

Planning in the moment

At Briary Pre-school we plan in the moment with our children. 'Planning in the moment is nothing new, it is exactly what you as a responsive parent do every day and exactly what our skilled staff have always done. Every time an adult looks at, and listens to a child, they are assessing and 'planning' how to respond.' Anna Ephgrave, Planning in the Moment with Young Children 2018.

Over the past year we have been conducting lots of research, watching how our children play and interact both with adults and their peers. From our observations we have changed our environment to ensure that it is delivering good levels of involvement opportunities for children. The best levels of involvement are achieved when children's well-being is high and we can achieve this when children are initiating their own play, the staff then join the children and plan in the moment, being observant and deciding if and how to respond. Our routine now supports this, so that children can play where they want, with whatever they choose for as long as they want. This is called child-initiated play and is sometimes referred to as 'free-flow'. Our research showed us that fewer interruptions, increases the children's wellbeing and involvement in their play.

You will have noticed that we have changed our environment to support this, lots of the plastic toys have been replaced with well organised open-ended resources that provide endless opportunities for children's imagination and play.

You will see china in the role play area, vintage scales for mathematical play, herbs and soil in the mud kitchen, cooking utensils in the sand area, real stones and pebbles in the construction area, a loose parts area, these are just a few of the many enhancements we have made.

We have a 'Nurture Room' which is open on arrival and provides a calm, cosy home-like space for children to play and settle, it has been particularly useful for our new settlers and their families, as well as providing a quieter space for children to play.

Bright stimulating coloured displays have been replaced with calm and visual displays showcasing the children's creations and wow moments.

All areas are resourced so that the children can choose what they would like to play with, for example the water area has well-stocked baskets with a variety of water exploration toys, funnels, pipes, jugs, sieves, etc. The playdough, sand, role play, music area, physical gardens, mud kitchen are arranged the same, children choose their own equipment. This ensures that the child is always leading their own play. We have cosy reading areas both inside and outside and writing opportunities in all areas.

Staff are supporting this play and 'teaching' in the moment, this could be teaching a new skill, adding on language, for example a child may say "bus" and the adult might reply "yes, big red bus", showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring, questioning and recalling – the opportunities are endless. If a child is showing a particular interest or curiosity, staff can support this by providing the resources immediately, e.g. a child asked if they could brush their hair, so the staff member immediately responded and provided a range of hair accessories and the child played with them, other children enjoyed this experience too.

All adults are focusing on embedding our 'rules' this term with the children:

- We walk indoors
- We use quiet voices indoors
- We put away our toys when we have finished playing with them
- We use gentle hands with our friends.

You can help by reminding your child too of these rules, at home.

Future planning for your child will include our 'Invitation to Learn' this will include activities that we may introduce to enhance our teaching, for example introducing lavender to the playdough, collecting autumn leaves and talking about the changing seasons, celebrating festivals and cooking, to name but a few of the invitations we may introduce. We will display our 'Invitation to Learn' on our planning board outside, we may ask for donations of resources to support this, for example pinecones and leaves or whatever is capturing their curiosity at the time.

We will also be introducing 'Focus Child' planning, where we will choose children each week to focus on (other children will still be observed as normal). You will be involved in this when your child is the focus child and will tell us about their current interests, things happening in your child's life such as holidays, new pets, family celebrations and share photographs with us too. Every child will have the opportunity to be the focus child during each term (a maximum of six times during the academic year – Autumn, Spring and Summer). More information on this to follow. Next steps will continue to be shared on your child's Tapestry page for the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms.

Parent afternoon/evening consultations Thursday 28th November 2019 and Thursday 18th June 2020 4.15-6.30pm, an opportunity to talk about your child's progress with your key person (optional). Remember you do not have to wait for the parent consultation to share information about your child, we have an open-door policy where you can talk to us at any time.

If you have any questions about this change in our planning, please do ask your key person.

Children want to learn in their own unique way, and this can be achieved through child-initiated play and planning in the moment.

