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AI cover sheet

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work, I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes and other resources I used before, and after use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence

Section 1

According to Play Wales (2021) play is defined as being a spontaneous and active process, which is controlled by the child and important to all children of ages and abilities.

Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that all children have a right to play (UNICEF, ND). There are various ways and types of play that a child can take part in, physical play and outdoor play will be discussed in further detail.

Physical play is a type of play that encourages exercise and movement from children, this can range in many forms and involves positive benefits for the child's development (Playworld, ND). Physical play can start from birth, a baby can use physical play to reach items and explore with their body, tummy time is used as a play activity in babies under one years old, which helps to promote their development, when they are able to crawl babies can be encouraged to crawl to their toys in safe supervised conditions (NHS, 2022). Also, according to NHS (2022) toddlers up to age five can explore in other ranges of play activities such as climbing, walking, jumping, dancing, having access to playgrounds and climbing frames. This promotes a child's development further; children can explore and take risks through their play whilst being supervised. According to Von Bank, (2022) children get a thrill out of climbing and exploring whilst reaching new heights, their curiosity allows them to explore objects and climb up on them and give the feeling of wanting to get more out of their risky play. This play promotes their physical, mental, social and emotional development through building confidence and wanting to explore this with other children and getting recognised by the adult as being a capable learner (Von Bank, 2022).

However not all children can have access to play in the same ways as other children have, children with disabilities will need adaptations made to equipment to ensure inclusivity. Children with any form of disability has a right to play, therefore extra planning and observations will be needed to ensure an activity is suitable for the children and plans put in place will ensure they have access and help off the

supporting adult and even their peers for them to be included in such activities (Bianquin, N. Encarnação, P. Ray-Kaeser, S 2018).

During physical play children develop their physical skills their gross motor skills are developed through movement and developing skills such as walking, running, pushing and pulling toys as well as throwing and catching objects. As children develop their play will develop further in to play activities such as hopping, jumping and skipping Welsh Assembly Government (ND).

Outdoor play enables children to use their environment in their activities and having access to outdoor encourages children to use and develop their skills further.

Outdoor play is important for children's development as this helps to develop their curiosity, social, emotional and physical skills (Maynard, 2014).

According to Benná (2015) children will experience different things when exploring outdoors that they would not get from being indoors developing a passion for the outdoors. However, the generation today is different from years ago, due to safety issues and parenting styles, and technology devices restricting the wants of children wanting to play outdoors. Playing outdoors creates independence as well as creative thinking, teamwork and compromise with their peers when taking part in activities. Forest schools is an example of children learning through their environment whilst having on experiences through their play and development. The process helps children to gain knowledge and understanding of their skills in the environment they are involved in. Children develop emotionally, socially, intellectually, physically and spiritually in a nurturing environment, where they can take risks and make meaningful connections to nature and their peers. Through having a hands-on experience, children can problem solve and build on their understanding of how the world works through building their self esteem and confidence through achieving in activities that they are able to control (Forest school association, ND).

According to Bruce (2020) a child's hands on experience will ensure that they are able to control and manipulate their play which they can practice repeatedly.

Also, according to Bruce (2020) real experiences will help to shape children's future of play through the community and beyond, allowing for the child to keep learning

and progressing throughout their life. This type of play shows the practitioners and enabling adults what they already know about play and how they are competent learners.

Section 2

Self-directed play is where the child independently decides what they want to play, how they want to play and with who they want to play. They are taking the lead on their play and how they want the play to go, they have the control of how the play is to unfold and what will happen within their play without the adults' instructions. The children will follow their own interests and ideas (Play adventures, ND). The role of the adult through self-directed play is to provide the materials and resources for the child to explore within their play. Self-directed play can help with the children that feel the stress and pressures of the environments where they can place their ideas flow and can develop their creativity (Nancy, 2020). According to Sprouts (2016)

Montessori observed that children showed more interest in practical activities and materials over toys and sweets when given free choice and through learning independently children became self-motivated learners. The role of the adult within a child's play is to support and provide materials and resources that the children need for their play. According to Sprouts (2016) a practitioner is seen as a facilitator for the children and to encourage them to become independent responsible adults who will share a love for learning. Through the play cycle the practitioner will be there for support for the child and follow their interests and to become involved if the child wants them to. To remain authentic during the play cycle the practitioner should resist the temptation to influence or control the child's play. They should only offer a response to the child if they are invited into the play, as and when the child gives them cues to join in (Play Wales,2021).

