



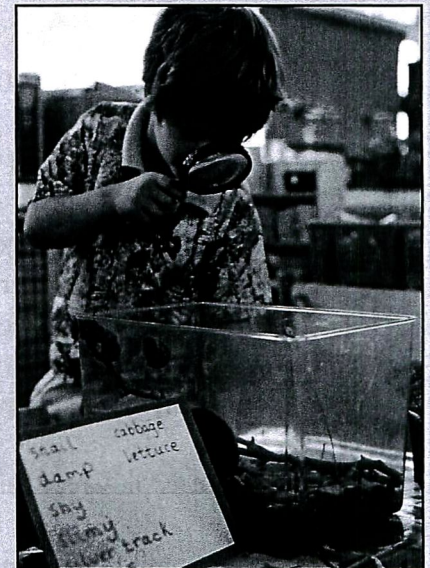
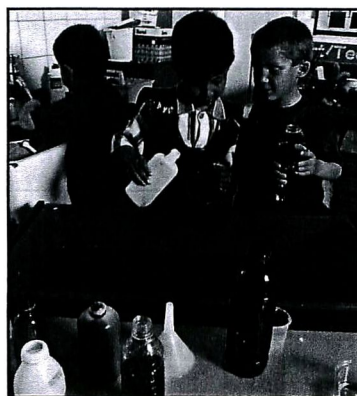
Planning for learning in the foundation stage

Early years practitioners

Early years settings which receive nursery grant funding and schools with children in the foundation stage

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Qualification and Curriculum Authority
83 Piccadilly
London
W1J 8QA
www.qca.org.uk

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Planning for learning

Introduction

This booklet has been designed to supplement the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*, published by QCA in May 2000. You will need to be familiar with all aspects of the guidance before you read this booklet.

This booklet contains:

- practical guidance, for early years practitioners in all settings, on planning a curriculum for the foundation stage; and
- examples of curriculum plans from a range of settings, together with descriptions of how the practitioners approached the curriculum planning process.

Why more guidance?

Some foundation stage practitioners have a great deal of experience in planning. For others it is a new aspect of their work. This booklet will help those who are less experienced to plan successfully and in a way that is manageable. For those with more experience, it will help when reviewing their plans.

Differences such as the number and age of the children, the length of time they spend in the setting, the number of staff and the educational philosophy of the setting will influence planning. The examples in this booklet show how five different settings have begun to develop ways of planning that work for them, in their particular setting.

Why do I need to plan?

Children who begin their education in a learning environment that is vibrant, purposeful, challenging and supportive stand the best chance of developing into confident and successful learners. Effective learning environments are created over time as the result of practitioners and parents working together, thinking and talking about children's learning and planning how to promote it.

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Good planning enables practitioners to build up knowledge about how individual children learn and make progress. It also provides opportunities for practitioners to think and talk about how to sustain a successful learning environment. This process works best when all practitioners working in the setting are involved. Practitioners who work alone will benefit from opportunities to discuss their plans with others working in similar settings.

Do plans always have to be written down?

Written plans are a useful way of recording significant information so that it can be shared with others and used for future reference. They provide a basis for mapping out future experiences, activities and achievements as well as a record of children's previous experiences, interests and progress. However, a written plan is not an end in itself – it is the planning process that is important.

There are many approaches to recording your plans. If practitioners meet regularly to discuss their ideas and plans, there may be no need to record everything in detail. You will need to select only the most significant information and to organise and present it in a simple format. This way, it can be easily shared and understood. To be effective and useful within the day to day demands of the setting, a plan needs to be clear, concise and quick to complete.

What are long-, medium and short-term plans and do I need to do all three?

However long a child spends in a setting and whether they attend full- or part-time, you will want to be sure that they are making good progress towards, and in some cases beyond, the early learning goals in all of the six areas of learning. Therefore it is important that each child has a broad, balanced and purposeful curriculum, including those that attend part-time. The first step towards achieving this in practice is to develop a long-term plan.

A long-term plan is a way of ensuring that all six areas of learning are given equal emphasis and that all aspects of learning within the six areas are covered regularly and frequently. As some children may attend one setting for several years, it will be important to ensure that their curriculum varies from year to year so that the children are motivated, challenged, and that their experiences are broadened.

A long-term plan is usually drawn up in preparation for up to a year ahead. It provides an overview of the range of learning opportunities that will be offered. It sets out in broad terms what you intend the children to learn and, as it is drawn up well in advance, it should be used as a guide and not stuck to rigidly. Unplanned events will often occur that capture the children's imaginations or interests, for example the opening of a new playground in the community or a heavy snowfall. It would be sensible to make the most of these events by including them in your short-term plans if they can be used to enhance children's development in the six areas of learning. A long-term plan is usually designed with whole groups of children in mind.

A short-term plan is based on the long-term plan and developed using ongoing observations and informal assessment of the children. It is usually drawn up on a day-to-day or weekly basis. It includes, for example, sequences of experiences and activities designed to promote new learning or to consolidate or apply things just learned. Like the long-term plan, it should be used as a guide and not followed rigidly. Using your observations of the children, you should be able to adjust your short-term plan to take account of the interests and needs of the children and to capitalise on unplanned events, particularly those initiated by the children. A short-term plan is usually designed with individual or groups of children in mind.

