

Section 1: 1436 words.

The curriculum plays a vital role in education and acts as a guide for future educational goals to run optimally. The purpose of education will determine success in forming the child, balanced with other elements within education such as Mathematics and Numeracy, Literature and Language (Sa'dullah, A, 2023). Curriculum is important because it gives practitioners and educators a framework of what to teach and how, while also allowing flexibility to adjust to individual needs of children. Curriculum in the Early Years sector is particularly important as it ensures every child's time is intentionally designed to support holistic development. An effective approach to curriculum will help practitioners to identify where additional support is needed (Department for Education, 2021).

A play-based curriculum is a learning context in which children learn content through playing freely. To promote successful, capable individuals, children must be fully immersed in developmentally appropriate practice which is culturally relevant to them (NAEYC, 2022). Play-based learning helps achieve this. Schools and Early Years settings must address the inequitable access to play afforded to children. Every child should be given access to play, regardless of socioeconomic class, race, gender, ability or disability (Zosh, J, et. Al, 2022). Early childhood represents a critical period where foundational cognitive, physical, emotional and social skills are built. Contrary to the misconception that play is merely recreational, it serves as a comprehensive educational tool that allows children to explore and learn about the world through experience. Prominent theorists such as Lev Vygotsky, Jean Soules and Goldman emphasize that play and experiences is an essential mechanism for children to understand and learn about the world around them (Sitorus, R. W, Siregar, K. P, Sari, R. I, 2025).

Research by the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (2025) indicates that children become better at learning new information and develop holistically through play. It shows that children participating in play-based activities displayed higher levels of creativity and cognitive flexibility. While playing, children refine their linguistic abilities by discussing scenarios with peers. Play-based learning acts as a social laboratory for social reciprocity. Studies consistently show that play-centred environments yield better outcomes for mental health compared to rigid, lecture-focused models that prioritize academic progress and assessments. There have been many studies that point out the need for understanding play as the action in which children learn (Sylva et. Al, 2017).

In section one, the National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care, and the Curriculum for funded non-maintained settings will be discussed in depth and

compared. Section two will be focused on assessments, and section three will feature a blog on schemas.

Finland's early years framework is the National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care. This framework is a legally binding regulation to standardize high-quality, inclusive Early Childhood Education and Care across Finland. It promotes holistic growth, lifelong learning and equity by partnering with families to support each child's development and well-being. Implementation follows a tiered approach conforming of national regulations, local curriculum plans and individual, child-specific education and care plans (The Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022).

The Curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings offers a structured, voluntary adoption model for funded non-maintained nursery settings in Wales, ensuring consistent, high-quality early education standards. It serves practitioners, leaders and teachers who manage early years provision, including non-funded settings required to meet minimum regulatory standards for child development (Hwb, 2022). Effective, responsive and dynamic child-centred pedagogy which is embedded in strong relationships is part of what makes this curriculum effective (Welsh Government, 2022).

One of the key elements to the Finnish Education system, is the high quality of teachers. They are trained rigorously to adapt to every child's needs (HEI Schools, personal communication, 10 June 2026). Teacher training is a priority in Finland, with a target of 30% of educators having a master's degree by 2030. This is an aim to make the career path more appealing. In addition to this, Early Years workers also require a degree. This is contrasting to Wales, as teachers require either an undergraduate degree or a postgraduate qualification that includes Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) to legally practice teaching in a local authority-maintained school. Early Years workers in Wales do not require a degree, however a minimum of a Level 2 qualification, such as a relevant CACHE certificate is required, and acquired through sources such as City and Guilds (CCW, 2017).

Finnish educators learn about each teaching approach and subject and how to incorporate into play. Like the Curriculum for Wales, the National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care is flexible, which gives practitioners and educators the ability to adjust lessons depending on interests and needs of the children in their care. Differently to this, student teachers in Wales often find it overwhelming when entering a classroom setting for the first time, as the theory work is often overlooked by the challenging needs and demands from students. Although the curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings is flexible, student teachers in Wales do not learn about every subject and how to teach it, and every setting's curriculum varies slightly as

it is part of the Curriculum for Wales, which allows schools and setting's to adapt content based off needs, interests, culture and socioeconomic classes.

