



**FALKIRK COUNCIL**  
**Education Services**

**Curriculum Policy 0-8**

**August 1999**

# Curriculum Policy 0-8

## 1. Rationale

- 1.1 Falkirk Council broadly endorses the Curriculum Framework for Children in their Pre-School Year, the Curriculum Framework for Children 3 to 5 and the 5-14 National Guidelines whilst also taking cognisance of documentation from Scottish Pre-School Play Association, Scottish Independent Nurseries Association and Scottish Childminding Association.
- 1.2 The early years of children's learning and development are recognised as being extremely important both in their own right and also because of the lasting effects these early experiences can have on later fulfillment of potential and on the children's attitudes to themselves, others and to learning.
- 1.3 Falkirk Council recognises the importance of home and community learning and the role it plays in early childhood learning and development.
- 1.4 Early Education in Falkirk Council should be delivered to support:-
  - the rights of children, parents and families
  - prior learning and previous experiences
  - developmentally appropriate practice
  - partnerships with parents
  - partnerships within and between the diverse range of early education settings in the area.
- 1.5 Despite diversity in the range of early education settings available within Falkirk Council, there are many identifiable similarities making it possible to establish a common foundation on which is built, and from which is delivered, a seamless early years service with shared philosophies, aims and values.
- 1.6 Falkirk Council's Curriculum Policy 0-8 will provide a framework for establishing a consistent approach to Early Education within which the monitoring and evaluation of the provision should ensure quality experiences for all young children and the adults involved in the delivery of the curriculum.

## 1. Aims

The aims of Falkirk Council's Curriculum Policy 0-8 are to deliver a quality early years service through a diverse range of settings within the 0-8 continuum by:-

- meeting the needs of young children and their families living in the local community
- providing a safe and stimulating environment, in which children can feel happy and secure
- encouraging the emotional, social, physical, creative and intellectual development of children

- promoting the welfare of children and their rights
- encouraging positive attitudes to self and others and developing confidence and self-esteem
- creating opportunities for play so that children learn through play
- encouraging children to explore, appreciate and respect their environment
- providing opportunities to stimulate interest and imagination
- extending the children's abilities to communicate ideas and feeling in a variety of ways.

These aims are echoed in the national documentation on the early years curriculum.

### **3. Principles**

Certain principles will underpin the curriculum offered to children in the variety of settings available.

#### **3.1 Falkirk Council endorses the following broadly accepted principles:-**

- learning begins at birth
- every child develops at his or her own pace, but adults can stimulate and encourage learning
- all children benefit from developmentally appropriate care and education
- skilled and careful observation is the key to helping children learn
- cultural and physical diversity should be respected and valued: a proactive anti-bias approach should be adopted and stereotypes challenged
- learning is holistic and cannot be compartmentalised: trust, motivation, interest, enjoyment and physical and social skills are as important as purely cognitive gains
- young children learn best through play, first hand experience and talk
- care and education are inseparable - quality care is educational and quality education is caring
- carers and educators should work in partnership with parents, who are the children's first educators
- quality care and education require well trained educators/carers and ongoing training and support.

#### **3.2 All adults involved in the early years provision should as a result:-**

- value equally the care and educational aspects of the service provided
- deliver the curriculum within the context of developmentally appropriate practice
- value cultural and physical diversity and celebrate individuality
- actively seek to promote home links in a climate of respectful partnership
- support children in their search for meaning, recognising the prior learning they bring with them
- be committed to a holistic view of childhood learning and development, presenting the curriculum accordingly.

- 3.3 Whilst recognising that individual philosophies of early childhood learning and development are constructed from many theories, Falkirk Council endorses a view that places importance on children's experiences within the home and in the community as well as within the early years provision. It emphasises the importance to early learning of positive interaction between adults and children and between children and children.

Learning is seen to be built on prior learning as children construct more complex understandings in response to their previous experiences.

#### **4. People in the Learning Environment**

Children experience learning in a variety of settings including:-

- the home
- with a childminder
- a creche or playgroup
- a nursery, family centre or children's centre
- primary school
- in the community.

- 4.1 Falkirk Council recognises that, in each setting, learning may be experienced differently by individual children because each child learns in different ways and at different rates. How and what children learn is affected by:-

- interests
- experiences
- self perception
- self confidence.

