



**Cymru**  
National Day Nurseries Association

# Factsheet

## Curriculum for Wales – Information for Parents

**Wales**

# Curriculum for Wales – Information for Parents

Education in Wales is changing. The curriculum has been reformed to build upon the success of the Foundation Phase with a focus on developing learners towards the four purposes of the curriculum – the starting point and aspiration for every child and young person in Wales:

<https://bit.ly/3lb3J83>

The new Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 will replace the existing national curriculum in Wales, which was established in 1988, on an England and Wales basis. This new legislation marks the first construction of a distinct Welsh curriculum; history has been made!

The Curriculum for Wales is due to be rolled out from September 2022, with nursery settings being some of the first to switch to the new curriculum.

## The new Curriculum for Wales is a learning continuum for children from the ages of 3 to 16 years

This means that children will follow the same curriculum throughout their education and move along the stages when developmentally ready. It will be the job of practitioners and teachers to ensure learning supports their development towards the Four Purposes. This approach allows the learning to be more child-centred and suitable for learners of differing skills and abilities. The new curriculum is not biased towards either knowledge or skills, as previous curriculums have been, but instead allows settings and schools to provide a balance of knowledge, skills, and experiences.

## Schools and settings have the autonomy to design their own curriculum

The Welsh Government has provided educators in Wales with an extensive array of guidance documents to support them in designing a curriculum. It is the school/setting's responsibility to decide what specific experiences, knowledge, and skills will support their learners to realise the four purposes. They should focus on their learners' interests, their setting's environment, and their local community (Cynefin). This supports practitioners and teachers to make use of their local areas to support learning rather than having to miss learning opportunities to follow some strict curricula. For example, a coastal setting may head to the beach to experience changes in weather and the effect wind can have on the environment.

## The Four Purposes of the Curriculum

Curriculum for Wales is a purpose-based curriculum. This means that the highlighted purposes (in this case there are 4) should be the starting point and aspiration for learning and development in Wales. Ultimately, the aim of a setting's curriculum is to support its learners to become:

- Ambitious, capable learners; ready to learn throughout their lives
- Enterprising, creative contributors; ready to play a full part in life and work
- Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- Healthy, confident individuals; ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

These may seem like big far-reaching statements for your nursery children, but practitioners have been equipped to consider these purposes in context of even the youngest learners and it's easy to see how settings are already developing children in these ways.

## Learning through play remains a big focus

The new curriculum for Wales has been developed to build upon the success of the Foundation Phase, the predecessor early years' curriculum in Wales. The vehicle for learning within the Foundation Phase was the use of learning through play. Settings will continue to promote these principles. Learning through play is a powerful tool. It can help children to develop and extend their language and communication skills. Play allows them to be creative, investigate and explore different materials, and gives them opportunities to experiment and predict outcomes. It can also help them to develop their confidence, self-motivation, and control of their own thoughts and actions. Play also allows children to test their abilities, use initiative, take risks and make mistakes without fear of failure. Through play, children learn the skills of negotiation and the art of forming relationships with their peers.

## Additional elements

For the first time in history, children in Wales will have access to the full curriculum. Children will learn about religion, values and ethics, relationships and sexuality education, and careers, and the world of work in a consistent and developmentally appropriate way. This will ensure that all young people are provided with access to information that keeps them safe from harm and that all children will learn about issues such as right and wrong, friendships and families, and roles and responsibilities within their community.

## The new nursery curriculum

A curriculum for nursery children is being developed by the Welsh Government, for settings to use if they wish. It will contain five key developmental pathways (Belonging, Communication, Exploration, Physical development, and Well-being) which are fundamental to the learning and development of all young children. They are child-centred and link closely to the key principles of child development, as well as to the key elements of Curriculum for Wales. The nursery curriculum provides support for an important step between home and/or childcare and full-time education. It focuses on recognising children's biological drives and providing purposeful play opportunities for children to fulfil these needs, through authentic and purposeful learning.

## Setting curriculum

Your child's setting will share with you their curriculum summary. This will include their intent to deliver the curriculum and the way in which they plan to do so through their provision, how they will develop the environment, and the experiences your child will access.

### What can you do to support your child's learning?

Your child's experience of learning should be a happy one; if children are not happy they will be less ready to learn. You can have a positive effect on your child's development, imagination, and interest by getting actively involved in their learning, not just at home but in the garden, in the park, and at the shops. The more children are stimulated, encouraged, and involved, the more they will learn.

It is integral to the new curriculum that learning is planned with each individual in mind. Therefore, keeping constant lines of communication with your child's setting about your child is incredibly important. Be sure to continue to discuss significant aspects of your child's life, such as their interests/likes/dislikes, out-of-setting experiences (whether good or bad), and their continuing well-being. This will ensure practitioners are able to plan effectively to meet all of your child's needs and ensure they make progress in their learning and development.

## Further support

- A new curriculum in Wales - Hwb - <https://bit.ly/2ZGwfNy>
- Curriculum for Wales - Hwb - <https://bit.ly/3EgWNEu>
- Curriculum for Wales 2022 - NDNA - <https://bit.ly/3l7Vr0R>.

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We are the voice of the 21,000-strong nursery sector, an integral part of the lives of more than a million young children and their families. We provide information, training and advice to support nurseries and the 250,000 people who work in them to deliver world-class early learning and childcare.

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