

## **How Children Learn**

Research has shown that children learn more in the first five years of their lives than at any other time, and that young children learn through play.

For children, there is no division between play and learning. Play enables them to develop important social skills and explore their environment – its significance can not be over-emphasised.

Of course, this does not mean that children can be left alone in a room with a variety of toys and effective learning will take place. The equipment and organisation of the room must ensure that children have the right learning experiences. It is also essential that the staff who are with the children have a good understanding of child development, in order to cater for their individual needs and interact with them effectively.

## **The Early Years Foundation Stage**

The Government has recognised that the ages of three to five represent a very important and special time in a child's education and have called it the Foundation Stage. The Foundation Stage is divided into six Areas of Learning and the children are expected to learn about each through a variety of experiences and play opportunities at their day nursery or school.

Every child needs rich sensory experiences, opportunities to explore and investigate, as well as time to assimilate information and apply it to other situations.

Under the care and supervision of highly knowledgeable staff, all Positive Steps Nurseries have a dedicated Pre-School area where children have the space to develop important practical skills that will assist them at school. Simply entering school at an early age provides no guarantees to earlier – or higher – achievement.

"Education should no longer be defined in terms of formal academic teaching, but in terms of sensitive, responsible adult communication that serves to stimulate learning."

(Pre-school Educational Research: Linking Policy with Practice, Wilson and Ogden-Smith, 1999).