LEARN · DISCOVER · GROW

Early Years Curriculum

Our sequenced, age-by-age curriculum for school readiness

Toddlers · Raindrops · Sunshines · Preschool

The Complete Curriculum — All Seven Areas of Learning

Prime areas: Personal, Social & Emotional Development · Communication & Language · Physical Development
Specific areas: Literacy · Mathematics · Understanding the World · Expressive Arts & Design

Aligned to the Statutory Framework for the EYFS and Birth to 5 Matters

Updated 17th September 2026

About this curriculum & how to use it

Purpose. This curriculum sets out what children at A B C Nursery will learn, in a clear sequence, from when they join as Toddlers through to leaving Preschool for Reception. Each area of learning has a precise end-goal for every age group, broken into the small-steps of knowledge and skills children need to reach it, with resource and environment ideas to support planning. The ambition for every child is that they leave us **school ready**.

Statutory basis. The curriculum is built on the seven areas of learning in the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*, and uses the non-statutory *Birth to 5 Matters* guidance to sequence development. Small-steps are linked to Birth to 5 Matters 'ranges' so staff can identify the best-fit stage for each child.

The seven areas. This master document covers all seven areas of learning. The three **prime areas** (PSED, Communication & Language & Physical Development, and) are the foundations developed first and throughout. The four **specific areas** (Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, and Expressive Arts & Design) grow from these foundations. Each area shows the Early Learning Goal(s) children ultimately work towards by the end of Reception.

Age groups mapped to Birth to 5 Matters ranges

Birth to 5 Matters ranges are overlapping and developmental, not fixed ages — staff identify the range that best fits each child. The table shows the typical best-fit range(s) for each room.

Room	Birth to 5 Matters range (best fit)	Curriculum focus
Toddlers	Range 1-2	Secure attachment, becoming mobile, first words, exploring through the senses
Raindrops	Range 2-3/4	Confident movement, expanding vocabulary, growing independence and self-help
Sunshines	Range 4-5	Simple sentences, coordination and tool use, cooperative play and self-regulation
Preschool	Range 5-6	Full sentences, fine-motor and early writing, independence and school readiness

How to read each section

- Each area of learning is split into its aspects (e.g. 'Listening, attention & understanding' and 'Speaking').
- For every age group there is one clear goal, the sequenced small-steps that build towards it, matching resource / environment ideas, and SEND / EAL adaptation ideas.
- The SEND / EAL column gives starting-point ideas only — always personalise to the individual child, following their SEND support plan or EHCP and working with parents, the SENCo and outside professionals.
- Read the small-steps top-to-bottom as a rough teaching sequence; use them as a basis for planning, observation and next steps — not as a tick-list.
- Links to Birth to 5 Matters ranges support best-fit assessment and conversations with parents.

Personal, Social & Emotional Development

A prime area. Children learn to understand and manage their feelings, become confident and independent, and build positive relationships. Strong PSED underpins behaviour, learning and a positive start at school.

End point — Early Learning Goal(s): Self-Regulation; Managing Self; Building Relationships.

Self-Regulation

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Toddlers **B5M Range 1-2**	To seek comfort from familiar adults and begin to manage feelings with their support.	• Seeks and accepts comfort from the key person when distressed (Range 1) • Uses a familiar adult as a secure base to explore from (Range 1) • Calms when needs are met and feelings are soothed (Range 1) • Expresses feelings through face, sound and gesture (Range 1) • Shows a range of emotions (joy, fear, frustration) (Range 1) • Responds to the soothing voice and touch of a key person (Range 1) • Begins to use a comfort object to self-soothe (Range 2) • Begins to show frustration or protest when needs are not met (Range 2) • Looks to the key person for reassurance when unsure (Range 2)	Consistent key person; cosy calm corner; comfort objects welcomed; predictable routines; emotion-rich commentary ('you're sad'); attuned, responsive adults; plenty of lap and cuddle time.	**SEND:** Ensure a consistent key person and predictable routine; offer sensory soothing; co-regulate with the child. **EAL:** Welcome comfort items from home; learn soothing words and songs in the home language.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Raindrops **B5M Range 2-3/4**	To express their feelings and begin to be aware of others' feelings, with adult support to manage strong emotions.	• Shares feelings such as excitement or pleasure with familiar adults (Range 2) • Expresses own feelings — sad, happy, cross, scared (Range 2) • Seeks the key person at times of need (Range 2) • Begins to notice others' feelings and may show concern (Range 3) • Responds to the wishes and feelings of others in simple ways (Range 3) • Tolerates short waits with adult support (Range 3) • Begins to manage frustration (tantrums are typical) (Range 3) • Accepts boundaries and limits some of the time, with support (Range 4) • Begins to use a familiar strategy or object to help calm down (Range 4)	Feelings named in everyday talk; emotion cards and books; key-person comfort; a calm-down space; simple supported turn-taking; consistent gentle boundaries; predictable daily rhythm.	**SEND:** Use emotion photos/symbols and a calm box; co-regulate and name feelings; offer sensory regulation tools. **EAL:** Provide feelings cards with translations; gather family information on what soothes the child.
Sunshines **B5M Range 4-5**	To name and begin to manage their own feelings and behaviour with adult support, and understand simple boundaries.	• Names some feelings in self and others (Range 4) • Uses a key person or strategy to help calm down (Range 4) • Begins to manage own behaviour and accept boundaries (Range 4) • Waits for a short time and takes turns with help (Range 4) • Responds to clear, consistent rules and boundaries (Range 4) • Talks about own and others' feelings (Range 5) • Shows emerging empathy for how others feel (Range 5) • Begins to use words instead of physical actions when upset (Range 5)	Emotion-coaching adults; feelings displays and mirrors; calm corner with sensory tools; visual rules and routines; sand timers for turn-taking; stories about feelings; consistent responses.	**SEND:** Use visual emotion scales and a calm space with sensory tools; keep consistent scripts; share simple social stories. **EAL:** Use dual-language feelings words and visuals; explicitly model emotion vocabulary.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Preschool **B5M Range 5-6**	To identify and moderate their own feelings, recognising and responding to the feelings of others, wait for what they want, focus attention and follow rules — the self-regulation needed for school.	• Identifies and names a range of feelings in self and others (Range 5) • Talks about and uses simple strategies to manage big feelings (Range 5) • Waits for what they want and delays gratification (Range 5) • Controls immediate impulses when appropriate (Range 5) • Focuses and maintains attention on adult-led tasks (Range 5) • Shows resilience and perseverance when challenged (Range 5) • Manages transitions and copes with change (Range 5) • Follows rules, understands why they matter and considers the group (Range 6) • Begins to negotiate and resolve conflicts using words (Range 6) • Explains own feelings and why they feel that way (Range 6)	Visual timetable and transition warnings; feelings/'zones' tools; calm area with breathing prompts; circle time about feelings; turn-taking games; co-constructed rules; problem-solving scripts; yoga/mindfulness.	**SEND:** Use zones-of-regulation visuals and personalised calm strategies; share social stories; plan sensory breaks; stay consistent. **EAL:** Provide visual feelings charts and emotion words in the home language; support with restorative, visual scripts.

Managing Self

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Toddlers **B5M Range 1-2**	To show confidence to explore and to assert their emerging preferences.	• Explores from the secure base of the key person (Range 1) • Shows curiosity and interest in new things and people (Range 1) • Expresses preferences (reaching for, pushing away) (Range 1) • Responds to own name; developing a sense of self (Range 1) • Shows growing confidence in familiar situations (Range 2) • Begins to do things for self (holds spoon, removes sock) (Range 2) • Enjoys the company of others and watches what they do (Range 2)	Safe, enabling environment to explore; resources at floor and low level; key-person security; mirrors and self-photos; real choices in play; unhurried time; rich sensory exploration.	**SEND:** Provide an enabling, low-distraction environment; offer simple choices; celebrate every small step. **EAL:** Use visual choices and modelling.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Raindrops **B5M Range 2-3/4**	To grow in confidence and independence, beginning to do things for themselves and assert their wishes.	• Explores new toys and spaces, checking back with the key person (Range 2) • Shows a sense of self — points to self or says own name (Range 2) • Makes a choice between two options offered (Range 2) • Shows a strong sense of self ('me do it', says no) (Range 3) • Selects and explores activities of own choice (Range 3) • Begins simple self-help (helps dress, feeds self, tidies) (Range 3) • Separates from main carer with key-person support (Range 3) • Tries new experiences with a trusted adult nearby (Range 3) • Takes pride in completing a task ('look!') (Range 3) • Begins to understand 'mine' and ownership (Range 4) • Begins to recognise danger and seeks the key person (Range 4)	Accessible, well-organised resources for choice; visual labels; self-registration photos; 'I can' opportunities; tidy-up routines; key-person settling; praise for effort; dressing and self-care chances.	**SEND:** Use visual labels and accessible resources; use backward chaining for self-help; give plenty of praise. **EAL:** Use photo labels and demonstration; learn home-language encouragement words.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Sunshines **B5M Range 4-5**	To become increasingly independent and confident — making choices, doing things for themselves and showing a sense of right and wrong.	• Selects activities and resources independently (Range 4) • Shows increasing independence in self-care (Range 4) • Grows more confident in new social situations (Range 4) • Begins to understand simple right and wrong (Range 4) • Follows routines and helps with simple jobs (Range 4) • Asks for help when needed (Range 4) • Takes pride in achievements; 'can-do' attitude (Range 5) • Adapts behaviour to different events, with support (Range 5) • Is more confident to talk to other children and adults about self (Range 5)	Continuous provision children can access independently; visual timetable; 'jobs' and responsibilities (snack helper); self-care opportunities; clear expectations and praise; new challenges; choice boards.	**SEND:** Use a visual timetable and 'Now & Next' boards; break tasks into steps; reward effort; keep routines predictable. **EAL:** Use visuals; model independence; involve family in agreeing goals.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Preschool **B5M Range 5-6**	To be confident and independent — managing personal needs, persevering with challenges and behaving well, ready to thrive at school.	• Confident to try new activities; shows independence and resilience (Range 5) • Perseveres with a challenge and bounces back from setbacks (Range 5) • Shows a sense of right and wrong and adjusts behaviour (Range 5) • Manages own personal needs (dressing, toileting, hygiene, snack) (Range 6) • Sees self as a valuable individual; shares ideas confidently (Range 6) • Understands, follows and explains rules and right/wrong (Range 6) • Manages own basic safety and asks for help appropriately (Range 6) • Adapts behaviour to different situations and transitions calmly (Range 6) • Takes responsibility for belongings and the shared space (Range 6) • Sets simple goals and works towards them (Range 6)	High expectations for independence; self-registration; child-managed coats and belongings; 'have a go' challenge culture; school-readiness routines (lunchbox, PE kit); class rules and jobs; transition activities.	**SEND:** Use visual checklists and goal cards; chunk challenges; teach rules explicitly via social stories; scaffold resilience. **EAL:** Use visual instructions and peer modelling; pre-teach routine vocabulary.

