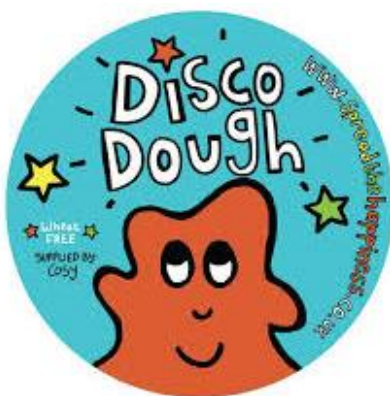


# OUR EARLY LITERACY FRAMEWORK

What we do and why



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Loughborough Campus Day Nursery

## *EARLY LITERACY (Reading and writing)*

We believe at the Campus Nursery that one of the crucial roles of the Early Years practitioner in supporting young writers within a literacy-rich environment.

We create a literacy-rich environment both indoors and out which covers the following elements:

- environmental print: letters and words
- opportunities for children to read independently and for adults to read with children
- books and literacy areas
- early writing
- resources for phonics teaching.

The practitioner's role is to foster boys' and girls' willingness to write. However, even if a high-quality literate environment has been created, which reflects children's interests and ignites their desire to write, this in itself will not be enough to support all children in becoming enthusiastic and confident writers.

We have developed a programme in our continuous provision and focused adult lead activities with the intention of teaching children the important basic elements. Early literacy is embedded in our practice and is seamlessly threaded through everything we do. It is not just delivered in one way for example through letters and sounds sessions.

### **Language and literacy are the cornerstone to learning**

Our practitioners understand that good communication skills are critical to children's success and they ensure effective communication whilst interacting with children, during free play, focused and adult led activities, fostering communication skills by modelling, listening and speaking to children. And through fun interactions develop sustained shared thinking.

We feel that the golden threads to early literacy are having a consistent, systematic, multi-sensory and high expectations approach.

Our effective planning, focused teaching and key group sessions ensure that children are regularly assessed for learning and progression.

The robust strategies/ systems we use as building blocks to nurture Early Literacy skills and development are:

- ❖ **Letters and sounds** – a phonics resource. We focus and deliver activities from Phase One. This phase falls largely within the Communication, Language and Literacy area of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- ❖ **Fun Time** – our structured small social communication sessions. These sessions support children to develop speaking and listening skills and developing social skills, such as turn taking and waiting. (These sessions are delivered with our Two to Three-year olds as one of the first steps to literacy)
- ❖ **Disco Dough** – this involves exercises for fingers to music using dough. It improves both fine motor control and gross motor skills. It involves exercises for the fingers to improve fine motor control and gross motor skills.
- ❖ **Squiggly whilst you Wiggle (Early Writing)** – A pedagogy for giving children the motor, observation and imaginative skills to read and write.
- ❖ **Early Movers (Early writing)** – activities that involve movement to develop a child's agility, balance and co-ordination.

## *Letters and Sounds*

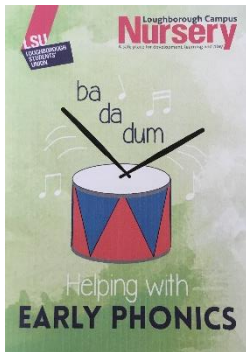
Letters and Sounds is a phonics resource published by the Department for Education and Skills in 2007. It aims to build children's speaking and listening skills in their own right as well as to prepare children for learning to read by developing their phonic knowledge and skills. It sets out a detailed and systematic programme for teaching phonic skills for children starting by the age of five, with the aim of them becoming fluent readers by age seven. We focus on the activities in Phase 1 (see table below).

### PHASE 1

Aspects	Strands
1. General sound discrimination: Environmental sounds	1. Tuning into sounds (Auditory discrimination)
2. General sound discrimination: Body percussion	2. Listening and remembering sounds (Auditory memory and sequencing)
3. Rhythm and rhyme	3. Talking about sounds (developing vocabulary and language comprehension)
4. Alliteration	
5. Voice sounds	
6. Oral blending and segmenting	

**Phonics** is the understanding that there is a predictable relationship between graphemes (written language) and phonemes (representing the sounds of language). In order to benefit from phonics teaching, children need phonemic awareness.

