



# **Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)**

## **A guide for lecturers and students**

**June 2005**

**Scottish Further Education Unit**



## **Play in Early Education and Childcare**

### **Unit DM41 12**

#### **Introduction**

These notes are provided to support teachers and lecturers presenting the Scottish Qualifications Authority Unit DM41 12 Play in Early Education and Childcare. This can be offered as a stand alone Unit and is also a component Unit of the National Certificate Group Award in Early Education and Childcare.

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# **Play in Early Education and Childcare:**

## **A guide for lecturers and students**

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# **Play in Early Education and Childcare**

## **Using this guide**

The pack is structured in the following way:

- Section 1 relates to lecturer information and includes:
  - Suggested lesson plans
  - Suggested student notes
  - Suggested student exercises
  - OHTs
  - PowerPoint presentations
- Section 2 relates to student notes and student exercises for Outcome 1.
- Section 3 relates to student notes and student exercises for Outcome 2.
- Section 4 relates to student notes and student exercises for Outcome 3.
- Section 5 has additional case studies which can be used to support preparation for NAB assessment.
- Section 6 contains useful websites, publications and a reference section and additional photographs for photocopying.

**The materials in Sections 2 - 4 are identified as either:**



## **Play in Early Education and Childcare**

This unit forms part of the mandatory section of the National Certificate Group Award: Early Education and Childcare (Higher) and is also a mandatory Unit in the Project Assessed Course: Play in early Education and Childcare (Higher).

This guide contains support materials for three components:

1. Looking at a play environment.
2. Play and why it is important to a child's development.
3. How the adult sets up play opportunities for children.

They relate to the three Outcomes in the unit:

1. Analyse a play environment in an early education and childcare setting
2. Evaluate the importance of play to the developing child
3. Explain how you would set up different types of play in an early education and childcare setting.

This unit relies on the candidates having some background knowledge of child development, so a starting point for lecturers and trainers would be to teach this unit in conjunction with the National Certificate Unit: Child Development: Birth to twelve years (Higher).

It is suggested that these notes are also used with child development texts and other texts which relate to the development of play. Some of these are included in the reference section at the end of the guide.

Examples of these are given in the reference section at the end of this guide.

It is also suggested you refer to the Learning and Teaching Scotland website and decide which of their resources fit best with the principles which underpin this guide.

[www.ltscotland.org.uk](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk)

There are five components to this guide:

**Student Notes; Student Exercises;** Guidance on how to deliver the unit with suggested **lesson plans / lecturer notes;** **PowerPoint/OHT resources;** and finally there are additional **Case Studies and Exercises** which can be used for formative assessment, to generate group discussion or to use as preparatory **NABs.**

The lesson plans are in sections relating to Outcomes 1-3 but it is strongly suggested that Outcomes 2 and 3 benefit from integrated delivery.

Student notes and student exercises appear numerically and are intended as guidance. They should be used in conjunction with your own teaching notes and exercises, videos or CD-ROM materials you may also want to use.

It is suggested they are used in the order they appear but each lecturer should make their own judgement about what is most beneficial to their own candidates.

Candidates should be encouraged to read widely on the subject of play. This includes books and journals and to use the Internet to find e-journals and other articles. This should enable discussion to take place in class. Some of these additional sources are included at the end of this guide.

By engaging candidates in debate about play, you will be able to challenge some of the firmly held but often narrow views people hold about the value of play, which hold back an understanding of the real benefits of play to the child.

If this unit is taught in conjunction with the Play in Practice (Higher) unit, candidates should have an opportunity to discuss and to bring in examples of how they have seen play taking place in the different centres they have visited.

Play will differ according to the child's age and stage of development. The challenges which are presented to the five year old will be very different to the challenges given to a one year old.

In this unit you should assume adult direction is kept to a minimum but adult engagement with the child is essential.

The skill of engagement is a subtle one and the candidate at this level will need support to understand this concept and to provide play which is essentially child directed or led. The role of the adult in planning and observing play experiences which is dealt with extensively in Play in Practice (Higher) should be considered alongside this unit and it should be remembered that candidates working at this level will need guidance and support from other colleagues.

The skilled professional needs to be aware of a variety of factors, which will be explored later in these notes, but the overall effect for the child should be of play, which is seamlessly provided according to their needs, interests and dispositions.

## Introduction

Most of the candidates who do this unit will consider they have an understanding of play. This is a common perception because we have all been children and have all engaged in play activities at some point in our lives.

One of the realities of play is that it is often mistrusted as being frivolous, not being ‘real work’ for children or not having any value.

Moyles (1994) describes play in young children as being:

‘a tool for learning’ and an ‘opportunity for children to construct their own views about life’ (pp. 5-6).

Others have said that

‘Play is a dynamic process that develops and changes as it becomes increasingly more varied and complex. It is considered a key facilitator for learning and development across domains, and reflects the social and cultural contexts in which children live’ (Christie, 2001; Hughes, 1999).

Hopefully by the time candidates have completed this unit they will begin to understand the complexity of play and the unit will dispel the myth that play is an activity that is somehow not about real learning.

It is anticipated that the candidate will become aware of the importance to the child of being able to engage in play which is developmentally appropriate, which is freely chosen and which has been structured according to his or her needs.

That is not to say that all play has to be rigidly structured to the adult’s idea of what the play experience should involve.

The real skill comes when an adult can set up a play experience which has been directed by the child and which seems to flow effortlessly from the child’s interests, needs or dispositions, ie. when the play ‘just happens’.

The idea of child-centred play is built on a belief that the play fits the child, not the child fitting the play.

Abbott (1994) has described child-centeredness as ‘being where the child is at’ and allowing the play to flow from that starting point.

She cites examples from Sweden which suggest that the adult perception of what constitutes play and the child’s perception of what play is can and do differ.

Fraser Brown (2003) in *Playwork* cautions against the assumption that play always has to have a developmental focus and must be measurable.

This is consistent with what Vygotsky (1978, in Lee and Das Gupta, 2001) argues is the ‘over-intellectualisation of play’.

However, Vygotsky also refers to a ‘zone of proximal learning’ which he describes as that stage in which children develop certain skills and understandings but which, with sensitive adult intervention, can be stretched further.

The adult is trying to create opportunities for children to engage freely with other children and to be aided by adults where appropriate.

Nieto describes one of the attributes the childcare professional should have, in Collins et al. (2001), as **praxis**.

Nieto describes this as:

‘The development of the important social action, pre-dispositions and attitudes that are the backbone of a democratic society ...’ (p. 39)

This implies an attitude of mind that both values children and doesn’t seek to dominate them by adult-driven ideals.

It is important to remember the essence of playing is in itself not just an experience for the child but is integral to his/her life and so it is very difficult for the adult to truly measure how much children are benefiting from engagement in play.

Play allows children to disengage from an adult-constructed world and has rules that may never be fully understood by adults because they are of the child's world.

### **Play is about and of children**

For the purpose of this guide and of supporting candidates at this level there will be a focus on the way in which play is constructed in organised settings such as nurseries and out of school care facilities.

Both of these have been described as '**settings**'.

Occasionally the words 'nursery' and 'playwork setting' are used, but these occasions are kept to a minimum.

**As lecturers you should contextualise the information and add to the theories and practices as necessary.**

## **Section 1: Lecturer information**

### **Outcome 1**

**Analyse a play environment in an early education and childcare setting**

**Lecturer Notes and lesson plans**

## Lecturer Notes

You might start off teaching this by using **Lesson 1** as an opportunity to discuss with students the different types of play you would want to include when you are setting up a play space.

A format for this might be:

- start off by asking students to reminisce about their own childhood and working in pairs ask them to write down a list of their favourite games (not toys) and activities
- keep a flip-chart record of this
- ask them to describe some of the things that annoyed them when they were playing, eg. being told to clear away when they were in the middle of a game, missing pieces of games, not having enough space
- now ask students to draw or create their ideal nursery or play setting and include in it a wish list of items and activities they would expect to find there
- ask the students to keep this in a logbook.

When this task is finished, you might want to spend some time on feedback or you may wish to leave this for the next session.

One thing you are trying to achieve at this stage is shifting thinking away from 'play' as being synonymous with 'toys' and start candidates thinking about broader categories of play experiences.

It might also be helpful to look at ways in which adults continue to play eg. when you've bought a new gadget and want to see how it works.

## **Lesson 2 – Use Student Exercise 1**

### **Lesson 3 – Categorising play:**

Start off by recapping on the previous lesson and on Lesson 2.

Encourage the candidates to group the play they have highlighted into types or categories you have selected using the play types described in the unit specification, as in Outcome 2.

Here is a reminder of the types of play the specification requires. You may wish to introduce additional types of play to this but the examples below are mandatory for this unit:

- **Symbolic Play**
- **Books and play which supports language enrichment**
- **Creative Play**
- **Discovery Play**
- **Vigorous Play**
- **Play with Technology**
- **Games.**

What you are trying to achieve here is to establish patterns within play, which means they overlap from one category of play to another, so use **Student Exercise 2** to illustrate the point.

Using overlapping circles is a way to illustrate this, eg. dressing up might go into the Symbolic Play circle but it might also go into Technology or Play With Language.

Candidates might begin to see from this that it is difficult to define some types of play as only belonging to one category.

You could do this exercise using three different age groups to see if there are different overlaps according to the age of the child.

## **Lesson 4 – The play environment:**

The next step is to explore ways of ensuring the play environment is conducive to developing play experiences.

Relating this to child development, you might ask for views about why play needs to be age appropriate.

There are some examples under **Student Exercise 3**.

The intention is to introduce the idea of ages and stages, ie. introduce the concept of play appropriate to age and developmental stage designed to allow children opportunities to develop cognitively, physically emotionally and socially.

You might want to add more examples of your own.

Candidates should also be given opportunities to make links between the type of play offered and the ways it might help the child's development.

See **Student Exercise 4**.

An example of this is shown in the student exercise; here is an abbreviated example:

### **Vigorous Play (with a three year old)**

Exercising large and small muscles; opportunities to explore the environment; opportunities to associate with other children; investigation and experimentation.

As part of this lesson you will be showing that play has to be able to support a number of functions.

Examples you might give would be that children need to have opportunities to play indoors and out of doors because of the benefits this brings to their health and sense of well being. Other examples might include the following:

- opportunities to take calculated risks
- opportunities to use and to hear different sounds
- to have stories told and books read
- to pick up the rhythm of poetry and verse
- to make friends, sustain friendships and make connections with others
- to become cognitively aware
- to explore their creativity
- to be inventive
- to support their emotional well-being.

See **PowerPoint 1: What can Play Provide?**

Hutt (1979) describes play that can be divided and sub-divided into:

- (a) Epistemic Behaviour
- (b) Ludic Behaviour
- (c) Games with rules.

This is then further divided into types of play behaviour that is too advanced for this level of study.

You may want to use it as a personal reference and should do so by following the link:  
<http://www.ncca.ie/i/framework/section3-5.htm>

The intention in this part of the unit is to make students aware of how the physical environment affects the ways that children play and the potential of children's play.

### **Lesson 5:**

This part of the guide is about how to encourage play by setting up an environment which is both developmentally appropriate and well organised according to the needs of the child or children.

There are student notes and student exercises to illustrate the points.

See **Student Exercise 5.**

### **Lesson 6:**

Creating the play environment – **student exercises 6 and 7** are suggested ways of teaching this, but you may wish to discuss some of these issues with the students before presenting them with the case studies.

The suggested points to make are in the OHT that follows and in **PowerPoint 2 – Organising a Play Environment.**

**You may also wish to show the video to elaborate the points that have been made: *Resourcing the Curriculum* (Moray House, Edinburgh).**

**OHT 1**

## **Organisation**

- ❖ clarity of what each person's role is and of what they are expected to do
- ❖ an ability to work constructively with other colleagues
- ❖ replenishing during the day
- ❖ children leading or supporting the process
- ❖ well-organised, labelled resources which are easily accessible to all
- ❖ repairing and replacing equipment regularly
- ❖ budgetary responsibility.

**OHT 2**

## **Planning**

- ❖ effective planning supports children's learning and development
- ❖ it requires an awareness of the children's needs
- ❖ it requires good, careful observation
- ❖ staff need to be clear about who has responsibility in the planning process
- ❖ staff need to be clear about their role in the planning process
- ❖ planning can and does involve children
- ❖ planning should be flexible because children's needs and ideas will change.

**OHT 3**

## **Observing children**

By observing children we:

- ❖ learn about their needs
- ❖ learn about their dispositions
- ❖ track their progress
- ❖ become aware of progressive or regressive behaviour
- ❖ evaluate how effective the provision is
- ❖ find out about child-to-child interactions
- ❖ find out about child-to-adult interactions
- ❖ create evidence for planning, resourcing and organising.

## **Lesson 7**

Consider the types of play experiences offered in the setting and about ways in which this can be organised to make it as effective as possible.

It is likely you will want to discuss the following:

- different types of play environment
- moving about
- the need for quiet and for space
- the flow of play
- the importance of the visual impact.

At this point you may want to arrange visits to local nurseries, crèches and out of school care clubs as a practical way of looking at the environment and critically analysing what you see. **Student Notes 2** offers some explanation for this section.

When the student knows what is required generally in the play environment, they need to be aware of some of the ground rules for setting out the play area.

## **Lesson 8**

A suggested way of approaching this is to allow students the opportunity to set up different play areas as a practical exercise.

You might want to split your class into groups with each group taking a different aspect of play (as defined above).

Each group would have responsibility to set up a stimulating play environment for the area they are given.

You can select age ranges which you think are appropriate but it would be helpful if one group could take the age range birth – 12 months, as this is often neglected.

Instructions for this should be given out a week in advance to allow students the opportunity to gather suitable materials and to assess what materials are available in the learning environment you are offering.

Part of the success of the experience will be determined by how well the members of each group communicate together and how well they plan their resources. Ask the other groups to use a checklist to constructively criticise the other groups.

Some of the things you should look for:

- the effectiveness of communication in the group
- how arrangements were made for individuals in the group to contribute to the task
- the success of the final product.

