

Toys and Play Equipment Policy

Aim

To endeavor to ensure that all toys and play equipment is safe to use.

Policy

Toys and play equipment should be a source of fun and learning for every child. However, poorly designed toys, and toys that are inappropriate for the child's age, used incorrectly or in bad repair can lead to injury. Where toys are shared between children, they may also become a source of infection. It is our policy to ensure that this does not happen.

Procedure

Selecting toys

When selecting or purchasing toys and play equipment:

- Children will be involved in the decision-making process.
- The intellectual, social, emotional, cultural and physical development of the children will be considered.
- The need for appropriate challenges to stimulate a child's inventiveness will be considered.
- The range of materials available to the children will be enhanced.
- The recommended age suitability printed on the packaging will be checked.
- Books and other materials will show positive images of people of all backgrounds, cultures and abilities and will avoid stereotyping.
- They will offer the opportunity for fun and enjoyment.
- Cost, durability, storage and ease of maintenance will be considered.

Storage and Access

- Where possible children of all ages and abilities will be able to reach the toys and equipment they are able to use by themselves.
- Children will be able to select from a range of different toys to allow for free choice and independent play.

- Children will be encouraged to share toys and equipment, take turns on popular games and show others how to use play equipment.
- Children will be encouraged to invent their own games and toys and we will endeavor to provide the space and materials to allow for this.
- Equipment will be stored safely and not piled up.
- The use of sharp, electrical and certain mechanical toys and equipment such as toasters, badge makers, irons and wire will be supervised and will be risk-assessed on an individual basis.
- Children will be allowed to bring their own toys to the setting.
- We will ensure written permission is obtained from parents for the use of specialist equipment e.g. bouncy castles and insurance cover and liability will be checked.
- More valuable toys and equipment (e.g., computers, TVs) will be kept away from view outside of the setting's hours and locks will be used particularly on outdoor storage units.
- Adequate contents insurance will be purchased.

Hygiene

Prevention of the spread of infection via toys will be attempted by ensuring that:

- Toys are cleaned thoroughly on a regular basis.
- Hands are washed after handling contaminated toys.
- Soft modeling materials (e.g., play dough) are replaced regularly.
- Children are discouraged from putting shared toys in their mouth.
- Toys are stored in a clean container or cupboard.
- Useful items such as anti-bacterial wipes are available for instant cleaning.

Looking After Toys and Play Equipment

- Children will be encouraged to respect equipment, report broken or unsafe equipment and will be involved in selecting new toys.

- Toys and equipment will be checked regularly for rough edges. Any that are damaged will be discarded.
- All toys that can be cleaned will be cleaned on a regular basis.
- Dust will be regularly removed as this can trigger asthma attacks and harbor germs.
- Plastic toys will be washed in water and detergent, then thoroughly rinse and dried, especially during an outbreak of an illness.
- Dirty soft toys will be laundered in a washing machine, taking care to follow the manufacturer's instructions. Soft toys that cannot be washed will be discarded when dirty.
- Any toys that are contaminated with bodily fluids (e.g., blood, nasal and eye discharge, saliva, urine and feces) will be immediately cleaned and disinfected or thrown out.
- Children will not be allowed to take toys into the toilet area.
- Toys will not be put back into storage if they are dirty.
- Toys will not be allowed to remain outdoors overnight. Rain and damp causes rust and damage that can increase the risk of accidents.

If a toy is thought to be unsafe it will be removed from the setting.