



Our Baby Curriculum

0–2 Years

EYFS 2026 | Play Days Nursery & Academy



Leaving your baby in the care of others is, without doubt, one of the most significant decisions you will ever make. We do not take that trust lightly. Not for one single moment.

Mel & the entire Play Days Baby Team

Helping Hands • Happy Hearts • Healthy Minds



Welcome to Our Baby Room

Our baby room is your baby's very first home away from home — and we treat that with the care & reverence it deserves. From the moment your baby arrives, they are welcomed into a warm, sensory-rich environment where every detail has been considered with their comfort, safety & development in mind.

Cosy corners with soft furnishings, dream oracle-sleep pods & sleep mats, sensory baskets, heuristic play trays & the gentle sounds of calming classical music — because we know that a settled, soothed baby is a learning baby. Everything here has a purpose.



Our Theoretical Foundations

Our curriculum is rooted in the most respected, well-evidenced approaches in early years education. We draw upon these thoughtfully & deliberately, always keeping your baby at the center of everything we do.

Jean Piaget — Learning Through the Senses

Piaget's work reminds us that babies learn through their senses & through their actions on the world around them. Every treasure basket, every heuristic play experience, every moment of exploration is purposeful, rich learning.

Rudolf Steiner — The Importance of Rhythm & Routine

Steiner's philosophy reminds us of the deep comfort that rhythm & routine bring to young children. The gentle, predictable flow of our baby day — sleep, play, eat, explore — provides a consistent, reassuring framework within which babies can thrive.

Reggio Emilia — Environment as the Third Teacher

Inspired by Reggio Emilia, we design our baby spaces as thoughtful, considered learning environments. Natural materials, interesting textures, real objects & open-ended resources invite babies to explore, discover & investigate.

The Key Person Approach — Bowlby & Ainsworth

This sits at the heart of everything we do. Every baby has a dedicated Key Person who knows them well — their preferences, their cues & their character. This secure attachment is the foundation upon which all other learning is built.

Emotion Coaching — John Gottman

Our staff are skilled Emotion Coaches. They recognise, name & respond to the emotions they observe in your baby — every smile, every frown, every moment of distress. We are attentive to the whole child, always.

Pro-Risk & Barefoot Play

We believe firmly in the value of safe, natural risk-taking. Barefoot play supports proprioception, balance & physical development in the most instinctive, purposeful way.



Our Curriculum Promises

- To create an emotionally supportive, home-like environment where babies develop secure attachments & feel completely safe.
- To celebrate every baby's individuality — their learning styles, characteristics & cultural background — & plan with intention for each child.
- To keep your child safe from harm. Safeguarding & child protection are at the absolute core of everything we do, with reference to Working Together to Safeguard Children & our Local Safeguarding Board.
- To provide a language-rich, communication-first environment where every baby is heard, responded to & valued.

- To nurture self-worth, confidence & independence through creative, sensory & exploratory play.
- To develop inquisitive, curious minds — opening a world of discovery through play, music, art, nature, science & technology.
- To support the earliest foundations of independence — self-feeding, self-soothing & self-help skills that serve children throughout their lives.
- To ensure our team are knowledgeable, passionate & continuously developing — so that your baby always receives the very best care & education.



Settling In

We know that settling in is a significant moment — for you every bit as much as for your baby. We take every step of this process with great care, patience & sensitivity.

Please do read our Key Person, Attachment & Attunement Policy & our Professional Love Policy. We will form a genuine, caring bond with your baby — that is not something we apologise for.



Personal, Social & Emotional Development

Emotional wellbeing is our absolute priority — it is the foundation upon which all other learning is built, from the very first moment your baby is in our care.

Our staff are trained to recognise, name & gently acknowledge the emotions they observe in your baby. We do not dismiss or minimise — we respond consistently, calmly & with care. Every response, however small, is meaningful to us.

Golden Rules — Kind Hands & Good Listening

Our Golden Rules are introduced from the very beginning of a child's time with us, modelled consistently by every adult in your baby's world. 'Kind Hands' & 'Good Listening' are our foundations — simple, clear, positive expectations that grow alongside your child throughout their Play Days journey.

Self-Regulation — The Earliest Beginnings

We support the earliest foundations of self-regulation through consistent, calm, responsive co-regulation. Soothing music, sensory timers, cosy corners & the steady, regulated presence of a calm adult — these are the building blocks of emotional resilience.



Communication & Language

Babies are communicators from the very beginning. From the earliest cry to the first coo, your baby is engaging with the world around them — & we respond to every attempt with attentiveness & skill. We know that rich, responsive interaction is the single most powerful thing we can offer a developing language learner.

- Songs, rhymes & finger plays woven into every part of every day
- Gentle, responsive 'serve & return' conversations — we follow your baby's lead, always
- Rich sensory storytelling — books, puppets, props & natural materials
- Makaton signing, which supports all babies — including those who are pre-verbal or whose families speak English as an Additional Language
- Vocabulary targets shared with you regularly via Nursery in a Box- learning journals, so language learning continues at home
- 'Vocabulary Flowers' — new words grown & shared with families throughout each curriculum topic
- I CAN-Babbling Babies- communication strategies focusing on- play & interaction, listening & attention



Physical Development

We support every physical milestone with knowledge, encouragement & genuine celebration — from the first roll, to the first confident steps.