Examples of long- and short-term plans have been included in this booklet. You may find it helpful to draw up medium-term plans which bridge the gap between the broad outline of the long-term plan and the day-to-day detail of the short-term plan. For most practitioners, long-term and short-term plans are sufficient.

How do I go about long-term planning?

One approach to long-term planning is to use the aspects of learning, set out in the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*, that go to make up each of the six areas of learning. For example, 'Personal, social and emotional development' is made up of dispositions and attitudes, self-confidence and self-esteem, making relationships, behaviour and self-control, self-care and sense of community. The aspects of learning that make up each of the six areas are shown on the chart on page 20.

This approach will give you a good knowledge of the breadth of each area of learning. This, together with a detailed understanding of the stepping stones and early learning goals, will help you to plan the wide range of experiences and activities needed for children to make progress throughout the year.

An effective long-term plan for the foundation stage is likely to include:

- an indication of when you plan to teach aspects/areas of learning;
- an indication of how regularly and frequently you plan to teach aspects/areas of learning;
- an indication of how you will link aspects/areas of learning in a relevant and interesting way for children;
- special events and activities that provide a meaningful context and enhance learning (eg a visit to a city farm, a cultural or religious festival).

To make sure that you have planned a balanced curriculum, you will need to check that:

- you have included all aspects of learning;
- there is a balance between and within the six areas of learning;
- there are sufficient opportunities for children to revisit all aspects of learning regularly and frequently.

How do I go about short-term planning?

Effective short-term planning, whilst it is based on the long-term plan, is largely informed by ongoing observations and informal assessments of the children and by discussions with other practitioners and parents. You can use all this information to help you to match the activities and experiences to individual or groups of children.

The stepping stones set out the different stages of development children may go through to achieve the early learning goals. It is important to remember that a child's stage of development is likely to vary within and across the areas of learning. When planning the next steps in children's learning, the learning intentions should be based on the stepping stones or the early learning goals according to the child's stage of development. The experiences and activities that you plan need to be designed around these learning intentions. A good understanding of the stepping stones and early learning goals will enable you to plan an appropriate curriculum and to focus on the sequence and pace of learning.

An effective short-term plan for the foundation stage is likely to include:

- clear learning intentions for individual or groups of children informed by observations and based on the stepping stones/early learning goals;
- a brief description of the range of experiences and activities
 - adult-directed and child-initiated;
 - indoors and outdoors;
- how experiences and activities can be adapted for individual or groups of children;
- how the children will be organised;
- the role of the adult(s), including parents;
- the resources and equipment needed.

The short-term plan could be extended to include:

- opportunities for observations of individual or groups of children;
- questions and/or vocabulary that the adult(s) will use during the activity;
- opportunities for informal assessments of individual or groups of children.

How do I plan for play?

You will need to use the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage* (page 25) alongside your knowledge of individual children to encourage play that is emotionally, intellectually, physically and socially challenging. In a well-planned environment, children can learn through play to explore their ideas and experiences in new and imaginative ways. For example, well chosen props can encourage children to engage in role-play that is based on a story you have read to them or on one of their own.

Spontaneous play is often based on important events in young children's lives, such as a holiday, moving home or the birth of a sibling. Exploring and experimenting through play can help children to make sense of their experiences and develop their understanding of these events. From your observations and informal assessments of children at play, you will be able to decide how best to support and extend their learning.

How do I plan to meet the diverse needs of children?

The *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage* (pages 17 and 18) contains advice about the requirements of providing equal opportunities for all children. This includes planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, children with special educational needs (SEN), children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social, cultural and religious backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups including travellers, refugees and asylum seekers, and children from diverse linguistic backgrounds. This means providing a safe environment, free from harassment and discrimination, in which children's contributions are valued and where racial, religious, disability and gender stereotypes are challenged.

How do I plan for children with special educational needs and disabilities?

The *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage* (pages 18 and 19) provides advice to support planning for children with SEN and/or disabilities to help all children make the best possible progress. All settings, including childminder networks, should have an identified SEN coordinator (SENCO) and a SEN policy to support inclusive planning. Essential details on identification and assessment of children with SEN are contained in the *Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Pupils with Special Educational Needs* (DfEE 1994). (A revised version is expected to come into effect in January 2002. It will be accompanied by the *SEN Tool Kit* that includes additional guidance to be read in conjunction with the SEN Code of Practice.)

New duties brought in by the SEN and Disability Act 2001 mean that in September 2002 the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) will be extended to cover education. All schools will be covered by a new Part IV of the DDA, and the education offered by those providers that are not schools will be covered by Part III of the DDA (social care is already covered). These are two key duties in Part IV – not to treat disabled children 'less favourably' for a reason related to their disability and to make 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure that disabled children are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their non-disabled peers. Guidance on the new duties is set out in a Code of Practice issued by the Disability Rights Commission.

How do I plan for the national literacy and numeracy strategies in a reception class?

The early learning goals are in line with the objectives in the frameworks for teaching literacy and mathematics, which should be taught throughout the reception year. The *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage* helps reception teachers to plan using these objectives to meet the needs of the children in their classes.

Guidance on the organisation of the National Literacy Strategy in Reception classes (DfEE 0153/2000) and *Guidance on the organisation of the daily mathematics lesson in Reception classes* (DfEE 0088/2000) show how teachers can teach the different elements of the literacy hour and the daily mathematics lesson flexibly throughout the day and appropriately to the age of the children. There is no expectation that these elements will be taught in a single unit of time. In order to ensure a smooth transition into year 1, the literacy hour and daily mathematics lesson should both be in place by the end of the reception year.