- 4.2 Falkirk Council recognises the importance of the range of adults who may engage with children in their learning in the various settings including:-

- parents and caregivers
- childminders
- playgroup leaders
- nursery nurses and teachers
- family workers.

- 4.3 In addition, Falkirk Council endorses the view that adults can improve children's access to learning experiences by working co-operatively with:-

- health visitors and school nurses
- speech and language therapists
- community, leisure and library services
- after school care personnel.

All adults in all of these settings influence the development and education of young children. This is especially true when prior learning in other settings is recognised, valued and used as a foundation for the next steps in the learning process.

- 4.4 For all adults involved in the early years provision the challenge in promoting children's maximum development and potential is great. Falkirk Council regards this as a challenge which requires enthusiasm, knowledge, energy and confidence.

## **5. Play as a Vehicle for Learning**

Falkirk Council endorses the importance of play as a powerful vehicle for learning in the early years and supports the view that play:-

- is an integral part of children's learning and development
- enables children to make sense of their world and the people in it
- is the way in which children integrate and demonstrate mastery and control of their learning.
- continues to have a vital place in the early years curriculum through the entire age range of the provision

Learning through play should be valued as much as learning in any other context.

Further consideration of play in the learning environment is included in the 0-8 Guidelines.

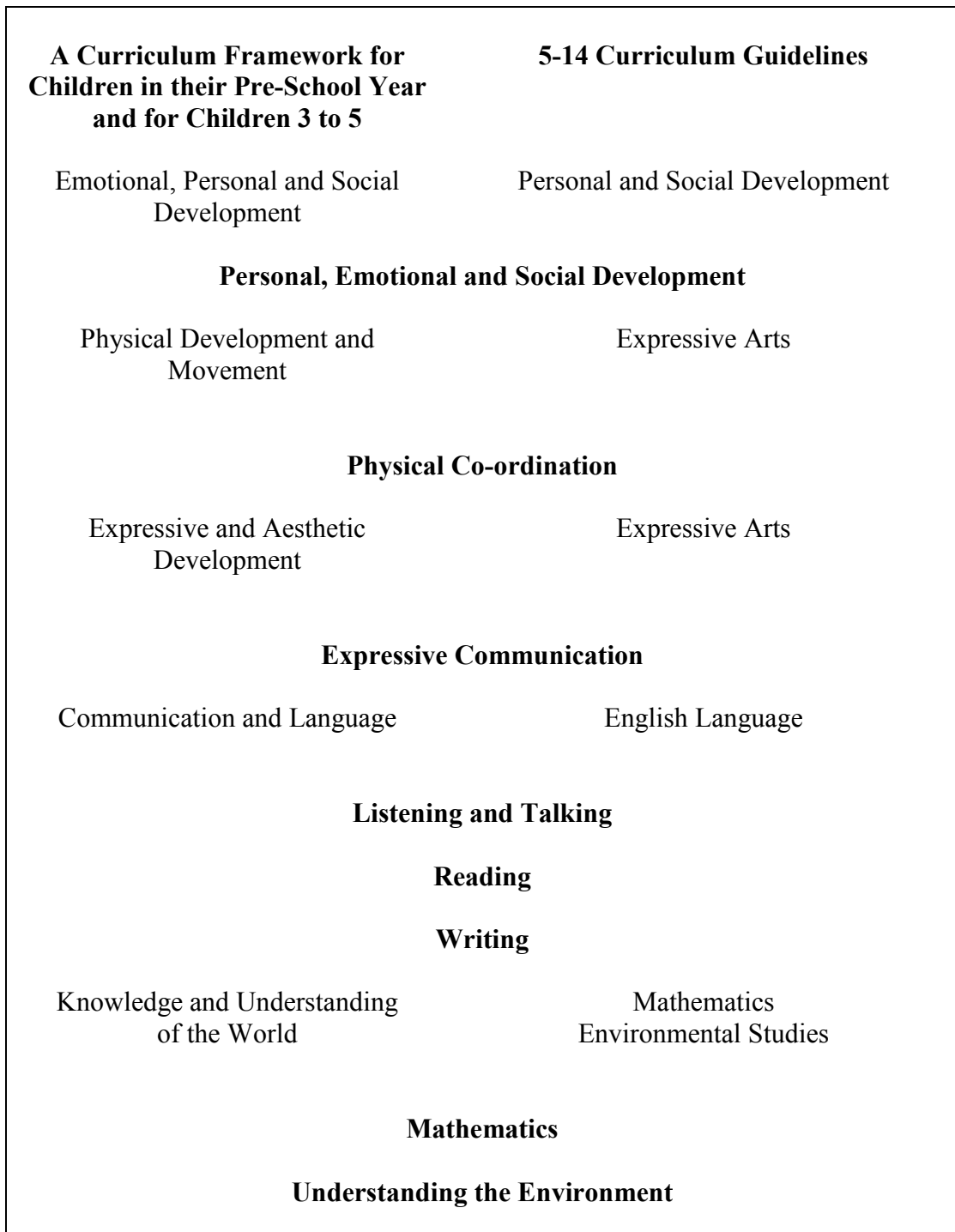
## **6. Planning**

### **6.1 General**

The diversity of early education settings within Falkirk Council provides the opportunity to benefit from a sharing of skills, knowledge, interests and enthusiasm. Opportunities for liaison between the early years settings should be identified by senior management teams in establishments and procedures put into place to promote such liaison and sharing.

