



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Yr Athrofa
Centre *for* Education
Addysg i Gymru | Education for Wales



Partneriaeth Dysgu Proffesiynol **Yr Athrofa**
Yr Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership

Trawsnewid Addysg Gyda'n Gilydd Transforming Teaching Together

A curriculum for
funded non-
maintained nursery
settings



Partneriaeth Dysgu Proffesiynol **Yr Athrofa**
Yr Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership

Session aims

The purpose of this session is to explore the Curriculum for Non-Maintained Settings, enabling to build confidence in understanding and applying its requirements.



A curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings



A curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings



This curriculum was developed for non-maintained funded nursery settings for adoption, should they wish to do so.

The curriculum for non-maintained funded nursery placements has been developed to support learners at the start of the learning continuum 3 to 16, including those with additional learning needs (ALN). It supports the learning and development of these learners to ensure they get the best possible start on their learning journey.





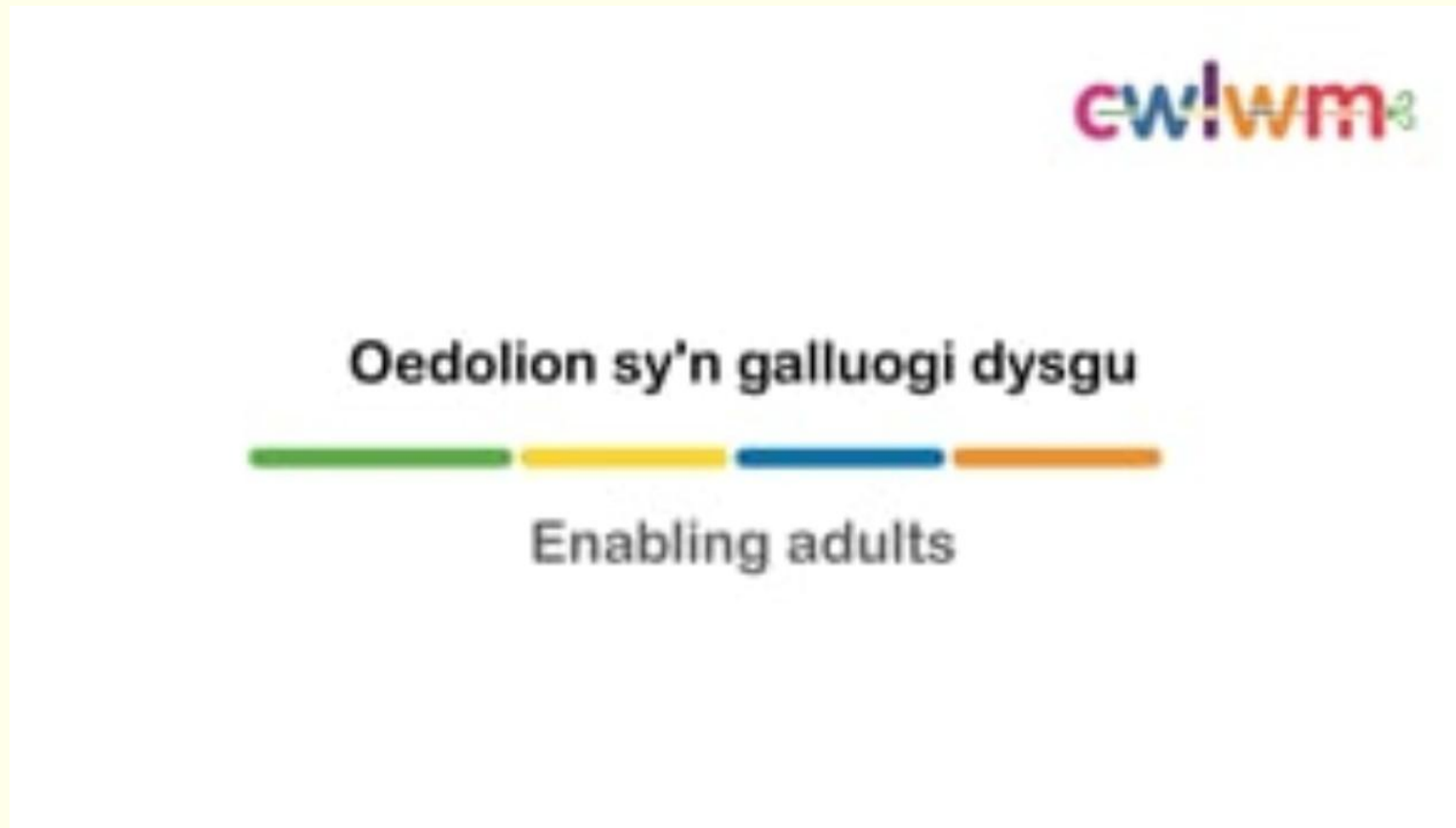
This curriculum meets the following requirements:

- it enables learners to develop in the way described in the four purposes of the curriculum
- it's broad and balanced
- It is suitable for learners of different ages, abilities and talents
- it provides an appropriate progression pathway for all learners

This curriculum is also:
Covering the six areas of learning and experience
Encompassing the 27 statements of what matters
reflecting the principles of progress
covering the compulsory elements of the curriculum, including the mandatory cross-curricular skills
Settings that choose to adopt this curriculum should use it in its entirety to support effective planning in order to ensure a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate for our youngest learners.



