



## **CURRICULUM**

### **Young Children Learn best through Play**

Play is critical for children's learning, growth and development.

Play experiences develop pathways in the brain, build complex language and social skills, develop imagination and enable children to develop executive functions and high level thinking skills.

### **BRAIN DEVELOPMENT STARTS EARLY**

'The research tells us that the brains of all children appear to thrive best in a nurturing, consistent and social environment, characterized by interventions which both secure the child yet enable him or her to explore and play safely.' Shonkoff and Phillips, 2001: Smith 2001

Brain research identifies that:

- The highest rate of brain development occurs in the early years of a child's life
- Children's early life experiences shape the way their brains develop, in the short term and throughout their life
- The young brain is very 'plastic'. It is continually responding and reacting to everything that the child experiences
- Secure relationships and rich life experiences encourage the child to explore and learn. This continues the brain building process.
- Children's early brain development is the foundation for all learning and development that follows.

*"Recognizing the early years are a period of unique opportunity and vulnerability means that the environments of early childhood should be designed so they facilitate, rather than blunt, the remarkable intrinsic push toward growth that is characteristic of every child...." The Future of Children*

### **The preschool curriculum is designed to**

- Connect with children's prior experiences and understandings
- Broaden children's knowledge and skills across the curriculum
- Expose children to a wide range of learning experiences
- Engage children's imagination and curiosity
- Actively encourage independent learning and more complex play
- Support children to deepen their interests and take ownership of their learning
- Reflect and respect children's cultural backgrounds
- Extend children's critical thinking, creativity and problem solving skills
- Develop children's communication skills in talking, listening, expressing, viewing, decoding, drawing and writing

- Develop children's numeracy skills in patterning, measurement, spatial reasoning, analysing data and quantifying
- Support children's overall social development and well being
- Assist children to successfully transition to school

We plan, assess and report on learning using "The Early Years Learning Framework". The stated Learning Outcomes are:

- Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
- Children have a strong sense of identity.
- Children are confident and involved learners.
- Children are effective communicators.



### **TEACHERS PLAN TO FACILITATE CHILDREN'S LEARNING BY**

Working in partnership with families and other professionals

- Respecting and extending children's ideas and interests
- Asking open ended questions, providing formative feedback and supporting children to test their ideas
- Encouraging children to explore, be independent learners and take risks in their learning
- Providing stimulating learning experiences, indoors and outdoors
- Listening, observing, recording, planning and responding to children's ongoing learning needs
- Being a co-player, modelling play, supporting children to enter and exit play situations
- Teaching by modelling, demonstrating and explaining

Research confirms that the higher the qualifications of staff, the better the outcomes for children. Department for Education Kindergartens employ qualified early childhood teachers and trained Early Childhood Workers.