

Children's play practice and principles.

Section 1-

What is play?

As a Baby grows into a young child/toddler they grow from being content to want to explore and this is a very natural process for every child to want to be creative, it is also very natural for every child's heuristic play as children love to touch and feel or even build and knock down objects whether it be a household item or not. Each discovery a child will make can occupy them for a while if it is a discovery enjoyable enough then the child may also repeat that a numerous amount of times to put their new found discovery to the test, so all this helps the child's cognitive development including eye and hand coordination as well as ones muscle control and all round ones holistic development (community play things no date).

Children show more signs of emotional wellbeing when they approach a activity as play rather than them to approach the activity as a task. The task can be performed in multiple locations whether it is indoors or outdoors, on a table or on the floor you will notice that the performance of the child will be significantly improved when the child is content within the environment (p2). It is reported by children that whilst they play they tend to feel happier (Fattore et al, 2007). (Howard and McInnes 2012).

To ensure a child succeeds and becomes successful later in life then they will need support to help develop communication skills and problem solving skills that can be fun for any child as they are very curious to create and invent whilst they explore. Children have a huge imagination which helps them learn through their play activities (Fox and wirth no date).

The practitioners/teachers role in early years is critical towards a child's development (e.g. Ashiabi 2007). The adult plays a variety of roles in the setting from directing a activity down to the child's self-led activity therefor the adults need to interact with the children and engage whilst the child is creating and playing during activities but should never try and adulterate play as the child will think it is not play is the adults takes over as play needs to be self led in order for play to work and the child to take on the activity gave to them (Howard, Crawley and Miles 2013).

Play is critical in the early years of young children as it helps support the learning and development of the child. Through play they develop their language skills, their emotions while playing and the creativity of each child shows. Play is the most natural experience for infants but in some cases some children may need that little extra bit of help from an adult. Whilst children play they discover adventure, they use their imagination and take many of risks as they learn. Playing helps children problem solve by his/her self or even as a team with others and this shows the

child's social skills whilst they play and interact with others around them (early years matters 2001).

Freely chosen play is extremely important to support a young child's healthy development and play improves their development significantly. While a child is at play they enjoy creating challenges and uncertainty in their play to test their own limits whilst taking risks and all the skills they create they will then be able to use later on in life. The parent/guardian really need to encourage from birth that they can do anything they put their mind to whilst teaching them basic life skills. While the adult is helping the child overcome different obstacles they need to keep reminding the child that anything is possible if they put their mind to it and help them believe in themselves and help to understand their limits and boundaries but most of all the child will need to be let freely to have fun and make each experience completely enjoyable for the child (indirect no date).

Section 2-

Risk

One of the largest barriers to children playing freely is the parental fear which limits children's play opportunities as to children who are free to challenge more opportunities. For a child to fully develop their abilities there will be a great deal of beneficial rewards to offering stimulation and challenging environments for exploring while the child develops their abilities. Play helps with supporting the development of resilience, creativity, flexibility and the way the child adapts to the environment which they are in. Challenges that occur throughout life enable a child/adult to positively deal with unexpected change and challenges throughout life. Play and seeking out risk is an extremely natural part of a child growing up and a way to find their way in the world. It is vital that the adult supports opportunities for the child to experience a degree of challenging risk as they overcome fears which is a positive achievement (Bazley 2018).

Risky play is extremely important as children need to explore and take risks but at the same time they need to be kept safe from the potential harm and hazards while they challenge themselves. Children challenge themselves physically whether it be running faster or even climbing slightly higher than the last time they tried but each step is a great achievement. When the child takes risks they can challenge themselves emotionally which could possibly be feeling out of control or taking on an activity which could overcome one's fear. For children to challenge themselves and take risks for the physical and mental development they will need opportunities to problem solve and experiment in taking risks to test out their strengths and abilities as part of their development progress. The practitioner will need to identify risk and take it into account what is acceptable and what is not acceptable to minimise harm and to keep the children safe at all times. The equipment the children are supplied with will need to be checked daily as broken toys can be harmful and toys need to be age appropriate to avoid the risk of choking and the safety of the children. Also in some settings children are let to cut their own fruit with a safety knife with guidance from an adult to allow and supervise and help the child achieve these steps and mainly adult supervision to eliminate risk. Outdoor play is fundamental for all children's health and

wellbeing and within some settings they allow the children to join in plant fruit and veg or flowers while they watch them grow throughout their time at setting while learning the children if they come across berries and any wild fruit they do not pick it up or eat it as it may be a risk and harmful to them (Rodgers 2018).