Enabling Adults



<https://vimeo.com/921040348?fl=pl&fe=cm>

Engaging experiences



The experiences we offer in the early years should be hands-on, purposeful and meaningful to the child. They should encourage children's independence, and offer risk, challenge and opportunities to experience success along the learning journey. They should be rooted in real-life, authentic contexts, to engage children in deep levels of involvement and long periods of uninterrupted active learning.

Pedagogy and Effective Environments

- Pedagogy is a word used to describe the method or practice of teaching. Working in the early years offers unique and wonderful opportunities for children to participate in play, be outside, experience meaningful learning, and enjoy physical movement. These experiences come together to form the pedagogy of this curriculum and are described in the curriculum as:
- play and play-based learning
- being outside
- authentic and purposeful learning
- physical literacy



Read the case study.

How has Pontypool Nursery School made use of a changing environment to create engaging experiences to help the children make progress in their learning?

What ideas from the case study could be developed in the setting you're in?

[Ysgol Feithrin Pontypwl Case study](#)

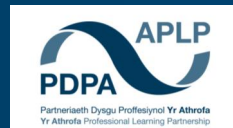


- As practitioners you want children to:
- learning and developing through play
- experience what the outside space has to offer
- engage in learning that is authentic to their own lives and to living in Wales
- be physically active and enjoy the confidence and competence that comes with movement



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Yr Athrofa
Centre for Education
Addysg i Gymru | Education for Wales



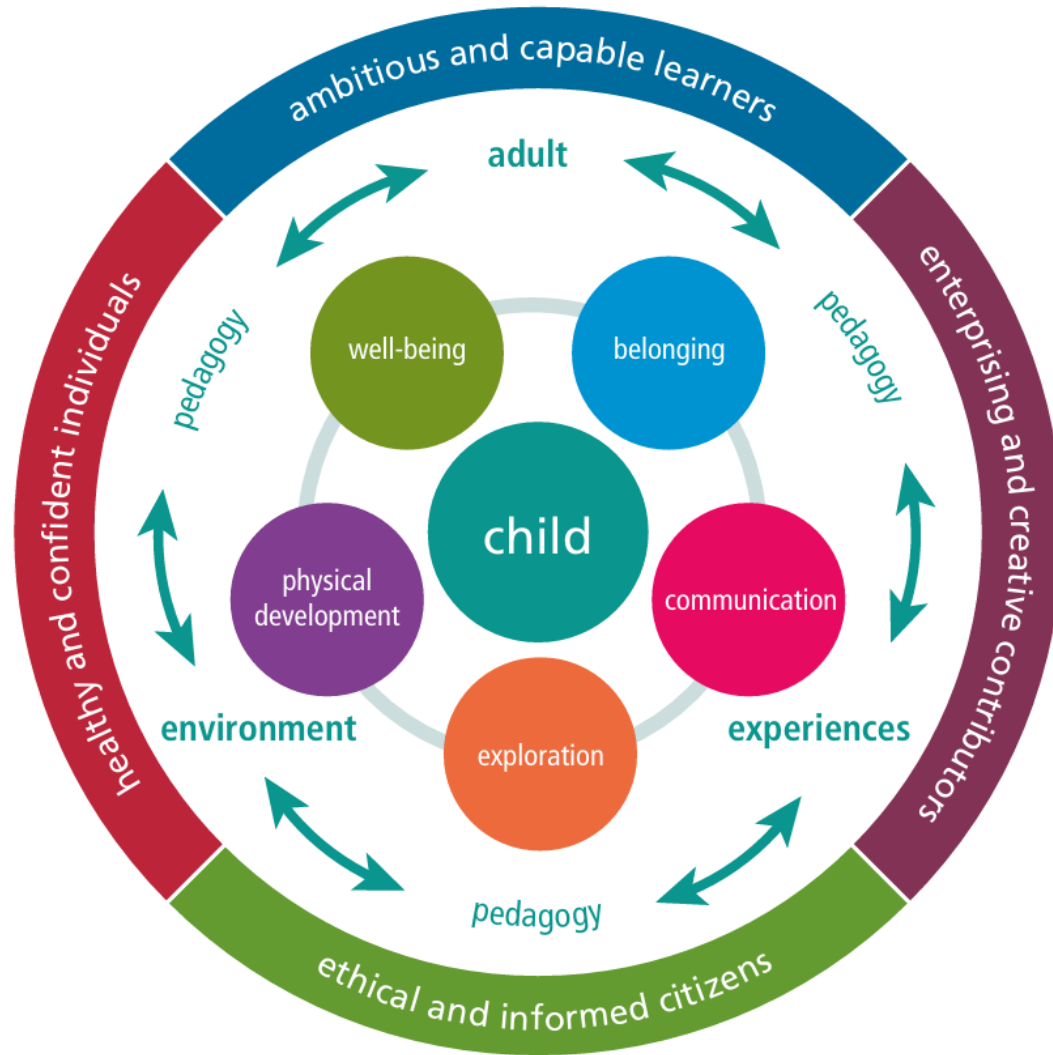
Trawsnewid Addysg, Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education, Transforming Lives

