



Marden Pre-school

Little Sunshine's Curriculum

Updated 2026

Our Vision

Is to provide the best start for each individual child providing inclusive early years education where children are able to reach their full potential.

Our aim

- Is to provide a stimulating, relaxed, safe and secure environment where children are encouraged to learn through play, exploring, experimenting, problem solving and taking risks.
- To feel cared for, safe and secure, allowing them to build relationships, make friends and develop their social skills.
- Are given equal opportunities, support and education tailored to their individual needs.
- Provide experiences that will help develop skills for life focusing on the children becoming independent and self-assured individuals.
- Promote school readiness and create a safe and smooth transition between preschool, the school, children and their families.
- To provide a balance of child led and adult led activities, supported by the child's interests and our weekly topic.
- Providing parents with affordable, flexible Early Years provision.
- Our setting will always go above and beyond to support our children and families.
- To enable children to be curious, confident and capable learners.

Effective Curriculum – we ensure that our curriculum is able to support all children, including children with additional needs, those who are disadvantaged or in minority groups ensuring inclusion for all.

The educational programme

For Personal, Social & Emotional Development

“Children’s personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.”

EYFS, pgs. 9, 2025.

What is important?

We commit to

- Providing opportunities for children to engage with others and developing social interactions.
- Providing a warm, friendly, and welcoming environment where children can develop strong attachments, friendships and relationships with others.
- Allowing children opportunities to take risks, use problem solving skills and support them to develop their resilience as they persevere to overcome challenges.

- Support children to learn about and understand about their emotions, providing quiet spaces and tummy time.
- Model and promote healthy eating. Encourage children to try new foods, make choices and express likes and dislikes.

Why is this important

- For children to build strong relationships/attachments to feel safe and secure within their learning environment.
- For children to feel more confident to share feelings, wants and needs through verbal and non-verbal communication as they feel comfortable and secure.
- Positive interactions with children and adults can help them understand how to build good positive relationships with others.
- Children need a can-do attitude to feel confident bouncing back after difficulty. This will help to support children's mental health and wellbeing later in life.
- For the children to experience a variety of different healthy foods.

Our community's needs?

- EAL- children and families from other countries, speaking multiple languages. It is important to make them feel welcome, taking time to ask questions and gather information about their culture and beliefs so they feel valued and included.
- Manager has made connections between the setting and the local parent and toddler group to support new parents.

Our Children's Learning Journey

Confidence

Capability

Independence

Resilience



Marden Pre-school

Hands on Learners

Respect of Nature

Social Interactions



Connections

Sense of Belonging

We want children to learn

Emotional Intelligence

Play

Our pedagogy

- Provide a safe and secure environment and build positive relationships - Bowlby's attachment theory
- Ainsworth's theory regarding separation anxiety
- Key person approach
- Risky play
- Collaborative play through free flow play
- Small group activities including circle time, craft activities and focus activities.
- Promote independence and self-help skills, encouraging confidence and self-esteem to complete tasks independently – Maslow's hierarchy of needs.
- Books supporting emotions, different cultures and communities.
- EYFS

By the time children in Little Sunshine room are ready to move to Shooting Stars

most children should...