Every human being has taken a risk in life since the day they were born from the very first independent breaths they took going on to the crawling and pulling themselves up on items to trying out new foods or even seeing a tree and attempting to climb it by challenging themselves. Wrapping a child up prevents their learning of risk where as taking risks helps the child develop and understand how to react when they encounter real danger which is beneficial for the childhood. When taking risks it is sometimes unavoidable to end up with cuts and bruises and the goal is to not eliminate risk completely but to learn the child how to deal when they are in different circumstances. A child's confidence should be built up with positive language and should not be told don't do that it's dangerous if you go there but alternatively the supervising adult should be encouraging and supporting the child that anything is possible just little steps at a time whilst questioning the child positively what is their next move as you can see how careful they are it is all about wording to support the child's growth and to prevent the child developing anxiety and confidence fail (Early education no date).

Section 3-

Observation- foundation phase

It is not always a child will question verbally what they want an answer for so the practitioner will need to closely observe the clues to what the child is seeking whether it be by what the child says or does or could even be the child's silence so the practitioner will need to also observe the gestures, movements, facial expressions and just pay attention in great detail to get to the answer the child is looking for (p15). What we learn from research and ideas of others about how young children develop and learn within a social, cultural environment make relationships with other humans matter. The children can learn how relationships form and matter within their community, in placement, at the park and mostly every environment they encounter (p7). In order to understand each child as an individual the adult will need to watch and listen and pay attention to absolutely every detail while observing the child as a whole being just take notice to the one that's upset, laughs, plays, shows anger and the questions raised by the child (Smidt 2nd edn p12).

The Welsh assembly government approach to a positive life long learning in young education is to ensure all young individuals have a flying start in their life for a good start towards the development and growth of every individual child (p2). Observation shows greatly the importance of support assessments within the foundation phase which is vital to support the knowledge of the infant's development and skills. The practitioners routine should be mainly of observing while they work in the foundation phase and the observations should be the main part of each setting's overall assessment for the infants (p3). To learn what stage each child is at in their

development the children will need to be observed when they are at their most natural to determine the child's skills and make sense of what each child can and cannot do. Practitioners need to know each child as a individual so that's how observation and assessment enables them to find where a child's development is (p4). While the practitioner observes they are then able to gather enough evidence to see if the child is in need of any extra support with their learning and also to identify any difficulties or misunderstandings a child has (p6). The practitioners key role while observing should also be to listen as a great deal can be learned. Observations should be across seven areas of learning. Through discussions and engaging with the child a great deal of information can be collected (p7). Thoroughly thought through plans need to be set and tailored to each child's individual needs to ensure the task set out for the child are the right one for the individual's development needs. Activities need to be made not too easy and not too hard, enough space is needed and take notice if the children are fully engaged and if they are not the practitioner needs to think why and maybe change the way the activity is done. To move the learning on to the next stage the practitioner will need to observe the child (p8). When the adult is observing it is important to know when it is appropriate to intervene and have a conversation with the children or when it is best to stand back and not interrupt the child with their activity (p12). There can be numerous ways to make a record of the child's achievements while observing them it could be diaries, record sheets or even technology each setting is different (p17). All the information collected should be used with the future planning of the child to make progression in the child's development and also the information should be passed on to the child's guardian to share the progress the child makes so each adult can help to move the child's development on further (Welsh assembly government p18).

Observing and assessing the child's development is not only taking down notes of where the child is at in their development but it is other important things needed to be considered such as the interaction the child makes as this is crucial information to gather. The information the practitioner collects can be obtained in many ways to help with development (early years careers 2016).

Observation should be regularly recorded with as much detailed information as possible. Different settings use different methods to record the observations undertaken whether it is the jotting down of notes, the time samples, work samples or possible photographic evidence of the child with detailed descriptions about where the photo was taken and what the child achieved when it was being taken and mainly just to provide an insight of the child as a individual but with photos the guardians consent is vital (weebly).