The National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care, and the Curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings demonstrate parallel ideas and approaches, but they also share a few limitations. ColegauCymru partnered with the Finnish Association for the Development of Vocational Education and Training, known as AMKE, to evaluate the highly successful Finnish Vocational Education and Training (VET) system. The study addresses urgent needs highlighted by the 2023 Welsh Government review, aiming to modernize VET through international learning and Taith-funded research (ColegauCymru, 2023).

Finnish primary education integrates regular breaks into the daily routine, offering fifteen minutes of outdoor play after every forty-five minutes of formal instruction to keep students refreshed. The "Finnish Schools on the Move" national program emphasizes reducing sedentary time through increased physical activity throughout the day. In addition to this, schools provide students with healthy, free lunches as a foundational element of the educational experience to ensure physical readiness for daily learning (Welsh Government, 2018). Contrasting to this, official guidance does not mandate a specific number of minutes or hours for outdoor play. Instead, statutory frameworks dictate that children should be afforded "as much time as possible" and "long periods of time outdoors" every day, regardless of the weather. School-specific policies focus on flexibility, child-led exploration and regular curriculum integration rather than strict quotas (Ellis C, *et. Al*, 2024). Welsh primary schools also offer free school meals to all children in primary education, regardless of household income. Secondary school pupils and qualifying pupils are not covered by the scheme; however, eligibility is based on receiving specific government benefits (Swansea Council, no date). Unlike the Finnish curriculum, the curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings, there is no specific or mandatory number of hours or minutes prescribed for physical education. Instead, physical activity is embedded throughout the day through a holistic, child-centred approach which focuses on Physical Development as a whole and Physical Literacy rather than timetabled Physical Educational lessons (SportWales, no date).

The two curricula face similar limitations to implementation, as both Welsh and Finnish teachers and educators often struggle to balance traditional subject teaching and more progressive cross-curricular approaches required by the national curriculum. The implementation of the Finnish national curriculum is a sophisticated exercise in balancing rigid academic standards with the inherent need for creative, flexible teaching strategies. While teachers face significant pressures in both countries regarding time management, interdisciplinary coordination, and the integration of

diverse student populations, the Finnish professional autonomy allows them to bridge the gap between national mandates and classroom reality. This educational success is fundamentally rooted in a system that empowers teachers to utilize their expertise to create responsive, high-quality learning environments that remain both consistent and adaptable to contemporary needs of students, including those with additional learning needs (VisitEDUfinn, 2025).

The National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care serve as a legally binding, high-quality standard that emphasizes equity, partnership with families and lifelong learning across all municipalities. The Curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings offers a voluntary, flexible structure focusing on a responsive, child-centred pedagogy, allowing settings to adapt content according to local cultural and socioeconomic needs. Both regions navigate the difficulty of balancing rigid academic mandates with progressive, cross-curricular goals, requiring educators to manage time effectively while maintaining high standards. Finland mandates structured outdoor breaks and physical activity, whereas Welsh policy advocates for flexible, long periods of outdoor engagement without strict, uniform quotas.

Section 2: 1587 words.

The concept of the unique child is a foundational principle in early years education. The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage includes a commitment to the 'unique child'. This commitment is partly about recognising the individuality of each child. What this means, is recognising that each child is different, and develop in different ways at different rates (Grenier, J, 2025). It is vital because it ensures that every child is recognized as capable, resilient, and an individual. This approach tailors care and learning to each child's unique pace and interests, maximizing their potential (Department for Education, 2016).