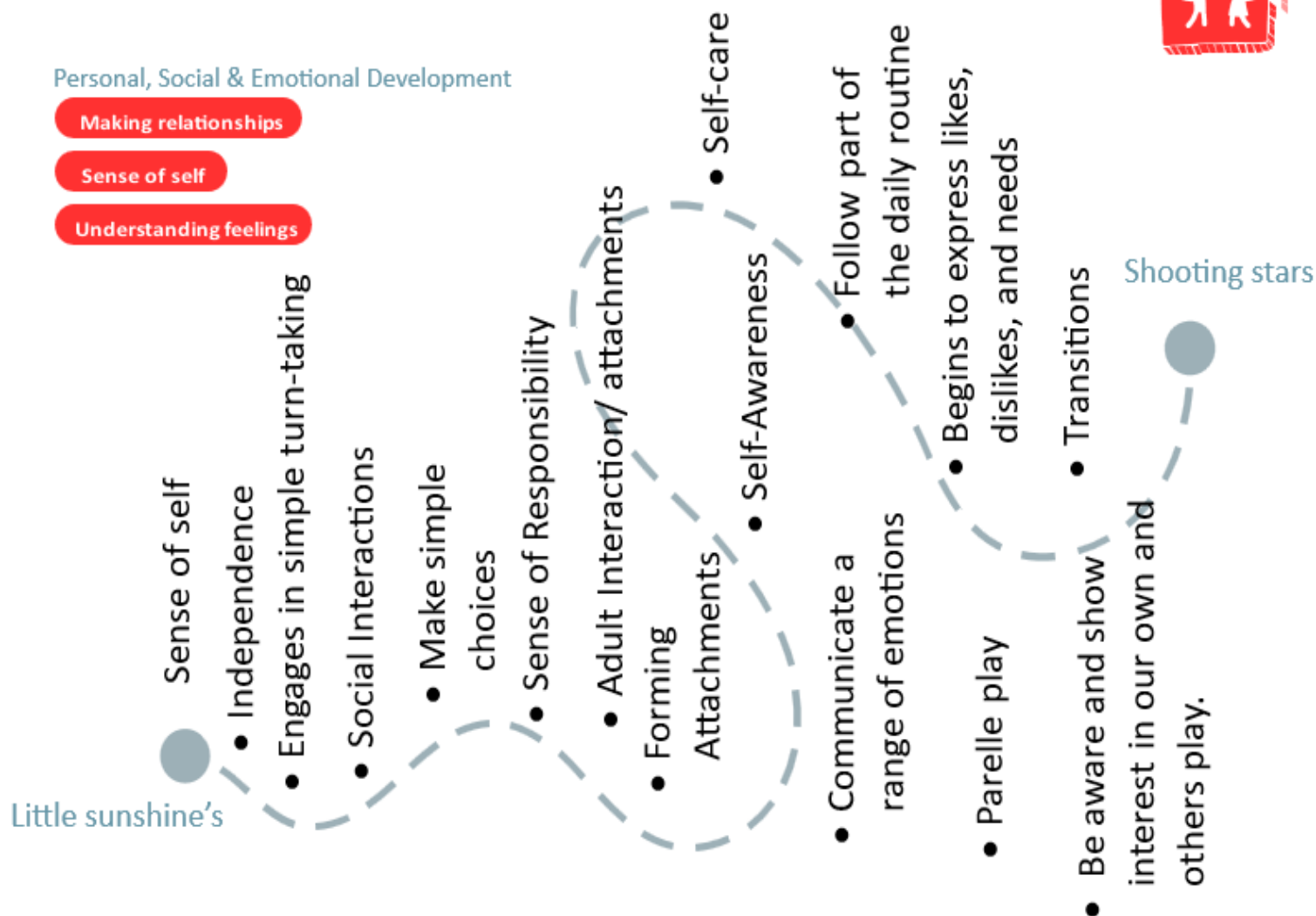


Personal, Social & Emotional Development

Making relationships

Sense of self

Understanding feelings



The Childcare Guru, 2024 ©

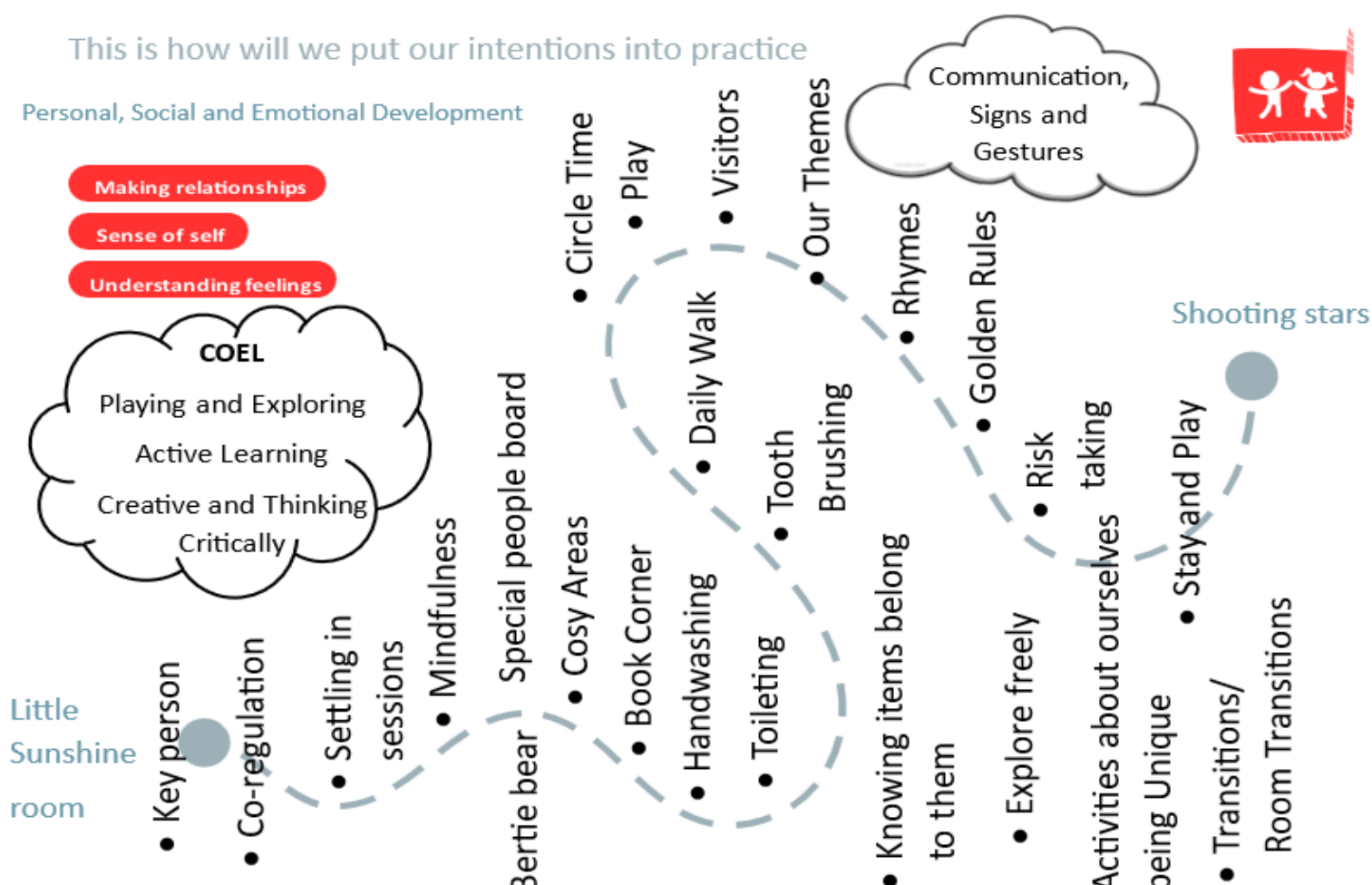
This is how will we put our intentions into practice

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Making relationships

Sense of self

Understanding feelings



The educational programme

For Communication & Language

“The development of children’s spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children’s back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children’s language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.”

EYFS, pg. 9, 2025.

What is important?

We commit to

- Reading frequently to children and actively engaging them in a wide variety of books, songs, rhymes and poems supported with the use of props and puppets for visual aids.

- Providing welcoming quiet spaces **both indoors and outdoors** for children to explore books independently, with peers and with adults.
- Modelling appropriate ways of handling books, demonstrating care and respect for the resources.
- Staff to use the correct terminology and spoken English when communicating.
- Modelling language in conversation, storytelling and role play.
- Promote language using sign along, Elklan, introducing five new words a day and promoting our keywords of the week, giving every child the opportunity to take time to reflect and communicate, verbally and non-verbally.
- Staff to use Elklan and open-ended questions, remembering the hand rule and one question to every comment, explanation, repetition and expansion of the child's language. Staff should also remember to allow up to ten seconds for children to think and respond.

Why is this important

- So children can gain knowledge and value books, learning that they can share with others to help with their understanding and acquiring new vocabulary.
- Children to experience good modelling of language so that they can become clear and coherent communicators.
- Communicating their wants, needs and interests clearly so they do not become frustrated or misunderstood. This will support their personal, social and emotional development.