Another way of consolidating learning is to ask students to do **Student Exercise 8**.

## **Outcome 2:**

**Evaluate the importance of play to the developing child**

**Lecturer Notes and lesson plans**

## Evaluate the importance of play to the developing child

Davenport (1998) reminds us that play changes as children grow.

Those working with children need to be aware of how children play and the purpose and value of the play.

In this section you will be looking at:

- a range of different types of play
- how play can support a child's development
- the role the adult has in supporting different types of play.

It would be impossible to cover all of the different types of play in this guide, so we will be looking at the following mandatory types of play.

Lecturers teaching this unit can, however add other categories if they think it will help the candidates' understanding.

- Symbolic Play
- Books and play which supports language enrichment
- Creative Play
- Discovery Play
- Vigorous Play
- Play with technology
- Games.

There will inevitably be overlaps between each of these types of play as it is often impossible to assert that a particular type of play only falls into one category – so you may find that there is repetition.

In this section it might be valuable to start with the second outcome first ie. **how play supports a child's development**. This can be integrated with the teaching of child development.

When looking at a **range of different types of play**, this will be integrated with the **role of the adult in supporting different types of play**.

Some additional specific guidance on the adult's role is in the final part of section 2.

A suggested format for delivering this section follows.

## Lessons 9 and 10:

### Play and the developing child

Davenport (1998) describes this as solitary, parallel, associative and co-operative play, however for the purpose of this guide the terminology that will be used is: playing **alone**, playing **alongside** others and playing **together**.

You may wish to introduce the more formal terminology of solitary, parallel, co-operative to underline the fact that sometimes terminology differs but the concept remains the same.

You may wish to start off by teaching the different types of play then proceed to the exercise with the pictures. They are featured in **Student Exercise 9** – they are also shown in A4 detail at the end of this guide, so they can be photocopied for class use.

The idea of this exercise is to introduce the concept of children playing in different ways because of the age they are or alternately because they choose to do so.

When children play alone it is called **solitary play** or '**playing alone**'.

Children under 12 months nearly always play in this way because of what Piaget describes as 'egocentricity'.

The ways in which children under 12 months engage in play is through a process of exploration and experimentation – this helps them find out about things.

**Picture one** shows a child playing alone, happily engrossed in what he is doing and experimenting with the water. An additional exercise would be for students to find some evidence of similar examples of children playing alone, concentrating on this age group.

This could be done by collecting anecdotal examples from their own experiences – either in placement or when babysitting or visually through using magazines and books to help.

A point to remember for the candidates is that young children aren't being 'selfish' when they play alone in this way. It is simply part of their development and telling a baby they 'have to share' is really not appropriate. 'Egocentrism' is described by Piaget as an 'incomplete differentiation of the self and the world' and with it comes an 'inability to take another person's perceptual or conceptual perspective' (Miller in Lee and Das Gupta, 2001).

So a very young child doesn't yet have the capacity to share.

This is why it is important to link this part of the teaching with the child development teaching which also forms part of the award.

**Picture 2** shows children who are very clearly playing alongside each other – they are engaged in the same type of activity and are using the same type of equipment. They may be aware of each other but the way they play is disengaged from the other.

This type of play is often called **parallel play** and in turn becomes **associative play**. It is the type of play that starts with children being aware of the other child and then starting to engage with that child. However there is probably no real co-operation in the way they play. They are therefore **playing alongside**. For the purpose of this unit it is the terminology 'playing alongside' which will be used.

**Picture 3** is an example of an older child 'playing alone'. This is to remind candidates that any of the types of play can happen at other stages too and that children often choose to play alone. They shouldn't feel compelled to force children to play together if the child's disposition is to play alone. It is about reminding students that children are individuals.

**Picture 4** shows the start of co-operative play. It is generally felt that this type of play requires particular engagement between the participants, so it will only happen when the children can show co-operation in what they are doing. This co-operation may occur because of a verbal cue or a non-verbal cue between participants.

What this means is that there has to be some type of exchange to indicate the expectations or rules of the play or some actual cognitive ability to see from another's point of view.

## **Lesson 11**

### **Consolidating learning from Lessons 9 and 10**

It is suggested you use the exercise below.

You may want to use different case studies depending on which age range you want to emphasise with your students.

You may also want to encourage the students to bring in observations from placement and to use these to generate examples.

The answers are given here but not in the student exercise to allow photocopying to take place.

Example	Answers
John, Tracy and Sandeep (4-4.5 years) are playing outside. They have bikes and trailers and are carrying bricks from one area of the playground to the outdoor sandpit. Sandeep suggests a better way to do the carrying would be to use a wheelbarrow and they set about taking the bricks out of the trailer and put them into the wheelbarrows. John says he will go over to the sandpit and keep an eye on the deliveries.	Co-operative play
Rhiannon (6 years) is sitting at the sewing table. She is carefully selecting different threads before she decides what she wants to make. There are other children at the sewing table but it is clear that they are all engrossed in their own activities.	Solitary play
Sui Lin and Tara are 2 years old. They are sitting on a mat in the nursery and both have blocks in front of them. As one throws a block down the other picks it up.	Playing alongside
Billy and George (4.3 and 4.6 years) have built a model that now needs painting. They discuss the colours they want to use and Billy goes off to find the paints. ‘Naw, they’re too runny,’ says George when he brings them back. They start to disagree. George comes back with some more powder to add to the paint.	Co-operative play
Jo (4.6 years) is sitting in the book corner. She is listening to a tape with a favourite story. She is turning pages as the tape instructs. She has a doll next to her and is ‘telling’ the doll when to turn the pages. ‘Well done’ she says to her doll at the end. ‘You listened to that very well’.	Solitary play

<p>Sam and Darren (3.7 and 4 years) are both at the modelling table. They have a variety of different types of 'found materials' to choose from. Each is looking at what the other is doing and as one takes a cereal box, so does the other. They are interested in what the other is doing.</p>	Playing alongside
<p>Chloe and Charlie (7 years old) are playing with bats and balls in the hall. Charlie throws the ball to see how high he can catch it from. Chloe tries to do the same and keeps dropping it. She starts to dribble the ball instead. Charlie says dribble it to me and I'll save it.</p>	Co-operative play

## **Lessons 12-20**

The remainder of this unit will be dealt with by integrating the **different types of play** identified at the start of this section and considering both how these types of play **benefit the child's development** and also how the **adult can support** the particular type of play. At this level there is no requirement to look at play in relation to Hutt's typology (1979) ie. play showing epistemic behaviour, games with rules and Ludic behaviour. However some of the terminology that emanates from this, eg. exploratory play and symbolic play, is used.

We will be looking at the following:

- Symbolic Play
- Books and play which supports language enrichment
- Creative Play
- Discovery Play
- Vigorous Play
- Play with Technology
- Games.

You will need to use your judgement about how long you need to spend with each of these types of play, but at least one lesson for each should be considered.

This will mean there is a minimum of **7 or 8** lessons.

Clearly the amount of time spent on this will depend on the pace of teaching and of understanding shown by candidates.

You may want to treat these either as taught lessons or combine them with outcome three which identifies ways of setting up this type of play with practical opportunities for the candidate to 'play' in the same way.

Ways in which the materials can be set up or constructed are dealt with in **Section 4** of the pack.

**Student Notes 3-9** are used to exemplify this outcome.

You may want to supplement this knowledge with videos such as 'Planning', 'Observation' and 'Outdoor Play' from the series of Moray House videos, or from LTS resources such as 'Learning is Magic'.

## **The Role of the Adult in supporting play – integrates with both Outcomes 2 and 3 of this unit**

This may be taught as a separate **Lesson 21** or may be combined with the previous section on types of play or with **Section 3, The Role of the Adult**. The role of the adult should be integrated throughout the course.



It is suggested you use a combination of PowerPoint presentations, practical sessions based on Outcome 3 and the Student Notes and Student Exercises to teach this part of the unit.

**NB. Student Exercise 18** is set out as **Case Studies 1 & 2** for nursery age children and **Case Studies 3 & 4** for school age children.

For the PowerPoint presentation see **PP3 The role of the adult in supporting play**.

Additionally the case studies in student exercise 18 may be used as a discussion with candidates encouraged to cite examples of where improvement could be made in the way the adults are supporting children's play experiences.

## **Outcome 3:**

**Explain how you would set up different types of play in an early education and childcare setting.**

### **Lecturer Notes and lesson plans**

## Explain how you would set up different types of play in an early education and childcare setting

In *Playwork: Theory and Practice* Brown et al. (2003) describe some of the agendas behind writing their text as:

- creating play opportunities that enable children to pursue their own play agendas
- enriching the child's world by providing opportunities for experimentation and exploration and enabling a sense of self
- developing appropriate responses for individual children's play cues
- introducing flexibility and adaptability into the play environment.

Workers in an early education and childcare setting might agree with all of these points and add that play can also support learning and developmental opportunities in the child.

It is important to understand how the adult can facilitate the setting up of age appropriate play by looking at some of the materials or some of the play experiences they might want to offer children.

There is insufficient space in this guide to identify all of the ways in which this can be done so the following examples, which are done by setting up practical sessions with your candidates, are only some of the wide range of possible activities.

There are also many other excellent texts on the subject of specific play activities that might be offered to children. These are included in the resources and websites list at the end of this guide.

As before, the suggested activities are set out under the specific play headings though none are exhaustive or belong exclusively in that category.

Before embarking on the practical, 'activities involved in setting up play activities', you may want to use **PowerPoint presentation 4 Setting Up Play** with students.

You may also want to emphasise the role of the adult and communication between adults by using **Student Notes 11** and **Student Exercise 19**.

In the final section you are teaching the following aspect of the course:

- explain why effective preparation is important in supporting different play experiences.

**Student notes 12** support the above as well as giving some practical examples of providing play under each heading.

It should be emphasised that this is not intended as an exhaustive list and students should be encouraged to investigate other resources, journals or periodicals which might provide them with additional ideas and resources.

**Student exercise 20** gives the candidates additional opportunities to develop play areas either collaboratively or working alone.

By now you will have reached the end of the course but may want to recap or prepare for NABs by going over some additional case studies.

These are in the final **section 5**.

**PowerPoint slides are reproduced here as overheads.  
The PowerPoint presentations can be accessed on the SFEU website.**

## **PowerPoint 1: What can play provide?**



## What can play provide?



Opportunities for all



## **Play can provide:**

- Opportunities to take calculated risks.
- Opportunities to use and to hear different sounds
- Opportunities for stories and books to be read or to be read to.

## Play can provide:

- Opportunities to pick up the rhythm of poetry and verse
- Opportunities to make friends, sustain friendships and make connections with others
- Opportunities to become cognitively aware.

## **Play can provide:**

- Opportunities for children to explore their creativity and to be creative
- Opportunities to be inventive
- Opportunities for and outlets to support emotional well-being

## **Play can provide:**

- Outlets for aggression and for the legitimate release of emotions
- Opportunities to make believe
- Opportunities for physical skills to be developed
- An opportunity for the child to function in his own world rather than the world of an adult

## Hutt (1979)

- Describes play which is
- Epistemic
- Ludic
- Play with games

## **PowerPoint 2: Organising a play environment**

## Organising a play environment

Some understandings

## Organising a play environment

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- Does every one understand their role in the setting?
- Does everyone understand their responsibilities in the setting?

## Organising a play environment

- Workers need to be able to work well with each other to ensure:
  - ❖ No ambiguity
  - ❖ Clear, communication
  - ❖ The needs of the children are understood and discussed regularly

## Organising a play environment

- Resources are managed effectively:
  - ❖ Tidied away
  - ❖ Replenished
  - ❖ Organised effectively
  - ❖ Changed regularly

## Organising a play environment

- Involving the children
- Children are active participants not passive observers in the play process
- Even very young children can be involved in e.g. choosing paint colours, mixing paints, organising areas
- Older children should be taking more responsibility with adults taking a back seat wherever possible.

## **Organising a play environment:- making it work**

- A designated member of staff needs to have responsibility for planning and organising others
- All other team members need to have an understanding of their roles in the process
- Good record keeping is essential

## **PowerPoint 3: The role of the adult in supporting play**



## **The role of the adult in supporting play**

## **The role of the adult in supporting play**

from O'Hagan & Smith 1995; Collins, Insey & Soler 2001; Brown 2003

- Health and safety and risk assessment
- Maximum space and freedom to explore and investigate
- Rooms which are divided appropriately but which are well defined by using screens or other devices

## **Role of the adult in supporting play**

- A logic to setting out areas –so keeping “messy areas” together and “quiet areas” separate from them
- Areas which are well presented and which make children want to go to them
- Organisation which allows children space to think and consider before moving on to other areas

## **Role of the adult in supporting play**

- Materials which allow for a progression of children's play needs and learning
- Age appropriate materials
- Equipment which the children can take out and tidy away independently

## **Role of the adult in supporting play**

- Resources arranged so that children can locate them independently and use them without needing to rely on adults help
- Equipment which allows children to discover and to take calculated risks
- Resources which are easily located because they are contained and are well labelled

## **Role of the adult in supporting play**

- Materials which are stored logically and accessibly
- Workers who work together and who know what each other is doing
- Good organisation and planning with written plans available for everyone to see

## **Role of the adult in supporting play**

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- Engagement with children
- Encouraging problem solving
- Empowering children to become reflective participants

## **Role of the adult in supporting play**

- “Learning begins when **children /students** see themselves as competent, capable and worthy of learning”
  - Sonia Nieto in Developing Pedagogy
- Being aware of how children communicate with us

## **PowerPoint 4: Setting up play in a childcare and education setting**

## **Setting up play in a childcare and Education Setting**

Some examples

## **Setting up play in a childcare and Education Setting**

- Think about how children move from one area to another. Try to avoid huge spaces which encourage children to run around inside the nursery unless it is a room which has been designated for this purpose.
- Remember to have quiet areas and noisy areas but not next to each other.

## **Setting up play in a childcare and Education Setting**

- Consider the space you have available and ways in which you can maximise space
- Consider effective ways of cordoning off areas so that you create specific areas for different type of play.