Treasure Baskets & Heuristic Play

Carefully curated collections of natural, everyday objects give babies rich opportunities for exploration, discovery & fine motor development. Real objects, natural textures, interesting shapes — not plastic toys. This is purposeful learning at its most direct.

Barefoot & Pro-Risk Play

We are advocates of barefoot play. Walking, crawling & exploring on different natural surfaces — grass, sand, pebbles, wood — develops balance, coordination, proprioception & sensory awareness. We embrace safe, considered risk-taking as an essential part of healthy development.

Movement & Milestones

Tummy time, crawling spaces, pull-to-stand opportunities, climbing & rolling — physical movement is threaded through every part of our day. Fresh air is non-negotiable. Our babies are outside every day, regardless of the British weather.

Self-Feeding & Independence

From the earliest age, we support babies in developing self-feeding skills — building confidence, coordination & independence alongside good nutrition. We work closely with families to ensure mealtimes are relaxed, positive & attuned to each baby's pace & needs.



Wellbeing & Mindfulness

We believe in nurturing the whole child — physically, emotionally & cognitively. Our gentle, nature-inspired wellbeing practices are woven into the fabric of every day.

Calming Music & Sound

Gentle classical pieces, lullabies & nature sounds create a peaceful, settled atmosphere throughout the day.

Baby Massage

Gentle, intentional touch builds the bond between carer & baby, promoting relaxation, body awareness & emotional security. Our staff are trained in infant massage techniques.

Mindful Movement

Rocking, swaying, bouncing done with full awareness & intention — co-regulation in action.

Sensory Exploration

Carefully considered sensory experiences with natural textures, sounds, scents & materials support sensory integration & grounded, present-moment awareness.

Nature Time

Fresh air, natural light, the sound of wind, the feel of grass — irreplaceable & given to our babies every single day. Nature is one of our greatest curriculum resources.

Calm & Regulated Adults

The most powerful co-regulation tool we have is a calm, present adult. Our staff model steadiness — always. We take that responsibility seriously.



Equality, Diversity & Cultural Capital

Every baby who joins us is unique, with their own family background, culture & personality — & we celebrate & honour that in everything we plan & do.

We are committed to enriching every baby's world with a breadth of experiences — stories, songs, foods, textures, languages & traditions from all cultures. We want every family to see themselves reflected here.



Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

Some babies need additional support to thrive — & we are wholly committed to providing it. Our practice is inclusive, tailored & always led by the child's individual needs. We follow the SEND Code of Practice & work closely with families, our SENCO & specialist professionals from the outset.

If you have any concern about your baby's development — however small — please speak to your Key Person or our SENCO without delay. Early identification & early support make the greatest possible difference.



Working in Partnership with Families

You are the expert on your baby — & we would not have it any other way. Our relationship with families is a genuine partnership built on trust, communication & a shared commitment to your child's wellbeing & progress.

- Regular vocabulary targets shared via NiaB so you can build language at home
- Mindfulness tips & gentle wellbeing activities to try together
- Updates on our curriculum themes — so conversations at home & nursery connect
- Termly topic newsletters & invitations to curriculum events
- Floor Learning Books — collaborative learning records that your child helps to create



CAN Statements 0-2 years

These statements reflect the developmental milestones we nurture & celebrate across our baby provision. They are shared with families to support learning at home & form the foundation of our individual planning for each child.



I CAN Statements — 0–12 Months

- I CAN feel safe & settled with my Key Person.
- I CAN explore my immediate environment with curiosity.
- I CAN listen to sounds, voices & music.
- I CAN respond to familiar voices with smiles & vocalisations.
- I CAN track moving objects with my eyes.
- I CAN reach for & grasp objects.
- I CAN communicate through facial expressions, gestures & sounds.
- I CAN enjoy sensory experiences — touching, tasting, smelling & looking.
- I CAN participate in simple songs, rhymes & finger plays.
- I CAN show preferences for familiar people & objects.



I CAN Statements — 12–18 Months

- I CAN take my first confident steps.
- I CAN point to communicate my needs & interests.
- I CAN use a small number of recognisable words.
- I CAN show strong preferences & make simple choices.
- I CAN climb, pull myself up & explore with increasing confidence.
- I CAN hold & use simple tools — a spoon, a crayon, a cup.
- I CAN engage in simple pretend play.
- I CAN begin to understand simple instructions.

- I CAN show awareness of other children.
- I CAN participate enthusiastically in songs & movement activities.



I CAN Statements — 18–24 Months

- I CAN run, jump & climb with growing confidence.
- I CAN use two-word phrases to communicate my needs
- I CAN follow simple two-step instructions-
- I CAN begin to show empathy — comforting others in distress.
- I CAN engage in role play & begin to use imagination in play.
- I CAN drink from an open beaker or cup.
- I CAN begin to feed myself with a spoon.
- I CAN sit on a chair & help tidy away toys.
- I CAN listen to a short story & show interest in books.
- I CAN recognise my own belongings.
- I CAN communicate my needs clearly, using words & gestures.

Helping Hands • Happy Hearts • Healthy Minds



Mel, Tracy, Gemma & the entire Play Days Baby Teams