Examples of curriculum plans

These are five examples of curriculum plans from a range of settings, together with descriptions of how practitioners have gone about developing a planning process that works for them in their setting. The examples show how plans can be recorded in a variety of ways. Practitioners wanted a format that could be duplicated, filled in quickly and easily understood by all who work in the setting.

The starting point for the planning process in each of the settings was the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*. This provided practitioners with valuable information as they went about planning learning opportunities for children in their setting and talking about the way they wanted to work together.

Example 1

The nursery school is located in the centre of a small market town. It occupies a single storey Victorian building which has been converted into open plan and has an easily accessible garden. The nursery provides full- and part-time places during term-time for children from the town and surrounding villages. There are 70 children aged three to four on roll, including approximately 20 children with special educational needs. There is a team of seven practitioners who work either part-time or full-time. All children are assigned to a key worker.

Long-term planning

Our long-term plan focuses on different areas of learning at particular times throughout the year. For example, in the first half of the autumn term we place a strong emphasis on 'Personal, social and emotional development' (PSED), to address the social and emotional needs of the new intake of children. Later on in the year, there is a strong focus on 'Knowledge and understanding of the world' (KUW), to develop the children's problem solving and investigative skills and expand their developing knowledge of their environment. Although the long-term plan focuses on one particular area of learning at a time, the daily planning ensures that all other areas of learning are included. For example, when the focus is on KUW and the children are experimenting with the effects of heat and cold on different ingredients during cooking, we incorporate 'Communication, language and literacy' (CLL) in our short-term planning by encouraging the children to write shopping lists for the ingredients. Over the year, the daily planning is regularly monitored to ensure comprehensive coverage of all areas and aspects of learning.

Short-term planning

Each week the team selects four or five children for detailed observation. At the end of each day, the team meets for about half an hour to evaluate the day's activities and discuss the detailed observations we have made on the children we are focusing on that week. We use these evaluations, coupled with knowledge gained from the observations, as a starting point for planning the next day's activities and experiences.

Each key-worker collects and files the observations of the children that are assigned to them. At the end of the week, they meet with the children's parents who have been asked to contribute their own observations of the children at home. This sharing of information between home and school helps build up a more detailed picture of each child's needs, particular interests and learning styles. We can then highlight one or two aspects of learning for each child for particular attention during the next few weeks.

During our daily planning meeting, we agree learning intentions for the next day's adult-directed activities. We discuss the learning needs of individual and groups of children and design the activities around these. We usually agree the key vocabulary/questions that will be used and the resources that will be needed. In addition, we plan a variety of other activities, both indoors and outdoors, from which children can choose so that they have opportunities to initiate and develop their own learning. We then write the activities down on the outdoor or indoor planning sheets with the learning intentions colour coded to show the areas of learning. This also provides a quick reference for setting up equipment at the beginning of each session. We record more detail if the member of the team leading the activity is unable to be at the planning meeting.

This approach to planning has evolved over the last two years and depends on good teamwork and a detailed understanding of the early years curriculum guidance. As a result of our daily planning meetings, all members of the team have an in-depth knowledge of the development and progress of each child and are able to adapt and match the activities to meet their needs.

We share our plans with parents, on a white board at the entrance to the nursery, by writing the current focus of learning and some activities that they might like to carry out with children at home. The team is available at the beginning and end of each session to talk with parents.

How an observation influenced our planning

Luke wanted to show me the map he had drawn of where Ella, another child in the group, had gone on holiday. He described in detail where she had gone. Later, during 'group time' he showed all the children his map and described Ella's journey. He finished by saying, 'This is Australia where Ella is.' He was happy and confident to share this with the group.

From this observation, I was able to make an assessment of Luke against the stepping stones for KUW and the early learning goals for CLL. He showed that he could:

- show interest in the lives of people familiar to him;
- speak clearly and audibly with confidence and control; and
- use talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas, feelings and events.

Luke's interest in maps and destinations spread to several other children in the nursery. We noticed this was a topic of conversation as they rode their bikes in the playground. This was an ideal opportunity to pick up on the children's interests, so we planned a sequence of activities designed to extend the children's learning over a period of weeks. Every activity had a clear purpose and learning intention.

We photocopied an enlarged map of the school and the local area. The team worked with a group of children to map out a route to the shops the children intended to visit. The children used the map to find their way, using different routes to and from the shops. On route, they took photos of landmarks that interested them.

As these outings generated a lot of enthusiasm and interest from the children, we were able to develop more activities. For example, the children transferred the maps they had used on their journeys to and from the shops on to a large-scale map on the floor, then directed remote controlled cars along the various routes. They sequenced their photographs to recreate the different routes they had taken and talked about which route they liked to take and why. Other activities included following chalked arrows around the garden and drawing the route on paper, and using maps to find treasure. Nadia used her map to show an adult where the sandpit was and then she started to use her imagination by whispering that there was a cat in the sandpit. She then went off to draw a cat on her map.

Some of these activities were initiated by the children. For example, a group of children decided to build a representation of the local church out of blocks. They returned to it several times, to rebuild it as they thought of new things to add.