## **Setting up play in a childcare and Education Setting**

- Often sand pits are underused by the children because they haven't been changed or because there is the same equipment there for weeks on end.
- Consider changing the sand to garden compost for a few days- this might generate a different type of interest for children.

## **Setting up play in a childcare and Education Setting**

- Remember planning and preparation should be done with all workers and should follow the child's interests and needs
- Think of possible ways of forward planning – are there recurring events e.g. Diwali, Christmas which you have resources for.

## **Setting up play in a childcare and Education Setting**

- Think of ways of accessing resources – local community libraries including toy libraries, the museum service, and local businesses?
- Ensure all equipment and resources are stored accessibly, well labelled, replenished, and repaired. This is the role of all workers.

## **Setting up play in a childcare and Education Setting**

- Try to involve parents and children as much as possible in accessing resources.
- Involve the community in maintaining them
- Think of “equipment sharing” by buddying with other local groups – it’s an effective way of saving some money.

## **Section 2**

### **Student Notes: Outcome 1**



## Student Notes (1)

### Providing a play environment



There are a number of important factors to consider in providing a satisfactory play environment for children.

Here are some. There may be others which your tutor wants to emphasise later, but in every centre these factors are essential to smooth running.

#### **Planning:**

This requires thinking about what children might need and making sure it is available. Children's needs may be their learning needs, their play needs, their emotional and social needs. The competent practitioner has to be aware of why they are planning, and has to be aware of how this planning is affected by other circumstances such as availability of resources, availability of staff, changing needs, amongst other factors.

When you are working with children, the children themselves should play an active part in the process of planning.

The extent to which children can do this will be determined by age, so planning for a child of less than 12 months will have potentially less child involvement than with a child of 3 or 4. Older children in out-of-school care are likely to be heavily involved in their own planning with the adult potentially facilitating rather than planning.

Nevertheless it is important to be aware of every child's potential needs and their dispositions when planning for their play.

Children will give you suggestions or a lead in to what they would like to play with.

Planning involves understanding the age and stage of development of the child, and ensuring the play you are providing is appropriate – the type of play you will provide for the child under 12 months will not be the same as you will provide for a 3 year old.

Similarly the child in out-of-school care needs play which is targeted appropriately.

Planning requires knowledge of the child, knowledge about what resources you have, a clear understanding of what you are trying to achieve and careful observation of the play process.

It also requires collaboration with other colleagues and clear guidance as to what the desired outcome is. So planning is about understanding **what** you are doing, as well as **how** and **why** you are doing it.

## Resourcing:

Resourcing children's play means you need to be aware of what materials you are likely to need, discussing these needs with your colleagues and ensuring the correct materials are available to the children.

The likelihood is that the business of resourcing children's play will be one that your team leader or nursery head might have. However, all childcare workers have to be responsible for ensuring the day-to-day resources do not run out and are ordered in sufficient quantity to address the needs of the centre.

Every centre will have a budget and it is your responsibility to make sure you work within the budget you are set.

There are inexpensive ways of resourcing play.

**A useful exercise for you to do would be to select an area of play, eg. pretend play, and try to resource it for under £30!**

## Organisation and tidying away:

When you have got the resources you think you require or which the children have selected you need to set them out in a way that is **attractive** to the children, makes the child **want** to use them, is mindful of any **health and safety** considerations and is **accessible** to all children.

The final point means that if children have some additional support needs, the play has to be made available to that child in a way they can access, so if the child has a visual difficulty it may mean that the adult has to spend time thinking about how the child will move unimpeded from activity to activity and the different ways in which the adult can encourage this child's independence.

This may initially mean there is additional adult support, but importantly all children should have the same opportunities.

Part of the organisation in the centre involves the way in which materials are stored and tidied away.

**Tidy away:** children themselves should be encouraged to do this wherever possible, but sometimes, younger children need some guidance about how to store things or where to put things away.

A good way of directing children to where things can be tidied is by labelling shelves or boxes and by making the process of tidying part of the play process.

Some nurseries draw outline shapes as a way of showing where, eg. woodworking or cooking utensils have come from. Other centres use boxes which are marked with the name of the items stored there.

Older children could personalise these boxes and keep their own records of what is in each one.

Larger materials may have to be stored in cupboards or sheds.

Please be aware of the possible health and safety implications of storing materials.

Any materials which are stored should be easily accessible when the children next want to use them.

Some centres make up resource lists and number boxes according to what is in them.

**An exercise to do when in placement is to consider how the materials are stored there. Bring back a plan of how this is done.**

**Check:** This is often seen as an essentially adult role but children can and should be involved in the process, particularly older children. It is the process which teams will go through when checking to see if pieces are missing from jigsaws, items are broken, things need repaired, washed, etc. General housekeeping is essential in keeping a safe and tidy environment. An important part of working with others is being aware of your responsibility to keep the environment well organised, clean and tidy and it is the responsibility of all team members, students included.

Checking will also involve doing risk assessment of materials which are hazardous or which pose a danger because they are broken and have sharp edges.

It will also involve considering the age of the child and the materials you are offering them – so something which might be hazardous for a baby is perhaps less so for an older child. An example of this might be certain adhesives used for craft purposes.



## Student Notes (2)

### The play environment

#### 1. Giving Choices:

Few people like to do the same thing every day.

Neither do children. That is why children, in whatever setting they are in, need choice and variety.

All children like to be able to find the activities they want to do and since every child is unique, it is important to have as wide a choice available as possible.

Very young children need visually stimulating environments, which are also soothing. Quiet rooms, snoezelens, rooms that offer sensory stimulation can be invaluable for children who need a calm, predictable environment.

A **quiet room** is usually a room which has very low auditory stimulation but which offers some visual and sensory stimulation.

The room might have low-level lighting, plasma lights, tactile materials available and perhaps essential oils burning. **NB. Health and Safety considerations here.**

The quiet room is an area where children can be relaxed and if necessary sleep.

It is also an area where children can come to 'chill out' or to read or look at a book quietly. It might also be a comfort-zone for children who are upset and sometimes want to have a trusted adult there.

Quiet rooms should never be used as 'punishment' areas. They should always be safe havens for children.

**No area of a centre should be deemed a 'naughty area'.**

**This devalues the child and devalues the play.**

2. Sometimes children like to take **risks and experiment** and they should have a play environment which allows them to do that safely. Risk taking in play is important in helping children develop resilience, but the risk should be a calculated one which the adult has quantified first and with the adult alert to dangers and ready to step in to prevent the child being injured.

Good outdoor play should allow experimentation and risk-taking activities. It should also give the children plenty of scope for running, jumping, using equipment like bicycles and push/pull toys, and playing games.

Children need to have exercise and fresh air and an outlet for energy. It is integral to the child's emotional and physical well-being.

3. At other times children want to **pretend** to be someone or something else. This is part of children developing awareness of self and coming to terms with the world around them. Children will frequently copy behaviour they have observed, either at home, in others, from television or from well-loved stories.

Sometimes this pretend play happens with other characters such as dolls or figures; at other times children will dress up and take on adult roles in their play.

Sometimes they pretend through puppets or through dance, music or mime.

The environment in the centre should give children the scope and freedom to pretend without questioning their motives.

4. Children need the opportunity to **explore and experiment** in their play.

Exploration and experimentation can happen in various types of play. Examples of this might be experimenting when building models, experimenting with natural resources like water, sand, compost.

Discovery tables which provide children with the ‘tools’ for experimenting can also be useful as can opportunities such as providing water and large paint brushes, rollers used outside on a warm day, or torches used in ‘black out’ areas. The possibilities are endless. Part of the reason for doing this experimentation and exploration is what Piaget describes as children ‘assimilating’ and ‘accommodating’ new concepts. So as children experience new things they gradually learn about them and remember what they have learned to use again, sometimes in a different context.

5. Children learn to talk and to use speech and language for communicating.

**Language development** is the process through which children learn to hear and use new vocabulary, understand concepts, become aware of the spoken and of the written word and is the start of the process that will eventually lead to children understanding how to read.

It is essential that in a nursery or in out-of-school care you support children as they learn to use new words and concepts and give them the opportunities to learn new ways of using language, including non-verbal language.

By telling children poems or rhymes children can be given opportunities to hear language used in a different way.

It is also important for children for whom English is not their mother tongue to hear their own language spoken. Inviting parents or carers or members of the wider community in to the centre to help can do this.

Playing games with mime and gesture is a fun way of enabling children to understand the different ways to communicate their ideas with others.

Playing with a child and talking to the child when they are playing is beneficial to their overall language development.

People working with children should provide a good role model for the child’s language development, always using appropriate language, never resorting to ‘baby language’ and ensuring they use words correctly.

Even very young children can cope with quite complex words eg. names of shapes like hexagons, or dinosaurs like triceratops.

By showing children prints of famous artist’s work they can become familiar with the names of artists. By having maps and globes children can learn about different countries. There are many ways in which language can be enriched through play.

Providing a good role model is one of the most effective ways to enrich language, so adults should always be aware of the impact they have on the child.

Speaking to children clearly and explaining when children don’t understand is essential. However, language-based games, particularly circle time games, taking children out of the nursery on trips, encouraging listening skills through games and activities and reading to and with children are good examples of language enriched activities. These will form the basis for early reading activities which will include making children aware of print in the environment, encouraging children to locate their name on lists and at snack times, using signage, playing matching games; all help the child start to acquire early reading skills.

## **The Play Environment**

The play environment is likely to have activities which are predominantly in the following groups:

- creative – activities such as art and craft, woodwork, sewing and collage, music
- pretend and drama-activities where children can make believe, such as puppetry, dressing up, make-up (with permission from parents), props, mirrors, music
- areas for reflection – quiet rooms, snoezelens, mood rooms
- outdoor play areas which are adequately stocked with working equipment and which give children an opportunity for vigorous play and which have space to explore and experiment
- areas which encourage language enrichment – book areas, areas for listening to tapes and stories, books about ‘us’, good signage
- areas for exploration – this might include computers with programmes which enable exploration, ‘discovery areas’ with magnifying glasses, binoculars, cameras and other equipment, cooking areas, snack making.

## **Student Exercises – Outcome 1**



## Student Exercise 1

**Analyse a play environment in an early education and childcare setting.**

**In this unit you will be asked to keep a folio or some other record of your work. Hopefully as you progress through other units, particularly Play in Practice, this folio will become a useful working document and a resource for your continuing practice as a childcare worker.**

Irrespective of whether you are working in an early years or in an out-of-school care setting there are certain factors which are important to consider when you are setting up play for children.

Some of them are:

- opportunities for discovery, exploration, experimentation
- play which is developmentally appropriate
- space to play
- variety in play
- accessibility
- appropriate support.

**Q.** Can you think of any that aren't on this list?

Add some more and discuss with a colleague.

**A. For example:**

- are you providing opportunities for both indoor and outdoor play?
- have you given due consideration to accessibility for children, including children with additional support needs?
- is the play culturally sensitive to all children and their families?
- are there any health and safety factors which prevent play taking place or which would pose a risk to children?

It is important that the play environment is well managed, well resourced, provides challenges for the children and that team members understand their role.

At all times you need to be aware of the needs of all children, so sometimes you need to adapt the play environment to meet the needs of children with additional support needs.

You must also be aware of the cultural and community needs in relation to children.

Finally you must remember that children have rights that are enshrined in the United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child.

Your tutor will explain the implication of this in more detail but it is important to actively listen to children when you are working with them and to be aware of both their needs and of their rights.

This unit will discuss most of these issues in detail and other units in the award will describe others, such as children's rights and entitlements, more fully.



## Student Exercise 2

You worked on describing types of play you liked as a child and also on discussing some of the things which you found off-putting when playing. In Exercise 1 you described some of the features of the play environment like space to move freely, play which is appropriate for all children to access, opportunities for play which is indoors and out of doors, etc.

In this exercise you are asked to remember some of the types of games and activities which either you or your colleagues spoke about. You are then asked to group them into similar types of play.

Draw a series of large circles on a flip chart and see if there are natural areas the games or activities go in to. If you think they overlap with other areas show them as over-lapping circles

An example of this would be:

- (a) liked dressing up
- (b) liked to wear her mum's shoes
- (c) liked to pretend he was feeding his soft toys and pretended they were real
- (d) liked to play with his 'Action Man'
- (e) liked to play at hairdressers.

All of these have a similar thread namely **pretend** or **symbolic play**, so they would go into the symbolic play circle.

More time will be spent explaining these types of play in Outcomes 2 and 3 and your tutor will guide you initially.

Similarly if colleagues had discussed the following:

- (a) liked to bake cakes
- (b) liked to help his mum spread the butter on bread for sandwiches
- (c) used to sew clothes for his 'action figures'
- (d) liked to play on the computer and with a 'Gameboy'.

These would be play with **technology**



### **Student Exercise 3**

Play for children needs to be developmentally appropriate.

Moyles (p. 25) describes the role of the adult as:

**'scaffolding children's learning'**.

By this she means that adults have the advantage of having observed what it is the child is doing and considering how best to challenge the child to reach the next stage by providing play which is slightly more complex than it was before.

However, it is important to be aware of what children are likely to achieve at certain ages and stages of development.

As professionals you can never say the child will have acquired a particular skill or competence but you can use developmental charts as broad indicators.

What you can usually predict is where play is inappropriate for the child's age and stage of development.



Look at the examples given below, explaining why you think the play or opportunities provided for the children were appropriate or inappropriate:

Billy is 18 months. He has started to walk quite confidently unaided. His carer thinks he should have a pair of roller boots.	
Mollie is 6 and has been riding a two-wheeled bike for two years. She is new to the centre and the worker insists she takes a bike with stabilisers.	
Sophie is 4. She often spends time at the sewing corner where she likes to make items for her dolls. She is using a sharp needle with a large eye and threads and sews unaided.	
Sandeep is 7 and wants to make crispie cakes. There are recipe cards available for the children and a stove where they can heat up chocolate. He doesn't want any adult help.	
Sui Ling is 10 months. She is playing alone at the water, throwing it in the air	
Barry is 7. He likes games and jigsaws and is very adept at them. He has been given a 20-piece puzzle to complete.	
Rashid is 2. He is asked to complete his name on a piece of his work.	
Jessie is 6 months. She is left in her cot and likes to pull at the mobile which is within her reach.	