Cross-Curricular Skills

Literacy, numeracy and digital competence are compulsory skills in all parts of the whole curriculum, and it is our responsibility to ensure that children develop and progress in these skills.

When planning learning experiences, we should ensure that children have opportunities to apply, develop and extend these skills in meaningful contexts, using the five developmental pathways.





The five developmental pathways

The five key developmental pathways recognise the learning and development that is essential for young children.

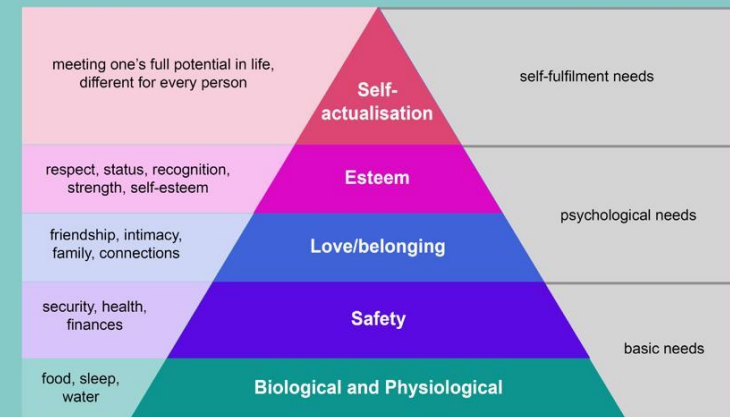
These pathways give the child a central place, depend on each other, and are just as important as each other.

They have been developed to ensure that children can be helped to make progress at their own pace and in their preferred learning environment.



Belonging

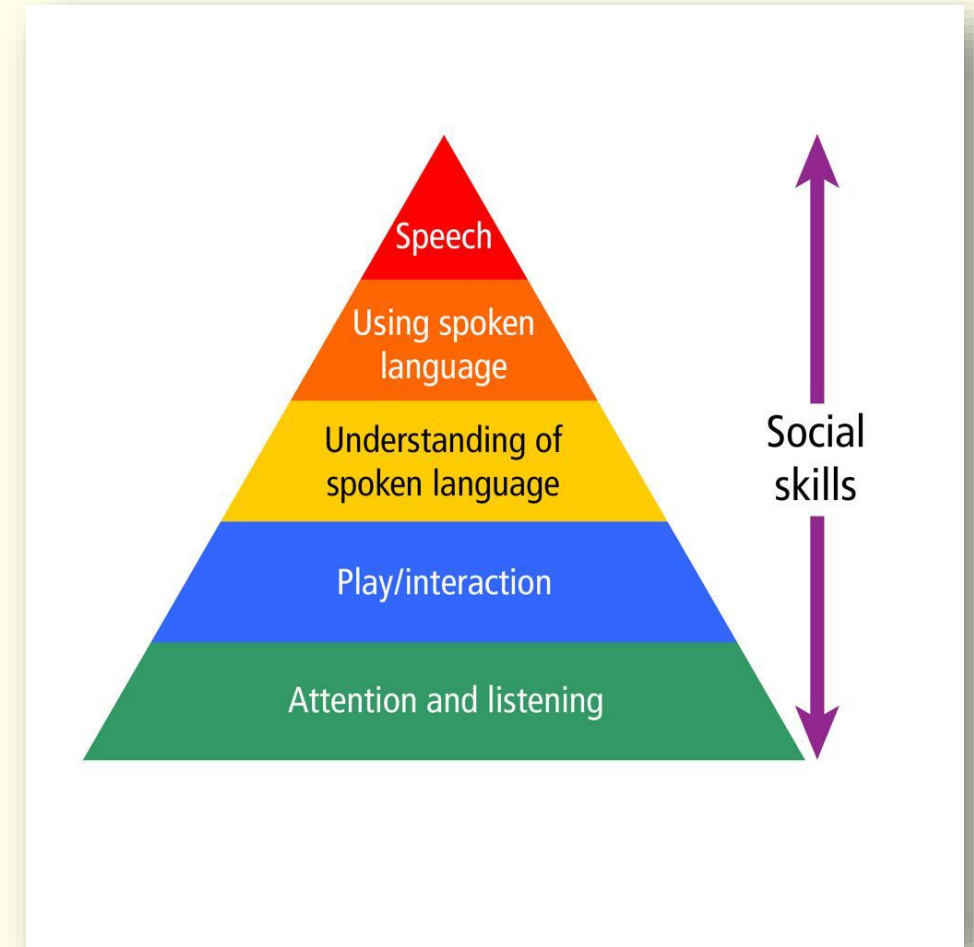
- When it is said that children have a sense of belonging, what does this mean to you?
- What do you think enables children to develop their sense of belonging?
- Why is it important for practitioners to understand their role in creating a sense of belonging between themselves, the family and the community?
- How does belonging affect the five pathways of development?
- How do you design a learning environment that supports a sense of belonging?