Falkirk Council is committed to the inclusive delivery of staff development which involves a cross sector approach to both personal and professional development. Planning for staff development opportunities for all adults involved in the early years provision should be seen to promote such an approach.

6.2 Links have been identified between the key curricular aspects of the official curriculum guidelines at the pre-school/primary school interface.



Falkirk Council endorses these links as one way of ensuring continuity of experiences for children during transition from setting to setting.

Curriculum Planning should take account of:-

- children as individuals
- equal opportunities and social justice
- partnerships with parents/caregivers
- the community and its influences
- education as a lifelong process.

6.3 Falkirk Council endorses the six principles for organising children as defined in the HMI report (October, 1996) : Achievement for All.

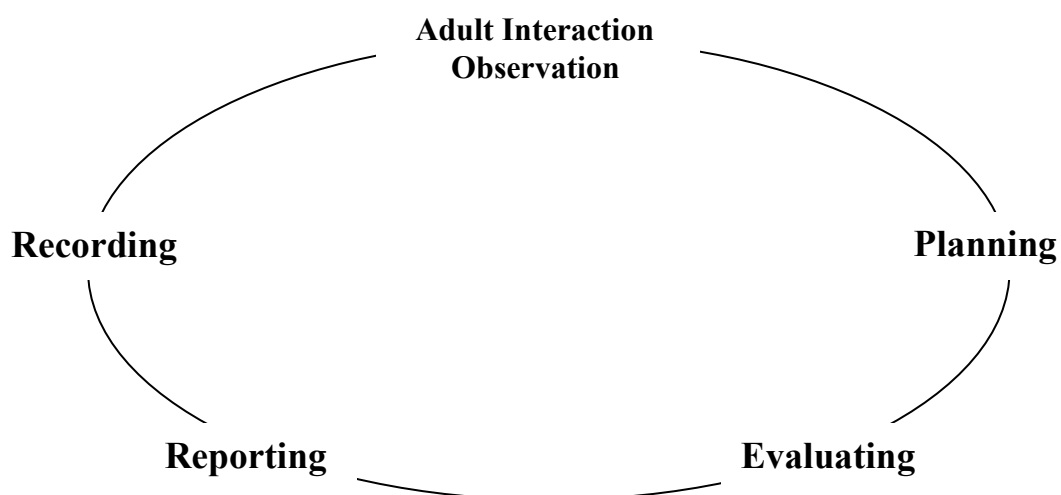
"The organisation of pupils by class or within class should:-

- create conditions which motivate all pupils to make sustained progress in learning within a common curriculum framework
- be flexible in responding to pupils' academic, personal and social development
- make it clear that the achievements and progress of each pupil is valued
- promote teaching which builds on the prior learning and attainment of pupils
- free teachers to spend most of their time on direct teaching and enable pupils to work effectively on challenging tasks
- be feasible and appropriate in terms of its expectations of teachers and pupils."

In early years settings it is important to consider the developmental stages of the children when making decisions about grouping children for whatever purpose.

Planning for classroom organisation and the organisation of space, resources, time and people is considered in depth in the 0-8 Guidelines.