## **Student Exercise 4**

**Creating your own links**

Try to extend your thinking on a subject by making 'mind' links.

There are many different ways to do these, which your tutor will explain.

For the purpose of this exercise you are being asked to do a simple link.

Think about an activity eg. playing with sand.

Now think about some of the possible benefits to a child from this.

Here is an example that is being done in linear form.

Playing with blocks → use of imagination → large muscle use → small muscle use → visual awareness → 'guesstimating size' → early number skills (counting blocks) → early maths skills (finding appropriately sized blocks to go one on top of another) → communicating a need.

The list could go on but this may give you an idea of some of the benefits from playing with blocks.

Do a similar exercise for the following types of play:

- Symbolic Play
- Books and play which supports language enrichment
- Creative Play
- Discovery Play
- Vigorous Play
- Play with Technology
- Games.



### **Student Exercise 5**

The picture illustrates a situation that is conducive to children enquiring and becoming aware, so it might be regarded as exploratory play.





Some of the situations in the grid below are less conducive to a good play environment:

<b>Play</b>	<b>Condition for play</b>
Doing a jigsaw	Some of the bits are missing but it doesn't really matter that much because it's such a nice picture.
Dressing Up	Keep the dressing up box well out of the reach of children. The children will only make a mess of it if it's at floor level. Some of the clothes are ripped but that doesn't really matter.
Cooking	You'll only need one of everything because the children can just wait their turn and share.
Sand and water	The sand and water has lots of different things in, and just enough space for the children to squeeze in behind the trays. It doesn't matter though the children are enjoying it.
Table games	The children are playing 'Operation' but the battery has run out and the sensors don't make a noise when they hit the sides. It shouldn't matter as they can work out for themselves if they are in or out.
Drama	The children wanted to put on a performance but the clothes are all for younger children. Also there's nowhere to change.
Craft/Design	The children want to start making props for the club and need to cut large pieces of corrugated card. They can only find scissors meant for younger children. The leader thinks craft knives are dangerous.
ICT	The young people want to put together a newsletter about their club. The computer is in a corner of the room and there are other tables in the way. John who is a wheelchair user cannot manoeuvre his chair to get to the table.



Can you think of ways to make the play environment better for the children in the examples given in the grid?



## Student Exercise 6

**Read this case study, and then discuss ways in which the play environment could be improved.**

June has just joined the team of a thirty place nursery. She notices the equipment is broken and that much of the environment in which the children play is dirty.

At the end of each day the children just leave things behind on tables in a haphazard way. The adults don't seem to bother checking to see if there are any breakages or if any of the materials have bits missing.

June has noticed that the children often run out of paint halfway through the morning session but the adults seem too busy or pre-occupied to get any more paint.

The dressing up area is always very messy with clothes lying on the floor.

The blocks are positioned next to the quiet area and the crashing of blocks onto a wooden floor distracts children who are reading books.

She asked what her role was in tidying up and cleaning but this was met by a shrug of the shoulders and a member of staff saying:

'There's no point worrying. We have a quick tidy up at the end of the day and a bigger sort out on a Friday. Otherwise it just isn't worth it. It just gets messy as soon as these children come in anyway.'



## Student Exercise 7

### Case A

Alex works in a pre-fives nursery.

There are three members of staff who work there.

Every morning before the children arrive the staff have a fifteen minute discussion to plan what they are going to set up that day based on what the children have been interested in the previous day and their curriculum planning.

Each member of staff is clear about which area they have responsibility for setting up, clearing away and resourcing throughout the day.

Every Friday afternoon the children leave at 2.00 instead of 3.30 and that time is spent looking at the nursery and how the play has been set up, checking for any hazards such as areas of congestion, possible 'trip' hazards, looking to see if the layout of the nursery is the best it could be and washing and mending any resources.

Each member of staff is asked how well they think their area has worked and everyone is very clear about what they are required to do.

Alex has pointed out that the 'quiet area' seems a little too close to the music area and so it is moved around.

Another colleague feels that having the sand and water close by is making the children fill the sand with water and so there have been no opportunities to play with flowing sand, a request some children have made.

The staff discuss what they can do about this and decide to do without the water tray indoors the following week and will put small basins with soapy water in the outdoor play area the following week instead.

### Case B

Joan works in a nursery with five other colleagues. The children who are aged from 6 months to 5 years are in for a full day and staff feel they don't ever have time to discuss what is needed.

As a result the children's play is often quite haphazard.

Joan has particular views about the play that is provided for the children in the baby room which is predominantly for children from 6 months to a year.

There should be two members of staff in this room plus a student.

She feels the babies are often under-stimulated and are given the same range of toys to play with every day.

There is no creative play offered for these children. Once a day a colleague tries to sit all the children down together and tell them a story. This is usually very unsuccessful. The colleague feels the children are being naughty because they aren't listening.

In the room with the 'pre-school' children the sand and water has the same equipment in it all year round, some of which is broken.

Often the children become quite noisy and use the large space in the middle of the nursery floor as an area to run around. The children who go to tabletop activities seldom stay there because of the noise.

The outdoor area doesn't have much equipment and what there is, is broken. She has tried to broach the subject when they do get together as a group but nobody thinks it is their responsibility so she just leaves it rather than causing a fuss.



**Using the case studies discuss:**

- which case study seems to show better staff communication skills?
- give an example of good planning and poor planning from each of the case studies
- what are some of the ways that the children could be involved in improving the play provided in Case Study B?
- describe ways in which staff provide a better, more stimulating environment for the babies in Case Study B.



## Student Exercise 8

We are trying to establish what is good practice and what is poor practice.  
This exercise is a suggested way of approaching it.

<p>The following equipment is put together in the middle of the nursery floor. A piano, a sand tray, a water tray, a table with small world equipment on it, a table for cutting and craft activities. The children who want to go outside are unable to get by it and the children playing in the sand are complaining because there are shards of paper in the sand. Some girls have started to throw them out of the sand at each other and sand is going in their eyes.</p>	<p>Find a solution by saying what is wrong: Remember to think about the spacing of activities and the way children should flow from activity to activity. Use a diagram to illustrate how you think the play could be set out.</p>
<p>The outdoor play area has a track painted round the perimeter. There is a climbing frame and there are lots of bikes.</p>  <p>Traffic signs have been set up by the children with help from an adult to show how the bikes should go round the track. This is preventing any of them going on to the tarmac area which is being used by other children to throw and catch balls and for the children who want to run up to and around the climbing frame before climbing up and sliding down on the chute which is attached.</p>	<p>Explain if you think this is a well-organised activity and if so why.</p> 

Another way of approaching it would be if you had the facilities to actually set up areas of play in a simulated way, and allowed groups to set up areas.

## **Section 3**

### **Student Notes – Outcome 2**

#### **Types of Play**



### Student Notes (3)



#### Symbolic Play:

**Symbolic Play** is sometimes called **representational** play.

It is the type of play used when children use toys, dress up, use puppets or other devices to symbolise something else.

So an example of symbolic play would be the child who puts on a hat and a pair of high heels and says, 'I'm the mummy'.

Another example might be the child who rolls out long shapes in the dough and claims to have 'made a snake'.

The object or prop 'symbolises' something else and which can be representational or play that is defined by the language the child uses in it.

In the representational phases of this play, the children will play in ways which are dramatic and which represent events or ideas. Children may pretend to be someone else during these early phases, eg. TV characters, 'superheroes', etc.

Sometimes this play takes on real life events and occurrences such as hospital visits, weddings and relies on the children's own experiences.

It can be a useful way of preparing children for such events as it gives children an opportunity to act out the event, although this must be dealt with very sensitively.

At other times figures such as 'Playmobil' are used to represent what the child is thinking and acting out.

Later this becomes more sophisticated and the children will have developed other ways to represent actions, such as words. There are likely to be instructions and suggestions used by the children:

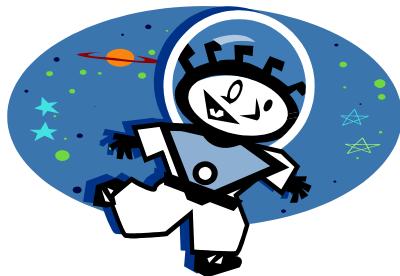
'Let's pretend we are going to the shops and you've forgotten your money'

For yet older children who have the capacity to write, this type of play can rely on written as well as verbal instructions.

At any point children can use the 'earlier' representational aspects of this play, but it is play that enables children to be expressive.

So some of the benefits to the child from this type of play might be:

- the emotional and social benefits which can be derived from playing out scenarios which are familiar or which are troublesome
- the social benefits of collaborating with others
- the language/cognitive development benefits of using language in different contexts and of extending the imagination
- the reading and pre-reading benefits which may be derived from seeing and using the written word.



By allowing children to engage in symbolic play we are not limiting children to play that has been contrived by adults.

It gives children an opportunity to be whatever they want to be and to use their imagination without adult direction.

Often there are examples of children who have been told to play by adults. Examples of this are in sand and water play. Often the children do so reluctantly but within minutes have constructed their own fantasy about pirates, sharks, etc.

A study by Spencer (1996) shows a 'strong link between expressive language and play of this type'.

For the practitioner, it is important to remember that some children may be deficient in hearing and in expressive language.

For these children it is important to give opportunities to play with the materials which, with supported adult help, might enable them to acquire appropriate language skills. These materials could then be translated into symbolic play mechanisms for the child.

What is meant by this is that if a child has a significant hearing loss, for example a great deal of one-to-one work may have to be done with the child to enable that child to acquire some of the conceptual language a hearing peer may have at a similar age.

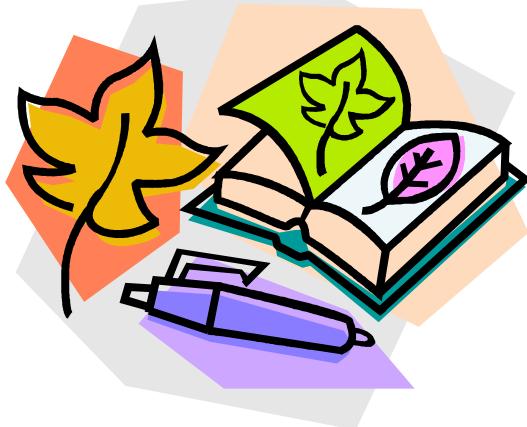
Using tools such as 'Playmobil' and other 'small world' and picture cues may be a mechanism for starting this process. It should be emphasised however that this is a specialised area and the nursery or out-of-school worker would be working under advice and direction from specialists in this situation.

The idea of audience is important for children when they are engaging in symbolic play and the adult needs to strike a balance between interfering in the play and appreciating the play for what the child has made it.



### Student Notes (4)

#### Books and play which supports language development



Early communication with children promotes linguistic competence and provides a 'Sure Start' for their future ([www.surestart.gov.uk](http://www.surestart.gov.uk)).

While the *Curriculum Framework for the Child 3 to 5* (LTS Dundee) believes:

**'The development of children's skills in language is central to their abilities to communicate in relationships and learning, to understand ideas and to order, explore and refine their thoughts ... this includes the language of gesture, facial expression and movement as well as verbal language'** (p. 15),

Howard Gardner (in Moyles, *Just Playing* (1983)) describes how learning is associated with linguistic abilities but also of the importance of other forms of learning experiences, notably the auditory and the sensory.

It is important for the child when attempting mastery of his/her world to have the capacity to explain, describe and reflect. Much of this is done by the use of words, gesture, body language, received language and spoken language.

The development of language skills is co-dependent on other factors.

When working with children it is important to allow children to develop skills in using language effectively.

Part of the adult's engagement with children will enable them to develop skills and competences.

Providing children with play that includes books and opportunities for language development and enrichment is crucial.

Play can provide children with language enrichment providing the correct conditions are in place.

An important skill is that of the adult's ability to engage with children.

This involves being skilled in communicating with children and being a good role model for the child.

Part of this involves being aware of what you say and how you say it.

It involves using open questioning techniques which give the child the opportunity to reflect and answer and it involves listening to the child until they have finished what they are saying and repeating some of what they have said to show you have listened.

This is called **active** listening.

The adult can act as an enabler for the child to learn new words and develop new concepts.

It is impossible to list all of the ways in which an adult can support the child's language development through play, but here are some examples:

The adult can engage children in conversation by using open instead of closed questions.

An example of this would be to change the way you ask children questions from:

'Is that a rocket you've made?' or 'That's a great rocket you've made' to

'Tell me about the model ... wait for a response then further engage the child by saying eg. 'Now I wonder what would happen if ...'

Additionally, the adult can provide the following opportunities for children:

(*A Curriculum Framework for the Child 3 to 5*, LTS Dundee)

- develop an enjoyment of and understanding of the purposes for which language is used
- listen to other children and adults during activities
- create opportunities for talk time with children
- listen to children when you talk to them so giving children a chance to talk.

For the purpose of this unit you are only able to look at **some** of the ways the adult can support language development through play.

One of the most effective ways for children to become capable in using words effectively is to hear them used by adults and by other children and to have a variety of experiences which enables the use of language, gesture, mime and other forms of expression.

It is also important that children hear the language of their home community.

Children also need to have contextual experiences in which words are used and here are some of the examples of how this might be done:

- talking to very young children whilst changing, feeding or bathing them
- reciting and using fingers and toes rhymes
- singing to the child
- laughing with the child
- using an appropriate tone of voice with a child
- telling stories, occasionally substituting the child's name for the main character's name
- using appropriate vocabulary with children – that means not using what an adult might regard as simplified words
- encouraging games which involve listening for cues, eg. circle games
- explaining carefully what is meant by certain words or explaining new concepts clearly
- taking children on trips to help extend their vocabulary. Some children need to be in the context to understand what the adult or other children are talking about
- listening carefully to children even if they are difficult to understand – using the device of repeating back to the child 'so you think that ...'