An overview of our week's activities and the areas of learning to be covered

Week commencing 26 February 2001	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Activities/Resources					
Themed activity	Walk to local church using maps made by the children KLUW5, CLL1, PSED4	Making Pancakes for Shrove Tuesday KLUW6, PSED5, CLL1	Walk to local shops using maps made by the children KLUW5, CLL1, PSED4	Investigate remote control cars with large sized maps PD4, CLL1, KLUW1	Mini treasure hunt in the sand tray CLL2, CD4, MD3
PSED activity	introducing our own objects of interest PSED, CLL, KLUW, CD	circle time - sharing news PSED, CLL, CD	sharing items collected on our walk PSED, KLUW, CD, CLL	creating an interest table showing maps and treasure PSED, CLL, KLUW, CD	exploring our treasure box and talking about our own treasure PSED, CLL, CD, KLUW
Reading/Writing	looking at a selection of maps CLL, KLUW	creating our own maps CLL, KLUW	sorting shapes MD, PD, PSED	matching shape and colour game MD, PD, PSED	matching and grid game MD, CLL, PSED
Maths	completing colour and shape puzzles MD, PSED, PD	completing number puzzles MD, PSED, PD	exploring slopes using tractors, lorries and cars KLUW, PD, PSED	exploring magnets and things they stick to PD, KLUW, PSED	looking through magnifying glasses at our treasure KLUW, CLL, PSED
Science	looking through a microscope at slides KLUW, PSED, PD	exploring slopes using tractors, lorries and cars KLUW, PD, PSED	looking through magnifying glass at items found on our walk KLUW, CLL, PSED	exploring our touch game (mapping) PD, PSED, KLUW	listening to guess the sound game KLUW, CLL, CD
ICT and computers	playing mouse control games KLUW, CD, CLL	using sand and blocks to create models PD, PSED, CD	building sand castles using buckets and spades MD, PSED, KLUW	using lorries, diggers and tractors on the building site KLUW, PSED, PD	pouring and measuring with sieves, funnels and scales MD, PSED, PD
Sand Tray	exploring the texture of wet and dry sand PD, CD, CLL	imaginary cooking with a tea set, pots and pans PD, CLL, PSED	looking at coloured water using tubes and funnels MD, PD, PSED	measuring using jugs and pouring equipment MD, KLUW, CLL	exploring items that float and sink KLUW, MD, CLL
Water Tray	blowing and chasing bubbles PD, KLUW, CD	balancing using small equipment - beanbags, balls and hoops PD, PSED	navigating an obstacle course PSED, PD	dancing to fast and slow music PD, PSED, CD	music and movement - vehicles we have seen PD, PSED, CD
Physical activity (indoors/outdoors)	constructing junk model buildings PD, KLUW, CD	handling wet and dry pasta PD, CD, KLUW	using the conveyer belt with moulded play dough objects PD, CD, CLL	creating junk model town PD, PSED, CD	creating junk model town PD, CD, PSED
Creative area	manipulating playdough with cutters and rollers PD, CLL, CD	connecting a train track for magnetic trains PD, CD, KLUW	building a garage for cars on a road map CD, KLUW, PD	discovering properties of cornflour PD, CD, CLL	mixing and blending paint PD, CD, PSED
Sensory Area	navigating cars around a road map CD, KLUW, PD	opening our own ticket office CD, PSED, CLL	having a picnic CD, CLL, PSED	aeroplanes and helicopters landing at the airport PD, CD, PSED	dolls from the dolls house going to the zoo CD, KLUW, CLL
Imaginative Play	going on a bus/train journey CD, CLL, KLUW			shopping in the supermarket CD, KLUW, CLL	booking a holiday at the travel agents CD, PSED, CLL

An example of our activity sheet

ACTIVITY

Learning to manipulate a remote control car to follow a route to the shops

Show the children how to use the controls, take turns to practice moving the car along different routes to the shops

GROUPING OF CHILDREN

3-4 children

MAIN LEARNING INTENTIONS

- * know how to operate simple equipment (KUUW)
- * show an interest in why things happen and how things work (KUUW)
- * to share and take turns (PSED)
- * to work as part of a group (PSED)

KEY VOCABULARY/QUESTIONS

- forward/backwards
- further away/nearer to
- left/right
- next to
- * Can you make the car stop?
- * Can you make the car move forward?

RESOURCES

- * Remote control car
- * Materials/boxes to customise the car
- * Large sheet of paper with route on
- * Large sheet of paper for children to draw new routes on

ADAPTING THE ACTIVITY FOR INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN

- * Children sequence two or three moves together
- * Children teach other children how to use the remote control car
- * Children draw out new routes on large sheets of paper
- * Children manipulate the remote control car to a set of verbal instructions

Children for whom this activity is particularly appropriate

Full time Ruth, Nadid, Sam, Katy

Part time Alex C (am) Luke (am) David (pm) Callum B (pm)

Example 2

The private day nursery is in an inner city area that has a high level of social deprivation. It is situated in a converted church hall with two main rooms and a quiet area that has two computers and a wide selection of books. The nursery has an easily accessible garden with separate areas for different activities; a shady grass area for outdoor activities, a track for bicycles and other toys with wheels and a safe area with climbing apparatus and slides.