Building Relationships

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Toddlers **B5M Range 1-2**	To form a secure attachment with their key person and show interest in others.	• Forms a strong bond and attachment with the key person (Range 1) • Seeks out familiar adults for security and play (Range 1) • Enjoys close, face-to-face interaction and responds with smiles (Range 1) • Shows interest in and watches other children (Range 2) • Enjoys reciprocal games (peekaboo, give-and-take) (Range 2) • Responds to the emotions and expressions of others (Range 2) • Plays alongside others (solitary/onlooker play) (Range 2) • Shows affection towards familiar people (Range 2)	Key-person system and careful settling-in; consistent staff; one-to-one play and games; family photos; small, intimate group times; warm, responsive care.	**SEND:** Ensure a consistent key person and small groups; use intensive interaction; follow the child's lead. **EAL:** Warmly welcome the family; learn greetings in the home language.
Raindrops **B5M Range 2-3/4**	To enjoy the company of others and play alongside peers, building trust with a small group of adults and children.	• Looks to familiar adults for approval or a shared response (Range 2) • Shows pleasure when familiar children arrive (Range 2) • Seeks the key person for reassurance and shared pleasure (Range 2) • Plays alongside other children (parallel play) (Range 3) • Shows interest in and imitates others (Range 3) • Begins to show concern for others (offers comfort) (Range 3) • Enjoys being with and talking to familiar people (Range 3) • Takes part in simple back-and-forth play with support (Range 3) • Begins to understand ‘mine’ and ‘yours’ (Range 4) • Begins to play with another child for short periods (Range 4)	Small-group activities; duplicate popular toys to reduce conflict; key-person small groups; cooperative songs and games; modelling kindness; home corner for shared play; familiar peer groupings.	**SEND:** Support parallel play and model turn-taking; keep groups small and familiar; use intensive interaction. **EAL:** Use cooperative non-verbal games; pair with a bilingual buddy.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Sunshines **B5M Range 4-5**	To play cooperatively with others for short periods, beginning to share, take turns and form friendships.	• Plays cooperatively with another child for a short time (Range 4) • Takes turns and begins to share, with support (Range 4) • Begins to follow simple group rules and routines (Range 4) • Forms special friendships with peers (Range 5) • Seeks others to share experiences ('look at me') (Range 5) • Shows affection and concern for special people (Range 5) • Initiates play and invites others to join (Range 5) • Resolves some conflicts with adult help, using words (Range 5)	Cooperative and small-group games; turn-taking resources and timers; role-play and home corner; kindness modelled and praised; group projects; circle time; friendship stories; supported conflict resolution.	**SEND:** Scaffold play as an adult; use social stories for sharing/turns and visual turn cues; keep groups small. **EAL:** Use low-language turn-taking games; pair with a bilingual peer; model friendship words.
Preschool **B5M Range 5-6**	To build positive relationships, work and play cooperatively, take turns, resolve conflict and form good friendships — ready for school.	• Plays cooperatively, taking turns and sharing fairly (Range 5) • Forms positive relationships with adults and friends with peers (Range 5) • Shows sensitivity to others' needs and feelings (Range 5) • Works as part of a group, taking on different roles (Range 6) • Resolves conflicts through negotiation and compromise (Range 6) • Listens to and respects the ideas of others (Range 6) • Helps, includes and shows kindness to others (Range 6) • Develops a sense of belonging to the group (Range 6) • Builds respectful relationships with new adults (school readiness) (Range 6)	Collaborative projects and group challenges; circle/community time; team and turn-taking games; role-play that needs cooperation; negotiation scripts; 'buddy' systems; feelings stories; school transition visits.	**SEND:** Provide structured cooperative roles; use social stories and comic-strip conversations; mediate conflict; try a circle of friends. **EAL:** Use visual negotiation scripts and collaborative tasks; run a buddy system; value home-language friendships.

Communication & Language

A prime area. Children develop the listening, attention, understanding and spoken language that underpin all later learning. The foundations are built through warm interaction, back-and-forth conversation, songs, rhymes and a language-rich environment.

End point — Early Learning Goal(s): Listening, Attention and Understanding; Speaking.

Listening, Attention & Understanding

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Toddlers **B5M Range 1-2**	To listen and respond to familiar voices, sounds and simple words, and begin to understand single words linked to everyday routines.	• Turns towards familiar voices and everyday sounds (Range 1) • Stops, looks or listens when hears own name (Range 1) • Pays attention to a person or object for short bursts (shared attention) (Range 1) • Responds to simple gestures (e.g. arms up for 'up') (Range 2) • Understands single words in context (cup, ball, daddy) (Range 2) • Anticipates familiar routines and action rhymes (Range 2) • Follows a very simple instruction paired with a gesture (Range 2) • Attends to and enjoys action songs and finger rhymes (Range 2)	Cosy low-arousal listening corner with soft furnishings; treasure baskets and sound-makers; baskets of real everyday objects; daily song and rhyme time; named photos of key people; familiar-voice recordings; visual timetables; now and next boards	**SEND:** Reduce background noise; use exaggerated intonation, gesture and objects of reference; allow extra processing time. **EAL:** Learn key words in the child's home language; use their name and objects to gain and hold attention.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Raindrops **B5M Range 2-3/4**	To concentrate on an activity of their own choice for a short time and understand simple instructions and questions about the here-and-now.	• Listens to and enjoys rhythmic, patterned speech and songs (Range 2) • Looks at a familiar object or person when it is named (Range 2) • Recognises and responds to many familiar words and names (Range 2) • Listens to and joins in with familiar songs, rhymes and stories (Range 3) • Understands simple 'where' and 'what' questions (Range 3) • Follows a one-part instruction ('get your coat') (Range 3) • Identifies familiar objects and pictures when named (Range 3) • Understands many more words than can say (Range 3) • Points to body parts or pictures in a book when asked (Range 3) • Single-channelled attention: focuses on own chosen activity (Range 4) • Shifts attention when prompted by name (with support) (Range 4)	Story sacks, props and puppets; picture lotto and 'where's the…?' games; book corner at child height; visual cue cards; small-group song time; real objects to match to words.	**SEND:** Pair words with Makaton signs and visuals; simplify to one key word; check understanding non-verbally. **EAL:** Use real objects and photos; repeat and label; warmly welcome and use the home language.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Sunshines **B5M Range 4-5**	To listen to and understand longer instructions, simple stories and conversations, and begin to respond appropriately.	• Understands simple concepts (big/little, more) (Range 4) • Anticipates and joins in repeated refrains in stories (Range 4) • Shifts own attention between speaker and task with support (Range 4) • Follows a two-part instruction ('get your shoes and sit down') (Range 5) • Listens to stories with increasing attention and recall (Range 5) • Understands 'who' and 'why' questions (Range 4) • Understands positional words (in, on, under) (Range 5) • Begins to listen and do at the same time during play (Range 5)	Story-mapping props and small-world play; tunnels and boxes for positional play; 'Simon says' and listening games; visual timetable; quiet group story time; question prompts.	**SEND:** Give instructions one part at a time with visual cues; apply the 10-second rule for processing; use a now/next board. **EAL:** Use visual timetables; pre-teach key vocabulary; provide dual-language labels and a bilingual buddy.
Preschool **B5M Range 5-6**	To listen attentively, follow multi-step instructions and understand and respond to questions, stories and discussions — ready for school.	• Maintains attention and sits to listen in a group for an appropriate time (Range 5) • Recalls key events in longer stories and predicts what may happen (Range 5) • Concentrates on chosen activities, ignoring distractions (Range 5) • Follows instructions with three parts (Range 6) • Understands and answers 'how' and 'why' questions (Range 6) • Responds to what they hear with relevant comments or questions (Range 6) • Understands a range of complex sentences and tenses (Range 6) • Engages in back-and-forth conversation, taking turns (Range 6) • Two-channelled attention: listens and does for a short span (Range 6)	Whole-group carpet sessions and circle time; talk partners and barrier games; fiction and non-fiction books; open questioning; daily story; review/reflection time; role-play that requires listening (café, shop).	**SEND:** Chunk multi-step instructions; use visual prompts and symbols; pre-warn transitions; offer a quiet listening space. **EAL:** Use visuals to support questions; pre-teach topic vocabulary; pair with a bilingual peer; value home-language listening.