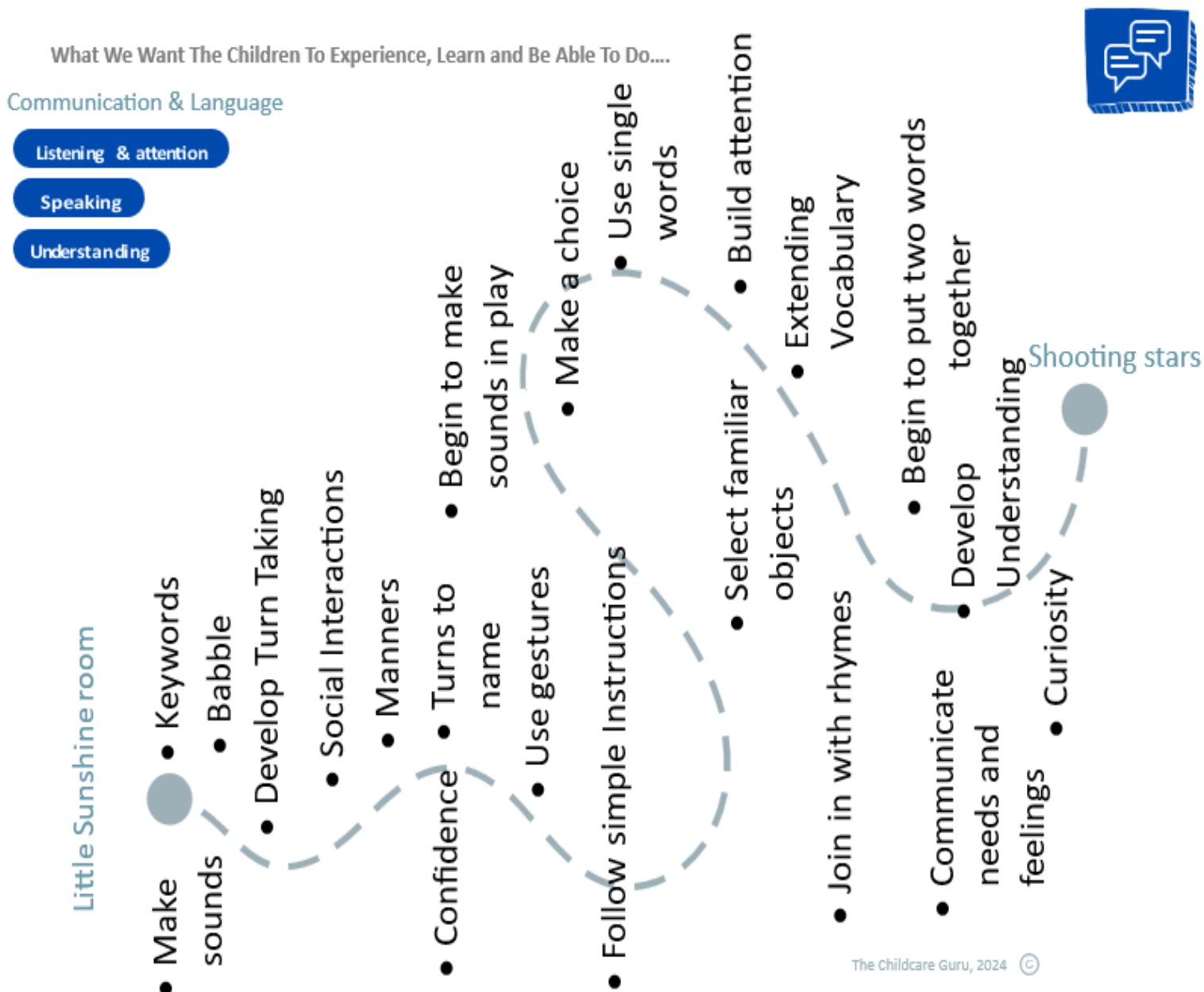
- For children to feel heard and valued and their interests and ideas supported and understood.
- To be able to access resources freely.
- Learn how to express feelings to others verbally and non-verbally.

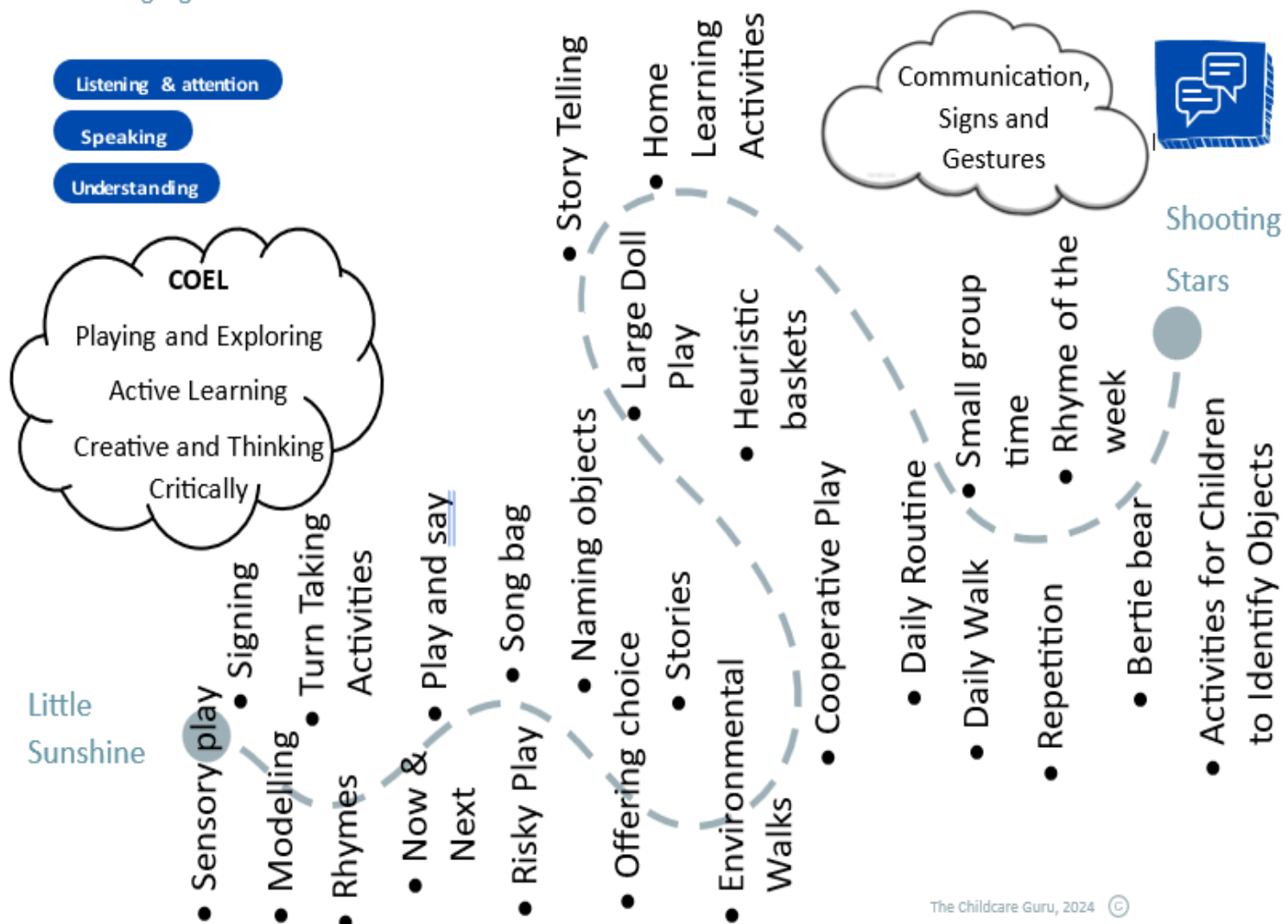
Our community's needs?