**Put simply, this grapheme 's' makes the sound sssssssssssss.**



To support a child's phonic development skills at home through simple games and activities parents are given an early phonics leaflet when their child starts in our Investigator room (3-5-year olds). Our practitioners' observations also make suggestions for home activities.

### **Baseline child's phonic ability**

During the first term, after a child has turned three, a child's key person will deliver activities that support children to develop their phonic awareness in:

1. General sound discrimination: Environmental sounds
2. General sound discrimination: Instrumental sounds
3. General sound discrimination: Body percussion
5. Voice Sounds

A child's progress will be recorded on a key children phonic baseline monitoring chart. These monitoring forms are then analysed at the end of each term, by the literacy lead practitioner. The data is used to identify those children who may need further practice before moving on, as well as determining those children who can make rapid progress. The children that are identified as ready to move onto the next stage of letters and sounds will then attend separate letters and sounds sessions with those children working at the same stage once a week with a literacy lead practitioner. They will be introducing activities that support the development of the later stages of Phase one.

4. Alliteration

6. Oral blending and segmenting

**Phonemic awareness** is the understanding that the sounds of spoken language work together to make words.

**Oral blending and segmenting** the sounds in words are an integral part of the later stages of Phase One. Whilst recognising alliteration (words that begin with the same sound) is important as children develop their ability to tune into speech sounds, the

main objective should be segmenting words into their component sounds, and especially blending the component sounds all through a word.

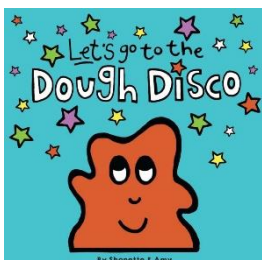


The literacy lead practitioner informs parents of their child's progress and then gives them a leaflet on activities that they could do with child at home to support their child's phonological development.



### *Squiggly whilst you Wiggle (Early Writing)*

To be able to write a child's brain needs to have control over their fine muscles but they also need to know where their arms are and then hands and the most important part the body for writing? The fingers! Co-ordination is the key skill in assisting a child to become a successful writer. We help a baby to learn where it's arms, hands and fingers are through simple rhymes that involve using these body parts. This programme of activities supports and encourages children to become aware of their body and movements. Our practitioners deliver this programme of activities in fun and exciting way, using scarves to encourage children to make different gross motor movement actions with both arms in different directions such as up and down, side to side, in and out, reverse and turn. By participating in this programme of activities, children become more co-ordinated, balanced and excited to literacy.



### *Dough Disco*

This involves moulding **dough** in time to music and performing different actions such as rolling it into a ball, flattening it, putting each individual finger into the **dough**, rolling it into a sausage and squeezing it. It helps to develop our gross motor skills as we are using the dough as a weight, so lots of lifting with straight arms, and round and round with extended arms. Fine motor control is developed through pinching, poking, rolling and squeezing. It takes six human years for the brain to control the body and the last thing the brain learns to control is the fingers. By doing these regularly young children's brains connect to their fingers more quickly. We use the normal names we call our fingers in the song 'Tommy Thumb'. Tommy



Thumb, Peter Pointer, Toby Tall, Ruby Ring and Baby Small. One of the key things to ensure during disco dough sessions is that children use both hands and both sets of fingers. It is all about the simplicity of the exercise. By doing this exercise, it is so simple that children's brains will start to connect to their fingers, just by getting the fingers moving. Initially the children start by squeezing the dough and gradually move onto more advanced moves such as sausaging and snipping.

## *Early Movers*

In order to become physically literate, young children need to learn basic movement patterns or the fundamental movement skills before they can become physically literate. There are three fundamental movement skills: Agility, Balance and Coordination.

We have been working extensively, in partnership, with Loughborough University School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences (SSEHS) to support them in developing a web site for parents/ carers and nursery practitioner's on how to support children to develop gross and fine motor skills. The web site will feature activities, games and experiences that will foster the development of crucial skills, which are necessary for children to write.