Speaking

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Toddlers **B5M Range 1-2**	To communicate needs and interests through gesture, sounds and first words.	• Babbles tunefully and uses sounds to gain attention (Range 1) • Uses gestures to communicate — pointing, reaching, waving (Range 1) • Takes turns in babbling vocal 'conversations' (Range 1) • Copies sounds and actions modelled by adults (Range 1) • Says first few single words (mama, more, no) (Range 2) • Combines a word and a gesture to make needs known (Range 2) • Names familiar people and objects with single words (Range 2)	Adults who narrate and use 'serve and return'; mirrors and naming games; one-to-one interaction; singing; simple repeated language; dummies kept for sleep only to free speech.	**SEND:** Model single words with signs; respond to every attempt to communicate; create a communication-friendly space. **EAL:** Encourage babble and sounds in any language; share a few key words with the family.
Raindrops **B5M Range 2-3/4**	To use an expanding vocabulary of single words and begin to put two words to three together, forming short sentences.	• Uses intonation and gesture alongside words (Range 2) • Names a wide range of objects and actions (Range 2) • Echoes words and phrases from adults and songs (Range 2) • Uses 50+ single words (Range 2) • Begins to join two words ('more juice', 'daddy gone') (Range 3) • Asks for things using a word or short phrase (Range 3) • Fills in missing words in familiar rhymes and songs (Range 3) • Begins to use simple pronouns ('me', 'my') (Range 4) • Begins to use three-word phrases ('more juice please') (Range 4)	Commentary-rich adults; expansion modelling (child 'car' → 'yes, a red car'); naming books; narrated routines; songs with pauses; small-world play to prompt talk; talk prioritised over screens.	**SEND:** Offer object/photo choices to prompt words; use Makaton; consider PECS if needed; never pressure the child to talk. **EAL:** Accept and celebrate words in the home language and code-switching; share dual-language books.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Sunshines **B5M Range 4-5**	To use longer phrases and simple sentences to share ideas, ask questions and talk about what they are doing.	• Uses three- to four-word phrases and simple sentences (Range 4) • Uses pronouns, plurals and prepositions (with errors) (Range 4) • Asks simple questions ('what's that?', 'where going?') (Range 4) • Uses talk to accompany and direct their own play (Range 4) • Talks about what is happening and what they have done (Range 4) • Uses a rapidly growing vocabulary (200–500+ words) (Range 4) • Links ideas using 'and' (Range 4) • Holds a short conversation with some turn-taking (Range 4) • Uses language to pretend in role play (Range 5) • Begins to use longer sentences with 'because' (Range 5) • Retells a simple past event in the correct order (Range 5)	Role-play areas and small-world; open-ended resources to talk about; adults who recast errors (model, don't correct); 'tell me about…' prompts; planned new vocabulary; story re-telling; songs and rhymes.	**SEND:** Expand and model rather than correct; use visuals and signing; accept non-verbal responses; refer to SLT if needed. **EAL:** Model simple sentences with props; record home-language vocabulary; use talk partners.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Preschool **B5M Range 5-6**	To express themselves in full sentences, use new vocabulary, recount events and use talk to organise thinking — ready for school.	• Speaks in full sentences, joined with connectives (because, and, so) (Range 5) • Uses a wide and increasing vocabulary, including taught words (Range 5) • Uses past, present and future tenses (mostly accurately) (Range 5) • Retells events and narratives in sequence (Range 5) • Asks questions to find out more and check understanding (Range 5) • Speech is mostly clear to unfamiliar adults (Range 5) • Uses talk to plan, organise and reason (Range 6) • Uses language to imagine and recreate roles in play (Range 6) • Takes turns in longer conversations, staying on topic (Range 6)	Rich role-play (vets, post office, home corner); talk-for-writing and story scribing; 'word of the week'; show-and-tell; open questions and discussion; non-fiction texts; visiting speakers.	**SEND:** Use visuals, symbols and sentence starters; consider AAC/communication aids; build talk through small groups. **EAL:** Pre-teach topic vocabulary; let the child rehearse retelling in home language first; share bilingual stories.

Physical Development

A prime area. Children develop control, coordination and strength through active play — building the gross-motor and fine-motor skills, and the healthy, independent self-care habits, that support wellbeing, writing and school readiness.

End point — Early Learning Goal(s): Gross Motor Skills; Fine Motor Skills.

Gross Motor Skills

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Toddlers **B5M Range 1-2**	To become mobile and develop balance and coordination — from sitting to crawling, pulling to stand and first steps.	• Lifts head and chest when lying on tummy (Range 1) • Rolls from tummy to back and back to tummy (Range 1) • Reaches for, grasps and kicks at toys when lying down (Range 1) • Sits unsupported and reaches without toppling (Range 2) • Crawls, bottom-shuffles or rolls to move (Range 2) • Pulls to standing using furniture (Range 2) • Cruises along furniture holding on (Range 2) • Stands alone momentarily (Range 2) • Takes first independent steps and begins to walk (Range 2) • Squats to pick up a toy and stands again (Range 2) • Climbs onto low furniture; begins stairs with support (Range 2)	Safe, clutter-free floor space; sturdy low furniture to cruise; push-along walkers; soft-play shapes and ramps; treasure placed to crawl towards; supervised tummy-time; varied floor textures.	**SEND:** Follow physio advice on positioning; offer supported sitting/standing and sensory-rich floor play; use adapted equipment. **EAL:** Demonstrate and model movements; rely on gesture, which is less language-dependent.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Raindrops **B5M Range 2-3/4**	To walk confidently and find new ways of moving — climbing, pushing, pulling and beginning to run.	• Walks independently, often with arms up for balance (Range 2) • Sits down from standing and gets back up independently (Range 2) • Crawls up steps and climbs onto low equipment with confidence (Range 2) • Walks confidently; stops, starts and changes direction (Range 3) • Begins to run (may find stopping hard) (Range 3) • Squats steadily and rises without using hands (Range 3) • Climbs onto and down from low equipment (Range 3) • Pushes and pulls wheeled toys and large objects (Range 3) • Walks up stairs, two feet per step, holding a rail (Range 3) • Rides sit-on and push-along toys (Range 3) • Kicks a large ball with support (Range 4) • Runs on whole foot with increasing steadiness (Range 4)	Ride-on and push/pull toys; low climbing frame and soft play; balls of various sizes; tunnels; trolleys to load and push; ramps, crates and tyres; daily outdoor space to run safely.	**SEND:** Provide stable support for walking and soft landing areas; use hand-over-hand support; adjust the challenge. **EAL:** Model and join in alongside the child; repeat simple action words.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Sunshines **B5M Range 4-5**	To move with increasing control — running, jumping, climbing and beginning to balance and use large equipment.	• Jumps with two feet together off the floor or a low step (Range 4) • Pedals a tricycle or scoots a balance bike (Range 4) • Runs safely on whole foot (Range 4) • Climbs confidently and pulls self up on nursery climbing equipment (Range 4) • Kicks a large ball forwards (Range 4) • Runs safely, avoiding obstacles and stopping when needed (Range 5) • Walks up and down stairs with alternating feet (rail) (Range 5) • Climbs confidently on age-appropriate apparatus (Range 5) • Balances momentarily on one foot; walks along a line (Range 5) • Throws, rolls and kicks a ball with more direction (Range 5) • Uses slides and climbing frames more independently (Range 5)	Trikes and balance bikes; balance beams and planks; climbing frames; large balls, beanbags and targets; obstacle courses, hoops and tunnels; movement to music; loose parts (crates, tyres).	**SEND:** Break skills into small steps; provide rails and supports; adapt equipment height; allow more time and repetition. **EAL:** Use visual sequences and demonstration; share action songs.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Preschool **B5M Range 5-6**	To move confidently, safely and with control — negotiating space and obstacles and showing strength, balance and coordination, ready for PE and active school life.	• Shows awareness of space, themselves and others (Range 5) • Pedals and steers a bike or trike confidently (Range 5) • Develops overall strength, stamina, balance and coordination (Range 5) • Runs skilfully, changing speed and direction (Range 6) • Jumps off objects and lands well; hops on one foot (Range 6) • Climbs, balances and travels on apparatus with control (Range 6) • Catches, throws, kicks and rolls a ball with increasing accuracy (Range 6) • Balances on one foot and walks heel-to-toe along a beam (Range 6) • Moves in varied ways — skipping, galloping, slithering (Range 6) • Negotiates obstacles and manages risk in physical play (Range 6)	Large apparatus and obstacle courses; balls, bats and targets; bikes and scooters; ribbons and streamers; ‘dough disco’ and ‘squiggle while you wiggle’; daily outdoor and active sessions; team games.	**SEND:** Differentiate equipment and expectations; follow OT/physio targets; scaffold balance and ball skills; plan movement breaks. **EAL:** Model games; use visual rules; pair with a peer; keep verbal instruction minimal.