Maslow (1943)

Communication

- What are the skills related to speech, language and communication?
- Why is it important for practitioners to understand their role in supporting children's communication?
- What strategies can adults use to support children's communication skills?
- How can you ensure that your environment is supportive of children's communication skills?



Stages of speech and language development A1 poster english for web

 2 – 3 years	- Beginning to listen to talk with interest, but easily distracted. - Listens to talk addressed to him/herself, but finds it difficult if prompts are not provided e.g. 'Stop and listen'.	- Developing an understanding of simple concepts including in/on/under/big/little. - Understands phrases like 'Put teddy in the box'. - Understands simple 'who' and 'what' questions but not why. - Understands a simple story when supported by pictures.	- Uses 300 words including descriptive language, time, space and function. - Links four to five words together. - May stutter or stammer when thinking what to say. - Able to use pronouns (me, him, she), plurals and prepositions (in, on, under). - May have difficulties saying l, r, y, f, th, s, sh, ch, j.	- Holds a conversation but jumps from topic to topic. - Interested in others' play and will join in. - Expresses emotions towards adults and peers using words, not just actions.
 3 – 4 years	- Enjoys listening to stories. - Still finds it difficult to attend to more than one thing at a time, so can't easily listen to a speaker whilst still carrying on an activity, has to switch attention between speaker and task.	- Understands questions or instructions with two parts e.g. 'Get your jumper and stand by the door'. - Understands 'why' questions. - Aware of time in relation to past, present and future, e.g. 'Today is sunny, yesterday was rainy, I wonder what the weather will be like tomorrow?'.	- Uses sentences of four to six words. - Uses future and past tense. - May continue to have problems with irregular words e.g. 'runned' for 'ran' and 'swimmed' for 'swam'. - Able to remember and enjoys telling long stories or singing songs. - May have difficulties saying r, j, th, ch and sh.	- Understands turn-taking as well as sharing with adults and peers. - Initiates conversations. - Enjoys play with peers. - Able to argue with adults or peers if they disagree – uses words, not just actions.
 4 – 5 years	Attention is now more flexible, the child can understand spoken instructions related to a task without stopping the activity to look at the speaker.	- Able to follow simple story without pictures. - Understands instructions containing sequencing words e.g. 'first, after, last'. - Understands adjectives e.g. 'soft, hard, smooth'. - Aware of more complex humour, laughs at jokes that are told.	- Uses well formed sentences, but there may still be some grammatical errors. - Easily understood by adults and peers, with only a few immaturities in speech sounds for example th, r and some consonant combinations. - Frequently asks the meaning of unfamiliar words and may use them randomly.	- Chooses own friends. - Generally co-operative with playmates. - Able to plan construction and make believe play activities. - Takes turns in longer conversations. - Uses language to gain information, negotiate, discuss feelings/ideas and give opinions.

Case study : Gestures

Consider this example by a practitioner.

In my setting, we use lots of gestures to accompany instructions. It helps the children to understand what we're asking of them. For example, when we give the instruction 'golchi dwylo', we rub our hands together to make the sign for 'wash'.

This gesture helps the children to understand the instruction. Sometimes they carry out the instruction and sometimes they also respond verbally. We use gestures throughout the day when communicating the regular routines of the setting. They know snack time is coming next!

Consider the following questions.

How can you use gestures in your daily routine to support children's understanding of spoken language?

How do you respond to children's gestures?

Do you look at what they are showing you and respond quickly?

