



Little Ladybird Creche & Montessori

Policy #6

PROGRAMME/CURRICULUM PLANNING

Introduction

This purpose of this policy is to ensure that each child's holistic development and learning is fully encouraged and supported through the implementation of a quality programme/curriculum informed by the principles of Aister, Síolta & Montessori.

Definitions/Glossary

Curriculum – The term curriculum is used to describe all the activities and experiences – planned and unplanned; formal and informal; overt and hidden – from which a child learns. It involves a consideration of **how** a child learns, **when** a child learns and **where** and **why** a child learns.

Holistic development – Taking into account all aspects of a child's development – physical, social, emotional and cognitive (thinking, reasoning).

Teachable Moment – This is a time at which a child is likely to be particularly disposed to learn something or particularly responsive to being taught or made aware of something.

Observation – This refers to the staff members watching how children play and learn; what their needs, wants, interests, perceptions and abilities are; learning from this and using the information gathered to plan for each child and each group. The information is also used to monitor each child's development.



Policy Statement

Our programme/curriculum planning is based on the following principles:

- Quality care is educational and quality education is caring.
- Play is central to the well-being, development and learning of the young child.
- Learning is holistic and cannot be compartmentalised: trust, motivation, interest, enjoyment and physical and social skills are as important as purely cognitive/academic gains.
- The child's needs, rights, individuality and strengths are central.
- All children are entitled to equality of access and to opportunities to enjoy and to learn within a stimulating and safe care environment.

We plan the curriculum with attention to and consideration of:

- Children's needs including special needs.
- Children's interests.
- Children's learning styles.
- The age and developmental stage of each individual and group.
- Varied experiences and activities for the individual and group.
- Social, emotional, cognitive and physical skills.
- Equality and diversity.
- Documented observations and assessments.

Developmentally appropriate activities will be offered which support and promote children's:

- Social and emotional development.
- Positive attitudes and values.
- Positive self-concept.
- Positive family, social and peer relationships.
- Literacy and language development.
- Mathematical development.
- Physical development.
- Positive health, safety and nutrition practices.
- Creative expression and appreciation of the arts, culture, nature and the environment.
- Understanding of right and wrong.
- Thinking, reasoning, questioning and experimentation.
- Respect for ethnic, cultural and physical diversity.
- Making choices and using their initiative.
- Spiritual and moral well-being.
- Knowledge and understanding of their world.

We aim for an equal balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Programme/curriculum plans are informed by observations and regular evaluations and a record is kept of the planning process and of decisions made.

Skilled and careful observation is the key to helping children to learn. Observations must be carried out with proper respect for the children, for their parents/carers and for the staff. We respect children's and families' ethnicity, their cultural heritage, their religions



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and the languages they speak. We respect all children whatever their gifts, abilities or special learning needs. When we observe children we attend to the whole of their development not just to certain aspects. Children's learning to respect one another is as important as their learning to count.

Staff members meet children's needs through sensitive and appropriate interactions that promote their self esteem (see Interactions Policy).

The principle that play is central to the well-being, development and learning of the young child underpins all of our programme/curriculum planning. Children need and want to take risks when they play. We aim to respond to these needs and wishes by offering children stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities.

We consider it essential:

- To involve parents/carers in our curriculum planning.
- For our staff to have sufficient non-contact time to engage in quality programme/curriculum planning.

Procedures & Practices

Programming includes opportunities for children to:

- Play – Toys and play equipment that are safe are stored within easy reach of children. The environment, space and layout facilitate different types of play and activity:
 - Messy play (water, sand, clay, paint, etc.)
 - Pretend play (clothes for dressing up, variety of materials for role-play and imitation)
 - Construction play (blocks of different textures, Lego, straws, etc.)
 - Social play involving interaction with other children
 - Activities using fine finger movements (jigsaws, threading, drawing)
 - Activities involving music and drama
 - Activities involving whole body movement (ball games, running, dance, etc.)
 - Reading
 - Outdoor play
- Develop academic skills (maths games, time for reading individually and in groups *(and if your service has a school age service include homework support, tutoring)*).
- Enhance creativity and express themselves through art.
- Explore and develop interests and talents.
- Learn to work as part of a team.
- Experience the satisfaction of completing both long- and short-term hands-on meaningful projects with tangible results.
- Think about and develop positive character traits (such as honesty, kindness, and courage) and social-emotional competence through projects, discussions, stories, and games.
- Develop leadership skills.
- Relax and rest and interact socially with each other.
- Learn about healthy eating and get the nutrition they need by preparing and eating snacks.



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Activities will be well planned with adequate materials available. Staff members must be prepared to lead activities. All staff members have specific responsibilities for planning, preparing materials and leading activities.

The children will be involved in regular meetings to help plan activities, discuss programme rules and talk about current issues in the programme.

Staff members must be friendly, approachable and respectful of all children (see Interactions Policy).

All staff members are responsible for working cooperatively to ensure a safe, secure, comfortable and stimulating environment.

