

Planning for Play Policy

Rationale

This setting recognises children's right to play, as contained in Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991. We support playing as integral to children's enjoyment of their lives, their health and their development. Children and young people – including those with additional needs – whatever their age, culture, ethnicity or social and economic background, need and want to play, indoors and out, in whatever way they can. Through playing, children are creating their own culture, developing their abilities, exploring their creativity and learning about themselves, other people and the world around them (Play England).

Aims

- To run in accordance with the Playwork Principles.
- To support and facilitate the play process within our setting.
- To create a space which enables children to access freely chosen play.
- To create play spaces that support a wide as possible range of play types.
- To foster independence and self-esteem.

Policy

Our responses to children and young people playing will be based on a sound up to date knowledge of play and reflective practice. We will support staff to undertake playwork training and to keep up to date with developments in playwork.

Our playworkers will work with children and young people to help extend their play. All playworker intervention will balance risk with the developmental benefit and wellbeing of children. Playworkers should recognise the importance of free play with minimal intervention, whilst keeping children safe from harm.

Our playworkers will aim to create a varied and interesting environment that stimulates social, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional play. We will plan activities and provide resources that are based on children's interests and support individual children's needs and development, that children can select to develop their own play. Planning will incorporate the Playwork Principles and encompass different play types. We will regularly evaluate practice and resources and renew these when necessary.

We will consult with children and parents about the provision in a variety of ways on a regular basis. Consultation methods will include discussions, a suggestion box and observations of children.

For more information on the Playwork Principles and different play types, please see the appendix.

Planning for Play

To ensure that playworkers plan effectively so they can support children and young people to have the best play opportunities possible, we will follow these procedures. They are broken down into 6 sections: Pre-Planning; Planning; Implementation; Evaluation; EYFS & Keyworkers and Supporting Older Children.

1. Pre-Planning

- **Asking Children**

Use a variety of methods to enable children to communicate their ideas and thoughts about what they would like to happen in their play space, e.g., suggestion boxes, writing up on large pieces of paper, surveys, remembering to write down when children have requested something, ideas book.

- **Early Years All About Me Form**

Check to see what has been recorded about children's play needs and preferences.

- **Feedback From Children**

Directly asking them during the session or at the end of the day making sure you don't disrupt their play flow.

- **Evaluate Previous Plans**

What worked well? What did the children engage with? What didn't work and why? The last one is important because it might just be where resources were set out, the weather that day, which children were present, not the right resources, the way it was introduced to the children. It might be worth trying some things again in a different way.

- **Observing**

Encourage all playworkers to contribute to this; what have they seen the children doing? What are they talking about? Where are they playing? What equipment and resources are being used, and what is left untouched?

- **Other Events**

Check out what is happening locally & nationally; community events, in school, festivals and celebrations. Is there something that could have a more playful twist in your setting, or some way of getting more involved?

2. Planning

- We will make a plan on a regular basis.
- We will enable all staff to plan certain activities.
- We will produce a weekly activity sheet, which will be available to all children, playworkers and parents.
- We will always provide opportunities for freely chosen unplanned play.
- We will always provide a wide a range of 'Loose Parts'.

Our plans will be developed underpinned with the following:

- **Risk and challenge**

We support The Play Safety Forum's policy statement: 'All children both need and want to take risks in order to explore limits, venture into new experiences and develop their capacities, from a very young age and from their earliest play experiences' (2002, Managing Risk in Play Provision: A Position Statement). When planning we will provide resources and activities that can provide opportunities for risk and challenge for **all** children according to their ages and abilities, ensuring adequate staffing ratios to maintain health and safety requirements.

- **Play Types**

Children's play experiences and development will be greatly enhanced by having opportunities to play in a variety of ways. To ensure this is possible our plans will show which play types you might be able to link to the resources and activities available each session (appendix b).

- **Outdoor Play**

We will offer access to outdoor play every day, with the exception of severe weather conditions.

- **Inclusion**

We want **all** children that want to, to be able to participate in the activities planned and be able to play with the resources available. We will adapt plans, and ensure adequate staffing levels to ensure this is possible.

