part of our approach, visits:

- Provide rich, natural learning environments for exploration and discovery
- Support risk-taking and problem-solving in real contexts
- Encourage connection with nature and environmental stewardship
- Offer opportunities for activities such as den building, nature walks, and seasonal observations

Forest visits reflect principles of forest school approaches, promoting confidence, independence, and a deep connection to the natural world.

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

At the heart of everything we do is Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). This is a Scotland-wide approach that helps make sure every child is safe, healthy, happy, and supported to do their best.

We focus on each child as an individual and work closely with families to support their wellbeing. GIRFEC is guided by 8 key wellbeing indicators, often remembered as SHANARRI: Our Wellbeing Buddies support the children to learn the language of SHANARRI in an age appropriate way.

- Safe Stella
- Healthy Henry
- Achieving Andrew
- Nurtured Nora
- Active Amir
- Respected Rhia
- Responsible Robbie
- Included Isabella



The Colour Monster

We use The Colour Monster story to help children understand and talk about their feelings in a fun and simple way.

Each colour represents a different emotion:

- **Yellow** – Happy
- **Blue** – Sad
- **Red** – Angry
- **Green** – Calm
- **Black** – Scared



This helps children:

- Recognise how they feel
- Put emotions into words
- Understand that all feelings are okay

The 6 Principles of Nurture

We follow the Six Principles of Nurture to support children's emotional development:

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally
We meet children where they are in their learning journey.
2. Our environment offers a safe base
A warm, welcoming environment where children feel secure.
3. The importance of nurture for wellbeing
Positive relationships help children thrive.
4. Language is a vital means of communication
We help children express thoughts and feelings clearly.
5. All behaviour is communication
We look beyond behaviour to understand what a child needs.
6. The importance of transitions in children's lives
We support children through changes and new experiences.

Parental Partnerships

We believe that working together with families is a key element in supporting children to develop.

We will:

- Keep you informed about your child's progress
- Listen to your views and concerns
- Encourage open communication
- Invite you to be part of your child's learning journey



The Rights of a Child

“Rights are not an addition to learning, they are part of the ethos and pedagogy of the service. Staff interactions with children are loving and caring and support children to understand their rights, not as an activity to be planned but as everyday experiences” (Care Inspectorate)

12 of the 54 Articles are particularly relevant to early years!

Article 2 – No Discrimination

Every child has all the same rights no matter who they are or where they live. It doesn't matter what language they speak, what their family believes, what they look like, or whether they have a disability or not.

Article 3 – Best Interests of the Child

When adults make decisions, they must think about what is *best* for children. Governments have to make sure that children are safe and well cared for.

Article 9 – Keeping Families Together

Children have the right to live with their parents unless that would harm them. If parents live apart, children should be able to stay in contact with both parents when it's safe.

Article 12 – Respect for the Views of the Child

Children have the right to express their opinions and have adults listen to them seriously.

Article 13 – Freedom of Expression

Children can share what they think and feel—by talking, writing, drawing, or in other ways—so long as it doesn't harm others...

Article 14 – Freedom of Thought, Belief, and Religion

Every child can choose their own beliefs and religion.

Article 17 – Access to Information

Children should be able to get reliable information from books, TV, the internet, and other media. Governments must help protect children from harmful content..



Article 19 – Protection from Violence

Children must be protected from all forms of violence, neglect, and mistreatment—at home, in school, or anywhere else.

Article 28 – Right to Education

Every child has the right to go to school and learn. Discipline in schools must respect children’s dignity.

Article 29 – Goals of Education

Education should help children grow their talents and personality, and teach respect for human rights, others’ cultures, and the environment.

Article 31 – Right to Rest, Play, and Culture

Children have the right to relax, play, and join in cultural and artistic activities.

Article 42 – Knowledge of Rights

Children and adults have the right to know about the Convention and what it says. Parents and Early Years Practitioners: Keep learning and sharing children’s rights so everyone understands and protects them.

Safe Guarding – Early Protective Messages

We help children learn about their bodies, feelings, and personal boundaries in a gentle, age-appropriate way.

Through everyday activities, stories, and play, we support children to understand that their body belongs to them. This means:

- They can say “yes” or “no” to touch (like hugs or tickles)
- Their feelings and choices are listened to and respected
- They learn the correct names for body parts in a safe, natural way

We also introduce simple early protective messages, such as:

- It’s okay to say no if something doesn’t feel right
- They can talk to a trusted adult if they are worried or upset
- Secrets that make them feel uncomfortable should be shared
- Their feelings matter, and they will always be taken seriously

We do this through:

- Storytelling and circle time
- Role play and discussions about feelings
- Encouraging children to express themselves confidently
- Building strong, trusting relationships with adults

Our aim is to help children feel safe, confident, and respected, while giving them the language and understanding they need to speak up and seek help when needed.



Reflective Practice in Early Years

What is reflective practice?

Reflective practice simply means that staff regularly think about what they do, why they do it, and how they can improve. It helps ensure your child receives the best possible care, learning, and support.

Rather than doing things the same way every day, practitioners:

- Observe children closely
- Think about what is working well
- Make changes to better meet each child's needs

The benefits for children

Reflective practice helps create an environment where children:

- Feel safe, respected, and valued
- Experience high-quality play and learning
- Have their individual needs understood and supported
- Benefit from staff who are always improving their approach

What does this look like in practice?

- Practitioners get to know all children as an individual
- Practitioners reflect on each child's interests, wellbeing, and development to plan meaningful experiences.

Adapt learning through play

Following *Realising the Ambition*, staff consider how children learn best through play and adjust activities accordingly.

Review and improve the environment

Using the *Quality Framework*, staff regularly evaluate:

- The play space
- Resources available
- Emotional atmosphere

Work in partnership with families

Parent views are important. Staff reflect on feedback from parents to improve the service.



How do staff reflect?

Reflection happens in different ways:

- Daily discussions between staff
- Observations and notes about children's learning
- Team meetings to review practice
- Training and professional learning

What are the key principles behind this?

- Child-centred practice – children are at the heart of everything
- Respect and nurturing relationships
- High-quality play experiences
- Continuous reflective practice to support improvement

In summary

Reflective practice is about never standing still. It ensures early years settings continue to grow, adapt, and provide the best possible start for every child.

We hope you have found this guide helpful and informative. For more information or to provide any feedback please contact: eyc@killermont.e-dunbarton.sch.uk