Fine Motor Skills

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Toddlers **B5M Range 1-2**	To explore and handle objects, developing the grasp and release needed to manipulate things and beginning self-feeding, using spoons when needed.	• Reaches for and grasps objects with whole hand (Range 1) • Bangs two objects together (Range 1) • Explores objects by mouthing, shaking and turning them (Range 1) • Passes objects from one hand to the other (Range 2) • Releases objects deliberately (Range 2) • Develops pincer grasp for small items (finger food) (Range 2) • Pokes and points with index finger (Range 2) • Puts objects in and takes them out of containers (Range 2) • Holds a chunky crayon and makes marks by chance (Range 2)	Treasure baskets and heuristic play (pots, chains, ribbons); finger foods; posting boxes; chunky crayons; stacking cups; soft blocks; sensory trays; objects of varied size and texture.	**SEND:** Offer easy-grip and cause-and-effect toys; use hand-over-hand support; provide varied textures and positioning support. **EAL:** Demonstrate tasks; name tools simply and repeatedly.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Raindrops **B5M Range 2-3/4**	To use hands with more control for stacking, posting, mark making (using a whole hand grasp) and self-care skills.	• Uses a pincer grasp to pick up and release small objects (Range 2) • Holds a spoon and begins to bring it to mouth (Range 2) • Stacks two blocks or objects (Range 2) • Builds a small tower of 2–4 blocks (Range 3) • Posts shapes into a shape-sorter (Range 3) • Makes marks and scribbles with a whole-hand grasp (Range 3) • Turns chunky board-book pages (Range 3) • Uses a spoon to feed self (with spills) (Range 3) • Begins to drink from an open cup independently (Range 3) • Fills and empties containers with sand and water (Range 3) • Uses simple tools (toy hammer, beater) (Range 3) • Begins to hold mark-making tools with fingers rather than a whole fist (Range 4) • Builds a tower of 4–6 blocks (Range 4)	Stacking blocks and shape sorters; chunky crayons and large paper; board books; spoons and scoops; sand and water; dough; large threading beads; self-serve snack.	**SEND:** Provide chunky/adapted tools; build hand strength with squeezy play; stabilise materials (e.g. non-slip mats). **EAL:** Model how tools are used; repeat tool names with objects.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Sunshines **B5M Range 4-5**	To develop hand strength and control for tool use, early mark-making (Holds mark-making tools with thumb and all fingers) and dressing skills.	• Builds taller towers and simple constructions (6+ blocks) (Range 4) • Uses a comfortable grip, moving toward a tripod grasp (Range 4) • Draws lines, circles and enclosed shapes with meaning (Range 4) • Threads large beads; completes inset puzzles (Range 4) • Snips with child scissors / cuts along a line with help (Range 4) • Uses one-handed tools — rollers, tongs, hammers (Range 4) • Feeds self with a spoon and begins to use a fork (Range 4) • Begins to put on and take off easy clothing (Range 4) • Holds mark-making tools with thumb and fingers, beginning a tripod grip (Range 5) • Uses scissors to make snips and begin to cut along a line (Range 5) • Manipulates small objects and fastenings with increasing control (Range 5)	Dough and malleable materials (dough disco); threading; child scissors; tongs, tweezers and pegs; jigsaws; triangular crayons; easels; tool benches; 'funky fingers' fine-motor station.	**SEND:** Use pencil grips and spring-loaded scissors; build strength with dough/finger-gym; offer left-handed tools and hand-over-hand. **EAL:** Demonstrate techniques; label tools with photo cues.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Preschool **B5M Range 5-6**	To use an efficient tripod grip and show accuracy and control with tools, fastenings and early writing — ready for school.	• Holds a pencil with an effective tripod grip (Range 5) • Shows increasing control with small tools (tweezers, pipettes) (Range 5) • Makes more controlled marks, drawing shapes and lines (Range 5) • Cuts along lines and around shapes with scissors (Range 6) • Copies and writes some recognisable letters, including own name (Range 6) • Draws detailed pictures with recognisable features (Range 6) • Uses a range of tools competently and safely (Range 6) • Does up and undoes buttons, zips and Velcro (Range 6) • Uses a knife and fork together (Range 6) • Shows a consistent dominant hand (Range 6) • Forms letters using correct movements (with guidance) (Range 6)	Mark-making area with varied tools; name-writing cards; cutting trays; small construction (Lego); dressing frames; cutlery at lunch; tweezers and pipettes; large-scale chalk; letter-formation prompts.	**SEND:** Provide triangular pencils, grips, adapted scissors and slope boards; follow OT advice; break tasks down; use multisensory letter formation. **EAL:** Model letter formation; use name cards; pair with a peer for support.

Health & Self-Care

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Toddlers **B5M Range 1-2**	To begin to take part in care routines and show awareness of their own needs.	• Shows when hungry, tired or uncomfortable (Range 1) • Opens mouth for the spoon; begins finger feeding (Range 1) • Holds out arms and legs to help with dressing (Range 1) • Settles into a predictable sleep and rest routine (Range 1) • Enjoys nappy changes as warm interaction time (Range 1) • Drinks from a beaker or cup with support (Range 2) • Explores a range of food tastes and textures (Range 2) • Begins to hold a spoon and bring food towards mouth (Range 2)	Consistent care routines and key-person system; comfortable feeding and sleep spaces; healthy varied snacks; unhurried care interactions; water freely available; visual routine cues.	**SEND:** Keep care routines consistent; consider sensory needs at feeding/changing; work closely with parents and the health team. **EAL:** Gather care and feeding information from the family; use visuals for routines.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Raindrops **B5M Range 2-3/4**	To participate actively in care routines and begin to show independence in feeding and dressing, showing a developing awareness of toileting needs.	• Communicates hunger, thirst or tiredness with gestures or sounds (Range 2) • Finger feeds and begins to hold a spoon at mealtimes (Range 2) • Co-operates with nappy changing and dressing routines (Range 2) • Feeds self with a spoon and drinks from an open cup (Range 3) • Helps with dressing and undressing (Range 3) • Shows awareness of a wet or soiled nappy (Range 3) • Washes hands with help at routine times (Range 3) • Tells an adult about basic needs by word or gesture (Range 3) • Shows interest in the potty / beginnings of toileting (Range 3) • Enjoys being active and rests when tired (Range 3) • Begins to recognise when they need the toilet and may tell an adult (Range 4) • Begins to wash and dry own hands with support (Range 4)	Low sinks and steps; visual handwashing prompts; self-serve snack; coat pegs at child height; potties and child toilets; toileting picture books; predictable routine; mirrors for self-care.	**SEND:** Use visual care sequences and adapted utensils; allow extra time; agree an intimate-care plan. **EAL:** Provide dual-language care words and photos of routines; involve family.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Sunshines **B5M Range 4-5**	To manage aspects of personal care independently — toileting, handwashing and dressing — with growing understanding of healthy choices.	• Uses the toilet or potty with increasing independence (Range 4) • Washes and dries hands independently at key times (Range 4) • Puts on and takes off easy clothing and shoes (Range 4) • Pours own drink and serves some of own snack (Range 4) • Names some healthy foods and shows preferences (Range 4) • Follows simple hygiene routines (tissue, handwashing) (Range 4) • Tells adults clearly about needs and discomfort (Range 4) • Recognises and talks about some healthy and less healthy choices (Range 5) • Is increasingly independent in meeting own care needs (toileting, dressing) (Range 5) • Begins to understand safety rules and why they matter (Range 5)	Accessible toilets with visual sequences; self-serve snack and water; dressing and role-play clothes; cooking and growing activities; picture routines for hygiene; 'I can do it myself' ethos.	**SEND:** Use visual step-by-step sequences (toileting/handwashing/dressing) and backward chaining; agree a care/toileting plan with parents. **EAL:** Use picture sequences and modelling; learn key care words in the home language.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Preschool **B5M Range 5-6**	To be independent in personal care and understand the importance of healthy eating, exercise, hygiene and safety — ready for school.	• Uses cutlery and table manners appropriately (Range 5) • Manages toileting with minimal support (Range 5) • Puts on own coat and shoes with little help (Range 5) • Goes to the toilet independently and manages own hygiene (Range 6) • Dresses and undresses, including coat and most fastenings (Range 6) • Washes hands thoroughly and understands why (Range 6) • Makes and explains healthy choices about food and activity (Range 6) • Understands the importance of physical activity and rest (Range 6) • Tells adults when unwell or hurt and manages basic needs (Range 6) • Understands tooth-brushing and basic oral health (Range 6) • Follows simple safety rules and recognises risk (Range 6) • Is able to cut own snack and pour own drinks. (Range 6)	Independent self-care expectations; healthy-eating and oral-health activities; cooking and growing food; changing for outdoor/PE; visiting professionals (dentist, road safety); risk-and-challenge play; self-registration; understanding changes to heart rate.	**SEND:** Provide independence aids (visual checklists, adapted clothing); set personalised self-care targets; use healthy-choice visuals. **EAL:** Use visual menus and pictorial safety rules; involve the family in routines.

Literacy

A specific area. Building on Communication & Language, children develop a love of reading, the phonological awareness and early phonics that lead to word reading, and the physical and compositional skills for early writing.

End point — Early Learning Goal(s): Comprehension; Word Reading; Writing.