Assessment in the Early Years is a continuous cycle of observation and interaction used to understand a child's unique development, interests and next steps. It is highly strengths-based, focused on building a holistic picture of the child rather than measuring them against traditional, rigid pass/fail testing targets. The assessment framework in Wales is designed to support the Curriculum for Wales and early childhood play (Welsh Government, 2022). In Wales, the unique child principle is the foundational bedrock of assessment in education and early years frameworks. By rejecting a "one size fits all" methodology, this approach ensures that evaluations remain deeply rooted in an individual's personal background, unique starting points and current progress, rather than relying on arbitrary, rigid comparisons (Welsh

Government, 2025). The Welsh assessment model emphasizes that nurturing the individual is essential to achieving broader societal goals. By prioritizing the unique child, educators maintain a responsive, adaptable environment that accommodates diverse developmental journeys. This student-centred approach, bolstered by 2026 standards, remains a cornerstone for pedagogical success, ensuring that all learners have the equitable opportunity to thrive (Welsh Government, 2026).

In the Curriculum for Wales, the unique child is operationalized through enabling learning principles and the four purposes, which are the shared starting point for all children aged 3-16. The Curriculum for Wales tailors the educational journey to the unique child through several core mechanisms including play-based learning, tailored progression and holistic early years focus (Welsh Government, 2023). The enabling learning guidance assists senior leaders and practitioners in designing, planning and implementing a curriculum that remains developmentally appropriate for all learners. It serves as a tool for evaluating the impact of the curriculum design progress, specifically emphasizing the crucial transition period leading to Progression step 1. Additionally, it provides a firm basis for realizing the four purposes by focusing on the essential interplay between three interdependent enables while remaining within the twelve pedagogies of the Curriculum for Wales.

Early Years educators cultivate emotionally safe, consistent environments, modelling compassion to help learners regulate behaviours and navigate daily transitions or uncertainty. Educators and practitioners foster supportive pedagogy by observing individual needs, interests, strengthen connections between home, communities and the diverse, multicultural Welsh heritage. They also act as skills interactionists, fostering language development by interpreting diverse communication methods such as implementing BSL into teaching environments that value every child's developmental pace and needs (Welsh Government, 2023).

Creating a space that reflects real-life possibilities and invites curiosity is the first step toward promoting independence. The setting must be flexible enough to accommodate spontaneous discovery while remaining structured enough to provide security. This involves resisting the urge to intervene prematurely, thereby protecting the student's uninterrupted active learning time. Ensuring that activities are rooted in real-life, rich, relevant contexts provides the necessary motivation for deep-level involvement. Authentic tasks resonate with the child's desire to participate in the adult world and contribute to their own development, resulting in ethical, informed citizens (Clement J, Sarwar S, 2024).

The National Board of Education has assumed formal responsibility for the continuous development of national curriculum guidelines for Early Childhood Education and Care

in Finland since a legislative transition in August 2015. This transition ensures that pedagogical frameworks are centrally managed. While the national guidelines provide the framework, the actual licensing, approval, and ongoing operational monitoring of Early Childhood Education and Care services and preschool settings are decentralized to local municipal authorities. At the municipal level, authorities enforce mandatory minimum standards designed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children. These standards strictly regulate critical areas such as health, hygiene and physical safety, alongside rigorous requirements for staff qualifications and professional learning development (OECD, no date). There is absolutely no standardized testing or grading. Instead, the system prioritizes qualitative observations, collaborative learning plans such as an Individual ECEC Plan. For every child enrolled in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), teachers and parents collaboratively create an Individual ECEC Plan. This plan assesses the child's personal needs, interests and preferences through observations. The plan sets specific goals and support measures for each child if they require special needs assistance (additional learning needs). They are reviewed regularly to ensure alignment with the individual's growth and well-being (Finnish Education System Institute, 2025).

Following the Curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings, educators utilize five distinct pathways- belonging, communication, physical development, well-being and exploration- to design meaningful, effective learning experiences for young children. The framework emphasizes that assessment and planning must remain flexible, providing the time and freedom necessary for children to build strong, foundational knowledge across diverse developmental areas. Assessments serve as a vital tool to facilitate child progress, ensuring tasks are both supportive and appropriately challenging for every learner. Evaluations must construct a comprehensive profile of a child's unique strengths, preferred learning styles and specific areas requiring further developmental guidance. Practitioners should avoid one-off judgemental assessments, prioritizing continuous monitoring to inform daily teaching strategies and long-term educational planning for all children (Education Wales, 2023).