Supporting Communication

Adults can support children's communication by:

modelling talk, reading and writing, and drawing attention to print in the environment

providing opportunities, high-quality materials and equipment, including books

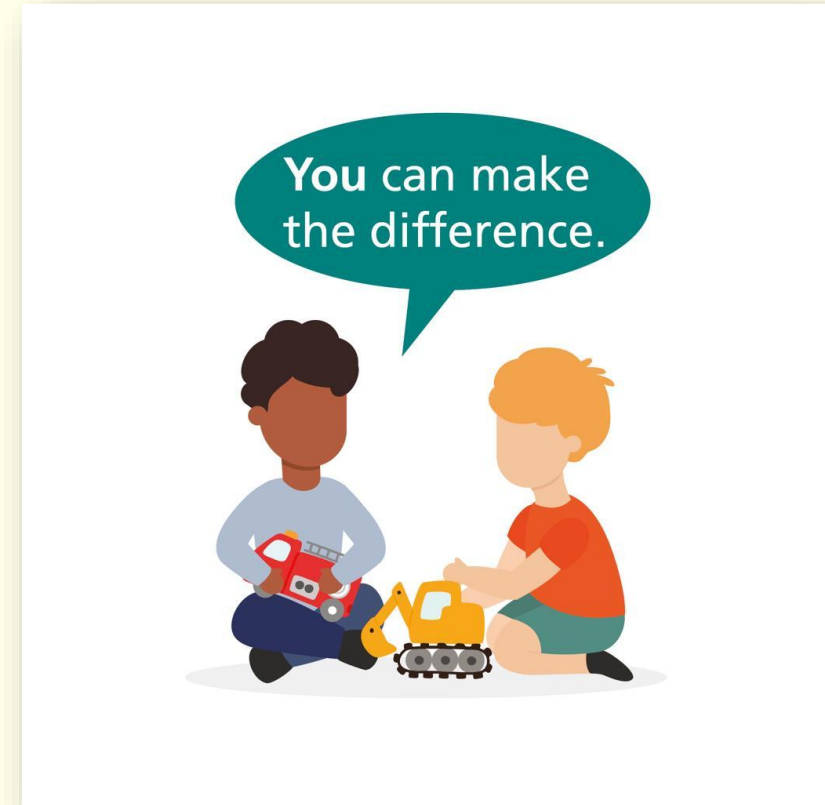
observing children – what they do and say, their interests and stories

interacting as children read and write

intervening sensitively **and** positively (not interfering)

evaluating to reflect on what happened, assess the strategies used and resulting outcomes

Adapted from *Threads of Thinking*, Cathy Nutbrown, 3rd Edition (SAGE, 2006).



Exploration

What do you understand by children learning through 'exploration'?

What do you think enables children to develop their skills to 'explore'?

Why is it important for practitioners to understand their role in supporting children's development of exploration skills?

How does the learning environment support children's explorative development?

How does exploration fit with the five developmental pathways and the learning environment?



Case study : Exploration



Mae [Y Llun Hwn](#) gan Awdur Anhysbys wedi'i drwyddedu dan [CC BY-SA](#)

Case study: Reflecting on exploration – Mushrooms

Read the case study in the attachment below and consider the following questions.

- What was the role of the adult in this exploration?
- What experiences were provided by the adult?
- How did these support exploration and free-flow play?
- What part did the child play?
- How did these experiences support skills development?
- How did they link to the developmental pathways and child-centred practice?

[Case study - Reflecting on exploration – Mushrooms.pdf](#)

Physical development

- What is physical development?
- How can physical development be developed within and across the other four developmental pathways?
- Why is physical development important?
- How can you support children to make progress with their physical development?
- How will physical development contribute to health and well-being which lasts through a lifetime?



The importance of being physically active



Article 12 (1966) of the United Nations Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Right recognises the right of everyone to be able to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines health as '*a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity*'.

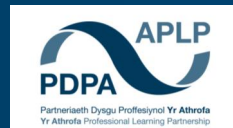
Being physically active is one of the NHS' five steps to improve mental health and well-being.

If children enjoy being active, develop confidence in their ability, learn key movement skills and where to use them, this will foster a lifelong enjoyment of physical activity and better health and well-being.



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Yr Athrofa
Centre for Education
Addysg i Gymru | Education for Wales



Partneriaeth Dysgu Proffesiynol Yr Athrofa
Yr Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership

Trawsnewid Addysg, Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education, Transforming Lives

Well-being

- How do enabling adults support children's well-being?
- What engaging experiences do we currently have in practice to support children's well-being? How can these be further developed?
- How can we be sure that our effective environment is emotionally supportive?
- How do we ensure that our pedagogy is supporting the well-being of children?



A woodland walk

A mindfulness walk with children can illustrate well-being in action.



Think about taking a group of children on a walk through a wood.

- What could the children experience on this walk?
- Can you make links between the learning opportunities the walk offers and how these may influence a child's well-being?