- **Flexibility**

Our plans are designed to be flexible, and sometimes children's own ideas and play needs may override plans. Children can take the activity or use the resources in many ways, this will be always be supported by staff.

3. Implementation

- **Resources & Equipment**

Once plans have been finalised a list of any resources needed will be drawn up and if necessary, purchased. Staff will be encouraged to select resources and equipment that reflect a diverse and multicultural society and which challenge stereotypes. Images used in the setting will support diversity and inclusion.

- **Play Environment**

We will set up the play space prior to children arriving, putting out a range of resources and equipment, both inside and out. We will regularly change the layout to support different types of play in different areas of the play space. It is the role of the playworker to offer a wide range of resources which support play opportunities enabling children to play freely and have control of their own play.

- **Activities**
Will be led by different members of staff, often the person who has had the idea and done the planning. Staff will also be selected to lead certain activities due to their experience and knowledge.
- **Staff Deployment**
The Manager should ensure that the team are allocated duties across the areas to ensure a safe and play rich environment.
- **Intervention**
Play should enable children to make their own decisions and learn from their successes and failings. Playworkers are trained to understand the impact of any interventions they make, and how it could affect children natural play cycles, their self-esteem, self-confidence and independence. Playworkers will consider which intervention style is the most appropriate in any situation.

4. Evaluation

- At the end of each session staff will have a verbal debrief and record information where needed.
- Any feedback noted from children will be included.
- Daily team meetings will discuss recorded actions where needed and enable playworkers to put forward new ideas for future plans.
- One to one supervision meetings will also enable playworkers to focus on their contribution to the play space and input ideas for future planning.
- The Manager will feedback to the management committee on all aspects of the planning and implementation. The committee will make them aware of any budget requirement for future resources and equipment needed.

5. Planning for EYFS and Keyworkers

We will ensure we meet the play needs of children within the EYFS age group (up to the end of the school year in which they are 5) by:

- Allocating a keyworker for each child, who will be known to both the children and their parent/carers. All keyworkers will support children's play and development by providing resources to extend their play and interactions that extend their understanding.
- When a child first starts at the setting, the keyworker and playworkers will support the transition to the new setting, find out what their play interests are and identify starting points for the child in discussion with the parent/carers. We will use an 'All About Me' sheet to help with this.



- Recording very short observations for each child on their EYFS form and sharing this with the child's teacher/parents.
- Identifying next steps and interests for individual children and feeding these into future plans.
- Focussing on the 3 prime areas of the EYFS learning and development requirements: Communication and Language; Physical development; Personal, social and emotional development.
- Linking with school. A Deputy Manager will liaise with EYFS teachers, so the setting's activities can complement the work being done in class in a play way and extend it.
- Picking up from school/class. Playworkers will always pick up the EYFS children and bring them to the setting. This builds relationships with the children and ensures daily contact with teaching staff, opportunity to share information about children's welfare and continuity of care. We will use this information to ensure we are planning appropriate play opportunities for the individual child, alongside the group.

6. Planning for Supporting Older Children

- All key stage 1 children are picked up from class, which gives an opportunity to speak to school staff in case there is any information on a child's welfare that needs sharing.
- With key stage 2 children, if a teacher or assistant has information that they feel is important to be shared with the setting/parents/carers, we will always be available to speak with them, e.g., if a child has been upset in class. We will pass on any relevant information to the parent/carer. We will use this information to ensure we are planning appropriate play opportunities for the individual child, alongside the group.
- Allocated playworker: If a child needs extra support and it is manageable, we will allocate them a playworker.
- Children's preferences will always be taken into account and when planning we will also seek to match dispositions or necessary skills. This will help ensure that play needs are met.

Appendix A: Playwork Principles

These principles establish the professional and ethical framework for playwork, and describe what is unique about play and playwork, and provide the playwork perspective for working with children and young people.

They are based on the recognition that children and young people's capacity for positive development will be enhanced if given access to the broadest range of environments and play opportunities:

- All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and well-being of individuals and communities.
- Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.
- The prime focus and essence of playwork is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.
- For playworkers, the play process takes precedence and playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult led agendas.
- The role of the playworker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.
- The playworker's response to children and young people playing is based on a sound up to date knowledge of the play process, and reflective practice.
- Playworkers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young people's play on the playworker.
- Playworkers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All playworker intervention must balance risk with the developmental benefit and well-being of children.