Assessment must address the emotional, social, cognitive and physical pathways of a child. Practitioners should avoid the temptation to rush through developmental milestones, instead allowing children time to consolidate their understanding. The goal remains focused on the child's immediate needs rather than future expectations. Effective assessment is indistinguishable from quality teaching. The curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings use the observational cycle as a way of measuring progress (Welsh Government, 2023). The observational cycle consists of three elements- notice, analyse and respond. The notice stage involves gaining rich knowledge of a child's holistic development through spontaneous or planned

observations. Practitioners should objectively monitor interests, levels of involvement and communication styles. It is vital that observation does not act as a barrier to interaction. Once the data is captured, practitioners must interpret findings by connecting them to known developmental theories and the provided curriculum. This stage involves deciding if an observation is significant, identifying if it indicates new learning, or confirming existing knowledge regarding a child's skills and schemas. Decisions on how to proceed follow the analysis. This may involve adjusting the physical environment, introducing vocabulary, or engaging in sustained shared thinking. Practitioners must be mindful not to interrupt authentic play unless invited, recognizing that 'next steps' are rarely linear and often require time for children to wallow in their current learning.

As of 2022 regulations, initial assessments must be completed within six weeks of a child beginning funded nursery education. These must cover four key areas. A strong initial assessment incorporates the insights of parents and carers to capture a child's unique background and cultural context. Ideally, multiple practitioners should contribute to these observations to build a comprehensive, unbiased picture of the child's strengths and support needs. Written observations should be concise and manageable, utilizing various formats like learning stories or digital apps. Following the initial six-week period, practitioners are required to summarise these findings and share them with families (Welsh Government, 2023).

Finland champions a model where every child, regardless of ability or background, possesses an intrinsic right to high-quality early childhood education that celebrates diversity as a fundamental strength rather than a hurdle to overcome in a mainstream classroom environment. The pedagogical approach focuses on the intersection of social, emotional, physical, mental and intellectual growth, ensuring that learning is not merely an academic pursuit but a comprehensive developmental journey that prepares young individuals for life in an interconnected, diverse global society. Every child benefits from a tailored educational path that respects their unique race, interests and capabilities, ensuring that accommodations are seamlessly woven into daily activities rather than being treated as stigmatizing add-ons that might separate a student from their peer group. Early childhood education settings thrive when multi-professional teams, consisting of lead teachers, special education (additional learning needs) experts and support staff, work in concert to monitor child progress and adjust environment design, materials and pedagogical methods to provide optimal accessibility for every participant. Strong emotional bonds between caregivers and children serve as the primary catalyst for development, providing a secure base that empowers children to explore, take risks and develop self-regulation skills which are particularly vital for children navigating complex neurological or physical developmental paths (HEI Schools, 2022).

Empirical research by Ryndak, D, L *et. Al*, (2008), suggests that the general education environment acts as a vital catalyst for the development of students with extensive support needs (additional learning needs) Beyond simple legal compliance, proximity to peers are essential components of cognitive growth and social inclusion. Without the context of the general education classroom, students are often denied the peer-modelling, social interaction and high-quality instructional discourse that characterizes successful schooling. Therefore, any effective conceptual model must mandate that the general education setting is treated not as an optional placement, but as a critical infrastructure for student achievement and essential belonging within the broader educational community.

This section summarises some of the limitations to assessment and also highlights how prioritizing the individual transforms education into an equitable, supportive and inclusive journey for all young learners.

Section 3: 951 words.

Schemas in the classroom- what do they look like?

A blog for practitioners.

Schemas are repeated patterns of play, where children explore thoughts, test concepts and make sense of the world. These observable behaviours are vital building blocks for cognitive and physical development (Rose, J, B, 2024).

How many schemas are there?

In total, there are 9 distinct patterns for practitioners and parents to recognise, which help them to provide targeted activities. These include:

-Trajectory schemas: These children show an interest in how things move.

Children may throw, drop or kick items and like to climb high things and jump off.

-Transporting schemas: Children may show an interest in how things move.

They love loading objects from one place to another, for example, loading objects into boxes, bags or buckets.

