

Section 1

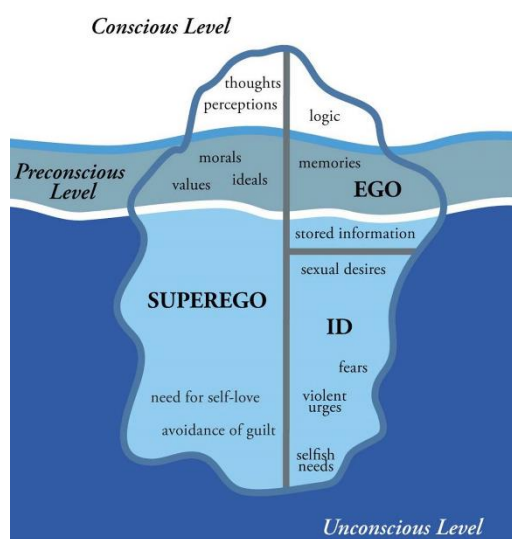
All children should have the right to play, the elements of play are anticipation, pleasure, understanding, surprise, poise and strength, children should be able to explore these and learn from them. In an article The Elements of Play Towards a Philosophy and a Definition of Play written by G Scott (2014) it claims play will enhance their emotional, physical and intellectual dimensions, but most importantly play should promise fun.

According to the welsh government, Wales – a Play Friendly Country (2014) they believe there is a huge benefit when play is a part of children's life's, it improves health, happiness and well-being. They state that play is freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated and that there is no external goal or reward, for example if a child is painting, they may simply be painting a pattern it might not have to be something, so adults shouldn't ask the child what it is that they have painted. A child should be able to choose what they want to do and if they want to participate in a certain activity, practitioners shouldn't force them too. Every child has a right to play for example the 3 p's- provision, protection and participation, a teacher should not keep them in until they finish their work, they should go outside for the full length of their play time. According to the article by play wales chwarae Cymru (2015) Wales became the first country in the world to legislate children's play meaning it was a requirement that children have rights to play; Councils will receive a share of the £1.5 million split between local authorities to improve play areas throughout the country for example Swansea received £106,138 to be spend on disability access and signs to develop street play, climbing frames and so on. Wales concentrate on the foundation phase which looks at learning through play, play based curriculum and using a holistic development.

Self-direct play is when children make up the rules, it is their own version of play and they chose how and what to do. It's one of the most important lessons that a child will teach themselves and something every child should naturally do. Adults can support self-direct play by allowing the child's imagination to explore, they should let the child be in control and not intervene or try to get the child to learn from their play. If a child feels that it is no longer their game and that there is an incentive to learn from what you are trying to get them to do, they won't see it as playing and will then stop. Self-

direct play will help a child's holistic development as they will be developing their mental, physical, Social, emotional and spiritual growth. But adults can also help by encouraging children to interact with the natural world and explore and discover the environment around them. According to an article How can I support the holistic development of children? by foundation Education (2018) Adults can support holistic development by asking open ended questions allowing the child to use their thoughts with cognitive thinking, build strong and trustworthy relationships, identify the child's interests to help motivate them in what they're doing for example a child loves dancing the teacher will find research about dance and the different styles there are to help the child learn about their interests.

According to Moyles, 2009 – “play is without a doubt, the most natural way children learn all over the world”, according to her book children should use their imagination to play and learn in a natural and nurturing environment.



There are many theories about children's play such as Freud. Freud believed that there were 3 levels of consciousness in a child's behaviour such as unconscious, preconscious and the conscious mind for example the iceberg theory. Children remembered things and learned things differently in each stage.

Figure 1- MCAT Psychology and Sociology Review: New for MCAT 2015 (2014)

Another theorist is Piaget and his 3 stages of play.

According to an article what is physiology (no date) the 3 stages of play are - practice plays - from birth to 2 years, it is this age that they master fine motor skills, curiosity and use repeated patterns, for example, eating everything; they will feel curious about what things are and if they taste good. The second stage is Symbolic play, aimed at the age 2-7 years, it is here that they begin to attach meaning, make believe, self-expression, they will begin to make things in play, for example a banana becomes a telephone, it is here they begin to use imaginative play. And the last stage is Social play, where ages 7-11 develop further for example, games now have rules and they

have social construction, at this stage a child can solve mathematical problems and spell.

Early Greek philosophers classified 3 forms of play

- Agon- play fighting, imaginary guns
- Mimesis- mime, acting pretending, role play
- Chaos- games of chance, dice game.

All the theorists above used imaginative play. Imaginative play is very important in children's development but especially in self-directed play.

Section 2

As an adult we must help children to learn and have fun whilst playing, but certain roles need to be done to allow this such as careful planning. Practitioners must watch their attitude and behaviour for example if they take a group of children or a child to the park and they seem frightened of the climbing frame the child will automatically feel anxious and worried too. We should help build scaffolding and skills for children by breaking things down for them, making it more manageable so it does not seem as much of a challenge. And other things are involved such as setting up starting points, observation and assessing risks.

