Wiltshire Portage Development and Learning Policy

Purpose and Aims

Wiltshire Portage believes that every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

Wiltshire Portage is committed to Early Years Foundation Stage themes and principles which set out the standards for the learning, development, and care of children from birth to five.

The principles and themes are:-

– A Unique Child: Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
– Positive Relationships: Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
– Enabling Environments: Children learn and develop well in enabling environments in which their experiences respond to their individual needs. There is a strong partnership between practitioners, parents and carers.
– Learning and Development: Children learn and develop in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in the Early Years including children with special needs and/or learning difficulties.

Within the EYFS Framework our practitioners provide activities and make assessment judgements based on the seven areas of learning:

Communication and Language
Involves children being provided with the opportunity to experience a language rich environment; develop confidence in expressing their wants, needs and feelings and being able to speak and listen in a variety of contexts. When children are slow to develop speech, where appropriate we will support their communication skills using Makaton signing, BSL or the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS).

Physical Development
Involves children being encouraged to be interactive and active and to use all equipment safely, appropriately and with increasing confidence and control to support their gross and fine motor development. Our Home Visitors are creative in the development of physical skills within the child's home and will use the outside environment when appropriate.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Involves supporting children in developing a strong, positive sense of themselves, and of others; form strong attachments and relationships and develop respect for others to develop their social skills and learn how to effectively manage their feelings. This area also supports children in understanding appropriate behaviour and develops confidence in their own abilities.

Wiltshire Portage

Literacy
Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials to ignite their interest; this may include making books for an individual child and using photographs to extend the range of commercially produced resources. Opportunities are regularly provided to help develop good pencil control in a variety of media.

Mathematics (Including Thinking)
Children are given opportunities to develop and improve cognitive concepts and extend their knowledge of how mathematics relates to them.

Understanding the World
Involves supporting children in making sense of the world around them and their community by providing opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology, and the environment. Major events in the children's lives such as holidays, birthdays, new arrivals, and local festivals etc. are discussed and included as opportunities for learning.

Expressive Arts and Design
Enables children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials using all their senses -as well as encouraging the sharing of thoughts, ideas, and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play and design and technology.

Our practitioners are continually:

- Reflecting upon the different ways and speeds that children learn to guide us when planning activities.
- Actively encouraging children to learn through play and to follow their own interests.
- Implementing the Foundation Phase and making sure it is suitable for children from birth to five years of age.
- Using individual assessments and observations to plan for the needs and interests of each child.
- Providing a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.
- Provide a wide variety of practical activities and experiences on a daily basis.
- Using information from parents to help meet the needs of individual children.
- Actively valuing diversity within our service and using resources which promote positive images of all the different groups of adults and children living within our society.

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