-Rotation schemas: Children show interest in things that spin.

They may enjoy running in circles, turning wheels or playing with hula hoops. Some children with Additional Learning Needs enjoy rotation schemas.

-Enclosing and enveloping schemas: These children enjoy hiding in spaces and/or completely covering items.

This includes making physical boundaries or entirely covering paper in paint.

-Positioning schemas: These children enjoy stacking, sorting or lining up objects in distinct rows or patterns. This is a schema children with Additional Learning Needs particularly enjoy.

-Connecting schemas: Children may enjoy playing with wooden train tracks and find joy in connecting the tracks, constructing and joining things together with tape, glue or magnets.

-Orientation schemas: Children (especially those with Additional Learning Needs), enjoy exploring different perspectives by hanging upside down, lying on the floor or looking through objects sideways.

-Transforming schemas: Typically, these children will mix Play-Doh, paint, mud and water, as they are exploring how minerals change state, or observing how ice melts.



(Credit, Loveevery, no date).

Why do schemas matter?

By tailoring activities to specific schemas, practitioners will nurture natural instincts. It encourages complex problem-solving and drives curiosity across diverse educational settings and developmental stages. Supporting these innate play patterns allows for precise intervention, ensuring that each child receives personalised opportunities to extend their conceptual understanding effectively.

Recognising and supporting schematic play patterns offers significant benefits such as building cognitive frameworks, encouraging deep focus, children's interests as well as supporting emotional well-being.

What is the role of the adult?

The supporting/ enabling adult has many roles during play-based learning. For example- they facilitate the environment and growth, support developmental progression and Teach through meaningful interactions (Whalley, C, no date).

Facilitate the environment and growth:

Adults curate enabling environments by organizing space, managing resources and differentiating activities based on careful observations of the child's needs.

Responsive guidance:

Practitioners adapt their level of involvement dynamically, allowing children to invent independent play while remaining ready to support learning when necessary.

The scaffolder: Informed by Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, the adult provides structured support to help children master new, complex skills independently.

Sustained thinking: This involves active collaboration where adults and children solve problems together, evaluate ongoing activities, and extend narratives to deepen cognitive engagement.

The Teacher: Reflecting national frameworks, guidelines, policies and legislation standards, teaching is viewed as a broad spectrum of interactions that include modelling language, demonstrating concepts and setting constructive challenges.

Pedagogical integration: Effective teaching avoids formal 'top down' methods, instead embedding education within child-initiated play to foster natural curiosity and exploration.

How can I support schematic play?

- Observe current developmental focus to provide relevant tools, e.g. Offering buckets to facilitate transporting.
- Select toys that align with specific schemas to help children refine physical and cognitive mastery through play.
- Accept that repetitive behaviours are essential for growth, even when they occur during inconvenient moments and events.
- When specific play becomes disruptive, offer safe alternatives instead, e.g., substituting items to redirect their focus.
- Refrain from interfering with the learning process. Allow the children to navigate play independently as self-discovery is crucial.
- Allow children to repeat actions extensively, supporting autonomy. Only intervene if they experience overwhelming levels of genuine frustration.

Schematic play outdoors? Is it possible?

Yes, schematic play can happen anywhere and with anything. Children do not strictly use traditional toys for schematic play. For example, children who enjoy rotation schemas may spin the wheels of a pushchair or a shopping trolley rather than strictly with a toy car.

Facilitating sensory play requires intentional environmental design. Creating stations with sand and water encourages children to investigate, and of course, these stations can be set up or found outside.

Organising nature walks allows children to collect seashells, leaves, acorns and other natural materials which promotes texture identification and sensory processing through direct touch. Encouraging children to gather objects satisfies the enveloping schema.

Providing varied outdoor apparatus allows children to experiment with gravitational forces in a safe, controlled way. Consistent outdoor exposure at local parks serves as a vital extension of classroom learning. Allowing children to swing themselves on swing sets fosters an understanding of cause and effect. Beyond simple exercise, outdoor play functions as a fundamental pillar for physical, cognitive and emotional resilience.