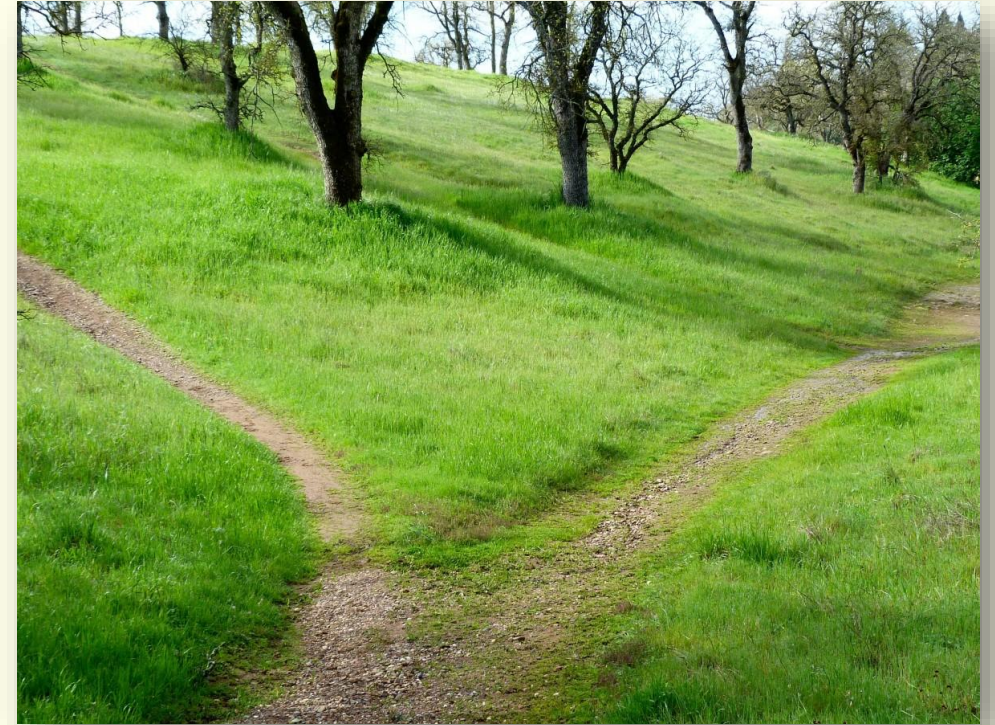
Understanding the developmental pathways

Children are at the heart of this curriculum and, as such, the five developmental pathways are expressed from the child's viewpoint to ensure that provision focuses on the needs, interests and curiosity of three- and four-year-olds.

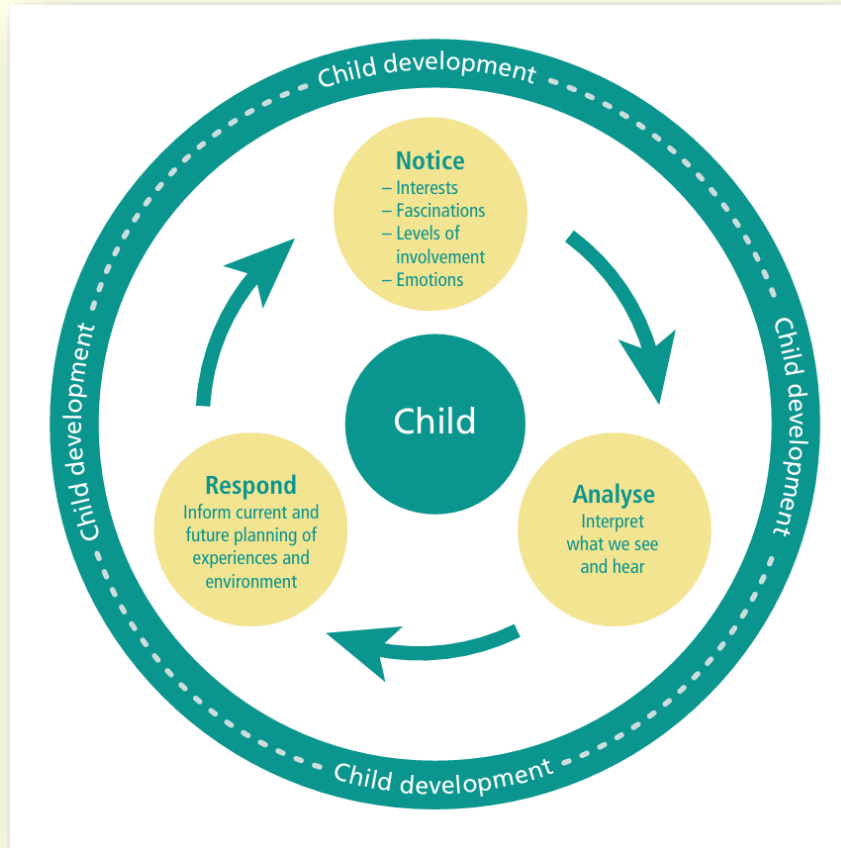
The '**I need to ...**' statements articulate the biological and social drives that children cannot or should not ignore. It is our responsibility to recognise and understand these drives, so that we provide purposeful play opportunities for children to fulfil these needs. They are inclusive statements that apply to children of all abilities.

The '**I am learning to ...**' statements demonstrate the skills and dispositions that children are developing on their learning journey.

The '**My ... is enhanced by ...**' statements describe the ideal conditions that can have a positive impact on the social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of the child.



Observing children



Observation is a key part of our practice.

