



## A policy for Play

### Rationale

Children learn most effectively through play. Early Years education is a valuable stage, and children should be given the opportunity to develop and learn through a rich variety of play opportunities.

A child has the right to play and should not be obstructed in any way to carry out play, children should be encouraged and supported during their play. North Ayrshire Council is committed to providing children with the best opportunity to grow up and play, "North Ayrshire strives to be one of the best places to grow up in Scotland and we believe that access to play and play pedagogy will support us to achieve this." (Education Scotland, 2023)

### Aims

To provide a stimulating and challenging learning environment where children are motivated to explore and learn through play.

### Objectives

- To provide interesting play opportunities across the 8 aspects of the Curriculum for Excellence.
- To organise the playroom to enable children to make choices in their play.
- To ensure that the needs of all children are provided for.
- To assess children's learning and development through play.
- To provide a balance between free play and more adult directed experiences.
- To inform parents about the importance of play.

### Links

#### National policy

- **Play Strategy** Scotland aspires to improve play for all children and young people in Scotland by supporting staff, parents and families who work with children and highlight the importance of play and how to support children's learning and development, "We want Scotland to be the best place to grow up. A nation which values play as a life-enhancing daily experience for all our children and young people; in their homes, nurseries, schools, and communities." (Scottish Government, 2013).

#### Local policy

- North Ayrshire Council's local policy, **Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)**, highlights the importance of children's wellbeing by focusing on eight wellbeing indicators, one of these which states,  
"Active - having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport, which contribute to healthy growth and development, at home, in school and in the community." (Scottish Government, 2024) this highlights the importance of children having the opportunity to play and how play supports a child's learning and development.
- All the wellbeing indicators within this policy have the child at the centre to ensure all children have the best opportunity to grow up, learn and develop and highlight the importance of the child's rights linked to **UNCRC** article 31, "Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities." (UNICEF, 2019).

#### Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

- Aims to make Scotland the best place for a child to grow up, both policies link to this settings policy which highlights the importance of a child experiencing play and how it can



support their learning and development as well as how individuals can support the child during their play.

#### How good is our Early Learning and Childcare

- Highlights the importance of play and allowing children to have the opportunity to play within the setting. Links to *How Good is our ELC* quality indicator 2.2 which highlights the importance of a child's curriculum, "This indicator highlights the importance of placing the needs of children at the centre of curriculum design and development.

#### Early Years Framework

- Supports children and their families to ensure children receive a high-quality start in life and are prepared for a good future.

#### Curriculum for Excellence

- Links to this policy by highlighting the importance of specific capacities and for children to acquire these capacities, they are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors, and responsible citizens.

#### Realising the Ambition

- Aims to provide all individuals who work with children and young people with support and guidance, the policy highlights the importance of a child's learning and development and how we as practitioner can support this through their play.

#### SSSC Codes of Practice

- Code 4.1 for employees: "I will recognise that people who use services have the right to take risks and support them to work positively with potential and actual risks to themselves or others." (SSSC, 2016)

#### Health and Social Care Standard

- Standard 2.27: "As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity." (Scottish Government, 2017).

#### Implementation

The following areas/experiences are offered regularly in the EY Class:

- Area for personal belongings
- Snack area
- Book/storytelling area
- Sand/water sensory play
- Puzzle area
- Role play area
- Construction area
- Writing/art area
- Playdough/malleable area
- Outdoor area

Staff are aware that children develop their skills in all areas of the setting, therefore, learning opportunities are embedded throughout each area within the setting.

#### Resources

A variety of age/stage appropriate resources are available (inventory regularly updated). Appropriate use of the School Grounds and immediate environment, as well as what is already provided in the Early Years.



### Consultation February 2024

After consultation with staff, children and families, the feedback we have received will conduct actions to ensure your feedback is valued. After consultation with the children, they all believe play is important, they all currently enjoy the play opportunities offered within the setting and wouldn't change anything. After consultation with the parents; not all parents had the same understanding of the policy and not all parents felt they had access to the opportunity to consult with staff on their child's interests in and out of the setting due to commitments, therefore staff will be more aware and provide opportunities to gather this information and involve parents with the consultations of their child's interests, this can be through the use of questionnaires. As a result of this feedback:

### Staff will

- Regularly observe and assess children at play
- Support children's interests and be responsive
- Regularly evaluate the playroom provision
- Plan the session to include time for free play and some adult led experiences
- Be flexible and encourage children to develop concentration and support them to complete tasks
- Try to avoid interrupting children who are involved in their play
- Use observations to influence planning
- Provide opportunities for children to develop their skills

### Children will

- Be encouraged to make choices and return resources, when finished their play
- Be consulted about their interests and preferences in play
- Be encouraged to plan and discuss their play
- Be involved in recording their achievements

### Parents will

- Be consulted on their children's interests in and out of the Early Years
- Be given information on play
- Be consulted during the implementations or adaptations to new or current policies

### Evaluations

The success of this policy will be discussed at staff planning meetings when observations by staff will be discussed. Children's feedback will be noted and discussed in the Learning Journal Book and in the floor book. Parents will be consulted on their child's interests and opportunities will be provided for parents and families to read the policies within the setting.

This policy will be evaluated and reviews on the 20<sup>th</sup> of March 2025.



## References

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