

This following work is my portfolio for above module.

Task 1.

As childcare practitioners our role is multi-faceted. Part of our responsibility is to play a part in ensuring that every aspect and developmental milestone is met regardless of developmental ability. An integral part of every child's development is Play.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child agreement clearly states in Article 31 that, 'Every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child.'

But what is play? How do we define what we perceive play to be? Jephcott (2017) describes play as, 'A Physical or mental leisure activity that is undertaken purely for enjoyment or amusement and has no other objective'.

It is too easy when we work with children to overlook the importance of play and the significance that it brings. Whilst a child plays there are opportunities to learn about colours, shapes, numbers, knowledge and understanding of the world around them, in addition to many other areas of learning. It is crucial that we understand the various play types that children participate in to ensure that we provide adequate opportunities for play, quality meaningful play that will benefit each and every child's development, including their Holistic development whilst providing learning opportunities within our settings.

For the purpose of this portfolio there are two specific types that I have chosen to discuss. Socio-Dramatic Play and Locomotor play.

Socio-Dramatic Play is defined as being the play type where children envisage situations, experiences or maybe stories and let their imagination run freely to perform these imaginative scenarios. They can become different people or different characters and also imagine that they are somewhere else, somewhere different to where they are at the time. Socio-Dramatic Play is what happens when the play evolves from Dramatic Play due to children sharing it with each other and involving others. (Education,2018) There are numerous possibilities within Socio-Dramatic Play. As children explore new ideas, they may take on new verbal and non-verbal communication. Acting as another person or character will give the child confidence to be able to speak and act as they may not have been able to before. Playing a character could also give the child courage to involve themselves within social situations that they may not previously have been able to. There are possibilities for children to acquire key social skills from this play, act out or talk about varying emotions, learning to take turns and begin to understand social cues. Socio-Dramatic play also proves to be beneficial to children with challenging behaviour as it can aid in the development of self-regulatory skills. Giving them the opportunity to gain the ability to manage and regulate their emotions and behaviour. (Howard,2013)

Smilansky was a theorist who realised the importance of Socio-Dramatic Play in a child's development. She also placed the importance of our role as educators to aid 'Scaffolding' within the play so that children can get the most out of their experience. (Smith, 2009) Adult

input can range from modelling situations or scenarios to Observation. Adults can encourage use of language, asking open ended questions and provide suitable props etc to encourage storytelling and life events.

There are no rules to this type of play, children can direct it to where ever they may want it to go or their imagination takes them.

The other Play Type is Locomotor. This is sometimes called Rough and Tumble Play. Locomotor Play can be observed in young babies by the kicking of legs and waving of arms and as a child develops it progresses into Physical Play. Running around, jumping and climbing. (MacBlain,2014) All movements that we see within our Early Years settings. These Gross Motor skills contribute to a child's Physical development and support developing co-ordination. "Children need to play and exercise to practice and develop their skills in running and jumping for both fitness and brain development." According to Reference (2019). This type of play can have numerous benefits for children, as well as the developmental benefits it can also play a positive part in behaviour regulation. 'Letting off steam' is something that can be done through Locomotor Play and can be done outside within our settings.

All types of play, including these types above contribute to a child's physical, mental and social development resulting in the child benefiting Holistically from taking part. As mentioned previously, children can relay experiences and situations that they may not be able to comprehend themselves, yet the outlet of play can help them act out and process circumstances. Adults should empower children and encourage them to freely self-Direct their play. We should prepare surroundings, remove barriers which could hinder play and let children take the direction of their play to where they desire without the input of adults redirecting play to where they believe it should go.

Task 2.

Within our capacity as Early Years Practitioners the safeguarding of Children is part of our role. We are counted on to look after and protect those in our care. To do this efficiently we need to minimise any form of harm and Risk. To most of us, even the word 'Risk' brings with it the connotation of danger and can strike us with an element of fear. But is all Risk a bad thing? Can Risk benefit children? Within this task, we will discover if there are benefits to Risk and if so, how they could be beneficial to children.

Today, Health and safety laws often limit the amount of risks that people are prepared to take. In addition to this, Parents are less likely to allow their children to have free play away from the family home and are more likely to supervise and organize their child's play. Gill (2007, quoted in Brown, 2013 p.100) speaks of the "shrinking horizons of childhood". This restriction on a child's free play and consequent playful risk taking is diminishing for today's children. This in turn, has a huge knock on effect on a child's wellbeing.

Children learn more and develop a better sense of wellbeing, when they believe themselves to be playing. (Howard, 2013) So why should we stop them from gaining these valuable experiences through play in order to lessen the risks of any possible harm occurring. We need to gain a balanced approach to risk taking and weigh up the potential advantages against the disadvantages.