Comprehension (love of reading & understanding texts)

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Toddlers **B5M Range 1-2**	To enjoy sharing books with a familiar adult and respond to pictures, rhymes and stories.	• Enjoys being close to an adult sharing a book (Range 1) • Responds to lift-the-flap and texture books (Range 1) • Looks at high-contrast and photo books with interest (Range 1) • Explores books physically (holds, pats, turns pages) (Range 2) • Shows interest in pictures and points to them (Range 2) • Anticipates and enjoys repeated rhymes and songs (Range 2) • Brings a favourite book to an adult (Range 2) • Reacts to familiar pictures with sounds or words (Range 2)	Board, cloth and texture books; cosy book corner; one-to-one lap reading; daily song and rhyme time; real-life photo books; books in treasure baskets.	**SEND:** Offer tactile/sensory books and short shared moments; use objects of reference. **EAL:** Provide dual-language and wordless books; encourage families to share stories at home.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Raindrops **B5M Range 2-3/4**	To actively join in with sharing favourite books and rhymes and show understanding of simple pictures and words.	• Handles books, turning pages (often several at a time) (Range 2) • Points to and vocalises about pictures in books (Range 2) • Joins in with actions in familiar rhymes (Range 2) • Has favourite books and requests them repeatedly (Range 3) • Turns board-book pages and points to named pictures (Range 3) • Joins in with actions and key words in stories and rhymes (Range 3) • Names familiar objects and characters in books (Range 3) • Fills in the missing word in a well-known rhyme (Range 4) • Holds a book the right way up and pretends to read (Range 4) • Listens to short stories with attention (Range 4)	Repetition-rich books; story sacks and props; nursery-rhyme cards; small-group story time; puppets; books linked to interests; comfy reading area.	**SEND:** Choose repetitive, predictable texts; sign key words; use story props. **EAL:** Share stories in the home language; use picture-led books and key vocabulary.
Sunshines **B5M Range 4-5**	To listen to and understand simple stories, recalling and talking about what happens.	• Listens to and joins in with stories in a small group (Range 4) • Recalls some events and repeats refrains (Range 4) • Talks about pictures and what is happening (Range 4) • Answers simple ‘what’ and ‘who’ questions about a story (Range 4) • Holds a book correctly and turns pages one at a time (Range 4) • Has favourite stories, rhymes and songs (Range 4) • Knows that print and pictures carry meaning (Range 5) • Pretends to read to self or a toy (Range 5) • Suggests how a story might end (Range 5)	Daily story time; story maps and props; non-fiction about interests; question prompts; small-world to retell stories; reading area with cushions; rhyme of the week.	**SEND:** Use story sacks and visuals; sign key words; shorten and repeat stories; support retelling with symbols. **EAL:** Provide dual-language books; pre-teach story vocabulary; use props to carry meaning.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Preschool **B5M Range 5-6**	To understand and engage with a wide range of stories and non-fiction — retelling, predicting and talking about texts — building a love of reading for school.	• Listens attentively to longer stories and recalls the sequence (Range 5) • Understands new vocabulary met in books (Range 5) • Predicts what might happen next and how a story may end (Range 5) • Knows print is read left-to-right, top-to-bottom (Range 5) • Retells familiar stories using story language (Range 6) • Answers 'how' and 'why' questions about events and characters (Range 6) • Talks about characters' feelings and motivations (Range 6) • Chooses and enjoys both fiction and non-fiction (Range 6) • Engages in role play based on stories (Range 6)	Rich, diverse book stock; daily story; story-mapping and small-world retelling; book-based role play; topic non-fiction; lending library; talk-for-writing; visiting storytellers; lending library.	**SEND:** Use visual story maps and symbol-supported texts; pre-teach vocabulary; tell stories multisensorily. **EAL:** Provide bilingual books; let the child retell in home language; use visuals to support questioning.

Word Reading (phonological awareness & early phonics)

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Toddlers **B5M Range 1-2**	To tune into and enjoy a wide range of sounds.	• Notices and turns to everyday sounds (Range 1) • Distinguishes between familiar voices and sounds (Range 1) • Makes and responds to vocal sounds (cooing, gurgling) (Range 1) • Enjoys making sounds with voice and objects (Range 2) • Listens to rhythmic patterns in songs and rhymes (Range 2) • Responds to music and sound with movement (Range 2) • Joins in with sound-making and instruments (Range 2)	Sound-makers and instruments; sound walks; music and movement; treasure baskets; songs and rhymes; listening games; environmental-sound recordings.	**SEND:** Offer sound-rich sensory play; use vibration/visual cues for hearing needs; play listening games. **EAL:** Share rhymes and songs in both the home language and English; enjoy sound play.
Raindrops **B5M Range 2-3/4**	To listen to and copy sounds, and enjoy rhythm and rhyme in songs and stories.	• Enjoys babbling and playing with sounds (Range 2) • Makes sounds with objects and instruments, exploring loud and quiet (Range 2) • Moves whole body to sounds and music they enjoy (Range 2) • Copies sounds, actions and simple rhythms (Range 3) • Joins in with the rhythm and refrains of songs (Range 3) • Enjoys rhyming and repetitive texts (Range 3) • Distinguishes sounds in the environment (Range 3) • Anticipates rhyming words in familiar rhymes (Range 4) • Beats out a simple rhythm (claps, taps) (Range 4)	Action and rhyming songs; instruments and shakers; clapping games; rhythm sticks; sound lotto; small-group music; favourite rhymes repeated.	**SEND:** Use instruments and sound-makers with visual/tactile sound cues; repeat often. **EAL:** Sing home-language songs; enjoy clapping rhythms together.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Sunshines **B5M Range 4-5**	To develop phonological awareness — hearing, distinguishing and playing with sounds, rhythm and rhyme (Phase 1 phonics).	• Listens to and joins in with repeated sounds, words and actions in stories and rhymes (Range 4) • Fills in the missing word or phrase in a known rhyme or song (Range 4) • Distinguishes between contrasting sounds (loud / quiet, fast / slow) (Range 4) • Recognises familiar logos and symbols in the environment (Range 4) • Joins in with and suggests rhyming words (Range 5) • Claps or taps the syllables in words and names (Range 5) • Recognises and continues simple sound patterns (Range 5) • Identifies familiar environmental and instrumental sounds (Range 5) • Enjoys alliteration and tongue-twisters (‘silly soup’) (Range 5) • Begins oral blending and segmenting with support (Range 5) • Recognises own name in print (Range 5)	Phase 1 phonics activities (all aspects); sound-discrimination games; rhyming and alliteration games; name cards; instruments; oral-blending games; print around the room.	**SEND:** Use multisensory sound games and signs for sounds; work with smaller sound sets; adapt for hearing loss. **EAL:** Notice sounds shared and different across languages; play lots of oral games with visuals.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Preschool **B5M Range 5-6**	To hear and say initial sounds, orally blend and segment, and begin to read some letters and simple words — ready for school phonics.	• Spots familiar words and logos in the environment (Range 5) • Shows awareness of rhyme and alliteration (Range 5) • Recognises words with the same initial sound (Range 5) • Hears and says the initial sound in words (Range 6) • Continues and generates a rhyming string (Range 6) • Orally blends and segments simple words (c-a-t = cat) (Range 6) • Counts and claps syllables in longer words (Range 6) • Knows that letters represent sounds (alphabetic principle) (Range 6) • Recognises some letters and the sounds they make (Range 6) • Reads some single letters / simple words where ready (Range 6)	Systematic Phase 1 (and emerging Phase 2) phonics; oral-blending games; sound buttons; name and high-frequency word cards; magnetic letters; alphabet displays; print-rich environment.	**SEND:** Use multisensory phonics (see/hear/say/do) and cued articulation; take smaller steps; try precision teaching; check hearing needs. **EAL:** Be aware of sounds absent from the home language; give extra modelling, picture cues and oral-blending practice.

Writing (mark-making to early writing)

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Toddlers **B5M Range 1-2**	To explore making marks with hands and tools.	• Makes marks in sensory materials (gloop, paint, food) (Range 1) • Watches adults making marks (Range 1) • Explores textures with hands and feet during messy play (Range 1) • Grasps and holds chunky mark-making tools (Range 2) • Makes random marks by chance with crayons or chalk (Range 2) • Uses whole-arm movements to make large marks (Range 2) • Enjoys the cause-and-effect of marks appearing (Range 2)	Sensory trays (foam, paint, sand); chunky crayons and chalk; large paper and easels; outdoor water and brushes; messy play; gloop and mud.	**SEND:** Provide large-scale and sensory mark-making; use hand-over-hand and easy-grip tools. **EAL:** Demonstrate; mark-making is language-neutral, so encourage it freely.
Raindrops **B5M Range 2-3/4**	To make marks with growing intention and enjoy a range of mark-making experiences.	• Makes marks with fingers in paint, sand and water (Range 2) • Shows interest in the marks made by crayons and chunky chalk (Range 2) • Enjoys making large marks with arm movements (paint, chalk) (Range 2) • Makes marks and scribbles spontaneously and with enjoyment (Range 3) • Holds a crayon with a whole-hand grasp (Range 3) • Makes marks on different surfaces and at different scales (Range 3) • Imitates lines and circular scribbles (Range 3) • Uses tools (rollers, stampers, chalk) to make marks (Range 3) • Distinguishes between marks they make (‘that’s mummy’) (Range 4) • Makes marks with intention and talks about them (Range 4)	Large-scale mark-making indoors and out; varied tools and surfaces; chunky crayons; paint; chalkboards; mud kitchen; ribbons for big movements; dough for hand strength.	**SEND:** Use vertical surfaces and big movements to build strength; provide adapted tools. **EAL:** Model; value marks made in any script.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Sunshines **B5M Range 4-5**	To give meaning to the marks they make and develop control for early writing.	• Ascribes meaning to marks ('that says my name') (Range 4) • Develops hand and finger strength for writing (Range 4) • Draws lines, circles and enclosed shapes with control (Range 4) • Imitates and copies some letter-like shapes (Range 4) • Uses a comfortable grip, moving toward a tripod grasp (Range 4) • Makes marks for a purpose in play (lists, labels) (Range 5) • Begins to recognise and copy the first letter of own name (Range 5) • Draws with increasing detail, such as a person with a head and legs (Range 5)	Mark-making in all areas (shop lists, registers); name cards to copy; dough disco / finger gym; chalk and paint at large scale; clipboards outdoors; tripod-grip tools.	**SEND:** Use dough disco/finger-gym and pencil grips; offer multisensory mark-making; allow alternatives to writing. **EAL:** Use name cards and modelling; encourage mark-making in the home language/script.
Preschool **B5M Range 5-6**	To use a tripod grip to write recognisable letters, write own name and begin to write words and labels — ready for school.	• Holds a pencil with an effective tripod grip (Range 5) • Uses some print and letter-like shapes to write for a purpose (Range 5) • Writes some letters of own name (Range 5) • Writes some recognisable letters, most correctly formed (Range 6) • Writes own name from memory (Range 6) • Writes for a purpose — labels, captions, lists (Range 6) • Uses initial sounds to attempt writing words (Range 6) • Forms most lower-case letters correctly (with guidance) (Range 6) • Writes letters and words left to right (Range 6) • Copies and writes some familiar words (Range 6)	Inviting writing area with varied paper, tools and reasons to write; name and letter-formation cards; purposeful writing in role play; phonics-linked writing; clipboards; word banks and alphabet strips.	**SEND:** Provide slope boards, grips and adapted scissors; use multisensory letter formation; offer scribing/ICT alternatives; follow OT targets. **EAL:** Model letter formation; use name and key-word cards; accept home-script writing; provide picture word banks.