- EAL- Lots of children and families in the local area speaking multiple languages. Staff have completed EAL training to support children within the setting.
- The correct terminology and proper English is important especially when talking to EAL children and families to avoid confusion when communicating.
- Speech and Language needs- Staff completed Elklan training to support children's language and communication. Preschool was previously awarded with Elklan's Communication Friendly Setting which we are going to redo to ensure we are providing the best for our children and families.
- Impact of Covid 19- Children have had less opportunities to interact with others to build language and communication skills. Elklan training will support this.
- Providing information through our social media and tapestry feeds to signpost families to online activities and information to support their child's speech and language, for example dummies.

Our pedagogy

- Elklan- promoting new and extended language, developing communication skills, listening and understanding
- 2 new signs a week to introduce sign language from an early age.
- Visual timetable to support understanding of daily routine.
- Quiet area to encourage communication away from busy or noisier areas
- ECAT (Every Child a talker) – pinpoints the areas of speech and language and helps staff recognise where to bridge the gap.
- EYFS
- Play and say- lays the foundations for focusing and attention skills





The educational programmes

For Physical Development

“Physical activity is vital in children’s all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives⁷. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child’s strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social

and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.”

EYFS, pg. 10, 2025.

What is important?

We commit to

- Promoting physical development allowing children plenty of opportunities to explore and move freely, supporting them to challenge themselves as they begin to assess their own risks and become confident to move with purpose and control.
- Support children to make healthy choices by providing a variety of healthy snacks and modelling our own healthy choices.
- Encourage sitting at the table during snack and lunchtimes.
- Promote independence with eating and drinking, washing hands, and dressing/undressing.
- Supporting a healthy oral hygiene by providing a range of books, resources and visual aids, along with healthy snack options and discussions about how to keep our teeth clean and healthy.
- Providing opportunities for children to explore expressive movement through rhythm and dance activities.
- Supporting children to learn about their emotions by providing quiet spaces for thinking and providing calm activities, such as having calming music playing and books.

- Providing a range of mark making resources and sensory exploration through a variety of textures and materials where children can develop gross and fine motor skills.
- Developing strength through malleable materials and various size resources, promoting gross and fine motor skills.
- Opportunities for scooping and pouring through water play, allowing children to develop control when pouring.

Why is this important?

- Building strong gross and fine motor skills which is important for strong muscle development so they can actively participate in daily activities independently.
- Develop understanding of active and healthy lifestyle to prevent health problems later on in life, such as diabetes and obesity.
- Having good oral hygiene, strong and healthy teeth and gums will help prevent issues such as tooth decay and gum disease later in life.
- Encouraging sitting at the table during mealtimes will minimise the risk of hazards such as choking, promote good table manners which also supports our cultural capital and provides an opportunity for children to develop social skills for communication and language.
- The importance of good hand washing to help minimise the spread of infection.
- To support the children's independence in dressing/undressing will help the children to be independent when going to the toilet, getting ready to go outside and to be able to regulate their own temperature.

Our community's needs?

- Mental health and wellbeing- use of physical exercise, such as yoga, to help regulate emotions.
- Importance of promoting good hand washing and good personal hygiene to help minimise the spread of infection.

Our pedagogy

Promote children's health and wellbeing through

- Vygotsky's zone of proximal development and scaffolding.
- Encouraging and supporting handwashing before mealtimes and after nappy changes
- Promoting healthy eating through snack time and cooking activities
- Exercise through a range of ride on toys, parachute games and dancing

Promote risk taking challenges by

- Providing an engaging outdoor area
- Climbing frame
- Large loose parts
- Soft play

By the time children in Little Sunshine's room are ready to move to Shooting stars most children should...



Physical Development

Moving & handling

Health & self-care

Little Sunshine room



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This is how will we put our intentions into practice



