

Identify and discuss two types of play and how they can be supported in practice.

Role Play

Role play is a type of play where individuals can pretend to be someone else in a scenario, children use Role play in early years settings to use their imagination and play with friends. Role play also allows children to learn about themselves and others and aids their holistic development. (New By Leisure, 2020). Drake (2005) suggests that a well-planned role-play area should provide opportunities for language, literacy, numeracy and communication development.

Early Years Children mainly take part in fantasy role play, this can be superheroes, comic book characters or princesses. Role play allows children to develop many skills and enables them to understand the difference between right and wrong. (New By Leisure, 2020)

Role Play allows children to develop many skills, such as imagination and creativity, New by Leisure, 2020 suggests that Albert Einstein suggested that “Logic will get you from A to Z however, imagination will get you everywhere.” Therefore, he believed that imagination allows children to develop these genius ideas later in life.

Social and Emotional Development is also developed during role play. When children conduct role play with other friends, they take on ideas put forward by others this allows them to develop their social skills as they are working with others to conduct play, they also develop Communication skills. Communication skills are developed as they are putting forward ideas and then listening to others’ ideas to put in the activity, children also learn new words and expressions from role play this allows them to become confident communicators as they develop. They also develop their Emotional development as they are in touch with their emotional side and allows them to express their emotions and see what ways their actions can affect someone else’s emotions and how they deal with the situation. (New By Leisure, 2020).

Problem solving is also developed in role play as their become scenarios where children may have to think of the best outcome, and this allows them to think of a solution outside the box. (New By Leisure, 2020)

Role Play allows children to develop physically, due to a child using their imagination to do things such as fight monsters, climb ladders, and run around enhancing their gross motor skills as well as their fine motor skills. Another physical element that is developed is hand eye co-ordination.

Adults in an early year's setting can enable role play by allowing the children to be free in this area, they can also come and play along side the children to help enhance their development and help their communication development. The Adult can observe the play being conducted. (Featherstone and Cummings, ND). Similarly, Drake (2005) suggests that the adult should engage in role-play with children and plan for more additional role play.

Heuristic Play

Williams, 2022 states that Heuristic play is 'exploring a range of objects in different ways and moving around with them in a safe environment.' Williams, 2022 suggests that Heuristic Play is experienced between the ages of 1 and 2 as it is based on curiosity and the child experimenting in order to find out for themselves.

Heuristic Play was founded by a child psychologist Elinor Goldschmied in the 1980's. Goldschmied suggested that it is a child-led form of learning and therefore the adults should supervise and observe for safety.

Heuristic play provides materials to be explored and is characterised to the children participating, it involves children being physically active, distributing, emptying and refilling containers in a specific area made by the adults during defined playing times. (Goldschmied and Jackson 1994)

Goldschmied, 1994 suggested that Heuristic play may look like children being handed baskets of everyday items and thinking of ways outside of the box using their imagination to play with them. This could be by a child being given a cardboard tube and then using it as a lightsaber.

Hutt (1989) suggests children gain knowledge through exploring and problem solving play, this allows them to use their imagination and also realise how things work.

Goldschmied, 1994 suggests that Heuristic play has many benefits for children, such as independence as they are playing on their own or with their peers. Concentration is also developed as due to the high level of engagement their brains are actively stimulated developing their brain. Creativity is also developed as children are using everyday objects and using their imagination to think outside of the box. Children will also develop their movement this also then develops their gross and fine motor skills, coordination and movement as children engage in far more movement when engaging in heuristic play. Gross motor skills are developed through moving their larger muscles such as arms and legs during this play they will need to pick up objects, transport objects and run and jump. Fine motor skills are developed through

children putting objects in holes using smaller objects in their fingertips. Critical development is developed during Heuristic play also as children will come into their own issues and will have to think critically about ways to overcome these issues. Heuristic play is led by the child's imagination therefore this is developed as they think of new ways to play. Mathematical and numeracy skills can also be developed such as fitting shapes and working out how many blocks they could stack and counting. Therefore, Heuristic play allows the child to holistically develop. Piaget (1952) suggested that infants also developed their reflex actions through active exploring which is sensory motor experiences which happen in Heuristic play.