Mathematics

A specific area. Children build a deep, secure understanding of number through counting, subitising and exploring composition, alongside spatial reasoning, shape, measure and pattern, using rich mathematical language in everyday play.

End point — Early Learning Goal(s): Number; Numerical Patterns. (Shape, Space & Measure and Pattern are not separate ELGs at the end of Reception but are sequenced here as they underpin number sense and wider mathematical thinking.)

Number

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Toddlers **B5M Range 1-2**	To experience number through everyday play, songs and routines.	• Notices when a familiar object is hidden or taken away (Range 1) • Responds to changes in the amount of food or toys offered (Range 1) • Enjoys songs and rhymes with repeated actions and patterns (Range 1) • Joins in with number songs and rhymes (Range 2) • Notices changes in amount (‘all gone’, ‘more’) (Range 2) • Explores filling and emptying containers (Range 2) • Develops an awareness of ‘one’ and ‘lots’ (Range 2) • Reaches for or selects more of a desired thing (Range 2) • Enjoys finger rhymes involving counting actions (Range 2)	Number songs and rhymes; treasure baskets and containers; stacking and posting toys; everyday counting (steps, fingers); heuristic play; number picture books.	**SEND:** Use multisensory number songs with actions and props; offer cause-and-effect counting toys. **EAL:** Count in the home language and English; share number rhymes.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Raindrops **B5M Range 2-3/4**	To begin to use some number names and notice quantity in play.	• Shows interest in objects being hidden and found ('where's it gone?') (Range 2) • Says some number names in play and song (Range 2) • Understands 'more' and 'lots'; notices 'all gone' (Range 2) • Joins in with counting actions (Range 3) • Selects 'one' when asked; begins to subitise 1–2 (Range 3) • Compares amounts informally (more / less) (Range 3) • Enjoys number rhymes with props (Range 3) • Sorts and groups objects in simple ways in play (Range 4) • Begins to notice when something is added or taken away (Range 4)	Number rhymes with props (5 little ducks); loose parts to sort and count; everyday counting; number books; containers; small-world for counting; fingers and toes.	**SEND:** Use repetition and tactile counting objects; sign numbers. **EAL:** Count in both languages; enjoy number songs from home cultures.
Sunshines **B5M Range 4-5**	To count small groups, recognise small quantities and begin to understand that numbers tell us how many.	• Says some counting words in sequence, sometimes skipping numbers ('1, 2, 3, 5') (Range 4) • Uses the language of quantity ('more', 'a lot', 'one') in play (Range 4) • Notices that a group changes in quantity when something is added or taken away (Range 4) • Recites some numbers in order (often to 5 or 10) (Range 5) • Counts a few objects with some 1:1 correspondence (Range 5) • Subitises (recognises without counting) up to 3 (Range 5) • Begins to understand the last number tells how many (Range 5) • Shows 'finger numbers' up to 5 (Range 5) • Compares two small groups (more / fewer / same) (Range 5) • Links numerals to amounts in play with support (Range 5)	Counting collections; number tracks and numerals; subitising cards and dice; five and ten frames; fingers; number rhymes; everyday counting (snack, register).	**SEND:** Use concrete manipulatives and dot-pattern subitising; keep number ranges small; sign numbers. **EAL:** Count in both languages; use visuals and everyday counting.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Preschool **B5M Range 5-6**	To count confidently, know numbers to 10, subitise and understand the composition of numbers — ready for school maths.	• Counts up to 5 objects, matching one number name to each (Range 5) • Shows 'finger numbers' and subitises up to 3–4 (Range 5) • Solves real problems with numbers up to 5 ('one each') (Range 5) • Counts objects, actions and sounds reliably (1:1) (Range 6) • Knows the cardinal value (last number = how many) (Range 6) • Subitises quantities up to 5 (Range 6) • Recognises numerals to 10 and links them to quantities (Range 6) • Understands the 'one more / one fewer' relationship (Range 6) • Explores composition of numbers to 5 (part–whole) (Range 6) • Begins to count beyond 10 and notice patterns (Range 6) • Compares quantities: more than, fewer than, the same (Range 6)	Numerals, number tracks/lines and ten frames; subitising and dice games; counting collections; part–whole models; manipulatives (e.g. Numicon); number rhymes; maths in routines.	**SEND:** Use a concrete–pictorial–abstract approach with Numicon/tactile resources; take smaller steps; try precision teaching and visuals. **EAL:** Build number vocabulary in both languages; use visual number lines; manipulatives reduce the language load.

Shape, Space & Measure (and Pattern)

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Toddlers **B5M Range 1-2**	To explore shape, space and size through sensory play and movement.	• Explores objects of different shapes by grasping and mouthing (Range 1) • Watches and tracks moving objects (Range 1) • Responds to being moved up, down, in and out during play and care (Range 1) • Explores how things fit together and inside one another (Range 2) • Investigates objects of different shapes and sizes (Range 2) • Moves and fits self into spaces (boxes, tunnels) (Range 2) • Notices big and small in play (Range 2) • Explores filling and emptying (capacity) (Range 2) • Manipulates 3D objects, turning them to fit (Range 2)	Posting and stacking toys; treasure baskets; boxes, tunnels and crates; shape sorters; nesting cups; sand and water; dens to climb in and out of.	**SEND:** Offer posting/stacking with adapted grips; provide sensory shape exploration. **EAL:** Demonstrate; name shapes simply.
Raindrops **B5M Range 2-3/4**	To explore shapes, space, size and simple patterns in everyday play, developing language to describe experiences.	• Explores posting and fitting objects into containers (Range 2) • Enjoys filling and emptying, and knocking down towers (Range 2) • Moves around, through and under obstacles in play (Range 2) • Selects shapes to fit a space or build with (Range 3) • Uses positional words in action (in, on, under) with support (Range 3) • Notices and responds to routines and patterns in the environment. (Range 3) • Compares sizes (big / little) in play (Range 3) • Stacks and balances blocks of different shapes (Range 3) • Completes simple inset puzzles (Range 4) • Begins to use language of size (big, little) (Range 4)	Blocks and construction; shape sorters and inset puzzles; tunnels and boxes; pattern resources (peg boards, threading); sand and water with containers.	**SEND:** Use inset puzzles with knobs and tactile shapes; use hand-over-hand support. **EAL:** Model; use positional gestures.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Sunshines **B5M Range 4-5**	To recognise and name some shapes, use positional language and copy and continue simple patterns.	• Notices simple shapes and patterns in pictures and clothing (stripes, spots) (Range 4) • Sorts objects by shape or size (Range 4) • Uses the language of size (big, little, tall, heavy) in play (Range 4) • Anticipates time-based events in the routine ('after snack, outside') (Range 4) • Recognises and names some 2D and 3D shapes (Range 5) • Talks about shapes' properties informally ('pointy', 'round') (Range 5) • Uses positional language (in, on, under, next to) (Range 5) • Copies and continues a simple AB repeating pattern (Range 5) • Compares size, length and weight using everyday words (Range 5) • Completes inset and simple jigsaw puzzles (Range 5) • Builds and balances with a range of construction (Range 5)	2D/3D shape resources and shape hunts; block play; pattern-making (beads, pegs, printing); positional-language games and obstacle courses; balance scales; puzzles; loose parts; junk modelling.	**SEND:** Sort shapes with visual/tactile cues; pair positional language with actions; repeat often. **EAL:** Use positional words with gesture; name shapes in both languages.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Preschool **B5M Range 5-6**	To name and describe shapes, understand position, size, measure and pattern, and use mathematical language — ready for school.	• Selects shapes appropriately for a task (flat surface, triangle for a roof) (Range 5) • Uses positional language in play (on top, behind, between) (Range 5) • Compares length, weight and capacity using everyday language (Range 5) • Names and describes 2D and 3D shapes and their properties (Range 6) • Selects, rotates and combines shapes to make pictures and models (Range 6) • Uses positional and directional language accurately (Range 6) • Compares and orders by length, height, weight and capacity (Range 6) • Copies, continues and creates own repeating patterns (Range 6) • Talks about and sequences time and daily routines (Range 6) • Notices symmetry and simple spatial relationships (Range 6) • Uses maths language to reason and solve problems in play (Range 6)	Shape and construction resources; pattern-making and printing; measuring tools (scales, rulers, jugs); tangrams; positional games and maps; daily-routine timelines; problem-solving challenges.	**SEND:** Use tactile/large shapes and visual pattern templates; provide manipulatives; break tasks into steps. **EAL:** Support maths talk with visuals and gesture; use key-vocabulary cards; model patterns.