Constant outdoor interaction cultivates a resourceful mindset and enhances imaginative capacity, ensuring that children remain active participants in their own intellectual maturation. By ensuring children have daily opportunities to interact with the natural world, adults provide a crucial foundation for long-term curiosity, which is essential for thriving in the educational framework beyond the early years.

Ultimately, these experiences cultivate a sense of resourcefulness, imagination and deep physical engagement that is essential for a child's holistic growth and overall educational success. Embracing these varied outdoor opportunities ensures that children remain connected to their environment, fostering a sense of belonging in the community, effectively building the cognitive and emotional architecture required for navigating their future academic and personal challenges in a rapidly evolving world.

Reference list

CCW, (2017) *Working in Early Years and Childcare*. Available at:

<https://socialcare.wales/cms-assets/documents/Working-in-early-years-and-childcare.pdf> [Accessed: 12 June 2026].

Clement, J, Sarwar, S, (2024) *Making connections: Froebel's principles and practice in Wales*. Available at: <https://www.froebel.org.uk/research-library/making-connections-froebels-principles-and-practices-in-wales> [Accessed: 13 June 2026].

ColegauCymru (2023) *Wales learning from Finland- Strategies for Moving Freely: The Finnish Approach to Vocational Education and Training*. Available at: <https://www.colleges.wales/en/blog/post/wales-learning-from-finland-strategies-for-moving-freely-the-finnish-approach-to-vocational-education-and-training> [Accessed: 12 June 2026].

Department for Education (2021) *Curriculum planning*. Available at: <https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/support-for-practitioners/curriculum-planning> [Accessed: 11 June 2026].

Department for Education, (2016) *Early years foundation stage statutory framework- for group and school-based providers*. Available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68c024cb8c6d992f23edd79c/Early_years_foundation_stage_statutory_framework_-_for_group_and_school-based_providers.pdf.pdf [Accessed: 13 June 2026].

Education Wales, (2023) *Assessment arrangements for funded non-maintained nursery settings*. Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/curriculum-and-assessment-arrangements-for-funded-non-maintained-nursery-settings/assessment-arrangements-for-funded-non-maintained-nursery-settings> [Accessed: 13 June 2026].

Ellis, C, et. Al, (2024) *The ‘Welsh way’, outdoor learning within the primary curriculum: a ‘fringe add-on or mainstream pedagogical practice’?* DOI: <https://doi.org/10.16922/wje.26.2.10> [Accessed: 12 June 2026].

Finnish Education System Institute, (2025) *Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in Finland: Structure, Values, and implementation*. Available at: <https://www.fesin.fi/early-childhood-education-and-care-ecec-in-finland-structure-values-and-implementation/> [Accessed: 13 June 2026].

Grenier, J, (2025) *The unique child: tailoring personalised support in the early years*. Available at: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/early-years/the-unique-child-tailoring-personalised-support-in-the-early-years#:~:text=The%20Statutory%20Framework%20for%20the,rates%20and%20in%20different%20ways.> [Accessed: 13 June 2026].

HEI Schools, (2022) *Finland’s Approach to Special Needs & Inclusion*. Available at: <https://www.heischools.com/blog/finlands-approach-to-special-needs-inclusion> [Accessed: 13 June 2026].

HEI Schools, (2026) ‘Welcome to HEI Schools!’, Personal communication via email. 10 June.

Hwb (2022) *Curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings*. Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/curriculum-for-funded-non-maintained-nursery-settings> [Accessed: 12 June 2026].

Jolly, A et. Al (2017) *Play, its role in development and evolution*. United States of America: Penguin Books.

Loveevery, (no date), Picture 1.

NAEYC (2022) *The Power of Playful Learning in the Early Childhood Setting*. Available at: <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/summer2022/power-playful-learning> [Accessed: 11 June 2026].

OECD, (no date) *Starting Strong IV; Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care Country Note*. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/about/programmes/edu/ecec/migrate/starting-strong-iv/monitoring-notes/finland-ecec-monitoring-note-SSIV.pdf> [Accessed: 13 June 2026].