6.4 Planning should be regarded as only one part of a cycle involving effective monitoring procedures.



## **7. Approaches to Teaching and Learning**

7.1 As a result of the principles of early childhood learning and development as outlined in this policy, all early years settings should present opportunities for teaching and learning to include the following approaches for children:-

- active learning in a range of appropriate contexts
- a variety of teaching styles involving the four modes of teaching - exposition, discussion, activity and enquiry
- recognising and responding to children's different learning styles
- an emphasis on the oral curriculum
- recognising and responding to aspects of emergent literacy and numeracy
- a developmental approach to writing
- a balanced approach to the teaching of phonics
- a range of approaches to the teaching of reading
- mathematical experiences based on real life situations
- opportunities to promote curiosity, choice and challenge
- equal opportunities for all children
- the development of the whole child.

Approaches to teaching and learning including the teaching of phonics, reading and mathematics are further considered in the 0-8 Guidelines.

7.2 It is Falkirk Council's policy to promote and support appropriate staff development on a continuing programme for all early years staff. Each early years setting is expected to commit time and resources to staff development and this should be reflected within the school or centre's developmental plan.

## **8. Equal Opportunities**

8.1 Falkirk Council is committed to meeting the needs of all individual children in their early years provision regardless of their age, ability, gender, race, nationality or culture. The provision must be seen to allow access to equal opportunities for all children.

The implications for this are:-

- all children should have access to all curricular aspects
- all children should have opportunities to develop autonomy and independence appropriate to their individual abilities
- all children should be accepted and valued for who they are
- all children should be encouraged to develop positive self image.

8.2 Resources reflect this belief in equality. Stereotyping of gender, race, nationality or culture in resources must be actively avoided. Appropriate resources that acknowledge cultural and physical diversity should be made available to children to encourage independence, choice and awareness of such diversity.

## **9. Observing and Profiling**

- 9.1 Skilled and careful observation is the key to helping children learn. Observation should be carried out to provide information about children's learning and development. This information should be gathered together to complete a profile.
- 9.2 Observation should be carried out for a variety of reasons. Important information can be gathered by observing:-
- one aspect of behaviour in children that is of particular interest as a result of developmental achievement
  - an aspect of behaviour that is giving particular concern
  - children individually or in group interactions
  - the use of context of learning by individuals or groups.
- 9.3 The completed profile should give accurate information about children's learning, their behaviour and attitudes to learning and to others, their dispositions and interests. It should be accessible to all professionals, the children and parents.
- 9.4 The contribution of parents in the completion of profiles is to be encouraged and valued.
- 9.5 Falkirk Council endorses the importance of prior learning. Profiles should be used as a means of information exchange at points of transition. They must be recognised and valued by the staff in the new setting and be used as a tool to assist in the planning of appropriate learning opportunities for the children in transition.

## **10. Transition**

- 10.1 Falkirk Council recognises that transition issues are important at all times of transfer from one setting to another and equally so for some children from class to class or stage to stage. All adults in the early years provision must be sensitive and proactive in providing the necessary support for children at these times.
- 10.2 Falkirk Council endorses the following aims for any establishment's transition policy.

To ensure:-

- continuity of experience
- that all children move confidently from one setting to another
- that children's previous experiences and learning are valued
- equal opportunities for all children

and to encourage partnerships in and between parents/caregivers and establishments.

10.3 Issues to consider in the transition process include the following:-

- welcoming atmosphere
- pre-contact with the new setting
- recording of details/information on entry or in early contact with parents/ caregivers
- settling in process - the first few days
- knowing and observing children
- giving equal opportunities to all children.

10.4 It is the responsibility of the management of establishments to ensure that an effective transition policy is in place. While it is important that those in management roles are involved in the transition procedures, it is also important that sufficient time is built into the procedure for parents/caregivers to meet face to face with the people who will be in direct involvement with their children.

## **11. Monitoring**

11.1 Falkirk Council's 0-8 Policy will be subject to continuous review.

11.2 Individual establishments will establish appropriate monitoring and evaluation procedures including the use of regular audits of provision and practice as well as the use of appropriate performance indicators. These procedures will relate to policy implementation and take account of Council and national documentation such as How Good is Our School (SOEID), How Good is Our Pre-School Education (SOEID) and Falkirk Council's Toolkit.

11.3 Management teams should monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of learning and teaching in their establishments and include all adults involved in the early years provision in reflective evaluation of their practice.

11.4 Development planning in all settings will be informed by the data gathered from an effective monitoring and evaluation process.

11.5 Annual reports and review procedures will also be taken account of in the monitoring and evaluation process.

11.6 Procedures for monitoring and evaluation will in turn be monitored by Education Services in line with existing quality assurance procedures.