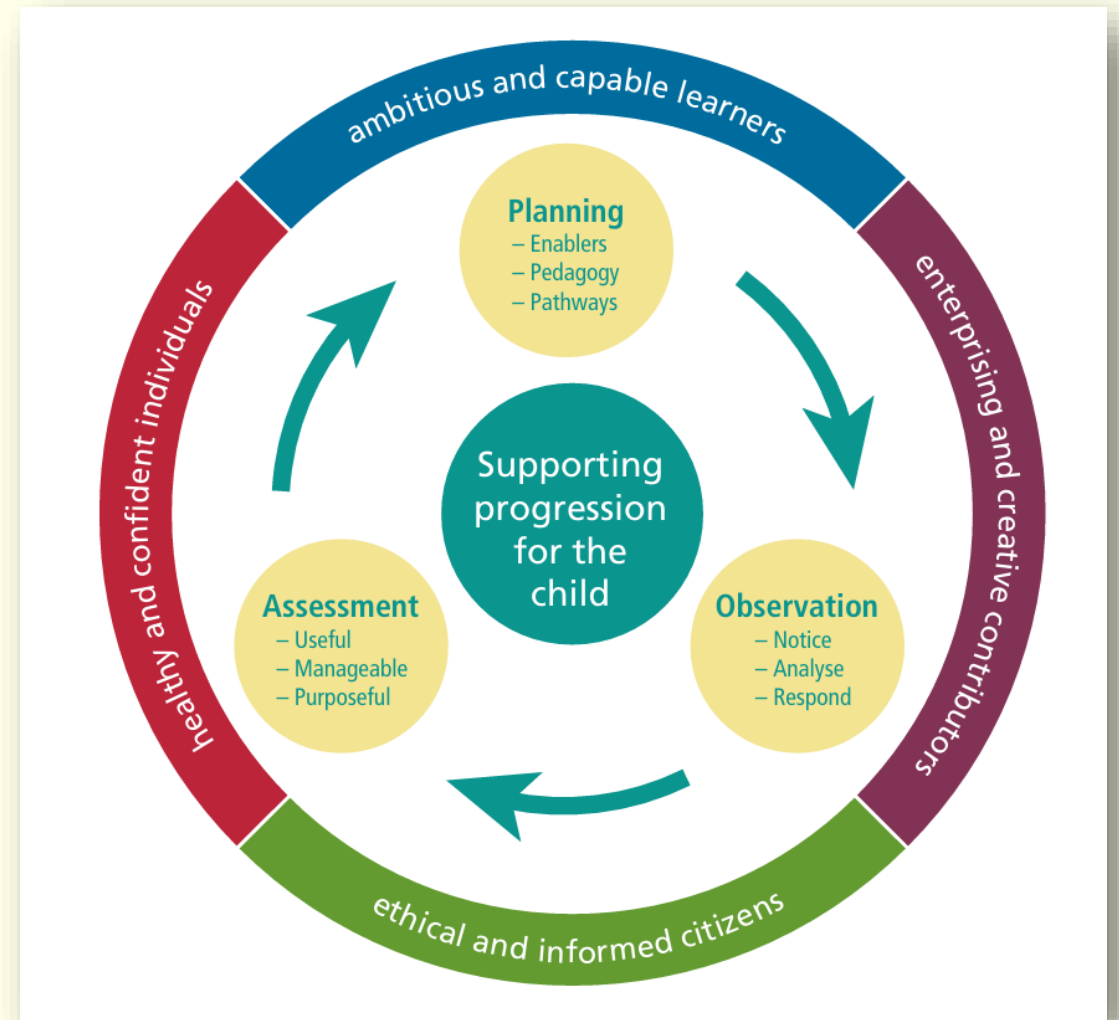
It should be based on our thorough knowledge of child development, and the child should be at the heart of the process.



Assessing children

Assessment has three main roles:

- supporting the individual child on an ongoing, day-to-day basis
- identifying, capturing and reflecting on individual progress
- understanding group progress over time to help the setting reflect on their practice.



Inclusion

Inclusive practice recognises, values and promotes the diversity of children and families, and ensures they receive equitable treatment, representation, opportunities and respect.



Mae [Y Llun Hwn](#) gan Awdur Anhysbys
wedi'i drwyddedu dan [CC BY-SA-NC](#)

Our environment should:

- be well organised to ensure accessibility for all
- include diverse and authentic representation within resources, images and text (in terms of gender, ability, sexual orientation, religion, etc.)
- make appropriate adaptations to remove barriers to participation
- offer open-ended resources that reflect diversity and are not gender-specific.

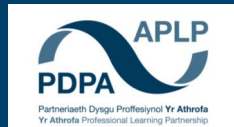
Adverse childhood experiences

The term 'adverse childhood experiences' refers to traumatic events a child may experience before the age of 18. These could include: abuse, neglect, bereavement, parental separation, parental imprisonment, and exposure to substance misuse or domestic violence.