When assessing the emotional well-being the practitioner needs to also pick up on the signals the child goes off as these observation awareness are used to judge the child's involvement. When a child is involved in play like activities they remain constant and shows a significant difference of the level of well-being shown where as children performing the same task but undertaking it as a not play activity will show a great deal lower level of well-being. Evidence is limited but there is a link between a young child's emotional well-being and play (Howard and McInnes 2012).

Section 4-

Role of play when undertaking observation.

An adult's presence, the location and also the voluntary nature of play do affect the child's performance to fully complete a task as through play they will be more focused and motivated in addition to an adult led task that is why the queue is manipulated to create a playful and fun experience (p4). To differentiate play and not play activities and to help towards the learning of the child it is suggested that manipulating the queues that children use change the child's whole attitude and their approach towards a task and this prompts their learning inhibition (Thomas, Crowley and Miles 2013 p5).

Children find a great deal of interest in a wide range of materials, shapes as well as a variety of smells and also their interest attracted towards animals, plants and absolutely anything is not in question when children explore different objects and materials and these are a just a few that children love to interact with but there is no evidence to prove that some baby's are born with a creative mind and others not (Nicholson p1).

Children show more signs of emotional wellbeing when they approach an activity as play rather than them to approach the activity as a task so proper planning needs to be set in order for the child to succeed. The task can be performed in multiple locations whether it is indoors or outdoors, on a table or on the floor you will notice that the performance of the child will be significantly improved when the child is content within the environment that he/she is in (p2). It is reported by children that whilst they play they tend to feel happier within themselves (Fattore et al, 2007). (Howard and McInnes 2012).

An adult led play is some different to what a child would usually play as children are less likely to approach an activity through play if there were an adult present at time. Although studies have shown that the most critical cue for a child is the presence of an adult and that there needs to be a mutual understanding between both child and adult which is vital in order to co-construct a play based curriculum and to get the most out of play through learning and adults should never try to adulterate but to observe (Howard, Crowley and Miles 2013).

Practitioners will notice that the environments to which the children choose to play in whilst in their care that it allows the child to feel happy and playful and maximises the development of the child whilst the practitioner observes the child's own perceptions of play (Howard and McInnes 2012 p5).

Every key worker involved within a setting working in play will realise that change is a process a child goes through whilst taking part in play work. By creating a

therapeutic approach to the play place it helps with the healing of a child. While you engage in play as a keyworker you should always join in as an equal and should never take over the child's play and adulterate play as to a child it will not be classed as play if it is adult led where as play exchange is said to be more fun for the child to enable learn through play while the child expresses themselves (Sturrock and Else 1988).

A practitioner is needed to gather a wide range of ideas to entertain a child to do throughout the day but it needs to be tailored to the interest of the individual (p8). The practitioner will also need to closely observe the children as each child has their own pacific needs as an individual. Each individual will need carefully monitoring as each child will need extra aspects of development concentrated on which could be different from another child (Lindon 3rd edn p11).

To support a child's social needs and cognitive learning process then the adult will need to take in to count the child's individual needs and look at the environment and the child's behaviour while observing closely so the adult can deal with all aspects of the child's growth, education, curricula and the way the individual interacts and involvement with every resource in the environment around him/her (Nichlson p4).

The role the adult plays while the child is at play is crucial as the adult will need a good quality plan in place based on each individual such as an appropriate environment and resources as well as providing space for the child. The adult is needed to stand back and observe whilst the child is in play and only join in with an invite but before the adult tries to intervene and adulterate the play they will need to watch and listen as the child leads the play. With a good plan in place from the adult plus the support from the adult play provides a better experience and supports the child's learning (early years matters 2001).

The practitioner will need to know as much as possible about the children in their care to fully understand what their interests are and what they pay attention to the most and even the questions they raise while in play (Smidt 2nd edn p8).

To promote strong positive relationships between the guardians home and proffessionals involved then all parties need to work together and share information to gain positive progression of the child (Welsh assembly government 2008 p2).

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