When children think of the characteristics of risk and what it involves, they think of how high something is or the motion or speed that their moving at they will see new and unpredictable places frightening, this happens when you start a new job you feel nervous and scared because it is a new place, children feel the same although it is exciting, it is also a risk. But if they experience this in a safe environment, they will come to understand their feelings and learn about dangers.

When children play outdoors, they learn a lot more about risks such as open spaces, rocks, tunnels or fallen trees there are all things that children love to explore but need the space to do so. In a YouTube video 'kids gone wild' <https://youtu.be/Jkij9dJfcw> you will see how forest schools allow children to climb trees, use blades to cut things and play outside in freezing temperatures, and how the children learn from this for example they are not afraid of the cold, or afraid of falling and all the children seem very happy,

they believe that children should play/learn outdoors until the age of 7 as they are learning about valuable life skills. In an article by play wales, chwarae Cymru the article let us out of the bubble wrap (2016) talks about how as a country practitioners and parents do too much for children and don't allow them to learn for themselves or take risks.

According to an article outdoor play matters: The Benefits of Outdoor Play for Young Children (no date), Marjorie Ouvre suggests that it is good for children to play outside in all weathers she also believes that children need to learn when things don't go their way for example practitioners should not tell a child 'everyone's a winner' because what lesson does that child learn, they need to understand that it is about testing their limits and seeing what they can do when they put their mind to it.

In an article by play wales, chwarae Cymru (2016) about play and resilience it states how it is important that practitioners know how to manage children's feelings and understanding they may fail at first, but they can bounce back.

There are many benefits to taking risks such as children learning for themselves, children will face risks every day in their lives such as crossing a road, they need to learn how to do this by themselves by thinking of a solution to their problem and weighing up the risks involved before deciding what to do.

It is important to make a risk assessment before going to do an activity to cover yourself and to make sure the children are safe. When writing a risk assessment practitioners must think about what it is that they want to achieve, what are the benefits and how can practitioners make sure that the activity is safe and enjoyable, an example of this is slippery leaves, adults should stick to the path to avoid the leaves. Examples of how to do a risk assessment is think, is there a road, if so, is traffic control needed. Another example is if practitioners have 20, 3-year olds the adult should make sure that there are enough staff and a first aider on board to avoid any accidents.

To help with this adults could follow the ABC model which is Action- things that might end up causing harm, Behavioural modes - that may lead children to cause a risk to themselves for example 3-year olds can't cross the road by themselves and lastly Context specific factors. In an online article play and resilience it talks about the ABC model and how you can do one risk assessment to cover a few different things for

example the same risks would apply to climbing a tree or swinging from a rope so one risk assessment is okay as long as it is updated regularly.

In an article Risky play for all children (2016) it talks about if the risk is worse for disabled children, which it should not be, practitioners should do more to ensure that disabled children have the same experiences, there shouldn't be a barrier, and it is down to the adults to adapt things for the child. Every workplace needs a certain amount of policies such as Estyn they should have a risk assessment and it should be done annually or every term; and CIW should have health and safety checks and safeguarding checks.

Section 3

On the welsh Government website (2015) they explain the foundation phase as a statutory curriculum for the ages three to seven, it was introduced in 2010 and focuses on inspiring children's creativity, imaginative and holistic development whilst they still learn in a fun/enjoyable environment. It looks at the levels that children are at and building on previous experience whilst trying to encourage equality and diversity. Children will all develop at different stages so to help understand this and encourage children's development further schools may use some observation methods such as a compact profile.

A Compact Profile is put in place to use as a baseline assessment in Reception Years to measure children's progress and development by observing them, for example if they played alongside someone that day or shared something, it is noted down with the date to keep track on how the child is progressing. Their development should be observed through a compact profile method until they are five years old and then children should be observed by the full profile after that until their time in the foundation phase has come to an end. The Compact Profile is there to help practitioners provide a holistic curriculum for all children.

The welsh government (2019) states that there are four different areas of learning within the foundation phase compact profile that must be measured, those areas are;

- Personal and social development, well-being and culture diversity
- Language, Literacy and communication skills

- Mathematical development
- Physical development

If there is development in all areas observed this then gives a holistic view but there must be observations seen in each area.

After observing the children and seeing their levels, practitioners can then work on making progression and decide if further experiences are needed to help consolidate their learning.

According to the welsh Government (no date) the foundation phase profile benefits children by tracking their progress so that early interventions can be put in place for those children who may need additional support. It benefits the school because they'll be able to process data which will be written evidence, and this will support policies and operational decisions.