- supporting the use of ‘technical’ language – when using computers, tools, measuring and weighing devices
- encouraging opportunities each day for talk time for the child. This might be when the child is in a small group or in a one-to-one situation, but it is important to encourage the child to talk and for the worker to listen.

Language development and the development of reading skills are linked, so it is essential that the children are given opportunities to use words in ways that help them understand the flow and syntax of words. Your tutor will explain these in more detail.

Children enjoy books but should be able to see that books can be used for a variety of purposes. Books should be varied, in good condition, age appropriate and not of one type.

Children should be encouraged to use books for a variety of purposes. The use of Story Sacks (described in the final section) is a way in which you can work with other workers and parents to support the children in their love, understanding of, and use of books.



## Student Notes (5)

### Creative Play



Creative play includes a range of play provision, which might include some of the following:

- art/crafts
- music
- drama
- puppetry
- the use of found materials
- messy play
- sand
- dough
- clay
- dance.

Creative play often has an end product but that should not be perceived as something that adults set about having the child complete.

Being truly creative in their play allows children to use their imagination.

Creative play can transcend different types of play, including symbolic play.

Curtis (in Moyles pp. 30-31 (1994)) describes young children in Africa who had no structured 'toys' available to them picking up leaves and gourds and 'pretending' to make the tea on return to their village.

She also discusses children in the Gambia using discarded coke cans to make drums and other musical equipment (pp. 30-31).

Sometimes eg. in a *Curriculum Framework for the Child 3 to 5* Creative Play is called 'expressive and aesthetic experiences' and it describes how children can learn through developmentally appropriate opportunities to explore, experiment, investigate and control their environment and the materials which are available in it.

Creative play for the very young child can involve having fun with bubbles, making splashes on paper with water, playing with food and generally messy play, with all that involves.

With the older child it can involve drama, puppetry, mask making, scenery painting, using clay, using dyes, investigating their environment and making hides.

For the nursery age child creative play may be found in all areas of the nursery but more usually in the art/craft and woodwork areas where a different variety of materials should be set out for the child and changed frequently. It can however be found in many different parts of the centre.

Children may play creatively by using musical instruments or by making and using music themselves.

The same is true of puppet and mask making, the use of dough and of clay and using 'found' materials.

Finally children can use manufactured materials like 'Lego' and 'Duplo' or 'K-Nex' to create.

Some of the developmental benefits to the child from playing creatively are:

- opportunities to explore, experiment and investigate and to create as a result
- opportunities to create a product giving the child a sense of achievement. (NB. The product should be the child's own, not what the adult thinks it should be.)
- opportunities to use language appropriate to what the child is making, so using comparative language such as 'this one is heavier than that one', 'this paint seems runny', 'that's sticky', etc.
- supporting children's understanding of the properties of materials – how sand and water behave together, what happens when clay dries, what happens when you 'knead' dough
- developing motor skills by using materials
- developing observation and visual skills.

Creative opportunities in the centre should always be fresh and advice on the types of materials and possible uses of the materials are in the next section of this guide. Importantly however, children should lead the creativity.

Drawing shapes and having children stick bits in the middle of the shape is not creative. That is adult directed and has involved no imagination on the part of the child. As practitioners you have a responsibility to support parents', carers' and other professionals' understanding of creativity in children.



## Student Notes (6)

### Discovery Play



Discovery play, unlike creative play, may have no product as an outcome, but is play which engages the child and which most probably will involve them learning something about the material they are playing with or the potential of the materials.

Discovery play is a feature of Hutt's epistemic play.

It is play which is exploratory and which involves the child handling materials.

It is also play which is reliant on children using their senses and is according to Hutt (1979):

- 'fuelled by their inquisitiveness as they search for understanding'.

In relation to Piaget's beliefs it is the type of play which results in the assimilation and accommodation of new concepts.

It is part of the cycle of exploration, experimentation and assimilation which is a developmental process children go through when presented with new challenges.

Like the other types of play mentioned in this section it is not narrowly defined and it has overlaps with play which has previously been identified in this guide and which will be highlighted later.

Discovery play involves the child exploring materials and seeing what happens with them. Children are exploring their potential.

It can also be play that has been described as 'didactic', ie. intended to instruct.

Much of the play that is a feature of the Montessori system of early education is didactic.

What the child learns is the way in which the materials – whether a puzzle or a particular type of equipment goes together and so the value of the play is in the level of observation the child needs to engage in, and in working out how it goes together. It might involve assimilated knowledge, ie. remembering which piece goes where, or observational understanding, ie. a visual understanding that a particular shape goes with another shape or colour.

Discovery play can range from using ‘treasure baskets’ and heuristic play materials with very young children, eg. using pots and pans and other everyday objects, to the older child using sheets and blankets to darken a room and discovering the length of beam of a torch, or discovering what happens if you paint a wall with fluorescent paint or taking a clock apart and try to rebuild it.

So discovery play transcends different types of play.

In the pre-fives setting it is most likely to be found in areas such as sand, water, science areas, interest areas where there are different materials available for the child such as blocks, in tabletop materials with didactic games described earlier.

Discovery play has additional benefits to the cognitive and potential language skills that children are using.

It is an important part of children’s physical development, whether through using large or small motor skills as they navigate their way through the materials.

It can be a purely solitary activity or it can be an activity which generates support from peers.

It is also a powerful way for children and adults to work together.

It is important to remember though that the adult might facilitate or lead but the discovery has to come from the child finding out.

Adult help in this situation can be through appropriate use of open questions:  
‘I wonder what would happen if ...’

Discovery play can provide a vehicle for the child to learn through a sensory experience. Adults can create opportunities for children to smell, taste, touch, describe and listen and it is a beneficial way for children to be encouraged to develop sensory awareness and be aware of situations. Children can be encouraged to become more aware of sensory stimuli, eg. when washing up, children often talk about the feel of the soap and the smell of it.

When using clay, often the first remark is about how cold it feels or that it is ‘squidgy’.

These are the types of expressions which adults can capitalise on when providing further play-based opportunities for children.

Ways in which this type of play can be taken forward is explained later in this guide.



## Student Notes (7)



**Vigorous Play**



Vigorous Play involves children being active.

One of the major issues currently is the inactivity which surrounds some children's lives. Government initiatives such as Health for All our Children cites good diet and exercise as one of the ways in which children become and retain their good mental and physical health.

Vigorous play enables children to become resilient, to engage in games, some of which are competitive, others which are challenging but all of which are fun for the child.

Along with fine muscle control, children need opportunities to develop larger muscle groups.

Vigorous play gives them this opportunity.

Vigorous play is especially beneficial if it is linked with fresh air, so the outdoors provides a good background for this type of play. However, some nurseries and inner city out-of-school care settings don't have the luxury of an out-of-doors facility. While this shouldn't prevent vigorous play from happening in the centre, it should be emphasised that every opportunity should be made to try to take children outdoors every day. If you are taking children on organised trips to local parks or recreation areas, please ensure all health and safety and risk factors are assessed.

Some of the types of experiences which could be defined as vigorous play are as follows:

- opportunities for 'rough and tumble'
- climbing frames
- outdoor equipment (which will be described later) such as swings, see-saws and bikes
- large tyres

- ball games, eg. having basketball hoops
- competitive games (NB. With older children)
- team games
- soft mats to allow children opportunities to play safely
- walking
- swimming
- climbing
- running
- dancing.

The idea of vigorous play is to enable children to exert themselves safely.

However the adult must be sensitive to the needs of the child and be aware when energy levels have changed and when the child is in need of rest. Adults should be sensitive to the health needs of children.

They should also make it possible for children with additional support needs to take part as equal partners by varying the types of games and activities.

- By engaging in vigorous play, children are given opportunities to challenge their beliefs in what they are capable of
- Explore different ways in which they can use their bodies in physical activity
- use their bodies to express ideas and feelings in response to music and imaginative ideas
- Learn to co-operate with others
- Develop an awareness of space (See *A Curriculum for the Child 3 to 5*).

The adult's role is to assess the likely risks from the activity and ensure the child's safety while allowing the child the freedom to explore possibilities.

Adults must also be aware that all children are entitled to this type of opportunity and with children who have additional support needs, the adults may need to discuss with parents, carers or other professionals the best way they can adapt or create situations to allow the child the same benefits and opportunities to succeed.



## Student Notes (8)

### Play with Technology



Children are quite probably more sophisticated in their abilities to use technology than adults, but nevertheless it is important for all children to have opportunities to play with technology.

Technology can range from the very complex to the very simple:

Children can use digital cameras, digital microscopes to scissors and 'make believe' versions of microwaves and washing machines.

Play with technology is a mechanism for supporting children's learning. This may be cognitive learning of the type described in 'discovery learning' or it may be that they are developing other skills while using ICT.

Children may have to communicate their needs eg. if wanting to take photographs, they may have to share resources like computers, they may have to communicate and work with an adult, eg. younger children using the laminator to cover a picture.

They may have to collaborate with another child over, for example, a particular image they want for a poster. There are many possibilities in the use of technology.

However technology in a variety of forms should be made available for the child to use.

Learning and Teaching Scotland have a particularly helpful website on the use of ICT in early years and also advice for working with older children, and for working with children with additional support needs. Follow the link [www.LTScotland.org.uk](http://www.LTScotland.org.uk)

In the context of play however the role of the adult is to support the child's ability to use the technology, to plan and to make available a sufficiently wide range of resources for the children to experience.

Using technology can be linked to a range of other learning and play experiences for the child.

For example by using tape recorders in the story area, children can be encouraged to listen to tapes while following a story.

By using digital cameras, children can be encouraged to record interesting information they have discovered during a walk or whilst playing out of doors. Photographs can be printed and the children can laminate them for display purposes. Binoculars can be used to look at wildlife or bug boxes to investigate insects.

Children can be involved in laminating instructions or recipe sheets for use in the centre. This will provide children with opportunities to feel valued for their contribution and may also provide opportunities for engaging with the written word or with symbols. Recipe cards can direct children to the correct ingredients to use when making cakes, crispies or other foodstuffs and the use of technology continues if they are using cookers, blenders or food warmers.

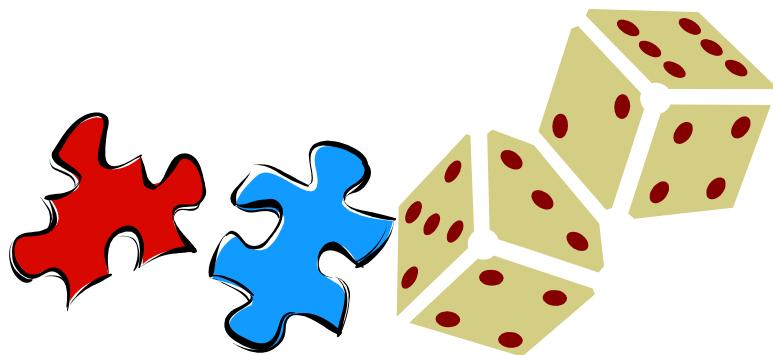
Calculators can be put into areas where symbolic play is likely to occur and the children can learn how to use them as part of their play, particularly if areas have been changed to reflect a particular interest.

An example of this would be if the children had set up a 'Travel Agency', the calculators and the computers would replicate a 'real' situation.

Everyday situations can provide children with opportunities for problem solving. An example of this would be if a piece of equipment breaks. Children and adults can work together to try to 'solve' the problem.

Some centres may have facilities for using out-of-doors equipment such as garden tools and implements for children to cultivate gardens.

Technology helps to bring a reality into the centre, and provides children with the opportunity to learn about everyday life.



### Student Notes (9)

#### Games

For the purpose of this unit games are defined as activities which require an interaction either between children or with an adult and a child or an activity such as a puzzle or a game which the child can play alone but which has a finished product eg. the completion of a jigsaw or an insert game.

In this context it does not refer to competitive games such as football, running and catching or playground games. They are dealt with under '**vigorous play**'.

Games allow children an opportunity to share though it should be emphasised that it is developmentally inappropriate to expect the very young child under two to 'share' and to understand the concept of turn taking.

Any games played with children this young are likely to be done on a one-to-one basis with the child and with much adult support.

For the older child, however, games give an opportunity for playing together, for turn taking, for compromise, to enable children to sustain an interest, to introduce new words or ideas and to create a sense of satisfaction on completion and when successful.

Games can be linked to pre-reading and pre-number skills and do not usually allow scope for imaginative play. Games tend to be more didactic ie. they are either right or wrong, however there are exceptions to this in the case of singing games, finger rhymes, etc.

Play with games can include some of the following:

- jigsaws
- insert games
- shape sorters
- board games
- circle games
- singing games
- computer games
- pre-reading puzzles
- number recognition games
- peg-board
- pattern making games.

Games can be used to facilitate children's learning. Examples of this would be board games which facilitate an understanding of time, of counting, of ordering, of sorting, for recognition of shape and form.

Sometimes games can enable children to develop spatial awareness and it is important that the adult is alert to the child's needs as they are playing games. Sometimes children need to be left alone to succeed by trial and error, sometimes children need sensitive intervention. The adult has to be alert to cues from the child. It is important that the adult doesn't 'do it for the child' but guides the child to a possible conclusion 'what do you think might happen if we put ...?' 'Can you find another piece that has a colour like this ...?' As before, different resources for this type of play will be exemplified in the final section of this guide.

## **Student Exercises: 9-21**

### **Outcome 2**



## **Student Exercise 9**

In this exercise you will be asked to look at pictures of children playing. Remember that children play in certain ways, sometimes through choice, sometimes because of their stage of development. The child under 12 months is unlikely to play co-operatively as he or she sees the world from his point of view, ie. he or she is egocentric. However a 7-year-old may well be able to communicate well with peers, understand and comply with the concept of sharing activities and resources but may nevertheless decide to play alone, and his disposition may be that this is his preference. The pictures that you will be shown in this exercise are, therefore, a general view of what you might expect at each age stage.



**Picture One:** How old do you think this child is?

Can you describe the type of play which children at this age seem to engage in?

Try to describe some realistic play expectations for children at this age and stage.