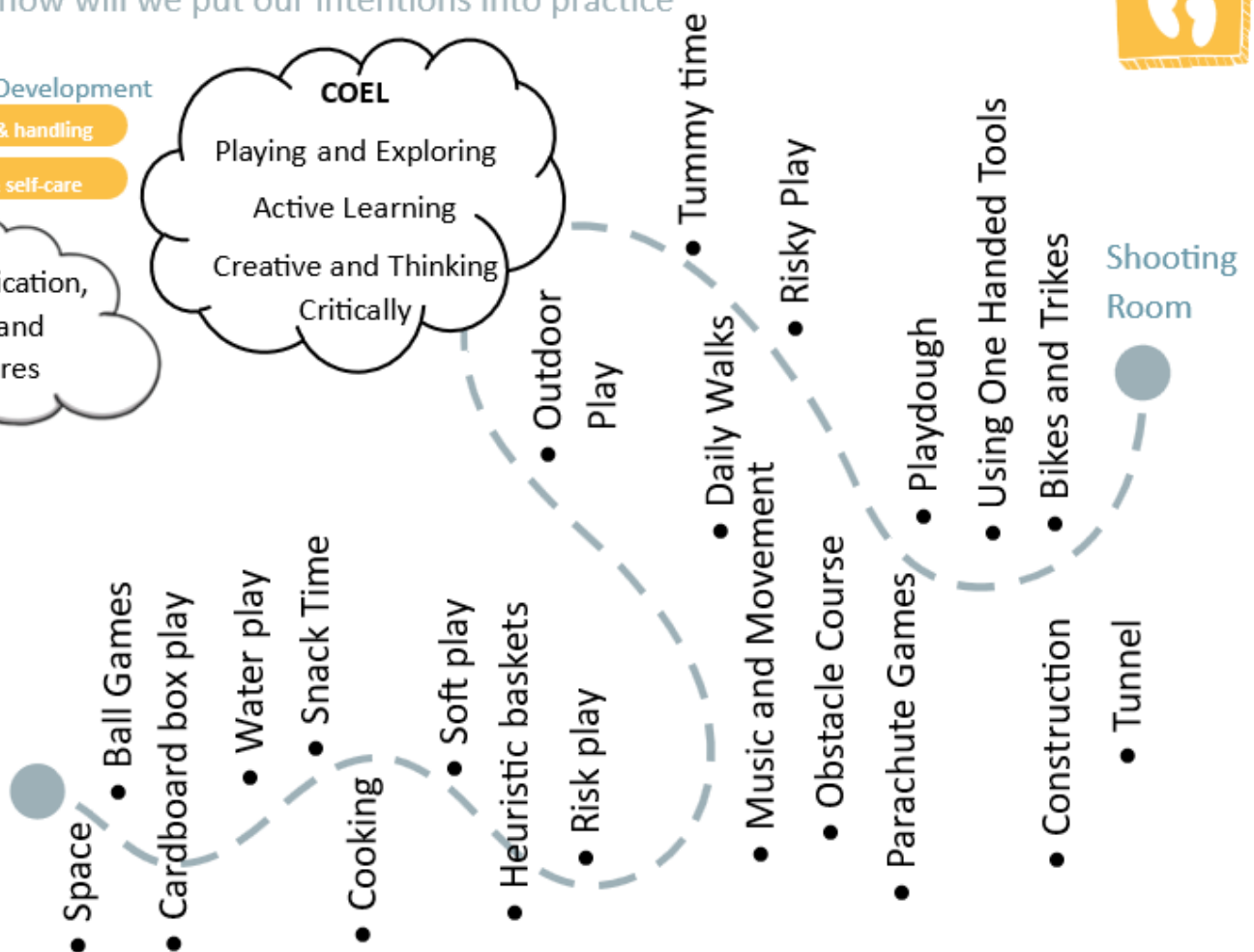
Physical Development

Moving & handling

Health & self-care

Communication,
Signs and
Gestures

Little
Sunshine



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The educational programme

For Literacy

“It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).”

EYFS, pg. 10, 2025.

What is important?

We commit to

- Promote listening skills through games, listening walks, stories, songs, rhymes and poems.
- Promote exploring sounds and rhythm with instruments, objects and actions.
- Promoting a love of reading by frequently reading to children and actively engaging them in a wide variety of books, songs, rhymes and poems supported with the use of props and puppets for visual aids. Encourage the children to interact using actions, sounds, words and phrases.
- Provide welcoming quiet spaces **both indoors and outdoors** for children to explore books independently, with peers and with adults.

- Modelling appropriate ways of handling books, demonstrating care and respect for the resources, how to hold them the correct way and turn pages carefully.
- Modelling storytelling through meaningful engagement with children's play and through adult led games and activities such as looking at story sacks.
- Providing a range of mark making resources, allowing exploration through a variety of textures and materials.
- Developing strength through climbing, large and small action songs and rhymes, malleable materials and various size resources, promoting gross and fine motor skills.

Why is this important?

- Developing a love of books so they can become active readers in the future.
- Being exposed to a variety of text and media means children will realise there are different ways to access new information, opening their minds to new opportunities for learning.
- Laying a good foundation for the children's listening skills which will help later on in Shooting stars room.
- Developing strength of gross and fine motor skills will help with co-ordination and pencil grip.
- Providing a range of mark making resources will develop gross and fine motor skills which in turn will support their writing development.

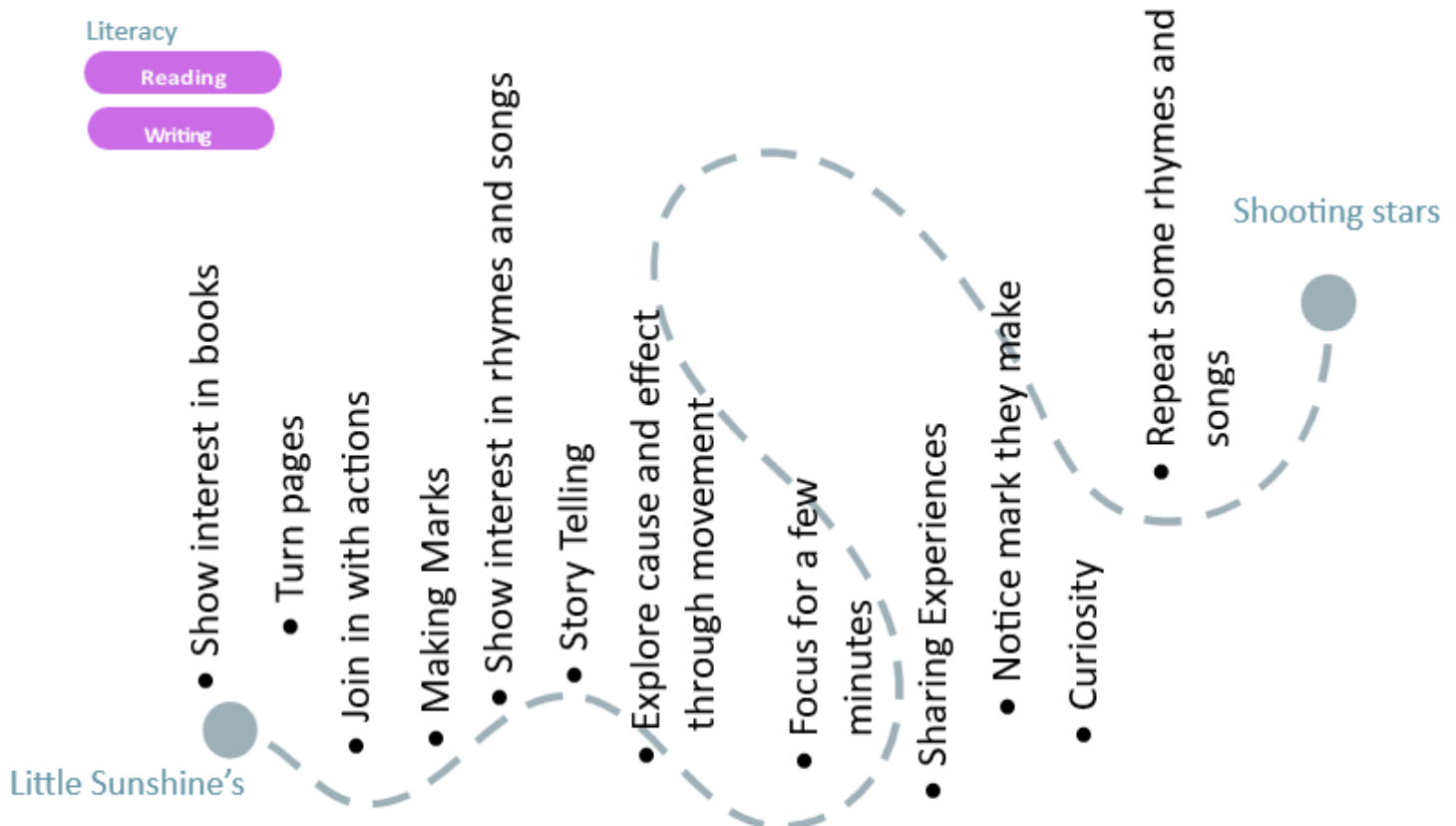
Our community's needs?