Children can be observed in many ways, and it is important that practitioners also listen to the children when observing as children will develop through their speech and language too. Some things to look out for when observing children could be, if they're playing alone or alongside someone, children's interactions with others, children's creativity and imaginative skills, any new words spoken and so on. There are also different observation types that can be used for example; Running record, Time Tracker, Interaction tracker or a schedule of growing skills.

A compact profile has a lot of benefits/pros as it can tell adults many things such as; where a child feels comfortable within a class and who they like to be next to, it tells practitioners of any friendships that have developed, it shows patterns for example their behaviour where do they like to go? What are their interests?, it tells practitioners the level of engagement that the child has and their preferences for example they may prefer activities where they don't need to talk and lastly a compact profile will tell practitioners any triggers a child may have and what starts them such as a child acting up because they don't want to go outside.

However a compact profile also has its limitations/cons as it does not tell practitioners certain things, for example what causes a child's behaviour, it doesn't tell the adults role for instance what was the practitioner doing and how much evidence was there?,

it doesn't tell practitioners any environmental factors which has an effect such as a new or supply teacher or children behaving differently as they have just come back to school from a Christmas break, these things have an impact on children, it also does not tell you about developmental factors for example if there are any additional learning needs. Another con to compact profiling is that in order to get a holistic view the child must develop in all areas of learning within the compact profile and if they do not do this it then becomes a limitation.

Section 4

When children think of play as an activity it impacts them differently, in an online article written by the university of south wales (no date) they discuss how children view play, for example a child thought it was play when there was an adult nearby but not involved, when they would be doing the activities on the floor or outside and if they could choose to take part rather than being asked or instructed to do it. When the children thought it was play they took more information in and they had better behaviour towards learning meaning their performance levels increased; they're was also a positive benefit on their wellbeing for example they had greater development impact because they felt like it was a safe environment to fail a place they felt was for trying things. Another article written by J. Howard K. McInnes (2012) they speak about similar things, for example they made a study where one hundred and twenty-nine children aged between 3 and 5 years participated, they looked at how a child views play, so half the children learned in a 'like play' environment and the other half learned in a 'non-play like' environment all the children did the same activities but their emotional wellbeing was being measured. The results were that the children who took part in the 'like play' environment had a much better wellbeing response to those learning through the 'non-play like' environment as they were more engaged with the activity. The conclusion of this was that practitioners needed the correct training to understand the children's views on play and to be able to support them and maximise their development potential.

Play should be freely chosen, and child led, Reggio and Montessori use this approach. Reggio use a method where a practitioner would set up interesting stations with lots of different things to see what area of development the child wants to explore. An example of Reggio's work is using free play this enables practitioners to observe the

child and see if they can use their imagination whilst playing. Montessori take a different but similar approach; this method uses puzzles and beads to learn. In a YouTube video 'Montessori in action' (2015) it shows a classroom using Montessori and it shows it being an accessible, clearly built out classroom with individual workstations. Although Reggio and Montessori classrooms look different the method is similar, they both give children the opportunity for self-directed play, which gives them a sense of freedom, independence, control over their movements, better self-esteem, a chance to make decisions and an opportunity for them to explore their limits which like in the study the children will benefit from practitioners being able to observe them.

The Welsh Assembly Government (2008) say the purpose of observation is to record changes in a child and record skills and any progress that a child has made over a period of time, for example if a child spoke 5 words, or if they played with someone that day. Some things that should be observed is physical development, creative development, mathematical, welsh language development, personal and social development, language, literacy and communication skills. By observing and assessing children it enables practitioners to understand the child and be able to note his/her strengths and interests, it helps practitioners to know how to help the child to progress further by highlighting the child's development, and abilities in all areas of learning, and it helps record the progress to be able to feed back to parents/carers and staff so that together they can then take the next steps in furthering the child's development in play.

Adults can break the play cycle by Adulteration. In an article 'The Play Cycle' (no date) it talks about how adults break the play cycle by wanting to join in, trying to control the play, trying to rescue play, trying to improve play or by trying to educate children through play, and this ends up destroying the play form because the adults break self-directed play, meaning that they are stopping observations being able to happen, as they are trying to control it, this leads children to think that they are doing a 'not play like' activity and as the study states this may affect the child's wellbeing. According to the Welsh Government (2015) children's wellbeing is very important and children should be able to contribute to their own wellbeing as well as others.

In the YouTube video 'Play Revolution: The Role Of Adults' (2017) it discusses how adults can support play and not break the cycle, practitioners can do this by becoming

a resource, the child might want the adult to get something and that is their part in the game, or practitioners can support by being invited in but playing on the child's terms, and lastly an adult can support if they are a conflict resolution, the child may need the adult to step in and help. A practitioner must not change the child's self-directed play or try to mould it, they should allow that child to use their imagination and play how they wish for example if they want to play with others they should be allowed to choose with who, not be forced to play with who the teacher/practitioner wants them too, this will allow practitioners to observe the child's decisions.

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