Understanding the World

A specific area. Children make sense of their physical world and their community through first-hand experiences, exploring the natural world, people, places, cultures and the passing of time.

End point — Early Learning Goal(s): Past and Present; People, Culture and Communities; The Natural World.

Past & Present

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Toddlers **B5M Range 1-2**	To experience familiar routines and people, building a sense of the daily rhythm.	• Recognises and responds to the key person's face and voice (Range 1) • Settles into familiar care routines (feeding, sleeping, changing) (Range 1) • Shows excitement when familiar people arrive (Range 1) • Anticipates familiar daily routines and events (Range 2) • Recognises familiar people (family, key person) (Range 2) • Explores photographs of self and family (Range 2) • Responds to familiar songs marking parts of the day (Range 2) • Shows recognition of regular carers and visitors (Range 2)	Predictable visual routine; family photo books; mirrors and self-photos; consistent key person; songs for routines; 'all about me' displays.	**SEND:** Use photos of self and family as objects of reference; give consistent routine cues. **EAL:** Display family photos; learn family words in the home language.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Raindrops **B5M Range 2-3/4**	To recognise familiar people and routines and begin to recall recent events.	• Shows interest in toys and objects brought from home (Range 2) • Responds to songs and signals that mark changes in the routine (Range 2) • Recognises familiar places (the garden, the front door) (Range 2) • Recalls a recent event with adult prompting (Range 3) • Recognises and names familiar people in photos (Range 3) • Anticipates 'what comes next' in the day (Range 3) • Shows interest in family members and pets (Range 4) • Joins in with celebrating birthdays and special days (Range 4)	Family photo displays; visual timetable; 'now and next' boards; birthday celebrations; books about families; talk about home and nursery.	**SEND:** Use now/next visuals and personal photo books; repeat often. **EAL:** Use dual-language family vocabulary; celebrate home cultures.
Sunshines **B5M Range 4-5**	To talk about themselves, their family and familiar past and present events.	• Talks about own family and home with prompts (Range 4) • Recognises self and family members in past photos and shows interest in them (Range 4) • Talks about recent events in own experience with support (Range 4) • Remembers and talks about significant events (Range 5) • Uses time language informally (yesterday, soon) with errors (Range 5) • Notices differences between babies, children and grown-ups (Range 5) • Shows interest in jobs and roles people do (Range 5) • Sequences a familiar routine (Range 5)	All-about-me and family floor books; photos and timelines; celebrations and festivals; role play of jobs; visitors who talk about their work; books about growing up.	**SEND:** Use visual timelines and sequencing supports with personal photos; keep experiences concrete. **EAL:** Make family floor books; learn home-language event words; use visuals.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Preschool **B5M Range 5-6**	To talk about past and present events in their own and others' lives and understand the roles people play — ready for school.	• Talks about past and present events in their life and family (Range 5) • Comments on images of the past ('then and now') (Range 5) • Orders familiar events in a sequence (Range 5) • Uses everyday time language increasingly accurately (Range 6) • Knows about similarities and differences between people and families (Range 6) • Talks about the roles of people in society (nurse, firefighter) (Range 6) • Understands growth and change over time (life cycles, growing up) (Range 6)	Timelines and 'then and now' photos; visitors from different jobs and communities; books reflecting diversity; festivals across the year; growing plants / life cycles; family floor books.	**SEND:** Use visual timelines and concrete artefacts; support talk with symbols; pre-teach time vocabulary. **EAL:** Use time words in both languages; involve family; use visuals to support discussion.

People, Culture & Communities

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Toddlers **B5M Range 1-2**	To experience warmth and belonging within the nursery community.	• Develops a sense of belonging with a key person (Range 1) • Responds to familiar voices, songs and languages from home (Range 1) • Enjoys looking at faces and photos of familiar people (Range 1) • Experiences sensory cultural materials (music, fabrics, foods) (Range 2) • Responds positively to familiar adults and peers (Range 2) • Explores resources reflecting home and community (Range 2)	Diverse, home-reflecting resources; multicultural fabrics, music and food; family photos; warm key-person care; inclusive books and dolls.	**SEND:** Provide inclusive, sensory cultural resources; keep caregivers consistent. **EAL:** Reflect home cultures; welcome family; use home-language greetings.
Raindrops **B5M Range 2-3/4**	To become familiar with the people and routines of the nursery community.	• Develops a sense of belonging, responding to key person and familiar peers (Range 2) • Shows interest in familiar people and what they do (Range 2) • Enjoys sensory resources reflecting home cultures (music, fabrics) (Range 2) • Shows familiarity with peers and adults in the room (Range 3) • Joins in with group routines and celebrations (Range 3) • Explores resources and images reflecting diversity (Range 3) • Shows interest in other children and their families (Range 3) • Notices differences between people, e.g. in photos and books (Range 4) • Joins in with family customs and routines shared at nursery (Range 4)	Group routines and rituals; celebration of festivals; diverse books, dolls and small-world; family displays; welcoming home languages; community visitors.	**SEND:** Keep groups small and familiar; use visuals for celebrations. **EAL:** Celebrate families' festivals; provide dual-language resources.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Sunshines **B5M Range 4-5**	To show interest in their own community and the lives and cultures of others, developing and understanding of the similarities and differences between themselves and others.	• Shows interest in the lives of people who are familiar to them (Range 4) • Enjoys joining in with family customs and routines, and talks about them (Range 4) • Begins to make connections between own family and other families (Range 4) • Talks about members of their family and community (Range 5) • Shows interest in different occupations and ways of life (Range 5) • Enjoys a range of celebrations and festivals (Range 5) • Notices similarities and differences between people (Range 5) • Shows curiosity and respect towards others' cultures (with support) (Range 5)	Festivals through the year; diverse books and resources; community walks; visitors and parents sharing traditions; role play of community; maps and globes introduced.	**SEND:** Use visuals and artefacts to explore communities; keep experiences concrete and first-hand. **EAL:** Invite families to share traditions; provide dual-language books and bilingual peers.
Preschool **B5M Range 5-6**	To know about and respect their community and the wider world, recognising similarities and differences between people, places and cultures — ready for school.	• Talks about family customs and celebrations (Range 5) • Notices similarities and differences between themselves and others (Range 5) • Shows interest in different occupations (Range 5) • Talks about their community and the people who help us (Range 6) • Knows there are different countries and ways of living (Range 6) • Recognises similarities and differences between communities (Range 6) • Shows respect and tolerance towards others' beliefs (Range 6) • Talks about features of their immediate environment (Range 6) • Compares their environment with other places (Range 6) • Understands that people have different families and traditions (Range 6)	Maps, globes and atlases; books and images of contrasting environments; festivals and 'people who help us' topics; visitors and parents; community walks; diverse provision throughout; visits to local care home and places of worship.	**SEND:** Use visuals, photos and artefacts; pre-teach vocabulary; prioritise concrete, first-hand experiences. **EAL:** Celebrate and share home cultures; map families' countries; invite community visitors.

The Natural World

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Toddlers **B5M Range 1-2**	To explore the natural world through their senses.	• Watches movement such as leaves, light and shadows (Range 1) • Explores natural textures (grass, water, sand) with hands and feet (Range 1) • Responds to sounds outdoors (birds, wind, rain) (Range 1) • Explores natural materials with hands and mouth (safely) (Range 2) • Notices and responds to texture and temperature (Range 2) • Shows interest in animals, plants and the outdoors (Range 2) • Reacts to natural phenomena (wind, water, light) (Range 2) • Explores water, sand and other natural materials (Range 2)	Daily outdoor access; natural treasure baskets (pine cones, shells); sand, water, mud; sensory garden; weather experiences; visiting animals; low planting at child level.	**SEND:** Offer multisensory outdoor exploration; ensure accessible/adapted outdoor access. **EAL:** Explore together; name nature words simply.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Raindrops **B5M Range 2-3/4**	To investigate the natural world around them and care for living things with support.	• Explores sand, water, leaves and natural materials with all senses (Range 2) • Shows interest in animals, birds and insects outdoors (Range 2) • Notices changes such as wind, light and shadow (Range 2) • Explores natural materials and mini-beasts (Range 3) • Notices features of the weather and seasons (Range 3) • Shows care towards plants and animals with support (Range 3) • Uses senses to explore the outdoor environment (Range 3) • Enjoys cause and effect in nature (splashing, digging) (Range 3) • Enjoys small-world play with animals (farm, zoo) (Range 4) • Notices detailed features of objects outdoors (bugs, leaves) (Range 4)	Daily outdoor exploration; magnifiers and bug pots; planting and watering; nature walks; sand, mud and water; weather talk; seasonal nature table.	**SEND:** Provide sensory nature play with magnifiers; use hand-over-hand support. **EAL:** Use nature words in both languages; demonstrate.
Sunshines **B5M Range 4-5**	To explore and talk about the natural world, noticing patterns, weather and living things; to show an increasing understanding of how we care for living things.	• Notices detailed features of objects and living things in the environment (Range 4) • Explores collections of natural materials with similar and different properties (Range 4) • Explores how things work (pouring, magnifiers, wind-up toys) (Range 4) • Talks about what they see, hear and feel outdoors (Range 5) • Notices and talks about the weather and seasons (Range 5) • Explores how things grow and change (Range 5) • Cares for living things with support (Range 5) • Explores natural processes (floating, melting, growing) (Range 5) • Collects and sorts natural materials (Range 5)	Growing and planting areas; nature and welly walks; magnifiers, bug hotels and pond-dipping; seasonal table; weather charts; ice and melting investigations; sorting natural objects.	**SEND:** Keep nature experiences concrete and first-hand; use visual vocabulary cards; mind sensory needs. **EAL:** Use dual-language nature vocabulary and visuals; draw on family knowledge.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Preschool **B5M Range 5-6**	To explore, observe and explain the natural world — seasons, growth and caring for the environment — ready for school.	• Observes and talks about the natural world and living things (Range 5) • Plants seeds and cares for growing plants (Range 5) • Explores how things work and change (melting, floating) (Range 5) • Understands the effect of the changing seasons (Range 6) • Knows about and cares for plants, animals and habitats (Range 6) • Talks about how living things grow and change (life cycles) (Range 6) • Makes observations about natural processes and materials (Range 6) • Asks questions and offers explanations about why things happen (Range 6) • Understands the need to respect and care for the environment (Range 6)	Forest school / outdoor learning; growing food and life-cycle studies (caterpillars, tadpoles); exploration tools; seasonal investigations; recycling and eco activities; nature non-fiction; farm or vet visits.	**SEND:** Use visuals and real objects; pre-teach science vocabulary; keep exploration accessible; support with symbols. **EAL:** Provide key vocabulary in both languages; first-hand experiences reduce language load; use visuals.