One obvious downside to risk is the possibility of bodily harm. Cuts, grazes and bruises are something that no one ever wants to happen but unfortunately are all an unavoidable part of childhood. When these happen, Children will make and learn from their mistakes, discover the best way of doing things and learn how to make decisions that will benefit them.

(Dowling, 2010) through incidents happening, a child's emotional and intellectual development can evolve. They will be able to manage their own emotions, through repetition and can make informed decisions and judgements regarding prevention of future harm to themselves. Physically there are also benefits to risk taking, doing things that they may not have done before. Climbing trees or jumping over muddy puddles, challenging their balance and co-ordination skills, pushing boundaries to discover their own limitations. Every child is unique so what may be some one's idea of risk may not be another's. Even so, the discovery of the ability to climb those trees and jump those muddy puddles will instil a sense of achievement and a boost of confidence, which will contribute to the child's overall wellbeing and build self-esteem.

Our part to play in the involvement of risk taking is paramount. It is crucial that we allow risks to be taken within our safe learning environments, whilst making sure that the benefit of the risks outweigh the risk itself.

The language we use should also promote positivity. When we tell children that they can't do something because of the dangers, i.e., don't do that you'll hurt yourself or don't climb that it's too high, the only thing we'll enforce is anxiety and uncertainty. If we change our responses to, lets do this, or, how could you get across there carefully. The decision is put

back onto them and they have a role to play in their own positive decision making. (Early Education)

There may be times when the risk taking doesn't go to plan and the outcome you desired doesn't happen. But then, in these situations you can teach the child resilience, encourage them to keep trying, to persevere. To understand what their bodies are able or unable to do. Gain an insight into the consequences of their actions and to develop problem solving skills. (Carrig, 2016)

These problem-solving and decision-making skills are invaluable throughout the child's life and are essential life skills to take into adulthood. We should promote risky play to ensure that these abilities are learned by all in our setting and that children are given the opportunity to be able to gain these life skills. "Learning to manage risk and adventure has important cognitive benefits, not just in increasing knowledge but also in developing personality traits such as teamworking skills, motivation, concentration and perseverance." (Knight, 2012, p.117).

All this information points to the benefits outweighing risk taking over non-risk taking. As in all of our professional practice, we should adopt a common-sense approach to delivering our learning experiences and ensure that the child's best interest is at the core of all our decisions.

Task 3.

Risk Assessment:

Details of planned activity: Autumn Walk to the local park for a Picnic and a welly walk with 26 nursery children accompanied by 4 members of staff; 1 Teacher and 3 support staff.

1 child has A.S.D, 1 child has Cerebral Palsy and has mobility issues and 1 child has a food allergy.

Description	Autumn Walk to the local park for a Picnic. Followed by a welly walk through the school field on returning to the school.
Department:	Nursery class.
Location:	Cefn Cribwr Primary School. Local park.
Line Manager:	Mrs D Bowditch, Foundation Phase Leader.
Staff Present:	Miss R Stockton, Mrs R Moss, Mrs R King, Mrs R James.
Date:	19/10/2018
Applicable Equipment:	First Aid kit, medicines, spare clothes, walking reins. Wet wipes and anti-bacterial hand gel. Rubbish bag.
Other items needed:	Lunch bags, including the lunch bag of the child with a peanut allergy.

Print name: _____

Signed: _____

Authorised by: _____

Print name: _____

Staff responsibilities.

- Ensure that all children have consent forms signed.
- Ensure that all medical forms have been signed.
- Staff should have access to a mobile phone in case there is a need to contact the parent of the child with the peanut allergy to make them aware of any incidents and to inform them of our return to school so the child can be administered medicine by the parent.
- All staff to be made aware of pupil's health and social concerns.
- First Aid kit and any personal medical requirements to be carried by staff.
- Staff to take a bag to collect any rubbish that may be in the park or left over from the children's sandwiches.
- All staff and pupils should be briefed of proposed journey, routes and activities.
- Children should wear appropriate clothing. Coats and wellies should be worn in preparation for weather conditions, whether that may be mud, rain, wind etc.
- All staff should be given a list of children and should be aware of the importance of continuous 'head counting' to ensure that all children are always present and accounted for.
- Children should be made aware of the importance of staying close to their peers and teachers.
- Children should always also be reminded about good behaviour.