The nursery has eight members of staff – seven full-time and one part-time. It is open from 8am – 6pm, 51 weeks of the year. Twenty-four children, aged between two and four, attend the nursery for a number of different sessions, ranging from two mornings/afternoons per week to full-time. There is another nursery nearby that is owned by the same company. The two nurseries have been working together for two years and have established a joint approach to planning.

Long-term planning

At first we met up every month to plan our curriculum. Having worked together for two years, we have experience of the planning process and a collection of long- and short-term plans to draw on. Now, we meet every three months to discuss, evaluate and adjust them if necessary.

We begin our planning cycle in September. At this point in the year, we discuss last year's long-term plan and evaluate how successful our themes have been in capturing the children's interests and imagination and helping them to make progress. It has taken two years of working together with parents and using our knowledge of the children to reach a stage where we are confident in our approach to long-term planning. We are always looking out for fresh ideas to motivate and engage the children as they move through the nursery. Each area of learning is given equal emphasis, and there are opportunities to revisit each aspect at least three times a year.

Our long-term plan for 2000/2001

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August
Theme	Autumn	Animals	Light	Patterns	Winter	Storytime	Health	Spring in the garden	Carnival	Summer holidays	Sport	Our homes
Special events & activities	Trip to country park	Visit to children's farm	Diwali visit to Hindu temple	Visit by artist Christmas	Parents' evening	Visit from an African story teller	Visits from a dentist and a doctor	Trip to garden centre	Fancy dress party	Picnic by the sea	Sports open day	Family barbecue
PSED	1, 3	2, 5, 6	1, 4	2, 4, 6	1, 2, 6	1, 3, 4	2, 3, 5	5, 6	3, 4, 5	1, 4	2, 3	5, 6
CLL	1, 3, 6	1, 2, 4	2, 3, 5	4, 5, 6	1, 3, 5	2, 4, 6	1, 3, 5	2, 4, 6	3, 4, 5	1, 4, 6	1, 2, 5	2, 3, 6
MD	1, 2	1, 2	2, 3	1, 2	3, 1	2, 3	1, 3	3, 1	2, 3	1, 2	3, 1	2, 3
KUW	1, 2, 4	1, 4, 5	2, 3	5, 6	2, 3, 4	2, 3, 4	5, 6, 1	1, 6	4, 5, 6	1, 3	2, 5	3, 6
PD	2, 4	1, 5	2, 3	2, 4	1, 5	2, 5	1, 3	3, 5	1, 4	3, 4	4, 5	2, 3
CD	1, 2	3, 4	2, 3	1, 4	2, 4	2, 4	1, 4	1, 2	3, 4	1, 3	3, 4	1, 2

KEY: numbers refer to the aspects of learning on page 20.

We plan to cover many other aspects of learning within the day-to-day routine of the nursery.

Short-term planning

At our weekly meeting, we develop our short-term plan for the week ahead, based on the previous week's observations and the aspects of learning we plan to promote. We meet informally each day to agree our roles and responsibilities so we know what we need to prepare for the next day. We plan to use activities more than once during the course of the week, to enable all children to have the opportunity to take part, including those who attend only for a limited number of sessions. We encourage children of all ages and stages of development to participate in the activities. The adult present will adapt the activity to challenge each individual child.

An extract from our short-term plan

Theme: Health, Week 2					
Intended learning based on stepping stones	Activity	Links with other aspects of learning	Groupings	Extension Activities	Resources
PSED Talk freely about their homes and community.	Fruit tasting activity. Tasting and talking about fruits - finding out which are familiar and which are new.	CLL1, KUW5	1-4 children	Talking about likes and dislikes, how it is alright to have different views. Talk about similarities and differences in the food we eat at home.	Selection of fruits from different countries, eg, mango, apple, banana, starfruit and kiwifruit.
PD Show awareness of healthy food to maintain healthy teeth	Talking about fruit and finding out why it is good for us.	CLL1	1-4 children	Find out which other foods are healthy.	Books on teeth, healthy foods.
KUW Show interest in the lives of people familiar to them	A local dentist to visit to explain her job and show the children the tools she uses to examine teeth.	CLL1, PSED5	Whole group	Encourage the children to recall her visit and to act out some of their own experiences of visits to the dentist in role-play.	Set up designated areas as a dentist surgery.
MD Show an interest in numbers and counting	Matching cards of differing numbers of dentists, nurses, doctors and opticians to numerals 1-5.	KUW5, CLL1	1-4 children	Matching 5 - 10.	Home made cards showing different number of dentists, nurses, doctors and opticians.
CLL Interacting with others using words or gestures to communicate	Set up role-play in the dentist surgery - waiting room where children can make appointments and the dentist room.	PSED2, PSED3, KUW5, PD3	1-4 children	Talking about our experiences of going to the dentist and discuss how we try and keep our teeth clean and healthy by brushing.	Role-play equipment: dressing up clothes, telephone, appointments book, dentists chair, reception desk.
CD Use available resources to create props to support role play	Role-play in the dentist surgery.	PSED3 KUW5, PD3	1-4 children	To make props for the dentist surgery.	As above.

Example 3

The community centre pre-school is a registered charity and is managed by an elected committee composed mainly of parents. It provides sessional care for 24 children aged between two and four, for five morning sessions a week. Ten children aged two to three attend three sessions a week and fourteen children aged three to four attend all five sessions. The pre-school serves a large multi-ethnic housing estate situated on the edge of a large town, and most of the children live on this estate.