- EAL- Books provided in different languages to promote more diversity and inclusion and to support children and families who speak multiple languages.
- EAL- Labels around the room displayed in other languages, tailored to the needs of the children in the setting.
- Book bags provided to allow all children access to a variety of text which they can share at home with their family.

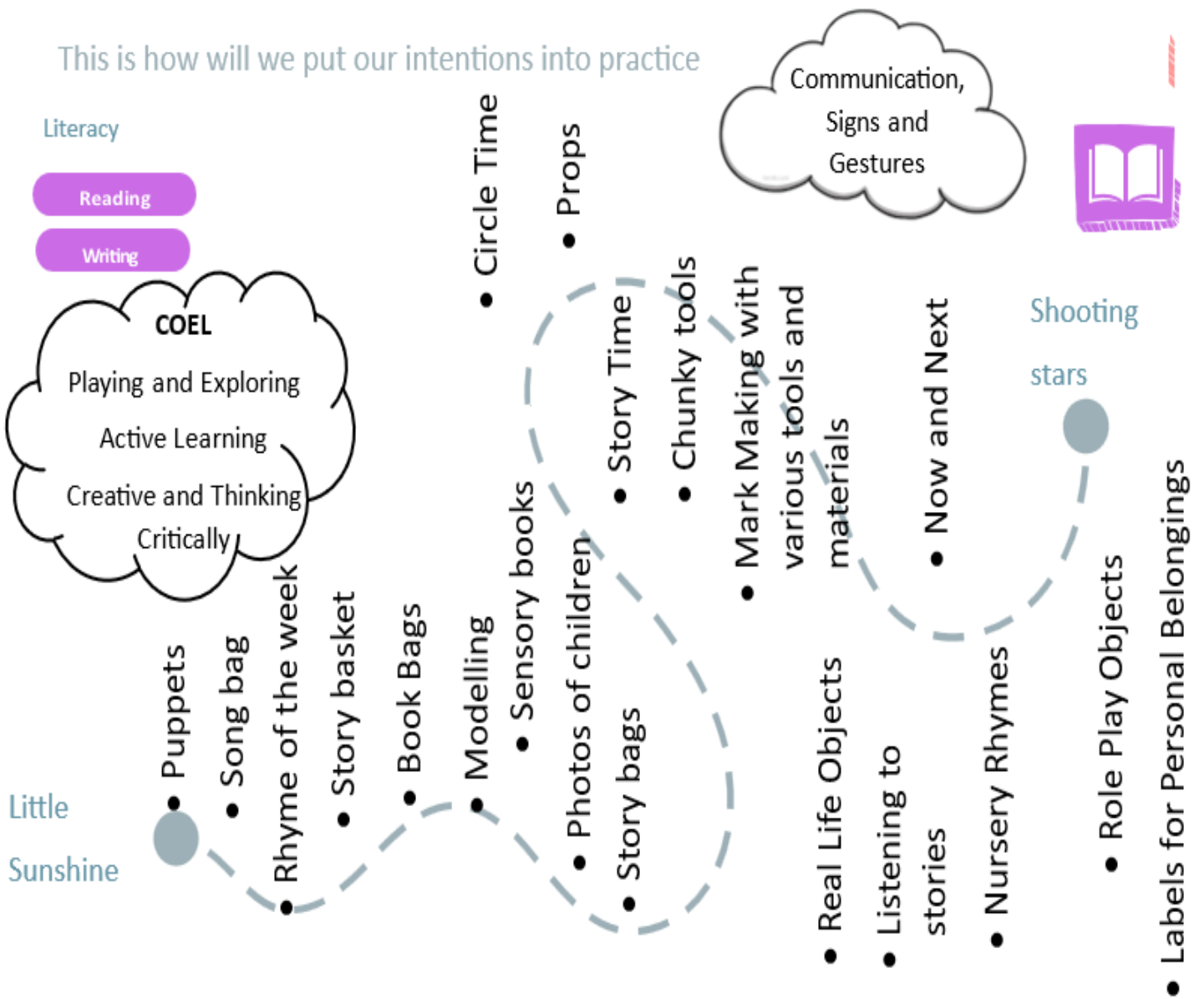
Our pedagogy

- Story-telling, using story sacks, props, puppets and visuals
- Providing a variety of books
- Book bags to ensure all children have opportunities to read and share books at home
- Rhyming activities, circle time songs, rhymes and games
- Mark making opportunities- using a variety of resources, such as pens, pencils, brushes, tools and multi-sensory approach
- Name cards to support children recognising their own name

What We Want The Children To Experience, Learn and Be Able To Do....



This is how will we put our intentions into practice



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The educational programme

For Mathematics

“Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding – such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting – children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, ‘have a go’, talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.”

EYFS, pg. 10, 2026

What is important?

We commit to

- Providing a secure daily routine for children to familiarise themselves with time and structure.
- Modelling mathematical language during appropriate interaction with their play, demonstrating the language of size, shape, time and quantity.
- Using physical activities, such as building, stretching, boxes, music and movement, parachute games, puzzles and filling and emptying containers as opportunities for children to learn about size, shape, number, weight, space, capacity and positional language.

- Experience patterns and numbers through daily focus, songs and rhymes, everyday tasks and their play.
- Expanding their curiosity of shapes through exploration, interactions and modelling language about the world around them.

Why is this important?

- To understand routine and sequencing now and next, which will help settle children.
- For children to develop logical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- For the children to explore the space around them and investigating moving themselves through spaces.

Our community's needs?

- Supporting new children and families who may be new to the setting. By helping the children with the routine using now and next picture cards.
- Providing videos on tapestry for parents and carers to interact with their children at home, especially if they are not confident with maths themselves.