Expressive Arts & Design

A specific area. Children explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, and develop imagination and the ability to express and communicate their ideas through art, music, movement, dance, role play and stories.

End point — Early Learning Goal(s): Creating with Materials; Being Imaginative and Expressive.

Creating with Materials

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Toddlers **B5M Range 1-2**	To explore a range of materials, textures and colours with their senses.	• Explores materials with hands, mouth and whole body (Range 1) • Shows interest in bright colours, lights and contrasting patterns (Range 1) • Explores texture through touch in treasure baskets (Range 1) • Responds to colour, texture and pattern (Range 2) • Makes marks and prints in sensory materials (Range 2) • Investigates squeezing, banging and mixing materials (Range 2) • Explores treasure and natural materials (Range 2)	Sensory and messy play (paint, gloop, dough); treasure baskets; large paper and chunky tools; natural materials; finger paint; texture exploration; mirrors.	**SEND:** Offer sensory-friendly materials and adapted tools; mind sensory sensitivities; use hand-over-hand. **EAL:** Demonstrate; art is language-neutral, so encourage it freely.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Raindrops **B5M Range 2-3/4**	To enjoy using a variety of materials, tools and techniques to explore and create.	• Explores paint, dough and textures using hands and body (Range 2) • Squeezes, pats and pokes malleable materials (Range 2) • Notices the marks and effects made with materials (Range 2) • Experiments with paint, dough, collage and natural materials (Range 3) • Explores colour mixing by chance (Range 3) • Uses simple tools (brushes, rollers, stampers) (Range 3) • Joins materials together (sticking, stacking) (Range 3) • Explores building and construction (Range 3) • Shows preferences for colours and materials (Range 4) • Makes simple constructions and talks about them (Range 4)	Open-ended art materials and tools; dough and clay; collage and junk modelling; large and small construction; printing resources; outdoor art; easels.	**SEND:** Provide adapted tools and stabilised materials; offer a choice of textures and sensory alternatives. **EAL:** Model techniques; name materials simply.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Sunshines **B5M Range 4-5**	To use materials, tools and techniques purposefully to make and represent their ideas.	• Manipulates and explores materials using all senses, considering what they can do with them (Range 4) • Explores paint using fingers, brushes and other tools (Range 4) • Makes simple models that express their ideas (Range 4) • Gives meaning to marks and creations ('it's a dog') (Range 4) • Chooses materials and tools for a purpose (Range 5) • Explores and mixes colours intentionally (Range 5) • Uses scissors, glue and tape to join and shape (Range 5) • Builds models and talks about what they are making (Range 5) • Creates simple representations (a person, a house) (Range 5) • Explores texture, shape and form in 2D and 3D (Range 5) • Names and talks about what they have made (Range 5)	Accessible creative area with varied materials; junk modelling and woodwork; clay and dough; colour-mixing; construction kits; printing and weaving; sketchbooks; children's work displayed, including photos of the process.	**SEND:** Use adapted scissors/tools and visual step-by-step; offer sensory options; value process over product. **EAL:** Demonstrate; label materials with visuals; keep exploration open-ended.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Preschool **B5M Range 5-6**	To safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques — designing, making and adapting their creations — ready for school.	• Selects and uses materials and tools safely and with purpose (Range 5) • Uses a range of joining techniques (glue, tape, split pins) (Range 5) • Develops own ideas and decides which materials to use (Range 5) • Plans and adapts what they make to achieve an effect (Range 6) • Mixes colours and knows how to create new ones (Range 6) • Cuts, joins, folds and shapes using a range of techniques (Range 6) • Constructs models that represent ideas, solving problems (Range 6) • Talks about the process, materials and changes they make (Range 6) • Shares and explains their creations and choices (Range 6) • Represents people, objects and experiences in detail (Range 6)	Well-resourced creative / design-and-make area; woodwork bench; clay; colour-mixing; junk modelling and construction; sketchbooks and observational drawing; recycled and natural materials; process-valuing displays.	**SEND:** Provide adapted tools and supportive seating; use visual instructions; offer sensory alternatives; focus on creativity not outcome. **EAL:** Model; provide visual vocabulary; talk about creations using gesture and visuals.

Being Imaginative & Expressive

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Toddlers **B5M Range 1-2**	To respond to music, sound and movement and enjoy expressive play.	• Listens and responds to familiar songs and voices (Range 1) • Moves arms and legs in response to music (Range 1) • Makes sounds with voice in response to adults' singing (Range 1) • Responds to music with movement and sound (Range 2) • Explores making sounds with voice, body and instruments (Range 2) • Enjoys action songs and rhymes (Range 2) • Watches and imitates expressive movements (Range 2) • Begins simple pretend (cuddles a doll, 'drinks' from a cup) (Range 2)	Instruments and sound-makers; daily music and movement; action songs; props for early pretend (dolls, cups, phones); mirrors; dance scarves.	**SEND:** Use vibration/visual cues for music; mind sensory needs; use intensive interaction. **EAL:** Share songs from home cultures; movement and music are inclusive.
Raindrops **B5M Range 2-3/4**	To join in with songs, music and movement and engage in early pretend play.	• Moves and bounces to music (Range 2) • Explores sounds using voice, body and simple instruments (Range 2) • Imitates everyday actions in play (stirring, talking on a phone) (Range 2) • Joins in with familiar songs, actions and rhymes (Range 3) • Moves expressively to music (Range 3) • Explores instruments and how they sound (Range 3) • Engages in simple pretend / imitative play (Range 3) • Uses one object to represent another (Range 3) • Sings or vocalises parts of familiar songs (Range 3) • Sings the melodic shape of familiar songs (up and down) (Range 4) • Begins make-believe play with simple props (Range 4)	Home corner and role-play props; dressing-up; instruments; music and dance; small-world play; puppets; everyday objects for pretend.	**SEND:** Provide accessible instruments; sign songs; stay sensory-aware. **EAL:** Sing home-language songs and action rhymes.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Sunshines **B5M Range 4-5**	To develop imaginative play, sing songs and express themselves through music, movement and role play.	• Listens with increased attention to sounds and music, responding with thoughts and feelings (Range 4) • Remembers and sings whole familiar songs (Range 4) • Begins to make-believe, using objects to represent things in pretend play (Range 4) • Explores and taps out simple rhythms on instruments (Range 4) • Engages in pretend and role play based on real experiences (Range 5) • Sings familiar songs and makes up own songs and rhythms (Range 5) • Moves and dances expressively to different music (Range 5) • Plays instruments with some control of tempo and volume (Range 5) • Uses props and small-world to act out simple narratives (Range 5) • Takes on a role and uses talk in pretend play (Range 5) • Explores how sounds and movements can be changed (Range 5)	Role-play and home corner; dressing-up and props; small-world and story props; instruments; music for dancing; puppet theatre; open-ended loose parts; story-acting.	**SEND:** Use signed songs and visual song cards; structure role-play prompts; stay sensory-aware. **EAL:** Use bilingual songs and props to support pretend; welcome non-verbal music and dance.

Age group & Birth to 5 Matters range	Goal for this age range	Small-steps: knowledge & skills (sequenced)	Resource & environment ideas	SEND / EAL adaptations
Preschool **B5M Range 5-6**	To invent, adapt and recount narratives, perform songs and rhymes, and express ideas and feelings through the arts — ready for school.	• Makes up and sings own songs and chants (Range 5) • Uses props to develop simple storylines in role play (Range 5) • Remembers and sings entire songs (Range 5) • Develops and acts out imaginative stories with others (Range 6) • Takes on and sustains a role, negotiating play with peers (Range 6) • Sings a range of songs and rhymes from memory, in tune (Range 6) • Performs songs, rhymes, poems and stories to others (Range 6) • Moves expressively and in time to music; explores dance (Range 6) • Plays instruments exploring pitch, tempo and dynamics (Range 6) • Creates own music, dances, stories and artwork to express ideas (Range 6) • Talks about and responds to what they have created (Range 6)	Rich child-designed role-play; performance / stage area; varied instruments and music; story-scribing and acting (Helicopter Stories); dance and movement; costumes; recording and listening to music; chances to perform.	**SEND:** Use visual prompts for role play and adapted instruments; use social stories for group performance; provide sensory-aware spaces. **EAL:** Share songs and stories in the home language; use props and visuals; allow non-verbal performance; celebrate cultural music and dance.