**Developing gross motor skills** - Children learn to control their bodies from the centre outwards, and from the top downwards. From birth babies build up their neck muscles so they can hold up their heads, then the trunk muscles so they can sit, and finally the whole-body control and balance required for walking. Arm and finger control follow the same pattern: At first, a child will be able to manipulate the arm from the shoulder joint; gradually he understands how to control the hands; finally, he learns how to make the fine finger movements needed to write. To develop gross motor skills, we plan daily physical activities through our continuous provision (learning environment) and our adult focused activities, for example using balance beams, crawling through tunnels, digging in the sand, carrying and pouring jugs of water, participating in our creative journey, music and movement sessions in the LSU dance studio, to name but a few.

**Developing fine motor skills** - children need to develop their fine motor control to hold and manipulate a writing tool. They need to develop strength in their wrists and hands, and a high level of finger control. Some of the key actions required are: grip strength (make a fist to feel this action); pinch strength (hold an invisible pencil tight to feel this action); and eye to hand coordination (also known as 'visual motor integration'). In our curriculum, we ensure that children have many opportunities to be physically active and develop these skills through daily routines, fun games, activities and experiences. For example, at snack time, by having the opportunity cut

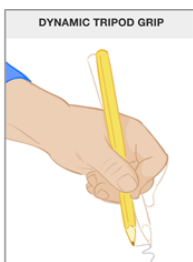
up foods, spread butter, squeeze and use cloths to wipe up spillages they are building their hand and finger strength.

Children also need to learn how to 'cross the mid line', to be able to control their movements across the centre point of the body. This will let them write without changing the pen over to their other hand midway through a line.

**Bilateral integration – crossing the mid line** - children will find it easier to control their movements on their dominant side, typically, the right if they are right handed. In order to be able to write, children need to be able to coordinate both sides of their bodies together, with one hand holding the paper, while the other manipulates the pen. This ability to coordinate the two sides of your body, while doing different things with each side, is known as 'bilateral integration'. It allows children to perform activities such as tying knots or kicking a football. Children also need to learn how to 'cross the mid line'. This is the ability to be able to control their movements across the centre point of the body. This will let them write without changing the pen over to their other hand midway through a line. Playing games such as 'Simon says' helps to develop these skills or asking a child to draw large circles in the air with both hands at the same time.

**Developing dexterity** - having a high level of dexterity is an important skill to enable children to write. We encourage children to develop their self-care skills throughout the daily routines, adult focused activities, learning environment (using tweezers and scissors, playing with peg boards, building towers) simple independent tasks such as doing up buttons and pulling on clothes.

**Holding a writing tool** – we ensure that children have lots of opportunity to make marks, draw and paint from our baby room. Our skilled practitioners understand the stages of pencil grip and support and encourage the development of this. The ultimate aim is for a child to learn how to use a 'dynamic tripod grasp', where the



pen or pencil is held between the thumb and the index and middle fingers, which should be from about three or four years old. The child makes a tripod shape with the thumb and fingers, with the pencil resting on the soft bit between the thumb and forefinger. We ensure that children learn how to control their individual fingers by singing lots of rhymes where the fingers hide or disappear, such as Tommy Thumb, 5 Little Monkeys, five Speckled Frogs.

**Proper posture** - Children also need a substantial amount of trunk strength in order to write, because they must support their bodies, neck and head while staying relaxed. We ensure that we help to develop children's core body strength by using plenty of gross motor activities. We ensure that they opportunities to sit on the carpet for gathering time, stories and singing, sit down for mealtimes, but sometimes

take the chairs away to encourage them to stand and play at sensory activities such as playdough.

**Assessments** – a child's key person retracts a child's progress once a term. This will help them to determine a child's progress during the term and highlights which areas a child is excelling in and where they may need additional support. This information enables our practitioners to decide on what next steps to set to foster a child's continued development.

### **Our early literacy framework References:**

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Leicester City Council. Fun Time Approach

Loughborough University School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences: Movers Practitioners training: Helping under fives live active and healthy lives.