Risk Assessment

Ref	Hazard / Task / Activity Area of Concern	Persons at Risk	Control Measures.	Describe Any Further Controls / Actions Needed	Actions By Whom	Severity of Risk
1	Walk to and from park to school.	Pupils/Staff	Discuss the dangers of the road to the children and safety rules that the children will need to follow.		Class Teacher/ Support staff	L
2	Trip, fall or slip during walk between park, school and welly walk.	Pupils/ Staff	Children to be reminded to watch where they are going, stay on the pavement, hold onto the walking rings and look out for any dangers in their pathway.		Class Teacher/ Support Staff	L
3	Crossing the Road/ Road Traffic Accident.	Pupils/ staff	Ensure that there is adequate adult to child ratios and that all children are made aware of road safety and informed of how to cross the road safely whilst holding onto the walking rings.	Staff are to supervise children as they cross the road. One member of staff to wait on each kerbside whilst the children cross the road.	Class Teacher/ Support Staff	H
4	Sharp/ dangerous objects, animal waste, Rubbish or any other item which may cause injury or harm to the children.	Pupil	Staff to carry out a safety check of the park for any sharp/dangerous items before entering the park.		Class Teacher/ Support Staff	L

5	Medical Conditions	Pupils	Ensure that all staff are made aware any medical issues that the children may have and that any medicine that is needed is taken on the walk.		Class Teacher/ Support Staff	M
6	Allergy to Peanuts	Pupil	Make sure that all staff are aware of the child that has a Peanut allergy. Child is not to come into contact with any other food in case of cross contamination. No medicine is needed to be administered by school staff, but parent is to be informed immediately if child displays symptoms of allergy, which include reddening of face and swelling of side of face. In which case the parent can administer anti histamines on return to school.	Parent has supplied a lunch bag for the child containing food specifically for her. Teachers are responsible for making sure the child's lunch is taken on the walk.	Class Teacher/ Support staff	L
7	Mobility issues.	Pupil	Support staff to aid child during the school walk and at the park and also during the welly walk, holding her hand if needed to help balance and aid mobility to ensure that		Support staff	L

			child is included in all activities.			
8	Child with A.S.D.	Pupil	Make child aware of what is going to happen before, during and after the walk to prepare the child and lessen the anxiety of the unknown.	Make staff aware of any trigger factors that the child may have. If staff notice child becoming upset, then Staff are to take the child away from the group for the child to calm down before returning to the group.	Support staff	L
9	Bad Weather.	Staff/Pupils.	In the event of bad weather, including heavy rain all children and staff should take cover under the shelter at the park or worst-case scenario, return to school.		Class Teacher/ Support staff.	L
10	Inappropriate clothing.	Staff/Pupils.	Ensure that all staff and children wear suitable clothing and footwear to protect themselves from the weather and elements.		Class Teacher/ Support staff	L
11	Missing Child/Children	Children	Staff to be given group lists of children participating in the walk. Staff are also expected to 'Head count' throughout the walk to ensure		Staff	L

			that all children are consistently accounted for.			
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Task 4.

Reflection.

Description.

This Reflection is written in relation to a risk assessment that was conducted for a trip to the local park for a picnic followed by a welly walk in the school field on returning to the school. The trip was taken by the Nursery class, 26 three-year olds whom were accompanied by 4 members of staff, 1 Class Teacher and 3 Support Staff. Amongst the group of Nursery children, there were children with additional and specialised needs. One child has A.S.D and can struggle with change of environment and routine. One other child within the class has Cerebral Palsy. This child has difficulties with her mobility and is not able to move so freely as her peers. Even so, her parents encourage her to take part in every learning opportunity available and with this in mind, additional support staff joined us on the walk to promote her inclusion. And another child has a peanut allergy so care had to be taken to ensure that the child did not come into contact with any food source that may cause the child to have a reaction.

The purpose of this walk was for the children to engage with their surroundings and to gain knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Discovering the changes in Seasons and looking for subtle signs of Autumn.

To enable the health and Safety of the children whilst out and about on the walk a Risk Assessment was completed and I will be using the Gibbs model of reflection to analyse this risk assessment.

Feelings.

The whole process of completing a risk assessment I found to be very interesting. Having worked within an Early Years setting over a number of years, it is surprising how many dangers that you are able to identify and how many potential risks

that you can foresee. I found myself confident in my identification of these risks and how best to limit them or even solve them. But even so, there was an element of doubt that I may have not properly identified all risks. I was concerned that whilst we were all out and about enjoying our walk, an eventuality may have occurred that I hadn't thought of and hadn't properly prepared for and that something may happen that would be out of our hands.

Evaluation.

I think that overall it was a good experience completing the risk assessment. I was able to think of all eventualities and everything went to plan. I don't feel as if I risk assessed too much, the children were able to do everything that we had planned to do. No unforeseen incidents happened that were out of our control. The staff were all able to keep the children safe while on our adventure. The children who had extra needs were fully supported by all staff. No children needed to be taken back to school and no parents had to be informed of any accidents, incidents or food allergies. By sticking to the risk assessment all risks were avoided. Staff were reminded to head count and as a result, no children were lost, and we all arrived back into school safely.