**Picture Two:** How old do you think the children are in this picture?

Do you think they are actually playing together or do you think they are both using the same type of equipment but playing separately?

Explain the type of play they are involved in using the descriptions you have been taught.

What is a significant feature of this type of play?



**Picture Three:** Here is another example of a child playing by himself.

Does it look as if he is unhappy in what he is doing or do you think he seems engrossed?

Describe the type of play.



**Picture Four:** Think about the type of game that is going on here.

Would the children need to co-operate in any way to play with this piece of equipment?

What does it tell you about the type of play?

Is there a significant feature of this type of play?

**Student Exercise 10**

Using the table below, describe the type of play which is likely to occur in each:

Example	Type of play
<p>John, Tracy and Sandeep (aged 4-4.5 years) are playing outside. They have bikes and trailers and are carrying bricks from one area of the playground to the outdoor sandpit. Sandeep suggests a better way to do the carrying would be to use a wheelbarrow and they set about taking the bricks out of the trailer and put them into the wheelbarrows. John says he will go over to the sandpit and keep an eye on the deliveries.</p>	
<p>Rhiannon (6 years) is sitting at the sewing table. She is carefully selecting different threads before she decides what she wants to make. There are other children at the sewing table but it is clear that they are all engrossed in their own activities.</p>	
<p>Suki and Tara are 2 years old. They are sitting on a mat in the nursery and both have blocks in front of them. As one throws a block down the other picks it up.</p>	
<p>Billy and George (4.3 and 4.6 years) have built a model that now needs painting. They discuss the colours they want to use and Billy goes off to find the paints. 'Naw, they're too runny,' says George when he brings them back. They start to disagree. George comes back with some more powder to add to the paint.</p>	
<p>Jo (4.6) is sitting in the book corner. She is listening to a tape with a well –liked story. She is turning pages as the tape instructs. She has a doll next to her and is 'telling' the doll when to turn the pages. 'Well done' she says to her doll at the end. 'You listened to that very well'.</p>	
<p>Sam and Darren (3.7 and 4 years) are both at the modelling table. They have a variety of different types of 'found materials' to choose from. Each is looking at what the other is doing and as one takes a cereal box, so does the other.</p>	

They are interested in what the other is doing. Chloe and Charlie (7years) are playing with bats and balls in the hall. Charlie throws the ball to see how high he can catch it from. Chloe tries to do the same and keeps dropping it. She starts to dribble the ball instead. Charlie says 'dribble it to me and I'll save it'.	
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## **Student Exercises (11 -17)**

Select from the age group indicated below:

- Under 12 months
- 1-2 years
- 2-3 years
- 3-4 years
- 5-7 years
- Over 7.

For each of the following types of play, describe some activities you would set out for your chosen age range:

- Symbolic Play
- Books and play which support language enrichment
- Creative Play
- Discovery Play
- Vigorous Play
- Play with Technology
- Games.

Describe what factors are important when providing the type of play and explain how an adult might sensitively intervene to take the play forward.



## **Student Exercise (18)**

### **Case Study 1**

This nursery provides full day care for children from 12 weeks to five years.

There are three rooms in the nursery with three members of staff in each.

Nursery workers tend to be assigned to the same room in the nursery.

Each room has a supervisor and the room workers and supervisors meet together at least once a day, either at the start or finish of the session to discuss the needs of the children.

Each member of staff has a group of 'key children' for whom they are responsible.

They are also aware of what their responsibility is for observing and contributing to the planning for that child's needs.

One of the main aims of the centre is to promote independence in the child and to foster their developmental needs. They have close links with parents, members of the local community and other professionals.

There is a bulletin board at the entrance to the centre which staff, children and parents use to post up notices which may be of interest to others.

A child and member of staff together make up an occasional newsletter with articles of interest. Staff believe this keeps them up-to-date with what is going on in the child's own community.

The children are encouraged to play out-of-doors as often as possible even though this involves the staff taking the children to a local park.

Preparation for the following day is done by both staff and children and the wide-ranging resources are investigated by the children when making choices.

## **Case Study 2**

This pre-fives centre is open for fifty weeks in the year and for 8 hours each day. Staff are allocated rooms according to how many children are in on any one specific day. Resources are short and often the same materials are put out every day. Sometimes the children complain because they cannot finish jigsaws when pieces are missing. Parents are invited in at the end of the day but if they ask about their child's progress are referred to the head of centre. There is no opportunity for the children to go outside as this is an inner city nursery so by the end of the day the younger children in particular can be fractious. Staff complain loudly in front of the children about the running of the nursery. There is no evidence of planning for occasions which occur in the calendar and staff seem to take little interest in any special events in the children's life. There are many children from different ethnic backgrounds in this nursery but none of the equipment reflects this fact. Staff choose the activities and children are then asked to join in with these, irrespective of their own wishes.

### **Case Study 3**

This centre provides full day-care for children from 5-10 years as part of holiday provision.

There are three rooms in the centre with 8 children and two members of staff and a student support worker in each.

Each room has a supervisor and the room workers and supervisors meet together at least once a day, either at the start or finish of the session to discuss the needs of the children. Each member of staff has a group of 'key children' for whom they are responsible. They are also aware of what their responsibility is for observing and contributing to the planning for that child's needs.

A major factor in this centre is the involvement of children in the planning process. The staff like to keep an arm's length focus of the room, particularly with the older children. One of the main aims of the centre is to promote independence in the child and to foster their play needs. They have close links with parents, members of the local community and other professionals.

There is a bulletin board at the entrance to the centre which staff, children and parents use to post up notices which may be of interest to others.

The older children together make up a weekly newsletter with articles of interest.

The younger children work with their key workers to develop a newsletter. Some of the children have spoken about putting together a web page for the community and are working with local community centre workers to do this.

Staff believe this keeps them up-to-date with what is going on in the child's own community.

The children are encouraged to play out of doors as often as possible even though this involves the staff taking the children to a local park.

Preparation for the following day is done by both staff and children and the wide-ranging resources are investigated, ordered and sometimes bought by the children when choosing resources.

### **Case Study 4**

This centre is open for fifty weeks in the year and for 4 hours each day. It is set up as an out-of-school care club in the local school.

Staff are allocated to rooms according to how many children are in on any one specific day, though the role is generally around 25 with the children aged 5 to 11 years.

Resources are short and often the same materials are put out every day. Sometimes the children complain because they cannot finish jigsaws when pieces are missing.

Parents are often rushed when picking up children after they finish work so staff feel there is little time to address any issues with them. Some regard themselves as 'glorified babysitters'.

There is no opportunity for the children to go outside as this is an inner city school so by the end of the day the children can be boisterous.

Staff complain loudly in front of the children about the running of the centre.

There is no evidence of planning for occasions which occur in the calendar and staff seem to take little interest in any special events in the children's life.

There are many children from different ethnic backgrounds in this nursery but none of the equipment reflects this fact.

Staff choose the activities and children are then asked to join in with these, irrespective of the children's own wishes and capabilities.

## **Section 4**

### **Student Notes**

#### **Outcome 3**

##### **Play ideas and the role of the adult**



## Student Notes (10) (corresponding to Lesson 21)

### The role of the adult

*A curriculum framework for the Child 3 to 5* describes the adult's role as: 'one in which they need to develop 'warm and supportive relationships with children and other adults [to] create a climate in which children feel confident to tackle new challenges and where children can see mistakes as part of learning' (p. 44).

Brown in *Playwork*, (pp. 60-61) however, describes the idea of flexibility in which the child is in control but in which the adult may have a role in supporting the process.

In fig 4.4 (p. 61) he describes SPICE as being:

Social Interaction → Physical Activity → Intellectual Stimulation → Creative Achievement  
→ Emotional Stability.

(Your tutor will explain these theories in more detail.)

Adults working with children need to be able to plan for the child's development, play and/or learning in a way that is effective and consistent with the child's needs.

This will include communicating effectively with other colleagues and contributing to the setting up and clearing away of resources.

It will also involve understanding what each person's role is in the team to avoid unnecessary duplication of tasks but also to ensure that every child is given adult time and attention.

Adults working with children have to be able to observe carefully and to pass on these observations during planning time.

This will ensure that the adults in the centre are able to intervene sensitively where necessary and provide additional resources to extend the child's play where required.

'Intervention by the adult should support or extend the learning by the child, increase its level of challenge or channel children's interests into a broader set of experiences' (*A Curriculum Framework*).

Irrespective of whether or not the play is in a pre-fives centre or an out-of-school setting, adults should be considering how to broaden and extend play experiences whether for pleasure or for learning.

This involves good teamwork.

In planning for children's play the adults in the centre need to ensure there is a good range of materials available that ensures children have as broad an experience as possible.

Planning for developmentally appropriate experiences is also important and play should both challenge the child and allow consolidation of previously learned competences and skills.

Observation is the best tool for determining what it is that children are learning or how they are behaving in relation to developmental norms.

Talking to and involving parents and carers is also important in determining the best play experiences for the child.

Adults must be culturally sensitive when they are providing play for children and must use support mechanisms in place such as local cultural groups, parents or other professionals to advise if they are in any doubts about the type of play they are offering.

Children themselves are often the best resource in determining planning and it is important that all children but especially older children are given personal choice and independence in planning for their own play.

This should be well supported by adults who may have to negotiate with the child over availability of resources.

Children who have additional support needs require the same opportunities for play and for personal choice as their peers.

Where appropriate, adults working with children may need to consult more widely, using other professionals' skills and experience to provide accessible play but never forgetting the child's choices.

Providing an environment in which play can thrive is crucial to the success of the play experience for the child. This will involve good organisation and planning.

Citing O' Hagan & Smith (1993) the following basic principles should be considered:

- health and safety
- maximum space and freedom to explore and investigate
- rooms which are divided appropriately but which are well defined by using screens or other devices
- a logic to setting out areas – so keeping 'messy areas' together and 'quiet areas' separate from them
- areas which are well-presented and which make children want to go to them
- organisation which allows children space to think and consider before moving on to other areas
- good organisation and planning with written plans available for everyone to see
- materials which allow for a progression of children's play needs and learning
- age appropriate materials
- equipment which the children can take out and tidy away independently
- resources arranged so that children can locate them independently and use them without needing to rely on adults' help
- equipment which allows children to discover and to take calculated risks
- resources which are easily located because they are well contained and are well labelled
- materials which are stored logically and accessibly
- workers who work together and who know what their colleagues are doing
- engagement with children
- encouraging problem solving
- empowering children to become reflective participants.



## **Student Notes 11**

### **Adult intervention:**

It is important to remember that the adult's intervention should be sensitive to the child's age and stage of development and there is likely to be more or less adult intervention according to the needs and wishes of the child.

It is important to view this information in conjunction with texts on child development and to remember that what is developmentally appropriate for a very young child eg. playing darts using Velcro darts would be inappropriate for an older child who should be given the correct equipment.

This has been explained in previous sections, so remember one of the adult's roles is to listen to children while another is to have a sound understanding of child development and to be able to observe the needs, wishes and dispositions of children.

If you are working with babies you may need to play one-to-one with the child.

When you are working with older children it is important that you are discreet and provide children with the opportunities to become autonomous – even if their choices aren't what we might have chosen, children should be allowed to make mistakes and to take calculated risks. Both, if handled correctly, are useful learning experiences.

For the child, play that is freely chosen but challenging is important.



## Student Notes 12

These notes highlight some of the ways of adapting or presenting different types of play.

They are not an exhaustive list of resources and you should always be prepared to add new ideas into your folio and to read other books and periodicals which give ideas for developing play.

### Symbolic Play

Symbolic Play	Resources required	Role of the adult
Dressing up clothes	Hats, clothes, shoes, full-length mirrors, handheld mirrors, props. Appropriate hanging facilities. Boxes with clothes for different occasions, eg. firemen, weddings, plays, pirates. Accessories: beads, gloves, handbags, cases, sunglasses.	To listen to the children's play. To provide resources where appropriate, to suggest ways of adapting resources, to work with children in creating new resources.
Masks and puppets	Paper plates and materials for gluing, such as feathers, sequins, coloured paper, glue, spreaders, sticks for holding masks, paints for painting 'blank' masks. A variety of puppets – hand puppets, finger puppets. Paper bags for making puppets.	As above. To make up glue and paints. To provide props for using as puppet theatre. To support children who want to make props. Helping with resourcing of this. Helping with children's enquiries. Leading children to resource books.

Small world, table top materials, play mat, outdoor equipment	Providing a range of materials such as Playmobil, Lego, cars, mats, traffic lights, dolls, dolls houses, traffic cones, whistles, hoses.	<p>Ensuring there is a wide range of materials and that they are changed frequently to reflect children's current interests.</p> <p>For children with specific language needs or for whom English is not the mother tongue, small world resources provide good adult-child interaction and a vehicle from which to talk about words, concepts and everyday activities.</p> <p>It is also a useful activity for talking about positional words (prepositions) or instructions, eg. 'Can you put the lion <b>in</b> the cage.' 'Is the bike <b>behind</b> the tree?'</p> <p>The adult needs to ensure the materials are in good condition and are cleaned regularly.</p> <p>Supporting children's learning when they use these materials by asking appropriately open-ended questions.</p> <p>Making sure that, eg. dolls clothes come in a variety of sizes and that this is obvious to the child. Organising the materials so that children easily locate them.</p>
Props	'real materials', eg. stethoscopes, magnifying glasses, binoculars, telephones.	<p>Sourcing materials.</p> <p>Keeping them in good order.</p> <p>Providing additional props as required by the play. Knowing when to intervene with additional props. Using everyday experiences to explain and support children's understanding, eg. 'A visit to the doctor', 'Ways of communicating'.</p>

### **Books and language activities**

<b>Books and language activities</b>	<b>Resources required</b>	<b>Role of the adult in developing this</b>
Songs, poetry and rhymes	You. You need to keep a repertoire of appropriate songs, rhymes and poems. Have good resource books in the centre to support this The knowledge of these.	The ability to engage with the child. The ability to get down to the child's level or in the case of very young children to sit with the child when reciting or singing songs. Very young children learn best through repetition, so it is a good idea to repeat some songs, rhymes or poems on a regular basis. You can develop this by starting off a song or a rhyme and letting the child finish it. Do this by lowering your voice so that it doesn't overwhelm the child.
Books and story telling	A range of books, fiction and non-fiction. Books that are well written and are at an appropriate level for the child. Avoid television spin-offs and 'Disney' type books. Go for Picture Lions, Puffins, and Walker Books, etc., for younger children. Make sure the books are in good condition. Provide tape recordings of the books that the children can listen to themselves. It will encourage independence. Use books and stories as a springboard for other activities, eg. If 'The Tiger who came to Tea' is a favourite book, put out orange and black paint in the	Providing books, props, additional resources like tape recorders. This may enable children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy of choice. Providing age appropriate resources – board or materials books for younger children, interest books for topic development. Ensuring you are aware of stories before reading them to children. Reading clearly and using pictures as discussion points. Encouraging children to make their own books, especially older children.