According to Amin (2022) the role of the adult during play is to observe and wait before interacting, the adult should adapt their role accordingly to the child. Through observing the child's self-directed play the practitioner will gain more knowledge and understanding of the child and the range of their development and skills. The practitioner should prepare an enabling environment that is safe and full resources and open-ended possibilities for children's play, to make their play choices

independent and self-directed. Also, according to Amin (2022) the role of the practitioner is to be able to listen to the child's needs and wants and follow their interests and to be able to develop trust with the child and be on hand for when the child needs help and assistance to overcome any barriers they may face during their play, self-directed play builds the child's confidence and self-esteem when they accomplish any goals that they set out during their play (Amin 2022).

According to Education Wales (ND) the role of the practitioner is crucial to the progress of all children and significant in the period of early learning. They should set an expectation for learning by creating emotionally safe enabling environments that will help children to express themselves and to regulate their feelings in positive ways. Also, according to Education Wales (ND) practitioners should model joyful, meaningful approaches to learning and encourage and support children's curiosity, making the most use out of the teachable moments in a natural way in a calming and natural environment for the children. The practitioner has a responsibility to the child and their families to engage with them through their play and world around them and introducing fun and new ideas into their play, when necessary, all whilst still being based on the child's interests.

Section 3

Observations are a way of watching and recording children's behaviours, speech and interactions. The purpose of the observations is to understand how children learn and develop. Through observations a practitioner can identify patterns in the child's behaviour, identify areas in which a child needs extra support and provisions. Practitioners can plan for children based on their interests and development needs from gathering information from an observation. Observations can be used to assess children's progress. For an observation to be effective a practitioner will need to watch, listen and take note of what has been heard and seen whilst documenting. Therefore, a practitioner can then analyse their observations to plan and prepare for next steps in the child's development. There are various ways in which an observation can be done, they can be done through taking videos and photographs to upload onto the settings preferred app to share with the parents and carers showing what the child has accomplished and done with their time. Leuven scale

individual child observation is a five-point scale that allows practitioners to measure children's emotional well-being and involvement. The main advantage of the scale is that it is based on meaningful observations, and it puts the children at the centre of learning (Structural learning 2021).

According to Brodie (ND) narrative observations are a detailed written record of the child's activity. The purpose of the observation is so a practitioner will be able to identify sequences of events, whilst understanding the child's thinking process.

Practitioners will document the child's progress and development. The observation will identify the child's interests and interactions with their peers and adults.

Observations can be shared with parents so they can understand their child's learning journey. According to Smidt (2015) the benefits of observations is that they provide a clear picture of the child's behaviours. Practitioners can identify areas where a child may need more support, and the practitioner can analyse their observation to be able to ensure proper planning for the child going forward.

According to Education Wales (ND) having effective cross curricular connections deliver broad and balanced curriculum, this draws on children's own knowledge and experiences. Showing what they already know and how they implement that into their daily experiences. Using this helps to plan effectively for the children and enables the practitioner to effectively assess the quality of provision they are providing. However, this will also show any areas of the provision that will need adapting to meet all the children's needs and ensure that there is effective inclusive practice for all.

Practitioners can use narrative observations to document children's learning and progress using the context of Welsh curriculum. The curriculum aims to develop and progress learners through the five development pathways

Section 4

According to Welsh government (ND) children have a strong need to play, during which children find ways to explore their emotions, and they learn about the world they live in, drawing on real experiences to guide them through their play. Children

require strong concentration and attention through play, which a practitioner will note during an observation. Play is fundamental when observing a child's physical, creative and intellectual development, the children also show if they are self-aware and show their social behaviours during play. practitioners that observe closely when a child is playing will gain a wider insight of the child's strengths and weaknesses and be able to enhance their learning further.

According to Welsh Government (ND) children do their best learning when they are actively engaged in play, and which sparks their interests and imagination. Children are at their best during play, if the child is thoroughly engaged in an activity the practitioner will be able to get more information from the child's observation. If the practitioner is involved in the play, they can extend the child's learning by asking them though provoking questions based on the play activity and get a deeper understanding of the child's development and knowledge. However, if the practitioner is too involved in the play, they may annihilate and take over the direction of the play and lead it into a different process that the child intended, risking the child's exit from the play.

Practitioners can plan activities and prompts for the child tailored to what they have observed in their previous play, to promote for an extended play interaction for further development of the child.

Observing children through play will highlight the child's interactions with practitioners and the other children, how they navigate themselves through their play and cooperatively have the serve and return with their peers in the environment. However, observing through play may have a undesired effect of the child's engagement through the pressure of being watched during their activity and they may not show their true capabilities during the activity to which they would if there wasn't an observation at that time. Practitioners need the true play actions to observe and assess their development correctly and effectively to enhance he child's development further.

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