During Heuristic play the practitioners take more of a back seat and allow the children to use their imagination to play. In order to enable Heuristic play, the adults have the role of collecting the materials for the children to use these can be things such as toilet roll tubes, kitchen utensils or pots. Practitioners are also in charge of setting the environment up to be used to its full potential. The adults will also help to enable heuristic play by observing the activity and watching out for risks therefore they should not supply the children with too small of objects as this can be seen as a choking hazard. Goldschmied and Jackson 1994 suggested that the adult's role in Heuristic play is to remain quiet and resist the urge to participate as this allows children to explore at their own pace.

Why it is important for children to choose their own play and importance of the role of adults in play.

Self-directed play is the idea of allowing children to play without the framework that needs to be followed. It is the idea that the self directs the way they play and what they use to play. It is seen to be that play is freely chosen, personally directed by following their instincts and ideas, and intrinsically motivated which is the idea of children playing in their own way for their own reasons (PSSG, 2005), (Sukenik, 2021).

Self-directed play is important for children as it benefits their development in many ways such as building self-confidence, encourages independence, stimulates the imagination, enhances problem solving, allows children to learn at their own pace and develops motivation. (Hollis Montessori School, 2018).

Lim-Yang (2018) suggests that child-directed play is where a child makes the rules of play.

The role of the adult in play can sometimes be of no significance depending on the activity taking place they are sometimes only involved to observe. Manning-Morton and Thorp (2003) suggests that practitioners play a huge role in the emotional and physical development of a child, and this therefore supports their physical development and play. They suggest that due to this close relationship it allows children to grow confidence and explore in settings. They also suggest that practitioners should be alert to any dangers that may arise during play but should allow babies to experience some of their fears. Whyte (1983) suggests that children in a setting will look back to their practitioner to see the anxiety on their face about the danger of the risk.

It is suggested that children may become bored if the setting lacks fear or risk therefore the practitioners should not 'bubble wrap' children but allow them to face some fear and risk. (Manning-Morton and Thorp, 2003).

Manning-Morton and Thorp (2003) suggests that during an activity such as role play the practitioner play a crucial role, they should be at the child's level and make themselves available for long periods of time, as this allows them to expand the child's ideas without needlessly intervening with their play. The practitioner will therefore need to follow the child's lead as this allows them to explore and experiment.

Drake, 2005 suggests that the role of the adult is crucial as they identify the child's needs, assess their development, and join in play to support individuals to develop further. However, as well as intervening and assessing it is also essential that the practitioners take time to observe play by children.

'Teachers enable each child to learn and develop by helping them to sustain their current interests and also by interesting them in new things.' (Edgington, 1998) Edgington 1998 further suggests that the practitioners will sometimes demonstrate

ways to keep children interested by allowing them to develop and expand their learning.

Drake 2005, suggest practitioners should be prepared to support children's ideas by adding resources to areas of provision and by planning for the appropriate focus. Practitioners should also encourage children to be independent therefore should support them in making decisions and choices. They should also interact with the children by asking questions to support learning, work alongside the child and observe children's learning and the use of the environment.

Broadhead, Howard and Wood (2010) suggests that the practitioners play a big part in the way the environment is set up as children tend to take cues from their environment and make decisions based on experiences in these environments. Similarly, Smith (1994) suggests that the attitudes of practitioners influence a child's play experience and therefore should have interactive conversations also as this will help to develop language skills.

Wescott and Howard (2007) suggest that from studies a child develops when play is in both inside and outside environments, adult interactive, child-directed, observational to record achievements and academic integrated tasks in play.

Meadows (1993) also agrees and suggests that educational settings would be successful if they adopted the Vygotskian model of teaching. Meadows's research shows that practitioners and adults play a critical part in supporting a child's cognitive development during infancy which is also developed during play.

It is important that play and learning is child led, 'child-led learning is where the child chooses the activity location and time spent on it.' (Lowbridge, 2017). Lowbridge, 2017 suggests that due to the child led learning this can have numerous advantages, such as a decrease of resistance when learning and improve enjoyment. The teachers can also plan the activity around certain skills such as numeracy.

Methods used to observe children when playing.

