

Welcome to
Durham University Day Nursery



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Welcome to Durham University Day Nursery

We really hope that you and your child will enjoy your time at our Nursery. Here is an overview of our vision and aims including the facilities available to help you and your child settle in quickly to Nursery life. This is important information about the Nursery but please feel free to contact us for further information or to arrange a visit to see at "first-hand" what we are offering.

Our Vision

We focus entirely upon enabling our children to reach their full potential and to demonstrate school readiness at this important stage of their development. We ensure this by empowering staff to be confident, by having a high level of expectations and their continued ability to support our children effectively during their journey with us.

Our Aims and Curriculum

We believe that your children deserve the best start in life. Here at Durham University Day Nursery we provide children with new experiences to help them build confidence, be creative and encourage freedom of expression. We thrive and pride ourselves in always promoting all seven educational programs in line with the EYFS statutory framework. We achieve this by planning and implementing the foundation blocks for all of our children to develop their social skills and communication and language to become independent young learners. Our highly qualified and dedicated staff provide a rich, learning and inspiring environment through in the moment planning following the children's ambitions and socially.



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Throughout your child's time in our Nursery, their development is observed and recorded. This information is used in planning activities to help them progress to the next stage.

Observations are recorded in your online child's personal learning journal, called Tapestry.

Staff work in partnership with Parents to ensure that any home learning experiences can be included. This will assist in monitoring your child's development.

In our Nursery, we are guided in everything we do, by the framework set out in Birth to Five Matters and Development matters:

A Unique Child

Each child is unique, and while we can be guided by an understanding of some general patterns of development from pre-birth into early childhood, progression is uneven and unfolds differently for each individual child. The complex differences for each child mean the pathways toward maturity should be seen more as dancing around a ballroom than climbing a ladder.

Positive Relationships

Parents and carers make a crucial difference to children's outcomes. It is vital that early year's practitioners recognise parents' commitment to their children's early development and education and give priority to working with parents. The benefits are greatest when practitioners and families work in respectful partnership to develop ways to support children both at home and in the setting. Working together ensures a good understanding of a child's needs, leading to appropriate provision within the setting and the possibility of supporting learning in the home.

Enabling Environments Children are unique and holistic learners, thriving within environments that support their individual and diverse motivations, interests, and needs. They require a wealth of possibilities within varied contexts, and this is best supported within stimulating and challenging environments that value exploration and play.

Learning and Development

Children's development and learning is best supported by starting from the child and then matching interactions and experiences to meet the child's needs. The observation, assessment and planning (OAP) cycle describes what is frequently called assessment for learning, or formative assessment. On-going formative assessment is at the heart of effective early years practice. It involves observation of children as a part of all activity, which is most often held in the mind of the practitioner but may sometimes be documented, using this rich information to understand how a child is developing, learning and growing, and then planning the next steps for the adults in supporting and extending the learning.



Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children's personal, social, and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm, and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others.

Physical Development

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy, and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination, and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults.

Communication and Language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively.



Specific areas of development



Literacy

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together.

Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increase their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries, and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world.

Mathematics

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding – such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting – children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built.

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts.

For more information please visit:

www.birthingmatters.org.uk

www.gov.uk/government/publications/development-matters--2

Nursery Rooms

Each room is thoughtfully planned to take into account the age and developmental stage of the children. Each room is designed to be safe, comfortable and stimulating, with furnishings and equipment appropriate to the needs of the children at each stage of their development.

Babies and children progress through the Nursery rooms depending upon their age and also their level of physical and emotional development.

We provide calming inviting rooms and use resources to enhance areas to develop children's curiosity, awe and wonder.

Each room has a Room Lead supporting other staff and taking a lead on teaching and learning. We aim to teach children by ensuring challenging playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning and development.



Key Person

We want to work closely with you to share relevant information about your child's development. Good communication is key, and it is important that you let us know of any changes at home which may affect your child. We offer a "Key Person Approach" across our Nursery.

A member of staff is allocated to your child in each room they attend to assist as they progress through the Nursery. The Key Person will build a special relationship with your child and help to meet their individual needs whilst in our care. They will offer security, reassurance and continuity and therefore be in the best position to understand your child's individual needs.

