

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by our setting helps children to continue to do this by providing all the children with interesting activities that are appropriate for their age and stage of development. The high ratio of staff at Belmont enables us to give time and attention to each child and talk to them about their interests and activities.

Play helps young children to learn and develop through doing and talking, which research has shown to be the means by which young children learn to think. At Belmont we plan and provide a range of play activities which help children to make progress in each of the areas of learning and development. In some of these activities children decide how they will use the activity and, in others, an adult takes the lead in helping the children to take part in the activity.

We assess how young children are learning and developing by observing them frequently. We use the information that we gain from observations to document their progress and where this may be leading them. We make periodic assessment summaries of children's achievements. We believe that parents know their children best and we ask them to contribute to assessments by sharing information about what their children like to do at home and how they as parents are supporting development.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is a play based framework that childcare providers use as a tool to ensure that children from birth to five years are developing and learning to their full potential. At Belmont we plan and provide a range of play activities which help children to make progress in each of the following areas of learning and development.

PRIME AREAS

Personal, social and emotional development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

Physical development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive: and to develop their co-ordination, control and

movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

Communication and language development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

SPECIFIC AREAS

Literacy involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems ; and to describe shapes, spaces and measures.

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

Expressive arts and design involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.