	<p>painting area, have a picture of a tiger and see if the children are encouraged to make their own pictures of the tiger.</p> <p>Put a tiger puppet or toy in the home corner. See if the children make tea for the tiger.</p> <p>For older children tales that have a choice of endings are often good ways of encouraging discussion in the children.</p> <p>See if there is potential to follow up stories eg. is there scope for one group to 'bury treasure' and another group to make maps to help the children find the treasure.</p> <p>Reading for information.</p>	
Reading for information	<p>Making name badges.</p> <p>Using recipe cards.</p> <p>Pictorial and written instructions sheets.</p> <p>Making newsletters</p> <p>Pointing out environmental print.</p> <p>Using maps plans and scale drawings with older children.</p> <p>Creating writing walls where children, particularly older</p>	<p>Set up a quiet area where the child can sit and read undisturbed.</p> <p>Support the child's understanding of the written word by answering questions and sitting alongside the child where appropriate. Create fact-finding opportunities in the centre by using plans and maps with the children.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for the children to see their names written: eg. by putting names on pegs, on finished work, having nametags to select from at snack time.</p> <p>Ensure adults spell names correctly.</p> <p>Work with the children to make up recipe cards. These can be drawn, by using computer graphics or by cutting out appropriate pictures from magazines. It will enable the child to see links and sequences.</p> <p>Talk and discuss environmental print with children on outings, eg. looking for</p>

	children are encouraged to write up their feelings, news, suggestions, etc.	words like 'bus stop', looking for bus numbers. Playing 'I Spy' With older children use print to convey information and to set up dialogue, eg. with other out-of-school clubs.
Story Sacks	A range of books, puppets, props, instructions, questions, comprehension exercises, suggested activities (see <a href="http://www.LTScotland.org.uk">www.LTScotland.org.uk</a> )	Working with parents and others to create these. Where possible having 'dual language story sacks' for children for whom English is not their mother tongue. Making sure the resources in the sack match the contents. Ensuring that you work closely with parents and receive feedback about the successes or failures of the sack. Developing new resources in collaboration with others. Making sure the books are age appropriate.

## Creative Play

<b>Creative Play</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Role of the adult</b>
Paints	A variety of different types of paint, eg. finger-paints, squeezy paint, powder paint, textured paint, marble painting. Inks. A variety of different materials to use with the paint. Paint brushes of different sizes, long and short rollers, Chinese calligraphy brushes, sponges, scrapers. Different types of paper – paper rolls, coloured paper, thin paper, absorbent paper, thick paper, newspaper. Marbles and stones to roll on paint. Materials to paint on such as calico, gauze to paint through, large sheets to paint or write on. Containers for finger paints, decorators rollers, etc.	To understand how to make up a variety of different type of paint. To present children with opportunities to use different types of paint To make up paints with the help of children. To ensure the children are adequately covered when painting if appropriate. To provide warm water to wash up after painting. To make sure the child's work can be identified. To provide areas for drying artwork. To provide larger areas for older children to have the freedom to make wall paintings or large collaborative friezes. To ensure all children who want to be included can be included. To provide support, including supported vocabulary for the child.
Music	Provide a range of music making resources including percussion, triangles, whistles, rain	Place music making equipment in areas where children are improvising in their play eg. dressing up areas. Be aware of different times of the year and when it might be more appropriate to include particular types of music. Relate music to other cultures and provide children with

	<p>pipes.</p> <p>Provide facilities for improvised music making including tins, shakers, wind chimes.</p> <p>Provide music including classical music, world music, rock music, Scottish country-dance music to sing along to.</p> <p>Cardboard rolls, dried pulses, marbles, tins, lids including dustbin lids for 'Steel bands'.</p>	<p>opportunities to create their own performances using music. Ensure there are mirrors available for the children to see what they are doing.</p> <p>Resource areas so that children can create their own instruments or music making devices. Ensure health and safety considerations are in place and adhered to. NB. Bear in mind considerations such as very young children potentially swallowing dried pulses, etc., but the need for older children to be imaginative and creative in their music making. You may need to resource steel bands, percussion bands, karaoke, etc.</p>
Found materials	<p>Provide a range of different shapes of boxes, cylinders, silver foil, and coloured cellophane.</p> <p>Provide feathers, buttons, material, wool, yoghurt pots and yoghurt drinks bottles. Provide pipe cleaners, raffia, wooden sticks, and any other suitable 'found' materials like driftwood, pebbles, etc.</p> <p>Provide scissors and where appropriate craft knives. Remember children who use their left hand. Try a variety of</p>	<p>Make sure the materials are presented in an attractive way. Ensure the table height is accessible for all children and make sure there are no obstructions to getting to the table. Consider ways in which you might need to respond to a child's request and ensure you have all materials available in boxes which are carefully labelled.</p> <p>Work with the children to ensure that tables are cleared after use and that sticky patches are wiped up. Look out for children who are struggling and assist them to find a solution to the problems they are encountering.</p> <p>Make sure the child's work is clearly labelled.</p> <p>For older children you may want to experiment with different materials and different ways of sticking materials together, eg. heat guns. Older children may want to resource these materials and you may need to support their efforts to do this.</p>

	<p>scissors such as pinking shears and scissors with pointed ends.</p> <p>Remember that children with motor difficulties may need a pair of scissors designed for their needs.</p> <p>Provide glue spreaders or 'Pritt'.</p> <p>Make sure the adhesives you provide are suitable for the materials you are presenting the children and that they will actually stick.</p> <p>Provide materials like corrugated cardboard and coloured card.</p>
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## Discovery Play

<b>Discovery Play</b>	<b>Resources required</b>	<b>Role of the adult</b>
Sand and Water	<p>Sand, water, containers for holding these. It might be as large as a sand pit or as small as a tub to hold a small amount of either.</p> <p>Materials which can be added to, eg. wheels, various sized containers, small, plastic animals (eg. dinosaurs) water can be added to the sand to make it wet, soap can be added to water to make it bubbly. Food colour can be added to the water occasionally. Drainpipes can be added to the sand or to the water play. Moulds, traction vehicles, magnifying glasses, 'bug boxes' to view the sand.</p>	<p>To ensure the area is kept clean and well organised. To assess how the children are playing and to add or take away items accordingly. So an example of this might be if children were interested in seeing how the sand flowed through the 'wheel' you might add drainpipes of different dimensions the following day. You might then add a little water to the sand to see if the sand still flowed the same way.</p> <p>Resourcing the needs of the particular 'discovery' play will be done after close observation and discussion with other team members. Encouraging children to use language which describes what they are doing including the language of mathematics eg. heavier than, lighter than, etc.</p> <p>This play may be strongly linked to symbolic play if children are 'pretending' eg. 'to be bricklayers', etc.</p>
Washing up	<p>Provide bowls, water or let the children pour the water into the bowl as they add washing up liquid. Discuss how the water becomes bubbly.</p> <p>Provide washing up cloths</p>	<p>The adult's role is to provide the scope for children to discover what happens when two materials, in this case water and washing up liquid blend. Provide further opportunities for the children to talk about and to describe the results. Be aware of trying to support the child's independence by leaving as much to the child as possible while being aware of any health and safety implications.</p>

	<p>or mops. Provide some materials to be washed up such as plates from the snack table. Look at them before washing up and after.</p>	
Model making	<p>Either boxes, cartons, glue, adhesives, craft knives/scissors or in the case of blocks, blocks of a sufficient size and quantity to allow children to experiment with building.</p>	<p>Be on hand to provide additional resources if required, to enable sharing of materials if appropriate, of the need to step in if necessary and show how something might be done, but without doing it for the child. An example might be if the child was trying to stick a cylindrical end face to a box but it kept falling down the adult may want to show the child a device for getting it to stick (cutting and bending the base so that the surface area is bigger).</p>
Treasure baskets	<p>Sturdy boxes, wooden plastic, shoe boxes or bags like shoe bags, materials to go inside boxes, etc.</p> <p>This can range from tactile materials, ie. materials that have a different feel velvet, jute, silk, cotton, wool, calico. ‘Precious materials’ such as shells, small stones, coloured glass, beads materials that make a noise, eg. rattles, small rain pipes, wind chimes, mirrors.</p> <p>Most suited to children who are very young and best done on a one-to-one</p>	<p>Making the child feel comfortable. Encouraging the child to explore the basket. Providing vocabulary enrichment for the child. Supporting the child’s curiosity. Ensuring the materials are kept in good condition. Ensuring there is a sufficient variety to keep the child engaged and curious.</p>

	basis. Also suited to children who need some additional emotional support and who may have some language difficulties	
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## **Vigorous Play**

<b>Vigorous Play</b>	<b>Resources required</b>	<b>Role of the adult</b>
Running, jumping skipping, dancing	A large enough area to accommodate the children's chosen activity or exercise.	To create space, to ensure children are given scope to develop skills and resilience. To ensure health and safety has been considered. To provide the child with reassurance where required. To make sure all children are safe.
Climbing frame	Climbing frame, large mat or appropriate surface beneath the mat.	To ensure children are appropriately challenged. To reassure children. To ensure all health and safety requirements are understood. To provide encouragement, to ensure fair play. To facilitate sharing if appropriate.
Ball games	Balls (variety of sizes), bats, hoops, basketball nets, football nets.	As above.

## Play with technology

Play with technology	Resources	Role of the adult
Cooking	Scales, mixers (electric and hand-held), tins and trays. Baby Belling or other cooker (eg. microwave). Cooking materials and recipe cards. Instructions sheets for technology.	Make explanatory leaflets (older children can do this for themselves) or photocopy clearly written instructions. Ensure all health and safety factors have been considered, balancing the potential risk against the potential benefit to the child's independence. <b>(NB. Do not take unnecessary risks with children's safety).</b> Be aware of the policy of the organisation covering risk assessment. Support the child in using technology where appropriate. Discuss. Offer guidance if and where required. Use technical language with children. Try to establish useful links between home and centre. Support sharing of equipment and of resources where appropriate.
Taking photographs	Digital cameras, cameras, video recording equipment Wall space to mount photographs, laminating facilities.	Ensure permission is sought from parents before embarking on this if any images of children are to be taken. Be aware of any policy over using images in the centre. Be clear about the purpose of taking photographs. If images are of eg. places and things of interest in the environment no permission will be required. Use images to make books, to create collage, to use in newsletters to discuss with children how the image can be transferred digitally or through processing. Support the child in using the technology if required. Use photographs to help enhance the child's knowledge of technical language; use as a focus for everyday conversations, links to home and community discussion about self. Extend learning by taking a stepped approach to taking photographs, viewing, selecting and printing.

## **Play with Games**

<b>Games</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Role of the adult</b>
Table top games	Jigsaws, insert boards, board games, eg. 'Insey Winsey Spider'. 'Tangrams' Poleidoblocs, Cards, such as matching cards.	Selecting appropriate games for the age of the child: so fewer and thicker jigsaw pieces for younger children including floor puzzles, more complex puzzles for older children. Ensure all pieces are in puzzle. Set up areas to attract children to them. Ensure materials are culturally sensitive. Sit with the children where required to show how the game is played, eg. taking turns, the way you are 'going round the table' being consistent – is it sometimes clockwise and sometimes anti-clockwise? Discuss with colleagues to ensure consistency. Explain rules, describe and discuss where appropriate. Ensure the game is not too difficult for the age range of child and that the expectation, eg. a 2-year-old sitting for fifteen minutes is developmentally inappropriate.
Circle time	Space, resource books such as poetry, song books, instruments where necessary, a range of songs, rhymes, games.	Be clear about the purpose, ensure the noise level is appropriate to all the children hearing you, and ensure all children are able to join in so think of ways that children with mobility difficulties or with hearing or visual difficulties might access the time. Be well prepared and know the songs and rhymes before circle time. Ensure children understand any rules and guide children who don't know gently.



### **Student Note 12a**

#### **Team Working**

As an adult you will be scaffolding children's play, ie. providing opportunities for children to have balanced and progressive play experiences.

Working alongside other adults is essential to the smooth running of the centre and you should be aware of how you fit in with the rest of the team you are with.

You should be clear about your roles and responsibilities.

If you are not, you have a professional responsibility to ask questions about what is required, how your mentor would like you to do things, how he/she prefers to work.

Communicating well is imperative to the smooth running of the centre, so if you feel you are unclear, find time to discuss.

Good communication is essential to avoid duplication and to provide children with an appropriately enriching experience.

Good teams can provide an effective play and learning environment for children. They should be built on the strengths of team members with complementary and supplementary ideas coming from the team.

Not every member of staff will have the same skills and competences but part of team leadership is identifying who has the appropriate strengths to lead particular projects.

## **Outcome 3**

### **Student Exercises 19 and 20**



## Student Exercise 19

### Team Working

Complete the following table, indicating what you consider to be effective and ineffective ways of communicating in a setting.

All examples are intended to focus on the adult's behaviours and not the children's.