The pre-school meets in a local community centre. It rents the main hall and has the use of a large cupboard for storage and a small outdoor play area. Four qualified staff are employed by the management committee. The staff, who are from different ethnic backgrounds, are supported by a number of parent helpers who attend most sessions, making a total of five adults per session at any one time.

Long-term planning

We meet during school holidays and half terms to plan the curriculum for the next half term. Using our knowledge and observations of the children's progress, and information from parents about the children's needs and interests, we normally plan a six week topic covering all areas of learning. We use the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage* and, in particular, the aspects of learning to plan our topics. From these we plan our day-to-day activities.

We have a child with Down's syndrome who attends for three sessions a week. We start thinking about the provision for this child when making our long-term plans, so we can include her in everything we do.

We also think about festivals and community events that we plan to participate in. We are finding that the planning process becomes easier as time goes on because we have more experience and knowledge of the children and the community to reflect on.

Short-term planning

Every Friday, we have lunch together to draw up our session plans for the week ahead. We discuss and record a range of activities, taking account of the progress the children have made in the previous week. To make writing our plans manageable, we fill in activity sheets only for the two main activities in each session. We talk about how these will be modified for individual children, although we do not write down all the details. We also discuss the other activities and routines in each session, agreeing who will be responsible for leading them and putting out resources.

At the end of each day, we make brief assessment notes and see if we need to adjust the following day's activity sheet for particular children.

To ensure that our child with Down's syndrome can participate fully in all activities, we regularly talk with her parents and discuss her development and needs for additional support. The pre-school SENCO liaises with the child's portage home teacher for practical advice on how to support her developmental needs.

We encourage parents to become involved in their children's learning by sharing with us what their child is interested in and the kind of things they do at home. For example, during key-worker group time and snack time, we can build on this information and encourage children to talk about their experiences. We ask them to contribute to their child's record by bringing in drawings or photographs.

An example of our session plan

Session Plan: Monday am, 12 October	Topic: Harvest
9.15 - Key-worker groups: talk about stories, news, objects of interest.	
9.30 - Range of activities	
10.00 - Activity 1: Making cards to celebrate the Harvest in different parts of the world. (JM)	
10.45 - Snack time.	
11.00 - Activity 2: Preparing food for Harvest party (MF)	
11.45 - Whole group: Harvest story and songs.	

Initials refer to the adult responsible for the activity.

Examples of our activity sheet

Activity: 1- Making Harvest cards (JM, SH)

Using a variety of materials for close observation, drawing and collage, including fruits and vegetables from around the world.

Learning intentions:

CD - 'expressing own ideas using a range of materials'

PSE - 'working in a group, taking turns and sharing fairly'

CLL - 'ascribe meaning to marks' -use writing for a variety of purposes and view different scripts

Extension activity:

CLL - 'use a pencil, holding it effectively' (Jack, Sukvinder, Rebecca, Melina)

Resources:

* selection of card, coloured paper, collage materials, selection of fruit and vegetables from different countries all around the world, coloured pencils, scissors, glue, fruit

Involving parents:

* an example of writing in Punjabi from Sukvinder's Mum.

Activity: 2 - Preparing food for Harvest party (MF, JH)

Talking about party food, children can choose to make simple vegetable samosas, fruit kebabs or Sukkot coconut pyramids

Learning intentions:

CLL - 'use talk to organise and sequence events'

CD - 'responding to what they see, hear, smell, touch, feel'

PSE - 'strong sense of self as member of different communities'

PD - 'use simple tools/practice safety measures'

Extension activity:

CLL - Extend vocabulary (Amandip, Emma, Pietro).

Resources:

ingredients, utensils, scales. Check kitchen available to cook samosas.

Involving parents:

Encourage parents to contribute ideas/food and join us for party.

Example 4

An accredited childminder works in her home caring for three children, aged three and four, for up to 35 hours per week. Her home is in the middle of a town and has a medium sized garden with a lawn and steps leading to an area for growing fruit and vegetables.

As an accredited childminder and part of an approved network, she is visited every eight weeks by her coordinator who helps her to plan learning opportunities for the children, to enable them to progress towards the early learning goals. She keeps a notebook of dated photos, observations and significant pieces of dialogue that she has had with the children. These are used to inform her planning and are also shared with the parents/carers during informal discussions on the children's progress.

I have only recently started writing plans for the children in my care. I try to build on the children's interests to plan a variety of activities. For example, I took the children to explore the vegetable patch and pointed out the different types of fruit and vegetables that were growing in the garden. The children were intrigued by the gooseberries as they thought they had a funny name. They did not know that they could eat them.

How an observation influenced my planning

Dan pointed to the gooseberries and said, 'What's that? They prick me!' I explained that gooseberries are fruit and that I grew them in my garden every year, because I like to cook them and eat them with custard. I showed the children the rough leaves and the prickly branches, telling them that unlike most fruit they were better cooked and sweetened before eaten.

The garden had obviously stimulated the children's interest so I decided to plan a week's activities around plants and, in particular, gooseberries.