Our pedagogy

- Piaget supporting schemas by providing loose parts
- Curiosity approach
- Displaying numerals in the environment
- Adult led maths activities
- Opportunities to explore basic shapes in the environment, supported by our weekly topic

By the time children in Little Sunshine's room are ready to move to Shooting stars

most children should...

What We Want The Children To Experience, Learn and Be Able To Do....

Mathematics

Mathematics

123



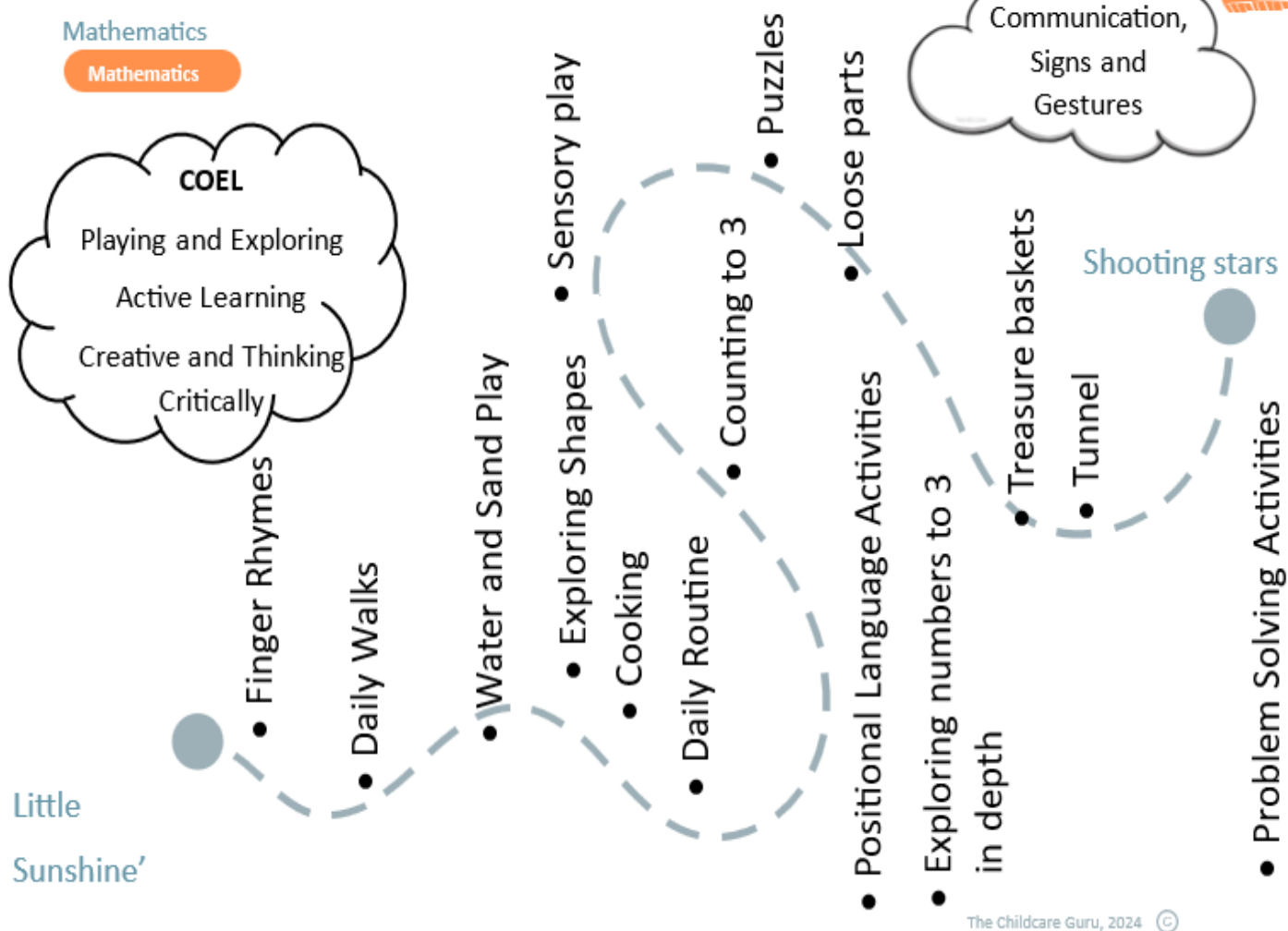
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This is how will we put our intentions into practice

Mathematics

Mathematics

123



The educational programme for Understanding the World

“Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children’s personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children’s vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.”

EYFS, pg. 11, 2025.

What is important?

We commit to

- Giving children the opportunities to explore the wider world through small world and role play, representing their own experiences and extending their wider understanding of the world.
- Using Tapestry, photos and books about family and friends and talking about their family relations and pets, giving the child a sense of belonging.
- Exploring the community by going on walks and trips, talking about the things we observe in the natural environment, people, animals and vehicles developing an enriched wonder and curiosity of the world around them.
- Supporting their understanding of the wider community by providing stories, video clips, walks around the village and trips to the wider area as well, providing opportunities to observe people working, playing and engaging in leisure activities.
- Providing books and resources that support and include a range of cultures for children to explore and engage with their peers and adults.
- Providing exciting and stimulating activities where children can experiment and explore using different approaches learning about cause and effect and be able to anticipate sounds\ actions.
- Providing opportunities for children to explore mechanical and friction toys and technology.

Why is this important?

- Give the children have a sense of belonging.
- Develop an inquisitive attitude about the world around them and show curiosity towards how and why things work as they explore cause and effect.
- To set the foundations in understanding of how to take care and respecting animals and nature. Which will encourage them to become active in preserving the planet as they get older.
- For children to be exposed to basic technology so they can grow with an understanding of how to access this as it is continually progressing and developing.
- For children to experience different people and cultures.

Our community's needs?

- Providing books, labels and resources that are multi-lingual and represent different culture and diversity.
- As a small rural community, it is important to remember some children may not have been exposed to other cultures.

Our pedagogy

- Small world and role play for children to explore different cultures, occupations and other parts of the world.
- Circle time and group discussions about family and significant events
- Nature walks and walks through the community
- Providing a safe, secure and engaging environment.
- Curiosity approach

- Learning through play
- EYFS

By the time children in Little Sunshine's room are ready to move to Shooting stars

most children should...