Parents/Carers should share information with the staff throughout your child's time in the Nursery. A Key Person Approach will help your child to develop relationships with other members of staff. We offer regular opportunities for parents/carers to come into the Nursery, for example to attend Stay and Play sessions and Room Transition meetings.





Snowdrops

Staff to Child ratio 1:3

We give undivided attention and encouragement to your child.

Babies in our Snowdrop Room will follow their home routine with regard to feeding, sleeping and play time.

The Snowdrop Room is designed to be a sensory haven for babies, with lots of soft furnishings, lights and music. We provide sensory experiences for our babies to explore using a variety of senses, including sand, paint, gloop and water. Throughout the day we provide lots of opportunities for action songs, music and stories developing early Communication and Language skills. We also offer daily outdoor experiences.

Our curriculum intent for Snowdrops is to provide a safe, secure, caring and loving environment for our children. This is often the first transition the child has made away from parents/carers, so it is important for them to feel secure. This will provide the foundation for the children to be able to flourish in all other areas.

Babies spend their day interacting with adults and other babies. We include Heuristic play which consists of offering a group of children, for a defined period of time in a controlled environment, a large number of different kinds of objects and receptacles with which they play freely without adult intervention.

Babies enjoy playing with Treasure Baskets. A Treasure Basket is a low-sided basket or box filled with natural and everyday items which babies can explore by themselves. They can have lots of fun investigating the different items which helps them expand their thinking.

We introduce small world play for our older babies to help develop their imagination and introduce pretend play.

We also have regular access to the outdoor environment to provide sensory experiences.

Each baby has the opportunity to rest or sleep on a small mattress, in a cot or coracle.

A coracle provides an inviting sleep space or cosy retreat. Its low edge allows a more mobile baby to climb in and out independently and its high edge provides a feeling of security.

We provide sensory experiences for our babies to explore using a variety of senses including sand, paint, gloop and water. This enables the babies to explore and experiment with a range of media through sensory exploration.





Buttercups

Staff to Child ratio 1:3

Within our Buttercup curriculum we will provide an enriching environment in which children have the confidence to flourish and grow. We will provide a loving, safe space full of opportunities each child needs to support their communication, physical, personal social and emotional development. We will ensure the environment is full of language rich and challenging experiences to promote every child's learning, in supporting them to become confident individuals.

This room is specially designed for our more mobile babies and young children who spend their days exploring and investigating their surroundings by accessing a wide range of equipment.

Staff provide a comfortable, safe and stimulating environment for the children throughout the day, allow each child to develop at their own pace. The children are able to access the quiet, comfortable area to rest or sleep.

Children are encouraged to extend their communication skills by talking, listening, hearing and joining in and responding to stories and songs.

There is access throughout the day to the outside area with opportunities to engage with children from the Sunflower room and Snowdrops.

From this stage, babies and young children are provided with experiences of the wider environment. The children are free to explore and engage in a range of experiences including role play, small world, music and dance, heuristic play and creative opportunities.





Sunflowers

Staff to child ratio

(Children over 2) **1:5**

Our staff support your child in their development and exploration of the world around them.

The Sunflower Room offers a fun and safe environment for children to explore. There are areas within the room which promote all aspects of learning, from active areas to quiet areas where your child can rest and reflect upon their experiences.

We offer weekly 'Football fun' and 'Yoga' activities for the children to participate in if they wish to do so which provides the children with the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills. This includes physical development, creative and imaginative development and also their social skills of working together with their peers.

Within our Sunflowers' curriculum we will provide the children with lots of exciting experiences and to engage the children's interest by offering a fun packed environment bursting with opportunities and to challenge and develop their self-care and independent skills. Our curriculum will be developing their foundations for them to become independent and active explorers.



There are a wide range of activities available for children, which will encourage children to experiment and investigate.

Staff plan for individual children by using their personal interests and experiences. Staff observe children in group and solitary situations and use their knowledge of child development to scaffold the children's learning and extend their knowledge and skills through sustained shared thinking, provide relevant resources and ensuring their safety.

The room has direct access to the outdoor space which allows for free flow. Children interact with children from Snowdrops, Buttercups room inside and out and also the Bluebell room while outside.