THEME: Fruit		Date: 3-7 July 2000	
Personal, social & emotional development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * encourage children to listen to others' questions & take turns * choose own utensils * safety reminders: prickly branches, use of knives, hygiene 		Knowledge & understanding of the world <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * how gooseberries grow, conditions of growth, sun, soil, rain * use magnifying glass to look at the inside and outside of gooseberries * Allow to see, feel, smell, taste gooseberries 	
Communication, language & literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * listen to explanations * make list of fruit growing in the garden * vocabulary: parts of plants: root, branch, stem, leaf, flower, fruit, seed. * non-fiction books on growing and eating fruit 		Physical development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * keep to the narrow path around the garden/ climb steps * fine motor skills: use of knives/magnifying glass 	
Mathematical development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * compare size of gooseberries and count them * order sizes * vocabulary: bigger than, more than, less than, how many 		Creative development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * colours of leaves and ripening berries * textures: smooth, rough, prickly * paint pictures of the garden * drawings of gooseberries 	
NOTES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Only allow children to feel, smell and taste gooseberries under supervision * Katy explained to Jess that we have to be careful with knives because they can cut you * Dan brought a book on fruit and vegetables from home that had a picture of gooseberries in it - could also be useful for learning about vegetables/seasons * Next time we go shopping, look at the different fruits in the shop and discuss where they come from * Use photos to introduce ideas and encourage discussion 			

Having drawn up the plan for the week, I fill in an activity sheet that I designed myself. I stick this into the children's notebooks, adding photographs and comments during the week. I base intended learning for each activity on the stepping stones.

An example of my activity sheet

Date: 3 July 2000		Names: Dean & Jess	
Activity: Looking at gooseberries and kiwi fruit		Intended learning: * show curiosity, observe and manipulate objects * describe simple features * examine living things to find out more about them * show an interest in what you see, hear, smell, touch and feel	
Main area of learning: KUW			
Aspects/areas of learning: KUW1, CD1			
Observation: Don used the magnifying glass to look at the tiny hairs on the gooseberry, fascinated by the magnifying glass he went to look around the room for other tiny objects he could look at. Jess didn't want to taste the gooseberry but said she liked the kiwi fruit, showing likes and dislikes. We had a lively discussion about fruit she likes to eat.			
Future action: Close observations of natural and manmade objects. Encourage children to use new vocabulary - skin, pip, seed, fruit, thorn, branch.			

Example 5

The First School is located in a small seaside town. One of the reception classes is made up of children who are four, born between January and August, 18 in total. The newly qualified teacher has a full-time classroom assistant and a school governor to help for two sessions a week. Many of the children have special educational needs relating to speech and language. The classroom opens on to an outdoor space with some hard surface and a large grass area for the sole use of the reception class. There is a sandpit and a shed to store outdoor equipment. The class also has use of the school hall for two periods a week. All the children in this class attend part-time in the autumn term. The older children become full-time in the spring term and all the children attend full-time in the summer term.

Long-term planning

I am in my first year of teaching. At the beginning of the year, my mentor helped me to draw up a long-term plan made up of themes lasting for approximately three weeks each. To do this, I used the foundation stage guidance and based my planning on the six areas of learning and the school's educational philosophy for the foundation stage. I then checked the school subject policies and schemes of work to make sure that my long-term plan linked with the long-term plan for year 1. In addition, I used the list of long-established events in which the school is involved and the places of interest that the children will visit as a starting point for my own long-term plan. I know that I will need to adapt this plan as unforeseen opportunities arise and I get to know the children over the three terms.

AUTUMN TERM 2000				
Areas of learning	Themes linked to the areas of learning			
	ALL ABOUT ME home visits	FOOD/HARVEST Harvest Festival	TRADITIONAL RHYMES	CELEBRATIONS Divali, Christmas
Personal, social and emotional development	me and my family	sharing, helping	discuss consequences	helping and sharing
Communication, language and literacy	my name/other names	using reference books	listen, say, recognise familiar phrases & words	writing invitations
Mathematical development	maths in my home	measures in cooking	counting, order in rhymes	maths in festivals
Knowledge and understanding of the world	finding out about us	investigate foods	'places' in rhymes	making decorations
Physical development	what my body can do	food for health	acting/role play rhymes	community games
Creative development	portraits, family songs	food patterns and prints	draw, model, sew	music for parties

SPRING TERM 2001				
Areas of learning	Themes linked to the areas of learning			
	CLOTHES	LOCAL SHOPS visit local shops	TRADITIONAL STORIES	LIFE CYCLES incubate eggs
Personal, social and emotional development	beautiful things	confidence in visiting	explore attitudes	caring for animals
Communication, language and literacy	descriptive language	vocabulary of shopping	re-tell, re-create	make life cycle
Mathematical development	positional language	measures in shops	number problems arising	shape, size, growth
Knowledge and understanding of the world	explore materials	jobs in shops	places stories come from	change in animals/foods
Physical development	travel in different ways	role play shops, dressing up	move like characters	small and big movement
Creative development	draw, collage clothes	models, painting	represent	draw, paint, model

SUMMER TERM 2001				
Areas of learning	Themes linked to the areas of learning			
	MAKING A GARDEN visit garden centre	MAKING A MUSEUM visit local museum	THE BEACH visits to beach	HOLIDAYS AND JOURNEYS
Personal, social and emotional development	caring for plants	appreciate old things	keeping safe	safe behaviour
Communication, language and literacy	use reference books	describe and label	use familiar words	relevant story books
Mathematical development	growth charts	explore collected clocks	maths in sand/water	making maps
Knowledge and understanding of the world	the garden centre	then and now	tides and effects	locating places on the globe
Physical development	effects of exertion	outdoor games	games/swimming	making a route in the garden
Creative development	sew, model, represent	observational drawing	sand, water and other natural materials	posters, role play

Short-term planning

From the three-weekly themes I make weekly plans. Each weekly plan covers the six areas of learning and shows what I intend the children to learn – the concepts/skills and vocabulary based on the stepping stones and early learning goals, the range of indoor and outdoor activities and opportunities to assess children. Future planning will be based on these assessments. My plans are informed by the first section of the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage* which makes me think about how I will work with parents, the range of abilities and diversity of experiences of the children, and the way children learn through their play. I use the stepping stones to identify clear learning intentions and the teaching frameworks for literacy and mathematics. I plan a range of activities both indoors and outdoors and identify opportunities for informal assessments of the children that will help me plan the next steps in their learning.