The Key Person will co-ordinate information about the individual child's needs and progress – this includes, in particular, information to and from the child's parents/carers (see Key Person, Admissions, Records and Record Keeping and Transitions Policies).

The Key Person will coordinate the planning and record keeping for individual children.

The daily schedule and the activity plans include a balance of:

- Indoor/outdoor
- Quiet/active
- Individual/small group/large group
- Gross motor/fine motor activities
- Child initiated/adult initiated activities
- Time to respond to 'teachable moments'

There will be appropriate materials and equipment for each developmental stage.

The schedule will allow transitions without children having to stand in line or to sit for long periods (see Transitions Policy).

Areas are to be arranged for children to do things for themselves with a minimum of adult intervention.

Shelves and interest areas will be labelled appropriately using pictures, symbols and words. These will be placed in the children's line of vision.

Children will be encouraged to try new activities in a safe and supportive environment.

Children will be given reassurance, encouragement and appropriate praise.

The following are the principles of the daily routine:

- Children engage in enjoyable active learning experiences throughout the session.
- Children plan their activities, carry them out and are encouraged and supported to talk about them.
- Children choose, use and return materials at 'tidy up time'.
- Children solve problems and resolve conflicts.
- Children play alone and together in small and large groups.
- Adults use systematic observation to support and encourage children's development and learning.
- Children and adults play, eat, talk and learn together as partners (see Interactions Policy).



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- Routine opportunities are provided for children to rest and children are encouraged to rest. If they wake early or don't sleep, staff will play with them quietly until the others wake.

Use of observation in Programme/Curriculum Planning

Objective assessments are used to:

- Review provision as a whole.
- Provide continuity of care.
- Identify strengths, weaknesses, gaps and inconsistencies in the programme/curriculum.
- Identify significant moments of learning for individual children and build on these.
- Share with parents/carers how their children are developing.
- Plan together as a team and decide what areas of learning experiences should be focused on.
- Plan and review provision for individual children.
- See changes in a child and how particular interests develop.
- Reduce assumptions and inferences.
- Increase our knowledge and understanding of children and their learning.
- Identify our own learning needs.
- Give a stronger sense of purpose in planning and development.

Communication Plan

All parents/carers are to be informed of the policy and procedures regarding Programme/Curriculum Planning on registration. Staff members will check with parents/carers that they have read and understood the policy and provide any assistance needed.

A summary of this policy will be included in the Parents'/Carers' Handbook. This policy will also be included in staff induction and annual staff training.

A copy of all policies will be available during all hours of operation to staff members and parents/carers in the Policy Folder located in main office

Parents/Carers may receive a copy of the policy at any time upon request.

Parents/Carers and staff will receive written notification of any updates.

Review Date

Date:

Person Responsible:

Related Policies, Procedures and Forms

- Equality and Non-Discrimination Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Food & Nutrition Policy
- Transitions Policy
- Key Person Policy



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- Interactions Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Records and Record Keeping Policy
- *List titles of any forms that your service uses for Observations here*

References/Supporting Documents/Related Legislation

- **Síolta** – The National Framework for Quality in Early Childhood Education, Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education, 2006
- **Aistear** – National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2009
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Child Care Act, 1991
- Child Care (Pre-school Services) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006
- **Supporting Quality: guidelines for professional practice in early childhood services (3rd edition)** by Geraldine French. Barnardos' Training and Resource Service, 2008
- **Framework for Early Learning** National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) www.ncca.ie
- **Managing Risk in Play Provision: A position statement** Play Safety Forum, 2002
- **Guiding Childcare Practitioners through Observations, Planning and Reflection** NCNA, 2007

Contact Information

Name:

Policy Created

Date:

Signatures

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Appendix A

Type of documentation	How it can be collected
<i>I. Individual Portfolios</i>	<p>Items collected at specific intervals, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing samples • Record of problem-solving using numbers • Unique items that indicate: Learning style Interests Personal talents
<i>II. Products (Individual or Group)</i>	<p>Products of children's use of language such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spoken language as collected in anecdotal notes or audio/video tapes • Written language as collected in signs, captions on photos or drawings, letters, labels, child-made books <p>Constructions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play environments, Lego or block structures, drawings or paintings <p>Records of data collection Musical expressions such as made-up songs or dances</p>
<i>III. Observations</i>	<p>Observations made by staff and recorded as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific knowledge or skills on a developmental checklist or curriculum guide • Anecdotal notes on events indicating knowledge, skills or dispositions • Behavioural indicators of dispositions, e.g. Expression of interest Time spent on activities Self-selection of activities
<i>IV. Child Self-Reflections</i>	<p>Children's statements of understanding their own:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity preferences • Enjoyment or interest in content areas • Pride in accomplishment • Acceptance of need for persistence and hard work
<i>V. Narratives of Learning Experiences</i>	<p>Stories of learning experiences of individuals, small groups or the whole group in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays on projects • Books or explanations for parents/carers • Books or stories for children