Analysis.

I think that I have made a good first attempt at creating a risk assessment. All areas that could have proved to be a risk were accounted for. However, an element of risk can be beneficial especially when it comes to the area of child development.

Most children love Risky Play and the challenges and the thrills that they get from participating in it, although every child's element of risk-taking and enjoyment of risks varies with each child. Gray, (2013) clearly states, 'what may be thrilling for one is traumatic for another.' This should be kept in the forefront of our minds when encouraging children to take a part in Rough and tumble play, some children could be physically taller and bigger than their peers, so assumptions could be made

that they may want their play to be 'Riskier'. When in actual fact, they may not be ready for such activity and their smaller classmates could in actual fact be the thrill chaser's!

Whilst undertaking Risky play, varying emotions are experienced by the child, before, during and after. Anticipation leading into enjoyment followed by self-confidence and pride when the risk has been completed. For some children the riskier the play the more intense the experience. When these risks have been mastered, it bestows a higher confidence and a greater self-esteem which in turn gives a boost to the child's well-being. (Sandseter,2011)

However, this is not always the case and there are times when perhaps the risk taken is unachievable or maybe perhaps the child may not be physically ready to be able to manage the risk, possibly due to a lack of co-ordination or balance skills. Unfortunately, when this happens, it could lead to feelings of fear, anxiety, disappointment and worst-case scenario, injury. (Sandseter,2011) Within our setting of Nursery Age children, unfortunately these negative outcomes are unavoidable but should not be looked at in a negative light. This is where our role as practitioners becomes crucial, we should encourage the child that it maybe better to take small achievable controlled risks. Some children may even need to accomplish this with an adult's support. The purpose of this is to build confidence and a 'bounce-back' attitude which will bring about a resilience within the child. We need to encounter risks to learn from them and to develop all the skills that risk-taking attributes to.

Gray, (2013) argues the fact that we may actually be harming children by taking away this play style and could be damaging their mental health by not encouraging this free play which promotes emotional resilience.

With this in mind, within our safe and controlled settings, we should take opportunities and encourage this self-directed, free play style and this can be substantiated through the work of such theorists as Les Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner (1976). Both theorists worked around the ideas based on the 'Zone of proximal Development'.

Bruner's work was motivated by Vygotsky's model of learning which was founded on the principal that learning is achieved from interactions with other knowledgeable people. (Wheeler, 2017)

From this concept Bruner based his ideas. He considered the notion that as children begin to learn new ideas and gain knowledge and skills, they need the support from adults and are solely dependent on them for their needs. Until the time

comes when more knowledge is gained, and the child becomes less reliant on the adult and they become increasingly independent. This is what is described as scaffolding. The process of building up and supporting until the next skill is accomplished and the action then repeats for another learning experience and skill to be gained. (Wheeler, 2017)

From this we should provide opportunities for children to learn new concepts and ideas. All children in our care should have scaffolding that is relevant to their age and stage of development for them to achieve their own personal learning outcomes. This idea of scaffolding links into what was previously mentioned. Whilst undertaking our rough and tumble play, we can aid children to best take risks that are appropriate to them. Helping those who need confidence to begin to take small risks such as jumping over small muddy puddles or even encouraging the braver of our class to climb higher up a tree. These more daring of the children could also play a part in scaffolding their more unadventurous peers helping them to build their confidence within a safe controlled school environment.

H.S.E (2018) informs us that “when planning and providing play opportunities, the goal is not to eliminate risk, but to weigh up the risks and benefits.”

In light of all this information, I believe that the positive risks outweigh the negative risks when it comes to Risky-play. There is a plethora of evidence that leans towards the benefits of risk-taking on a child's development.

Conclusion and Action Plan.

In Hindsight I could have extended the activity further. I was conscious that the children would have been out and about for a few hours, especially the child who had problems with her mobility. I didn't want it to be too much for them and end up spoiling the learning opportunity with them losing interest.

There were possibilities whilst back at the school field to go into the woodland. Which we didn't make the most of during this excursion which we could have done. The purpose of this would have been to expose the children to an element of risk taking. There are lots of trees, shrubs and muddy areas where there would have been ample chances for everyone to climb

and also negotiate areas that were muddy within the woodland. This would have been a perfect opportunity to give the children a chance to take part in risky play while being in a controlled, safe area with trained staff to encourage and support them whilst scaffolding their learning experiences.

In the future, this will be something that will be incorporated within a local walk so that the children familiarise themselves with the area and have a chance to build on their risk-taking Skills and the other life-skills that risk-taking promotes in regard to Child Development.

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