John is new to the setting. He sees the paints are empty and sets about replenishing them.	Effective /Ineffective
Joanne is new to the setting. The paints are empty. She finds a colleague and asks if she can replenish them.	
Cara has taken over as manager. She expects the staff to stay behind after work and tells them this when she comes in that morning.	
Cara has taken over as manager. She calls the staff together briefly to tell them she wants to have a weekly meeting. She asks them to put the preferred options on a noticeboard in the staff room.	
Tabassum notices some of the younger children are quite distressed when their parents leave. She raises the possibility of a staggered starting time to allow children to come in over a longer period at the next staff meeting. She hopes this might mean she can spend longer with individual children.	
Ray tells a parent in a loud voice and in front of other parents that his child has been very boisterous this morning and has upset other children.	
Susie has known for some weeks that Fiona is going in to hospital to have her tonsils out. On the day before she goes she asks a colleague where the hospital kit is kept.	



## Student Exercise 20

### Activity 1

Show how you would set up an area in your centre which shows a range of materials children might use for symbolic play.

Discuss how you would respond if a group of children child came in to the centre having been on a visit to the local fire station. What are some of the materials you might provide discussing whether you would provide these in or out of doors and why?

### Note

An important feature of symbolic play is the child's right to decide on what and how they choose to play. Adult intervention should be kept to a minimum.



**Activity 2**

Make up a resource book which contains two finger rhymes you would use with the age range birth-eighteen months and two stories you might use with the same age range.

Also include in this book two stories and poems you might use with the ages ranges 2-3, 3-5, 5-7 and 7-9.

Select two of the age ranges and describe the props you might use or activities you might use to support the children's understanding of either the stories or the poems.



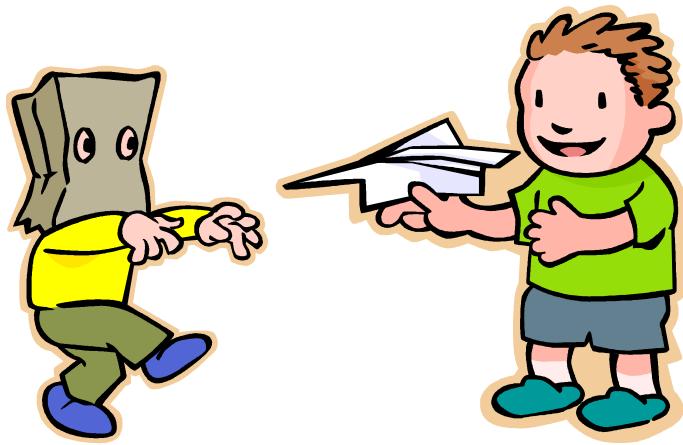
### **Activity 3**

Discuss in groups how you might provide three different types of creative play for children in two of the three age ranges indicated describing how the adult might sensitively intervene to the benefit of the child in the chosen age range.

- Birth-18 months
- 3-5
- 5-7
- 7-11.

Put these ideas together by setting up a creative play area, defining which age range it is meant for.

Describe how children might benefit from using these materials by making a poster for parents describing the benefits.



#### **Activity 4**

Describe 5 different activities which might involve children engaging in discovery play.

Explain how the adult might support a child's understanding of how something works.

**Practical activity:** Working in groups of no more than 3 set up a discovery table, or make a treasure basket for a child under 3 explaining what you have put on your table/basket, the age range it is intended for, and the potential benefits to the child from the experience you have described.





### **Activity 5**

Describe some of the activities you would provide in the centre to ensure children have a range of challenging vigorous play opportunities.

Select an age range from 0-3, 3-5, 5-7 or 7-11 and make a poster or a leaflet for parents or for children explaining how vigorous play is provided in your centre, detailing the benefits to the child's health and development and how you as an adult help to support that type of play in the centre.

### **Activity 6**

Describe five types of technology which children may use in a centre.

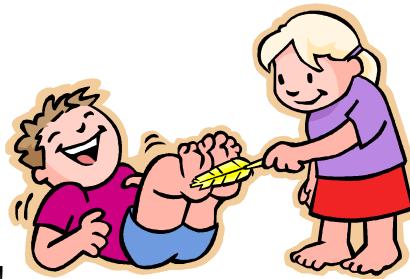


Explain how you might take a step-by-step approach that goes from children being aware of the technology to children being proficient in using the technology.  
Describe some of the ways you would convince colleagues and parents that technology in the centre is about more than just computers.

### **Activity 7**

Make up a circle time activity or whole group time for two of the following ages:  
Birth -18 months, 2-3, 3-5 5-7 or 7-11.

Explain two of these activities to your class and keep a scrapbook detailing the types of games, songs, rhymes and poetry you might include in the circle time.



Try them out with your classmates!

## **Section 5**

### **Practice Case Studies**

**These case studies may be used in the following way:**

- **as formative assessment**
- **as small group exercises to generate discussion**
- **as preparation for NABs.**



Lee Valley Child Care Centre provides a breakfast club, full day care for children age 12 weeks to five years and an out-of-school care club for children aged 5-10.

The centre has a range of staff some of whom are early years workers and others playworkers.

### **Scenario One**

In the centre there are three rooms dedicated to pre-fives children, a large multi-purpose soft play area, an outdoor play area and a covered veranda.

There is a garden which the centre uses to grow vegetables and a 'wild garden' area. There is currently some debate about developing a healthy lifestyle policy in the centre and you have been asked to contribute to developing some play activities which might help support the process.

You are looking at three main areas in which to develop this:

- Discovery Play
- Vigorous Play
- Technology Play.

The idea is that the ethos of the centre will change to reflect this and so the concept has to be applied at all stages in the centre.

Select two of the age ranges below and describe some of the activities you might provide for the three chosen areas of play:

- Birth-18 months
- 2-3 years
- 3-5 years
- 5-7 years
- 7-10 years.

Describe how the children might be involved and how you see your role in the process.

### **Scenario Two**

The children in the pre-fives centre have been on a trip to the local farm and have been discussing the animals they saw there.

One child in particular is intrigued by the fact that you can get milk from goats and that goats' milk can be made into cheese.

Two other children have started looking at the book 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' and are pretending to be the troll, shouting, 'You can't come across my bridge' to other children as they come into the book corner.

One child says he is disappointed because there were no tigers in the farm and keeps looking at non-fiction books with tigers and pretending to 'be' a tiger.

How might you take the children's interests forward?

### **Scenario three**

A group of girls in the out-of-school club have created a play space out of doors. It seems they are playing with dolls, writing something, and then hiding the notes for their friends to discover.

There doesn't appear to be a leader to the game and there are some verbal cues between the players while the 'dolls' seem to be given characters.

The same type of play goes on for several days. The children seem to understand the rules and will spontaneously add materials but when an adult tries to engage in the play with the children it stops.

- what type of play could this be describing?
- is adult intervention appropriate in this play?
- how might the adult support the children?

### **Scenario four**

Ella is 9 months old and has been in the centre for around 2 months.

She is a very active and inquiring child but towards late afternoon she becomes tired and quite upset when noisy games are played near her.

Describe a range of activities or strategies the key worker could use with Ella.

### **Scenario five**

Philippe is six and has just arrived in this country from France. His parents are studying at the university nearby the centre and he is attending the after school club. He is reserved with adults and though his spoken language is improving, he sometimes has difficulty finding the correct vocabulary.

He is fascinated by the puppets and masks which are in the centre.

What type of activities might be beneficial to Philippe and how would you try to develop his interests in them?

### **Scenario six**

Craig is four. He is very repetitive in the way he plays and given the choice would never move from the water area. If he does it is to the sand or to paint. He shows no interest in books, stories table top games or symbolic play.

His speech is inarticulate for his age and he seems to find it difficult to follow instructions.

With support from an adult Craig can be coaxed into going to other play areas where he is popular with the other children who are keen to play with him.

What do you consider might be the best way to develop Craig's play?



## Additional exercises

### **Study A**

You have been appointed to work with children under 12 months.

You feel the resources in the room are not as extensive as they might be.

The room practitioner has asked you to compile a set of resources which you think would be helpful for the room but she has asked you to describe what you think the benefits of having these resources would be.

How would you tackle this?

### **Study B**

As part of a literacy awareness scheme in the local community you and your colleagues have been asked to make up a list of books which you think would be beneficial for the following age ranges of children. They are

- Children under 12 months
- 2-3
- 3-5
- 5-7
- 7-9
- 10 upwards.

Select two of the age ranges and investigate the best books for the purpose.

### **Study C**

The playgroup committee feel you are under resourced for outdoor play.

Given that the playgroup also operates as an out-of-school club between 3 and 6.30 each day, how would you set about providing outdoor equipment?

The clubs are based in a school and have a playground and a large shed for storage.

### **Study D**

A local theatre group came to the centre and the children became interested in the music they were making and the dance they saw.

Some of the children have expressed an interest in 'being dancers'.

The children in this centre are 3-5.

How might you go about this?

### **Study E**

Children aged 5-10 are in the play centre during the summer holidays.

Many are interested in crafts but are bored with the range of paints and 'found materials' that are on offer.

Some of the children have expressed an interest in doing something on a larger scale. Some of the other children are more interested in creating a 'space' for themselves indoors which is a 'strictly no adult' zone.

What might you suggest?

## **Section 6**

### **References, Videos and Useful Websites**

## **References – Guide**

- Abbott, L. (1994) *Quality Education in the Early Years*. Open University Press.
- Brown, F. (ed) (2003) *Playwork: Theory and Practice*. Open University Press.
- Christie, J. (2001) 'Play as a learning medium' in S. Reifel (ed.), *Theory in Context and Out* (Vol. 3, pp. 358-365). Ablex.
- Collins, J. Insley, K. Soler, J. (eds) (2001) *Developing Pedagogy: researching practice*. Open University Press.
- Davenport, G.C. (1989) *An Introduction to Child Development*. Unwin Hyman Ltd.
- Fromberg, D. P. (1998) 'Play issues in early childhood education' in Seefeldt, C. (ed.) *The Early Childhood Curriculum: A review of current research* (2nd ed., pp. 190-212). Merrill.
- Hughes, F. (in press). 'Sensitivity to the social and cultural contexts of the play of young children' in Isenberg, J. P. and Jalongo, M. R. (eds.), *Major Trends and Issues in Early Childhood Education: Challenges, Controversies, and Insights* (2nd ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Karby, G. (1989) 'Children's concepts of their own Play' in 'The Voice of the Child' Organisation Mondiale pour L'Education Prescolaire (OMEP) July conference.
- Moyles, J. (ed) (1993) *The Excellence of Play*. Open University Press.
- O'Hagan, M. and Smith, M. (1995) *Special Issues in Childcare*. Bailliere Tindall.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978) in Lee, V. and Das Gupta, P. (eds) (2001) *Children's Cognitive and Language Development*. Open University Press.

## **Suggested reference materials**

- A Curriculum Framework for the Child 3-5 (1997)* LTS/HMIE Dundee.
- Abbott, L. (2001) *Experiencing Reggio Emilia: implications for pre-school practice*. Open University Press.
- Bruce, T. (1999) *Child Care and Education* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). Hodder and Stoughton.
- Curtis, A. (2003) *A Curriculum for the pre-school child* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). Routledge.
- Davey, A. (2001) *Playwork: Care and Play for Children 5-15*. Thomson Learning.
- Gregory, E. (1997) *One Child, Many Worlds: Early Learning in Multi-cultural Communities*. Fulton.
- Tassoni, P. and Hucker, K. (2000) *Planning Play in the Early Years*. Heinemann.

## **Magazines**

- Nursery World*. TSL Publications.
- Nursery Education*. Scholastic Publications.
- Infant Education*. Scholastic Publications.
- Child Education*. Scholastic Publications.

## **Resource materials**

- Early Years Activity Bank*. Scholastic Publications.
- Downloadable ideas Scholastic Publications from  
[http://www.scholastic.co.uk/teach\\_index.html](http://www.scholastic.co.uk/teach_index.html)
- Playwork Activities – London Borough of Southwark from  
<http://www.londonplay.org.uk/play-publications/publications-playwork-activities.html>
- Learning and Teaching Scotland resources guide from  
<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/earlyyears/files/resguide.pdf>

## Videos

Title	Source
<i>Learning is Magic</i>	Learning and Teaching Scotland, Dundee  <a href="http://www.ltscotland.org.uk">www.ltscotland.org.uk</a>
<i>Planning</i>  <i>Observing</i>  <i>Outdoor Play</i>  <i>Resourcing the Curriculum</i>  <i>The Child in the Community</i>	Moray House series  Edinburgh Media and Learning Technology Service University of Edinburgh Holy rood Road Edinburgh EH8 8AQ  0131 650 4097
<i>Playwork Take 1 the video</i>	National Centre for Playwork Education University of Gloucestershire 01242 554043 <a href="http://www.playwork.co.uk">www.playwork.co.uk</a>
<i>It's Child's Play</i>	Produced by Eric Mival for  Open School Network Image 2000 Studios Margaret Street Immingham Lincolnshire DN40 1LE  01469 515152
<i>Many Functions of Play</i>	A Video reportage production  01603 613879
<i>Heuristic Play with Objects</i>	Produced by Elinor Goldsschmeid and Anita Hughes  Available from National Children's Bureau 8 Wakley Street London EC1V 7QE

All details correct at the time of publication.

## **Useful contacts**

Candidates studying this unit may want to refer to some of the policy and additional materials which supports the theories contained in this unit.

They may not directly affect what the candidate is doing in the unit but should be seen as additional professional knowledge which supports best practice in an early education and childcare setting:

Codes of Practice for Social Services Employers and Employees  
Contact [www.sssc.uk.com](http://www.sssc.uk.com) and follow links to 'Codes of practice'.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16.  
Contact [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)

The Child at the Centre – self-evaluation in the early years  
Contact <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library2/doc16/cac2-00.asp>

Playwork Values and Assumptions  
Contact: <http://www.playwork.org.uk/downloads/values.pdf>

*Care and Learning for Children from Birth to Three and A Curriculum Framework for the Child 3-5* follow the links from  
[www.LTScotland.org.uk](http://www.LTScotland.org.uk)

## **Photographs for Student Exercises**



**Picture 1**



**Picture 2**



**Picture 3**



Picture 4