This provides the opportunity for the Sunflower children to learn about caring for the younger children and encourage their development as the older children act as role models. It also means that siblings can have contact during the day.

The children are encouraged to develop a number of life skills, such as feeding themselves, starting to use a potty or small flushing toilet, express their feelings in an acceptable manner and respect the views and feelings of others.

Meal times are a great opportunity to promote a child's independence. Children help to set up the table and serve themselves at snack and meal times. They develop health and self-care skills by washing.



Bluebells

Staff to Child ratio (Children over 3)
1:8

Children play and learn in a secure environment with effective adult support allowing your child to explore, investigate and enjoy their learning experience. The environment is organised into clearly defined areas to accommodate different activities.

Within our Bluebells curriculum we aim to achieve school readiness for all of our children for them to become active and independent learners. We implement this by supporting the children in displaying positive behaviour, building good relationships and developing self-care. Our Staff are role models by providing effective Communication & Language and Mathematical skills by incorporating Letters and Sounds and problem solving activities in our daily routines.

We develop the children's confidence by providing a safe, challenging and stimulating environment in readiness for their transition to school.

Children have the opportunity to explore a variety of construction equipment. There is a large area for children to construct using the wooden blocks and tables for small construction equipment. Small world equipment provides the opportunity for children to engage in imaginative play. Within the room is a cosy book area with a wide variety of books, soft cushions, puppets and story CDs. Children have access to library books.

The mark making area provides opportunities for children to select independently a variety of mark making materials. Fine motor skills are encouraged by the use of pen, pencil, crayons, scissors and stencils to encourage handling small objects with increased control.





The role play area provides the opportunity for children to use their imagination through every day experiences. Children are asked for their views when staff are considering changing this area.

Children have access to ICT equipment such as programmable toys, digital cameras and CD players. There is a computer and iPad and an extensive collection of educational games. The Bluebells children can also access the internet e.g. CBeebies and a smart board.

We ensure that children's safety is taken into consideration while accessing the computers by having parental controls in place and by using child-friendly search engines.

The creative area is full of art equipment, natural materials and recycled resources to allow children to experience open ended exploration. Children also have the opportunity to explore and enjoy the musical instruments, join in and respond to music through daily sessions of "Letters and Sounds".

The bluebell room carries out activities which works on the underpinning skills for language, communication and literacy - turn taking, discrimination, listening, attention and social communication as well as developing basic language skills both receptively and expressively.

Children get involved in a variety of activities including baking and participating in trips and outings to explore the wider environment and further learning opportunities.

Number Sense

Within the Sunflower and Bluebells room we encourage children to take part in number sense. We also invite parents into the nursery to take part in these sessions to allow number sense to be practiced at home as well as nursery.

Number sense and 5 frames are foundational concepts used to support children's mathematical development in a playful and engaging way.

Number sense refers to a child's ability to understand, relate to, and work with numbers. It's not just about counting—it's about developing a deep understanding of how numbers work and relate to each other.

A 5 frame is a simple visual tool used to help children develop number sense. It's a rectangular frame with five equal boxes where objects (like counters, cubes, or pictures) can be placed.

Forest School

Forest School is a nature-based education where we nurture-learner-led experiences through exploration and discovery.

At Durham University Day nursery, we host forest school sessions within our local woodlands (Pelaw woods) for our Bluebell children. We support and promote self-confidence, self-esteem and well-being at its core. think of the woodlands as a blank canvas, where children can embrace challenges, develop their characters, hone their resilience and problem-solving skills.

the forest is bursting with different colours, textures, smells and textiles to stir the children's curiosity.

At Durham University Day nursery, we facilitate the children's play, support decision making, interaction and ability to work in partnership with their peers.





Outside Space

Our outside area (with safety surfaces) has all the equipment needed to safely provide a challenging and exciting play area for climbing equipment, sand and water play, quiet reflective areas and busy moving play areas. There is also a growing/digging area with tubs, vegetables and flower beds.

Children benefit from the full range of outdoor learning experiences and get lots of fresh air and outdoor exercise. We believe that all children should have outdoor experience in all weathers and children should be dressed appropriately. "There is no inappropriate weather, only inappropriate clothing."