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Yr Athrofa
Centre for Education
Addysg i Gymru | Education for Wales



Trawsnewid Addysg, Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education, Transforming Lives

Transitions

Transitions are changes that take place in a child's life and that require them to adapt to a new set of circumstances.

There are three main types of transition

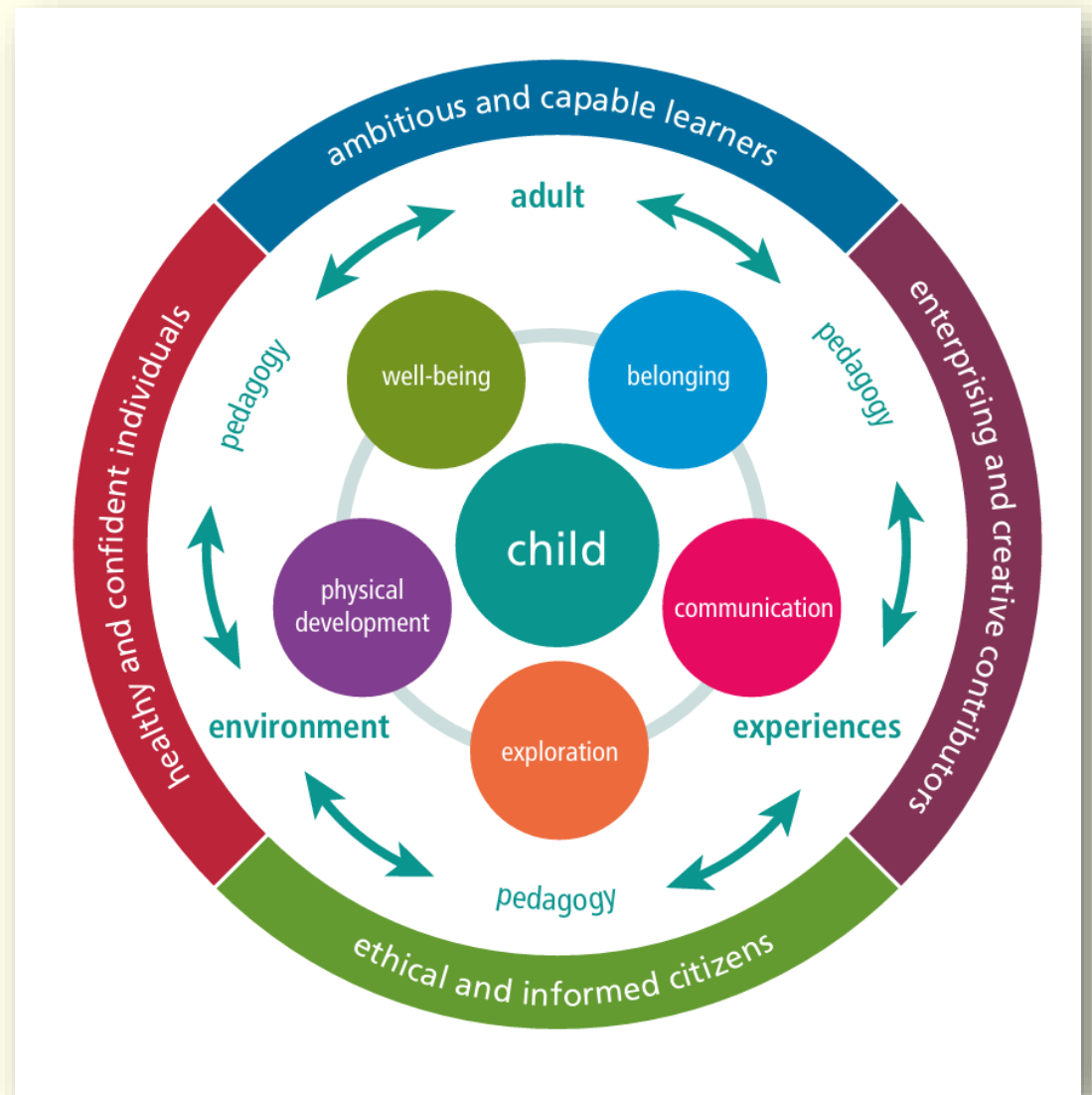
- Horizontal
- Vertical
- Multiple



Activity

Using the [A curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings](#) and the information you have learnt today, work together to complete the Curriculum Activity.

[Activity for Curriculum fod non maintained settings.docx](#)



References

Welsh Government (2022) A curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings Available at: [A curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings](#) (Accessed: 04 October 2026)

Welsh Government (2022) Child Development *Professional learning: foundation learning support for practitioners in schools and settings* Available at : [View – Hwb](#) (Accessed: 05 October 2026)

Welsh Government (2022) Understanding the five developmental pathways and pedagogy.
Professional learning: A curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings Available at: [View – Hwb](#) (Accessed: 04 October 2026)