Playwork Principles Scrutiny Group, Cardiff 2005.

Appendix B: Overview of Different Play Types

There are acknowledged to be a number of different play types (Bob Hughes – Taxonomy of Play Types) which provide playworkers, managers and trainers with a common language for describing play. There are in no particular order.

1. Symbolic Play

Play which allows control, gradual exploration and increased understanding without the risk of being out of depth e.g., using a piece of wood to symbolise a person or an object, or a piece of string to symbolise a wedding ring.

2. Rough and Tumble Play

Close encounter play, which is less to do with fighting and more to do with touching, tickling, gauging relative strength. Discovering physical flexibility and the exhilaration of display. This type of play allows children to participate in physical contact that doesn't involve or result in someone being hurt. This type of play can use up lots of energy.

3. Socio-Dramatic Play

The enactment of real and potential experiences of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature e.g., playing at house, going to the shops, being mothers and fathers, organising a meal or even having a row

4. Social Play

Play during which the rules and criteria for social engagement and interaction can be revealed, explored and amended. E.g., any social or interactive situation which contains an expectation on all parties that they will abide by the rules or protocols, i.e.: games, conversations, making something together.

5. Creative Play

Play which allows a new response, the transformation of information, awareness of new connections, with an element of surprise. Allows children to design, explore, try out new ideas and use their imagination. They can use lots of different tools, props, equipment. It can have a beginning and an end, texture and smell, e.g.: enjoying creation with a range of materials and tools for its own sake. Self-expression through any medium: making things, changing things.

6. Communication Play

Play using words, nuances or gestures e.g., mime / charades, jokes, play acting, mickey taking, singing, whispering, pointing, debate, street slang, poetry, text messages, talking on mobiles / emails/ internet, skipping games, group and ball games.

7. Dramatic Play

Play which dramatizes events in which the child is not a direct participator. For example, presentation of a TV show, an event on the street, a religious or festive event, even a funeral.

8. Locomotor Play

Movement in any or every direction for its own sake. E.g., chase, tag, hide and seek, tree climbing.

9. Deep Play

Play which allows the child to encounter risky or even potentially life-threatening experiences, to develop survival skills and conquer fear. E.g., light fires with matches, make weapons, conquer fear such as heights, snakes, and creepy crawlies. Some find strength they never knew they had to climb obstacles, lift large objects, etc. E.g.: leaping onto an aerial runway, riding a bike on a parapet, balancing on a high beam, roller skating, assault course, high jump.

10. Exploratory Play

Play to access factual information consisting of manipulative behaviours such as handling, throwing, banging or mouthing objects. E.g.: engaging with an object or area and, either by manipulation or movement, assessing its properties, possibilities and content, such as stacking bricks.

11. Fantasy Play

This is the make-believe world of children. This type of play is where the child's imagination gets to run wild. Play, which rearranges the world in the child's way, a way that is unlikely to occur. E.g.: playing at being a pilot flying around the world, pretend to be various characters/people, be where ever they want to be, drive a car, become be six feet nothing tall or as tiny as they want to be the list is endless as is a child's imagination.

12. Imaginative Play

Play where the conventional rules, which govern the physical world, do not apply. E.g.: imagining you are ..., or pretending to be, a tree or ship, or patting a dog, which isn't there.

13. Mastery Play

Control of the physical and affective ingredients of the environments. E.g., digging holes, changing the course of streams, constructing shelters, building fires.

14. Object Play

Play which uses infinite and interesting sequences of hand-eye manipulations and movements. E.g., examination and novel use of any object e.g., cloth, paintbrush, cup.

15. Role Play

Play exploring ways of being, although not normally of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature. For example, brushing with a broom, using a telephone, driving a car.

16. Recapitulative Play

Play that allows the child to explore ancestry, history, rituals, stories, rhymes, fire and darkness. Enables children to access play of earlier human evolutionary stages.

References; Hughes, B. (2002) A Playworker's Taxonomy of Play Types, 2nd edition, London: