

Theorists, studies and approaches in Early Years Education and how they influence our pedagogy and practice.

Studies indicate that approaches that adhere strictly to a specific type of pedagogy do not always result in better child outcomes compared with programmes that take a less prescriptive approach.

(DfE 2015)

Play based learning, sustained shared thinking and a balance of adult directed and child led play seem to be the key factors in a successful pedagogy.

We believe our most valuable resource is our staff. Each person bringing their own unique personality but working together as a team to provide a continuity of care that the children can predict and rely upon.

The environment of course plays a big part in our provision and it is carefully thought out and changes are made according to needs.

We read about theorists of old and keep up to date with new approaches and studies, and we consider their benefits and investigate whether there are aspects of their work, findings or ways that we can adopt into our eclectic approach...

Here are some that we can relate to and that do influence our practice...

Piaget brought us the constructivist theory - That children learn through play, doing and having the opportunities and time to explore and keep trying.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory shows how a child's development is influenced by their closest family, their wider family, their community, their culture and their friends. It is important that we recognise this and find ways to include and value these in our day to day provision.

Vygotsky - a social constructivist also saw that children learn through play and doing but also from each other and from kind, supportive adults. They build on previous learning experiences and as adults we need to recognise these opportunities and use them well, **scaffolding** learning when the opportunity arises.

Skinner - a behaviourist - believing that children learn through consequences of their behaviour. We embrace this through **positive reinforcement**, valuing the efforts of the children in our care and recognising when they are having a go and encouraging this behaviour. Carol Dweck brought us the idea of a **growth mindset**. We encourage a can-do attitude and we praise the journey, not just the final outcome.

Bandura's social learning theory - how we learn from others. That's why modelling good behaviour and play skills is so important. We as staff are good role models and we encourage the children to follow good role models through **proximal praise** when the opportunity arises.

Maslow was a humanist, he brought us the idea of the **hierarchy of need**. Children need to be safe and happy to be able to learn. Our safeguarding policies and procedures come into play here. As does our kind, supportive and welcoming environment.

Bowlby's **attachment theory** explains that children need to feel like they belong. That's one of the reasons we have the key person system. Children learn from secure and healthy attachments. In such a small setting, secure and happy attachments are easier to achieve.

Hygge (Hue-guh) is about embracing the simple joys in life. It is about feeling joy and appreciation for the simple moments in your day. ... Bringing Hygge into the early years means bringing more wonder, joy and comfort into children's lives. As a setting we see only good in this. To us, the key to Hygge is that it costs nothing, it is a way of being, behaving and feeling.

Te Whāriki is the vision that children are competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society. A little like Reggio. We are the enablers of this contented confidence as is our carefully planned environment.

Gottman developed the idea of **Emotion Coaching**. A strategy which supports young people to **self regulate** and manage their behaviour and responses. We have attended a training course on this and we aim to acknowledge the children's feelings and help them to deal with them with appropriate strategies. This includes **conflict resolution**.

The 30 million word gap study - a research study conducted by psychologists Hart and Risley. Their study showed that children from lower-income families hear a staggering **30 million** fewer words than children from higher-income families by the time they are 4 years old. We need a language rich environment to play our part in trying to bridge the gap and bring balance to all children. We certainly talk a lot!! But we also sing, tell stories, comment on play, listen to and talk to the children about their experiences and the world around them. We also run language interventions to give those that need it some extra support.

EPPE project found that pre-school attendance improves all children's development. Children with no pre-school experience had poorer cognitive attainment, sociability and concentration when they started primary school. Importantly the study showed that the provision had to be 'good' to achieve this benefit.