Rose, J, B, (2024) *What are play schemas and why do they matter?* Available at: <https://www.famly.co/blog/play-schemas-and-why-they-matter> [Accessed: 13 June 2026].

Ryndak D, L, et. Al, (2008) 'Access to the General Curriculum: The Mandate and Role of Context in Research-Based Practice for Students with Extensive Support Needs.' Sage Publications, 1 December. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2511/rpsd.33.4.199> [Accessed: 13 June 2026].

Sa'dullah, A et. Al (2023) *The Importance of the Role of an Appropriate Curriculum in Education*. Available at: <https://ejournal.unuja.ac.id/index.php/icesh/article/view/5624> [Accessed: 11 June 2026].

Sitorus, R. W, Siregar, K. P, Sari, R. I, (2025) "The Role of Play Based Learning in Early Childhood Development", *Educia Journal*, 3(1), pp. 1–14. DOI: [10.71435/610424](https://doi.org/10.71435/610424). [Accessed: 12 June 2026].

SportWales, (no date) *Programmes and projects*. Available at: <https://sport.wales/about/programmes-projects> [Accessed: 12 June 2026].

State Islamic University of North Sumatra (2025), 'The Role of Play Based Learning in Early Childhood Development', *Educia Journal*, 3(1), pp. 1-3. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.71435/610424> [Accessed: 12 June 2026].

Swansea Council (no date) *Free school meals*. Available at: <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals> [Accessed: 12 June 2026].

The Finnish National Agency for Education (2022) *National core curriculum for early childhood education and care*. Available at: <https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/National%20core%20curriculum%20for%20ECEC%202022.pdf> [Accessed: 12 June 2026].

VisitEDUfinn, (2025) *How do Finnish teachers implement the national curriculum*. Available at: <https://www.visitedufinn.com/how-do-finnish-teachers-implement-the-national-curriculum/> [Accessed: 12 June 2026].

Welsh Government, (2018) *Finding out about Finland's language learning, teacher autonomy and work-play balance!* Available at: <https://educationwales.blog.gov.wales/2018/03/21/finding-out-about-finlands-language-learning-teacher-autonomy-and-work-play-balance/> [Accessed: 12 June 2026].

Welsh Government, (2022) *A curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings*. Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/1f581142-6b91-41e4-845d-3d6c7765df20/a-curriculum-for-funded-non-maintained-nursery-settings.pdf> [Accessed 12 June 2026].

Welsh Government, (2022) *What's changing in assessment?* Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/assessment-arrangements/what-s-changing-in-assessment/> [Accessed: 13 June 2026].

Welsh Government, (2023) *Assessment arrangements for funded non-maintained nursery settings*, (chapters 1-3). Available at:

<https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/c6383417-cd62-4d66-9d53-15a955c79d6f/assessment-arrangements-for-funded-non-maintained-nursery-settings.pdf> [Accessed: 13 June 2026].

Welsh Government, (2023) *Enabling learning*. Available at:

<https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/designing-your-curriculum/enabling-learning/> [Accessed: 13 June 2026].

Welsh Government, (2023). *Pedagogy*. Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/designing-your-curriculum/pedagogy/> [Accessed: 13 June 2026].

Welsh Government, (2025), *Written Statement: Publication of the Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care: Assessment Arrangements for 0-3 year olds in Wales*. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-publication-early-childhood-play-learning-and-care-assessment-arrangements-0-3> [Accessed: 13 June 2026].

Welsh Government, (2026) *Flying Start childcare: guidance*. Available at:

<https://www.gov.wales/flying-start-childcare-guidance-html> [Accessed: 13 June 2026].

Whalley, C, (no date) *The role of the adult in learning through play*. Available at:

<https://www.eyalliance.org.uk/news-events/blogs/role-adult-learning-through-play/#:~:text=The%20role%20description%20for%20scaffolding,extend%20their%20thinking%20and%20learning.> [Accessed 14 June 2026].

Zosh, J et. Al, (2022) *The Power of Playful Learning in the Early Childhood Setting*.

Available at: <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/summer2022/power-playful-learning> (2) [Accessed 11 June 2026].