This is how will we put our intentions into practice

Understanding the World

People & communities

The world

Technology

COEL

Playing and Exploring
Active Learning
Creative and Thinking
Critically

• Daily Walks

• Heuristic baskets

• Sensory play

• Daily Routine

• Celebrating Differences/ Festivals

• Special People Board

• Cooking

• Books

• Stories

• Puzzles

• All About Me

• Rhymes

• Themes

• Home corner

• Investigation Station

• Outdoor Play

• Problem Solving

• Visitors

• Imaginary Play

• Recycling

• Exploring Environment

• Daily outdoor play

Shooting stars

• cause-and-effect toys

Communication,
Signs and
Gestures



Little
Sunshine'

The educational programme

For Expressive Arts and Design

“The development of children’s artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.”

EYFS, pg. 11, 2025.

What is important?

We commit to

- Supporting children's imagination and artistic development by providing a range of media and materials, for them to explore, experiment and create with.
- Providing an exciting and stimulating role play environment, following the children's interests, where they represent their own experiences and start to make believe.
- Engaging children in songs and rhymes, musical instruments and music and movement encouraging them to explore, listen, vocalise move and create sounds.
- Providing children different styles of music and movement through opportunities to listen and move to different rhythmic and cultural music.
- Provides the opportunity for the children to express themselves through actions and sounds such as artwork, singing, musical instruments, dancing and different media.

Why is this important?

- Learning how to use objects, tools and materials to create new and exciting things.
- Finding ways to express themselves and their interests through different medias.
- Developing curiosity and extending their language through multi-sensory exploration.
- To lay good foundations to continue the development for imagination for storytelling and creative thinking.

Our community's needs?

- Putting parents/carers in contact with local parent/toddler groups where they can meet others from the community and engage in music, dance and art and craft activities with there children. This would be especially helpful for the families moving into the area from abroad.

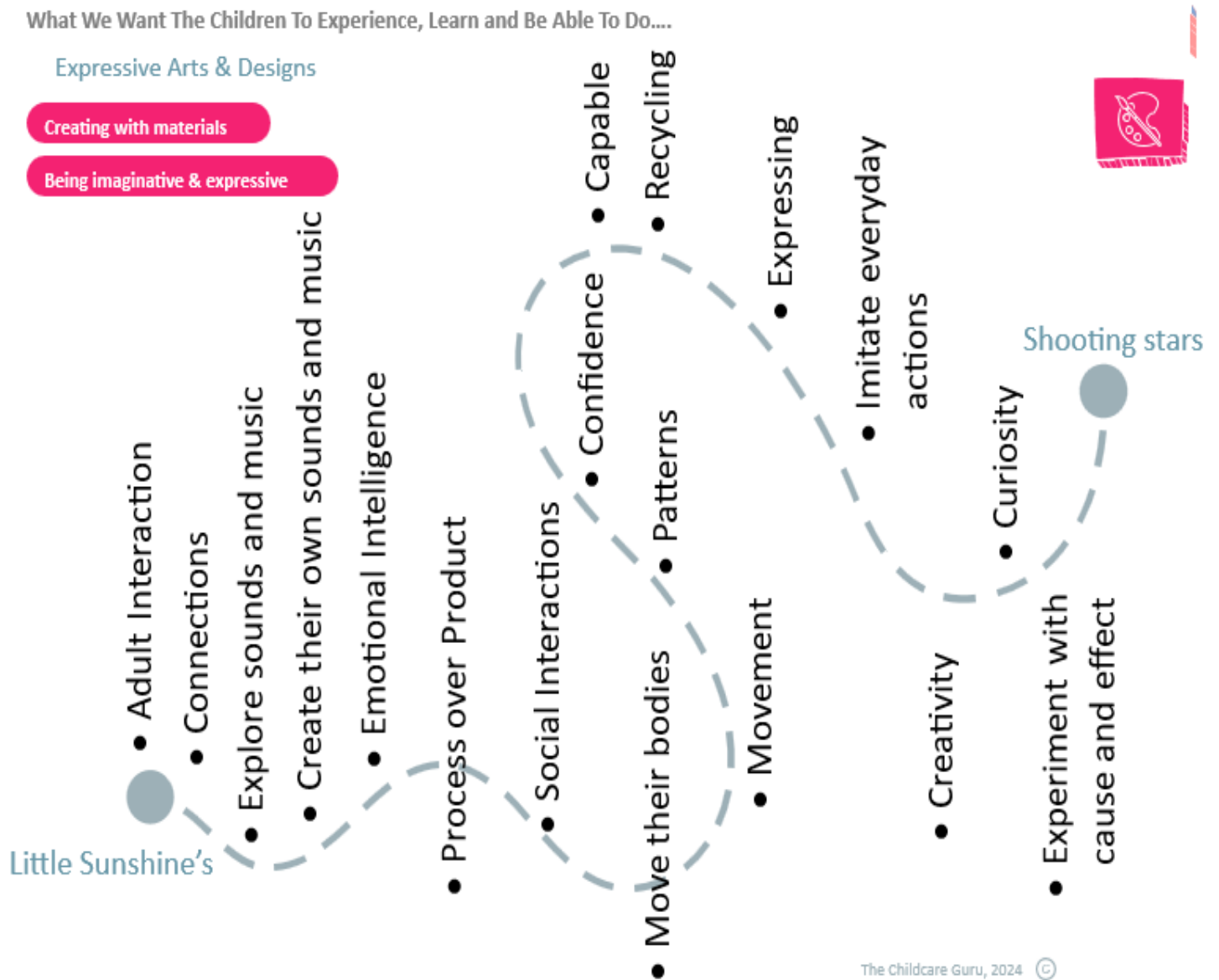
- Providing videos of songs, rhymes and dancing on tapestry and Facebook so children and families can access them at home.

Our pedagogy

- Tuff tray activities, exploring different textures
- Art and craft activities- free flow and adult led
- Creative area- giving children opportunities to explore and create independently
- Rhyme time and songs- baby shark BINGO
- Musical instruments
- Explore colours and mark making
- Pablo Picasso - Every child is an artist – allowing children to freely express themselves in art activities.

By the time children in Little Sunshine's room are ready to move to Shooting stars

most children should...



This is how will we put our intentions into practice

Expressive Arts & Design

Creating with materials

Being imaginative & expressive

COEL

Playing and Exploring
Active Learning
Creative and Thinking
Critically

• Rhyming

• Song Time

• Song Bag

• Action Rhymes

• Rhythm

• Home corner

• Offering instruments

Sensory play

• Book Corner

• Craft

• Music and Movement

• Free Paint

• Recyclable Modelling

• Exploring Media and Materials

• Playing music with different tempos

• Noticing Patterns

• Rhyme of the Week

• Making Marks with a Purpose

Communication,
Signs and
Gestures

Shooting stars

