

# A Parent & Carer Guide to

# PLAY

## Pedagogy



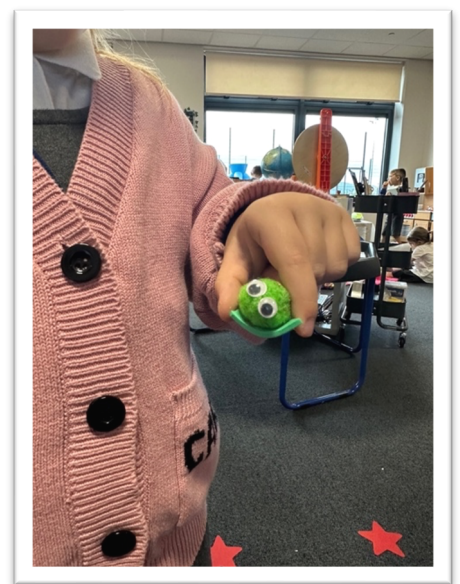
Biggar Primary School

# What is play pedagogy?

Playful Pedagogy is a way of integrating children's play experiences with curricular learning, giving pupils flexibility to find their own solutions to both new and existing problems. It engages children in personally meaningful activities, learning about themselves and others, and encourages autonomy and their independent motivation to learn. *(Play Scotland)*

"We know **how** babies and children learn best. They learn best in an environment of quality **interactions**, interesting **spaces** and when the **experiences** on offer are set in meaningful contexts. They learn best in environments that inspire them to be curious and creative."

*(Realising the Ambition: Being Me, Education Scotland)*



# Why play pedagogy?

Research throughout the decades provides evidence that play is the most valuable and successful way in which children engage in learning. The play pedagogy approach can build necessary skills and knowledge in children. Neuroscience has also identified the important link between learning through play, physical movement and the successful development of key functioning skills that are essential for the holistic development of a child.

## Key curriculum documents and legislation



### Rights of the Child:

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 31) recognises the right to play for all children under the age of 18.

### Curriculum for Excellence:

Children in early primary school and beyond should have "*high quality learning experiences based on active learning approaches...which engages and challenges children's thinking using real-life and imaginary situations.*" (Building the Curriculum 2)

# The *benefits* of Play!

Through play and active learning children can:

- Communicate in different ways and for different purposes in a range of settings
- Engage with others by participating, negotiating and collaborating
- Participate in decision making
- Make connections across learning
- Extend their problem solving and thinking skills
- Build on their own interests and ideas, and make choices about their learning
- Develop creativity and use their imagination
- Develop initiative, independence and resilience
- Discover their capabilities and limitations in a non-threatening environment
- Foster a range of social skills - sharing, turn taking and cooperating
- Develop self-confidence and self-control
- Learn about risks and safe practices
- Increase attention span and the ability to concentrate and persevere
- Become healthy and active and develop physical skills and coordination
- Learn from first hand experiences
- Utilise all of their senses

# How is play different in P1 to Nursery?

Learning environments can be very similar, for example art area, construction or role play though many of the resources will be different.

The BIG difference in P1 is the increased level of challenge. The children are older and have already experienced high-quality play in early learning and childcare settings. Play in Primary 1 builds on and takes forward the learning experiences already had, providing rich and varied opportunities for intellectual challenge.



# How does play fit in with the P1 curriculum?

Play pedagogy is an approach to learning, teaching and assessment. Teachers plan high quality play and active learning experiences that support the implementation of the Early level Experiences and Outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).



In Biggar Primary, children develop their Literacy skills when they have the opportunities to "*communicate, collaborate and build relationships,*" for example in a Doctor's surgery, children can allocate appointments, deal with patients, explain waiting times, comfort crying babies or give simple information.



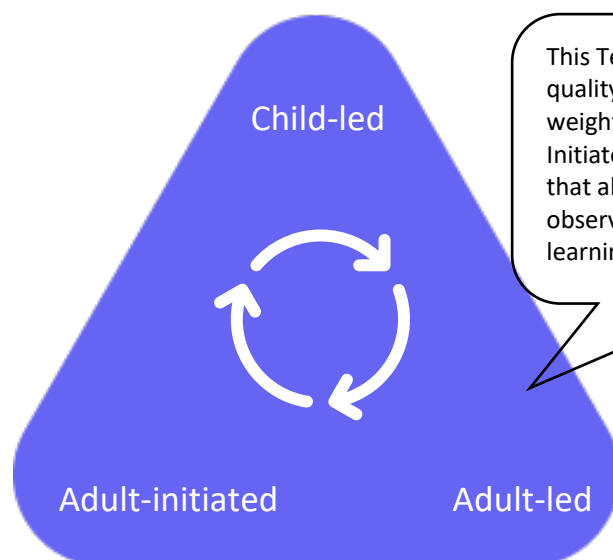
In Biggar Primary, children need to "*apply skills and understanding creatively and logically to solve within a variety of contexts,*" for example in the construction area, learners can develop mathematical language as they build towers of different heights and use the correct terminology - tall, taller, tallest or measure an area using different concrete materials.



In Biggar Primary, children should "*experience challenge and enjoyment and make informed decisions to improve their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing*". For example, in outdoor play learners develop social and team building skills when they play ball games together. They improve their physical wellbeing by running energetically or balancing or climbing.

# What does learning look like in a play-based environment?

Child-led learning takes place when a child has full choice and ownership over how they play, how their play develops and what they play with. This is a driving force for children discovering themselves, and provides pupils with the opportunity to explore, experiment and create in an uninhibited way. Pupils engage in free-flow, child-led play throughout the day. Adults observe play, measure engagement and plan next steps.



This Teach, Target, Play model for high quality Play Pedagogy ensures equal weight is given to Adult Led, Adult Initiated and Child Led provision and that all three are underpinned by observations which inform teaching and learning.

Adult-initiated learning experiences are when the adult gives the pupil a task to do or an object to play with, often with a planned outcome. Pupils are given personalised and differentiated “target tasks” daily to complete. These could be a game, a jotter task or a worksheet. Learners can choose when they do the task and aim to complete this task independently.

Adult-led learning experiences are directed by a teacher. This is our focused teaching time taking the form of whole class, group or individual inputs. Learners engage with daily literacy and numeracy core learning suitable to their individual needs. For example phonics, number recognition and writing concepts. In addition, other curricular areas are planned, delivered and assessed as appropriate.