

Physical Development at York Road Nursery

Being physical is vital for healthy bone development and growth and, by their very nature, young children are extremely active. The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum emphasises the importance of supporting and enhancing the physical development of all children. It is our intention at York Road Nursery School to offer a wide and varied range of physical experiences in order to support children in developing both their fine motor and gross motor skills, differentiated to support the needs of each child. The children at nursery are encouraged to be active, independent learners whereby they are taught the importance of keeping healthy through physical exercise and discussions around the importance of having a healthy diet, and they are encouraged to be independent in managing their own hygiene and personal needs. There are links to physical development in every aspect of the EYFS and all of these aspects are implemented in the following ways.

Indoor Environment

The indoor environment offers many opportunities for children to develop their fine motor skills which in turn help to strengthen hand and finger muscles and helps to develop good hand/eye coordination. Our messy play area allows children to enjoy all our malleable materials on offer. 'Dough Disco' is a great activity where children squeeze, prod, pat, smack etc, their own little piece of playdough to music, helping to develop those little fingers in preparation for writing! Children need to be able to experiment with making marks from an early age. Our children are able to access 'mark-making' tools such as pencils, charcoals, chalk, paint using brushes, rollers and sponges, to create different effects. The children are given opportunities to be creative with junk modelling, using their skills to cut with scissors, and to problem solve by using materials such as tape, glue and string to join boxes together.

Outdoors Environment

Our beautiful, spacious, outdoor garden is fantastic in encouraging children to be active in a number of ways; children can run, jump, spin, roll, ride, climb, and balance. Our outdoor equipment includes climbing and balancing apparatus to support children's core strength; tricycles, scooters and pull-along trolleys to encourage coordination; a large selection of bats

and balls, etc to support and encourage hand/eye coordination and a 'mud kitchen' where children can dig for worms or make big holes, and use their imagination in cooking a delicious mud pie, stew, soup or cake! Water is readily available for the children to practise their mixing, pouring and stirring skills. The 'mud kitchen' not only helps support children's physical skills but also supports their language and communication along with their personal and emotional development, encouraging socialisation with others, sharing, taking turns, etc, as together they make up their concoctions and stories.

At York Road Nursery, a number of lunchtime clubs such as a sewing club, dance, yoga, Pilates, football and sensory trails for those children who need a little extra support are available, which again support children's physical skills. And we are extremely lucky to be able to provide a Forest School experience visiting a local woodland on a school site weekly. In the woods, the children can take risks, climb, explore and use all their senses as they experience the awe and wonder of nature all around them.

Physical development at York Road Nursery supports children in developing a positive sense of themselves and others and gives them confidence in their own abilities. Not only do these well-resourced areas in the nursery, both indoor and outside, enable children to learn, develop and challenge children both physically and emotionally, they also promote an "I can do it!" attitude, supported by caring, motivated, and highly skilled early years practitioners.

Debbie McAllister, Physical Development Lead

Part of the York Road Team.