There are various methods that can be used in order to observe children in the activity of play. Play is a common activity done amongst all children which can give up to date information about development such as the development of fine and gross motor skills, cognitive development and speech and language development.

Manning-Morton and Thorp (2003) suggests that one of the practitioners' roles is supporting the creativity and the exploration of the children and therefore should observe the children's skills and materials that they use when playing to plan for further activities. However, Manning-Morton and Thorp (2003) suggest that observations can not be the only way to monitor a child's progress. Therefore, it is suggested that practitioners should be able to share information about interests to understand their play.

An observation method developed by Ferre Laevers (1994) was the Leuven Involvement Scale this scale is used to assess the effects of learning situation on the child, by observing and scaling involvement in accord to signals. It is characterised by motivation and fascination.

If observations and reflecting are done efficiently then this allows practitioners to plan well for other times and allows new challenges, this helps practitioners to know if help is required and not assume it is required. (Manning-Morton and Thorp, 2001)

Once practitioners have observed a child it is their duty to assess using their professional judgement. (PACEY, 2016)

A Running Record is an observation method used to observe children in an early year's environment. A running record is seen to be an informal method where practitioners schedule a day, time and setting. In order to do this practitioners will select a child or group of children to observe with a reason or focus such as cognitive skills, Social interactions or play patterns. This will then be written down and observed during a specific time frame. (Bentzen, 2009). Bentzen, 2009 suggests that good data has been collected when a practitioner can close their eyes and imagine the activity taking place.

Running Records provide practitioners with more detailed analysis of a child's interactions at a specific time. They allow them to determine why a child is behaving the way they are. (Infant and Toddlers, 2014).

With any observation method there is advantages and disadvantages. A running record holds many advantages such as it holds information of who, what, when and where. Evidence is stored chronologically with descriptive evidence of the child's skills, interests and abilities. Running records also allow practitioners to track a child's development over an extended period of time. The way of doing a running record allows the observation to feel less structured and formal but more free flowing therefore allowing a more credible result as the child won't feel as pressured in an informal setting. (Petersons and Elam, 2021)

However, there are also some disadvantages to the running record observation method. These are aspects such as they are time consuming to do, children tend to move and jump from activity to activity some may be hard to keep up, Observations one day may be more difficult compared to others. (Petersons and Elam, 2021).

The role of play when undertaking observations and assessment.

Observing children's play allows the practitioners to assess and gives insight into the children's needs, interests and possible difficulties that they may be facing in their development.

It is suggested that observations provide some of the most accurate results providing information about people, the task that they are doing and their needs, it also provides a good resource for later reflection on areas the setting can provide support in order to develop these needs. (Ross, 2018)

When undertaking observations during play the practitioners role is to sit back and watch what is happening. Many early years settings follow the rule of look, listen and note. This allows the children to be observed and not be interfered with which then allows more accurate results. (Kelly, 2016)

Drake (2005) suggests that observing children's play is the key to understanding their interests and learning. Drake (2005) also suggests that practitioners should allow time for observation of play in the early years setting. Drake suggests that 'observation time' could be pre-planned, written down or verbally suggested. Either way that this is noted practitioners should have an effective way of recording information from observations.

According to Drake (2005) it is suggested that the broad aim of observations is to gather information which will enable practitioners to assess a child's learning and allow them to plan the curriculum which meets a full range of needs of the children in the setting.

However, if practitioners decide to use a more focused observation the aim of these is to, asses the learning of children including their needs, evaluating and improving provisions for all children and making sure that a common need is taken care of throughout the setting.

Wood and Attfield (1996) suggest that play provides a window into a child's mind that reveals structures, patterns, and meanings that may not be evident in more formal contexts. However, if a child is aware of observations taking place it is likely that the results that are collected will not be credible therefore their planning for future provisions may not meet the children's needs.

A child should be given the option to learn therefore the activity should be child-led. This then makes the child intrinsically motivated. This is where the child gets their own desire to work. Intrinsic motivation leads students to want to have a deeper desire to learn. This is also known as the desire to learn from within. (youaremom, 2020)

The opposite to intrinsic motivation is extrinsic motivation this is motivation that comes from external resources. Such as students who focus on studying,

participation in class and do homework for rewards or good grades other than self-satisfaction. (youaremom, 2020)

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