I also write a daily plan which outlines my daily routines, the focus for 'whole class' and group activities and the range of self-select play activities available indoors and outdoors.

I have made a series of pictures to show these activities. Each day I fix the pictures of particular activities to a magnet board so that the children can see what they will be doing that day. At the first 'whole class' time, after self-registration and self-select play, we choose the 'special person' who 'reads' the programme for the day. By sharing my plans with the children they know what to expect and are able to 'read' them for themselves. My daily plan is based on the previous day's observations of how children have responded to activities. This enables me to promote learning and teaching through the children's interests.

As most of the children attend part-time for their first two terms, I make sure that during their time in school the six areas of learning are given equal emphasis in my planning. I include elements of literacy and numeracy, based on the teaching frameworks, every day. I also make sure that other activities promote CLL and MD. Towards the end of the summer term, I introduce a daily literacy hour and mathematics lesson.

I have found that the process of planning, observing children, talking with colleagues and reflecting on learning and teaching have been vital in helping my professional development. It has also given me a better understanding of how the foundation stage curriculum links with the national curriculum for year 1.

An example of our short-term plan

THEME: 'All About Me'

Date: September 10 - 14

	What do we want the children to learn?		How will we enable this learning to take place?	How will we know who has learned what?	What next?
	Learning intentions based on stepping stones/early learning goals	Vocabulary			
Personal, social & emotional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate from family with support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greetings in various languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-Registration Selecting activities Changing books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note which children are finding it hard to separate 	<p>[This column will be filled as assessments are made.]</p>
Communication, language & literacy <i>Objectives from the Literacy framework</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk about home/community. Listen to others Enjoy rhymes Show awareness of rhymes Use talk to connect ideas Listen with enjoyment and respond to stories, songs and other music, rhymes and poems and make up their own stories, rhymes and poems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Names of body parts Names for family Alliteration in rhymes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circle time focus Make a class book about the children Sing and recite favourite nursery rhymes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect examples of stages in drawing and mark-making Record significant comments made by the children 	
Mathematical development <i>Objectives from the mathematics framework</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers connected with home Numbers in games Show an interest in numbers and counting Use number names Begin to understand and use ordinal numbers in different context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counting numbers more/less 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop - making house fronts Counting games in garden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List children who know and can use numbers 1-5 List children who are aware of larger numbers 	
Knowledge & understanding of the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 'Now' and 'me' in the past Show interest in the lives of people familiar to them Begin to understand past and present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family name Home Work Body parts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circle time focus Collect baby photos Take photos Class book (graphic) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checklist of the names of the parts of the body 	
Physical development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use space safely Show increasing control in using equipment Use tools appropriately Understand equipment and tools have to be used safely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climb, jump, scramble, swing Cut, stick 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Garden - climbing equipment etc Workshop and graphics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record children who use/do not use equipment Note on their ability to cut with scissors Record right and left handed children 	
Creative development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use bodies to investigate colours & textures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feel hard, soft, rough, smooth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creative area Finger painting Materials for collages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep selection of items for 'me' booklet 	

Areas and aspects of learning for the foundation stage

There are six areas of learning in the curriculum for the foundation stage. Each area includes several aspects of learning. These are listed below and numbered for ease of reference

Personal, social and emotional development (PSED)

- 1 Dispositions and attitudes
- 2 Self-confidence and self-esteem
- 3 Making relationships
- 4 Behaviour and self-control
- 5 Self-care
- 6 Sense of community

Communication, language and literacy (CLL)

- 1 Language for communication
- 2 Language for thinking
- 3 Linking sounds and letters
- 4 Reading
- 5 Writing
- 6 Handwriting

Mathematical development (MD)

- 1 Numbers as labels and for counting
- 2 Calculating
- 3 Shape, space and measures

Knowledge and understanding of the world (KUW)

- 1 Exploration and investigation
- 2 Designing and making skills
- 3 Information and communication technology
- 4 A sense of time
- 5 A sense of place
- 6 Cultures and beliefs

Physical development (PD)

- 1 Movement
- 2 A sense of space
- 3 Health and bodily awareness
- 4 Using equipment
- 5 Using tools and materials

Creative development (CD)

- 1 Exploring media and materials
- 2 Music
- 3 Imagination
- 4 Responding to experiences and expressing and communicating ideas

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Related documents	<i>Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage</i>

Executive summary

Overview

This booklet contains practical guidance on planning a curriculum for the foundation stage. It gives examples of curriculum plans from a range of settings, together with descriptions of how the practitioners approached the curriculum planning process.

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Fax 01787 312950

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