

## Play

### Category: Early Years

#### Risk Management and Legal Implications

Failure to manage risk may impact on the delivery of Service objectives and the outcomes achieved by Service users. Education and Children's Services aim to mitigate the implications by ongoing management and review of risk in all elements of work activity.

The production of this document is one way in which we aim to reduce our exposure to risk. By providing staff with information on good practice, making reference to other guidance that is available across the Council and providing clarity on how we should do things, we can ensure that the management of risk is intrinsic to what we do.

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## **Play**

'...play at this time is not trivial, it is highly serious and of deep significance.'  
(Froebel, 1826)

"Play is an intrinsic part of human nature and development. For babies and children, the essential role of play is well documented. Through play a child develops their cognitive, social, emotional and physical capacities.

Through play, the child can learn to answer their own questions, learn new skills and learn to work collaboratively with other children or adults."  
(Realising the Ambition – Being Me)

Play provides opportunities for children to experience learning in a meaningful and purposeful way. It is a means by which children can develop the skills and capabilities to be effective learners.

Play provides a context to access the content of the curriculum. It is how a child makes sense of the world around them and how they begin to understand the place they have in their family, at nursery, in the community and the wider world.

Through play, they develop physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially, and grow to be a healthy and competent individual.

When planning for children's play experiences, staff should take account of each child's individual needs, interests and abilities by providing stimulating, challenging and appropriate learning environments, both indoors and outdoors. Children will feel safe and secure in the knowledge that they will be given encouragement and support by a nurturing adult. Children learn best when they are given appropriate responsibility, allowed to experiment, make errors, decisions and choices, and are respected as autonomous learners.

Children will be supported to take risks in their learning to encourage them to become risk aware. When engaged in learning the focus is very much on the process rather than the product.

As an inclusive nursery we ensure we meet the needs of all children. As the first educators we value the role parents play as partners in their child's education. We work closely with all stakeholders to ensure that we get it right for every child.

"Children exhibit many traits in their play, particularly if adult providers are clear in their own minds what different play opportunities actually provide for children in terms of learning.

To play effectively, children need:



- playmates, play spaces or areas, play materials, play time, play to be valued by those around them.
- opportunities to play in pairs, in small groups, alone, alongside others, with adults.
- time for exploring through language what they have done and how they can describe the experience.
- time to follow through what they begin (so often time is not made for this and much valuable work is left unfinished and uncherished!)
- experiences to broaden and deepen what they know already and what they can already do; stimulation and encouragement to do and learn more; planned and spontaneous play opportunities"

(Janet Moyles, "Just Playing")

Tina Bruce describes 12 features of play to help us understand the deep engagement in learning which children show in their play. .... in their play children use the first-hand experiences they have had in life. Children rehearse their future in their play. But there is a balance where we need to raise the profile of play and to deepen an understanding for practitioners in support play experiences with children.

The nursery aims to provide children with a rich and stimulating learning environment, where playing and learning go hand in hand. A varied selection of materials and activities will be provided in response to children's interests and needs, throughout the day, using both indoor and outdoor activities.

Resources and activities are available to challenge the children in their learning. Open ended resources allow for imaginative play. Children need to revisit play experiences so that they can gain mastery in their play and deep level learning will follow.

All the resources and activities provided in nursery are carefully planned to provide a rich array of experiences. Staff use responsive planning to note interests observe and skilfully support the learning using quality interactions.

The staff continually observe the children and use the information gained to assess each child's development and progress and to plan next steps for all children.

"Child-centred play pedagogy requires us to take the lead from the children. This approach actively responds to the individual and constantly changing needs of a young child. A young child's voice is interpreted by our observations of their actions, emotions and words. These observations are central to assessment and inform us what children need."

(Realising the Ambition – Being Me)