Outdoor play is essential for all aspect of a child's development. It can provide children with experiences which enable them to develop intellectually,

emotionally, socially and physically.

A mud kitchen provides the opportunity to build up early child development through sensory play, role play, imagination, maths and hands on exploration. It provides a rich and genuine messy sensory experience.

By bringing in a combination of natural materials, children are given the opportunity to explore using a variety of different senses.



Children have access to our nursery allotment where they have opportunities to learn how to grow and look after produce. Developing understanding of the world.



General Information

01

Admissions/ Registration process

- Complete the booking form and send it to Nursery with the specified deposit.
- The Nursery will contact you as soon as possible after receipt of your booking form and deposit, to confirm whether a place can be offered.
- If a place is offered, a formal letter will be sent to you and a contract provided on registration.
- Nursery policies and procedures are on the nursery website.
- If the Nursery is unable to offer a place, the deposit paid will be refunded on receipt of a written request.
- If you cancel the Nursery Booking, the deposit will not be returned as it is non-refundable.
- The deposit is refunded against the first invoice.

02

Fees

Fees are payable throughout the year, whether your child attends Nursery or not. Fees are calculated so that they are the same amount each month irrespective of the numbers of days in each month.

Fees - Funding

9 month and older 30 hours funding. Local Authority funding may be available for eligible families.

<https://www.beststartinlife.gov.uk/eligibility-checker>

Fees - Payment methods

We have different options for payment including Childcare Vouchers, Direct Debit, HM Tax free Childcare, or Salary Sacrifice (University Staff).

If you experience payment difficulties, please speak to the Nursery Manager who will try to help.

Non-payment can result in losing your Nursery place.

03

Food/Meals

Children are offered breakfast, early morning snack, 2 course lunch and a light tea.

All food served in Nursery is freshly cooked in our Nursery kitchen. We have devised menus to provide a nutritious, carefully balanced diet. The focus is on healthy eating, and the children are served fresh fruit and vegetables every day.

Menus are changed throughout the year, and you can view these on the Nursery website and on Tapestry.

Dietary or cultural requirements can be catered for, and we work closely with Parents/Carers. For allergies we do ask for a letter from GP to confirm the allergies or intolerances.

Water is freely available for children throughout the day.

Parents are asked to provide formula or breast milk.

Food appropriate to the child's stage of development (e.g. pureed or blended) is provided.

Breastfeeding mothers are welcome.

04

Good Behaviour Policy

We firmly believe that children are individuals who have rights and needs. Each child is given the opportunity to develop their self-worth through the experience of praise and success.

Good behaviour and good manners are positively encouraged. Boundaries are set in a way which helps children develop a sense of significance of their own behaviour.

05

Health and Safety

The health and safety of babies and children in our care is of paramount importance to us. We have a full Health and Safety Policy which is regularly reviewed, and staff make daily checks on premises and the equipment.

In addition we receive regular inspections by the University, Environmental Health and OFSTED.

The complete Nursery Health and Safety Policy are available to view at any time from the Nursery Office.



06

Insurance

The Nursery is fully insured with a specialist nursery insurance policy, providing employers and public liability insurance and certificates are on display in the nursery reception.

07

Late Collections

Children must be collected promptly at the end of their session i.e. 1pm or 6pm. If a child is not collected promptly, a senior member of staff will contact parents /emergency contacts and remain at the Nursery until the child has been collected. A charge will be made for late collections.

08

Nursery Staff

The Nursery has: an established team of experienced and well- qualified staff. We promote continuous professional development.

If you wish to speak to the Nursery Manager or a Deputy Nursery Manager, you can ring Reception on 0191 3348153.

09

Outings

For our older children, the Nursery staff plan local outings and trips to widen their understanding and experience of their local community and the world around them. As well as taking part in Forest School. Permissions are required from Parents/ Carers and at all times staff to child ratios are maintained.

All necessary safety measures and risk assessments are carried out in advance of any planned activities.

For babies, we offer daily access to the outdoor environment to provide sensory experiences.

10

Parking

The Nursery has a number of dedicated Nursery drop-off parking spaces located at the front of the building, making drop off and collection easy and convenient.

11

Policies And Procedures

Information in relation to Policies and Procedures can be viewed on the Nursery website and in the memo section on Tapestry available to view at any time from the Nursery office.



12

Rest and Sleep

The Nursery aims to follow your own daily routine with respect to eating, sleeping and resting. Each child has their own individual bedding which the nursery launders each week.

13

Security

Access to our building and Nursery Rooms is via a security system. We operate a strict policy regarding the collection of children from the Nursery. If a child needs to be collected by somebody other than the usual Parent/ Carer, then the Nursery must be informed in advance. Staff will need to be informed of an agreed password before the child is released into the care of someone and the Parent/Carer may need to be contacted to check permission is granted.



14

Sessions

Opening and Session Times:

The Nursery is open from 8 am to 6 pm Monday to Friday, 51 weeks.

Morning Session: 8 am to 1 pm

Afternoon Session:
1 pm to 6 pm

It is closed on Bank Holidays, 2 Professional Development Days and for a short period at Christmas.

Extra Sessions are bookable, in addition to your child's regular pattern of attendance, and are subject to availability. These sessions are chargeable and must be paid for in advance. They are payable even if the child does not attend the session booked.

Permanent Sessions/
Cancellation of Placement: You can request changes to sessions, including cancelling of placement, giving at least 28 days' notice as this involves a variation to your contract. There is a form to complete to request any changes, available in reception.





15

Settling In

At Durham University Day Nursery, we make great efforts to ensure children settle into Nursery well. We encourage several visits to the Nursery, prior to a child's start, firstly to complete a formal registration, to meet the child's Key Person and then for familiarisation sessions i.e. to stay for increasing periods of time to get to know the Nursery and staff. These visits are free.



16

Transitions

Room to Room

We aim to provide a smooth transition for the child from one Nursery room to another in partnership with the Parent/Carer.

When your child reaches the next stage of development and is ready to move from one room to the next, your child will have pre-arranged periods of time in there so that they can become familiar with their new peers, staff and Key Person.

Before your child moves into the next room, Staff will complete an "All About Me" sheet to keep updated with any changes to the child's likes, dislikes, allergies and changes to routine. This information will be shared with the new Key Person and staff within the child's room.

Parents will be kept regularly informed of progress, updates and invited in to look at their child's new room.





Nursery to School

We aim to make this transition as comfortable and exciting as possible, recognising that it's a significant step, both for your child and your family.

In preparation for "School Readiness" and prior to a child attending school for their first visit, the Nursery holds a session with Parents with visits from local school teachers.

Before the end of the academic year preceding a child's entry to school, or if a child leaves prior to this, the child's Key Person completes a leaving report. These are then forwarded on to the appropriate school with parents/carers permission.

Leaving Nursery

On our approval, your child's learning journal on Tapestry will be available for you to download, after your child leaves nursery.

17



Working in Partnership with Parents

At Durham University Day Nursery, we believe that good communication between Nursery and Parent/ Carers is extremely important, and we do all we can to ensure good communication. Staff communicate with Parent/Carers daily, both verbally and by Tapestry.

We operate an open door policy, and Parents/Carers are encouraged to feel that they can approach staff and management of the Nursery at any time about any issue relating to their child.

The Key Person plays an important role in providing detailed information about your child's time at Nursery. Suggestions or ideas that you have are always welcome and can be entered in the book which is kept in the Nursery reception.



SENCO

Within the nursery we have a nominated Special Educational Needs Coordinator and good links with the Local Authority

The SENCO is responsible for the day to day implementation of the SEN Policy and any provisions made to support the children with special educational or developmental needs. We work closely with Parents/ Carers, Nursery Practitioners, and other outside professionals to ensure that children's individual needs are being met. Outside professionals include specialists from speech and language, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Educational Psychology.

We will continue to keep you informed, in a variety of ways, about the activities and learning that your child has experienced throughout their time with us.

Two Year Old Reviews

Reviews take place to assess the development and progress of children between the ages of 26-30 months. These take place in partnership with a Health Visitor and allocated Early Years Practitioner. The assessment involves monitoring a child's progress of their prime areas and milestones in order to identify any gaps in development. Where weaknesses are identified, support is put in place to ensure the child has the opportunity to reach their full potential. This also includes guidance and support for Parents.

Contact Us

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