

Children's play: principles and practice

What is play and why is it important?

The word 'play' is somewhat difficult to define because it is a verb, adjective and a noun. Furthermore, participating in play is not thought to be work but a voluntary activity that passes time which can be frivolous, pleasurable, and free (Andrews, 2017). Tonkin and Whitaker (2019) believe adults normally associate play with children and the way in which they communicate and interrelate with others enabling them to form positive relationships through enjoyment and freedom of exploration with no expectations on an end result. According to Smith (2009) play gives children opportunities to gain experience of the world around them and is important for child development enabling them to develop physically by doing and socially by interacting with others, learning as they play. Sutton-Smith (1996) suggests Piaget's theory on play is an important part of a child's cognitive development which enables children to gain a knowledge and understanding through stages as they grow and experience the world around them.

Creative and Fantasy play

It has been said that fantasy and creativity are closely linked through observation and theory. Fein (1987, cited in Russ, Robins and Chrisitiano, 1999) points out that recognising emotions through fantasy play is important and fantasy or pretend play is a form of creativeness on its own. Similarly, Hoffman and Russ (2016) are of the opinion that children participating in fantasy play which involves using their imagination are in turn naturally creative individuals and will naturally engage in fantasy play.

It is often said that defining creativity is a difficult task due to the opinion that for some creativity is linked to talented individuals and for others it is something within all humans whether it is used or not (Moyles, 2010). Smidt (2010) believes that creativity is an important part of child development that encourages children to explore, develop problem solving skills and build an overall curiosity for their environment. Furthermore, play in the control of the child allows the ability to view things differently, using their own imagination and ideas to

create something that has no end goal, but their own desire enables children to feel empowered and self-satisfied whilst developing their level of concentration and attention span (Daly *et al*, 2015).

According to Andrews (2017) creative expression covers a varied range of activities including musical instruments, painting, cut and stick, messy play, singing, movement and dancing. These activities enable children to develop and master social, physical, and cognitive skills and build confidence through self-expression.

White (2014) believes creative play does not have to be limited to indoor provision. White suggests that the very nature of the outdoors provides children with learning opportunities that the indoor environment would not and therefore outdoors significantly improves child development and extends learning experiences. For example, space, terrain, and the natural environment. According to Garrick (2009) the outdoor environment allows for creative opportunities through a range of natural materials such as leaves twigs, logs, earth, pebbles, and rocks, all can be used to enhance the creative learning experiences for children. The Welsh Government (2009) Foundation Phase handbook shows that the outdoors is the perfect environment to encourage creative expression and play. Furthermore, the outdoors offers natural stimuli to awaken children's senses such as weather, noises, smell, and textures of the natural world.

Russ (2014) describes fantasy play as make belief driven from curiosity and wonder, creating an environment with pure imagination. To put it more simply, where children go to a world where anything is possible. A banana becomes a telephone, a hairbrush becomes a microphone, a chair becomes a racing car, or they are the worlds bravest superhero. Grimmer (2019) suggests that fantasy play develops imagination, builds confidence in children to become something or someone else, enables children to be creative outside of reality, extends vocabulary, language, and communication, gives them the freedom to express themselves through fun and enjoyment. In addition to this, Paley (2006) points out that fantasy play also enables children to re-enact real life situations they have experienced. An example of this would be setting a table and serving dinner, speaking on a telephone, or going shopping with a list.

Vygotsky (1978, cited in Canning, 2011, p 10) suggests there is a strong link between children's emotional development and self-regulation through fantasy play. Vygotsky believed that fantasy play is governed by children's own rules based on their individual choices played out by the role of the character the children choose to be. Furthermore, it is through this play children will develop self-regulation skills by them placing limits on their own behaviours and choices thus developing this important life skill (Scharer, 2017).

The early years foundation stage (2021) framework suggests creative development is an important area of learning and states practitioners must expand upon provision to enable children explore creativity through art, music and movement, dance and using their imagination freely. According to Sheridan, Alderson, and Howard (2011), children can indulge in play anywhere and there are many environments that can support play. Moreover, practitioners can support this through good practice and providing an inviting environment for children. It is important for practitioners to understand how valuable unprompted voluntary play is for the development of children. Duffy (2006) believes practitioners having a good understanding and positive approach to creative and Imaginative play is vital for development in young children. One can go as far to say that creating a warm, safe, and stimulating environment encourages children to engage in play. Furthermore, practitioners can support creativity and imagination by ensuring space is adequate for children to explore freely, a variety of stimulating resources are available for children to access that are age and stage appropriate, appropriate time is given for children to explore play freely enabling them to engage their imagination and fulfil their interests (Sheridan *et al*, 1999).

Through the Reggio Emilia approach building positive relationships is paramount. Practitioners must be sensitive to the needs of children through playfulness, listening, with the child as individuals at the centre of their learning (Kinney and Wharton, 2015). An interesting aspect of the Reggio approach is a focus on creativity through expressive arts and imagination. Thornton and Brunton (2005) suggests that through a Reggio approach children are encouraged to experiment with dramatic play, music and dance, painting, moulding, and drawing. Learning and teaching Scotland (2006) Reggio Emilia guidance states that Practitioners believe creativity and imagination is central to learning and development thus enhancing children's knowledge and understanding of their environment.

Importance of children choosing play and how this can be supported in practice.

It is generally considered that freedom of choice is an important factor of play and as a result the approach to choosing one's own activities contributes to the potential of child development through play (King and Howard, 2019).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) article 13 states that children have the right for freedom of expression including freedom to ask, receive, orally, writing or through the form of art and media of the child's choice (UNICEF, no date, b). In addition to this, article 31 states that all children and young people have the right to play and have fun how they choose, furthermore children have the right to participate freely in activities without inhibition from adults (UNICEF, no date). Therefore, it is essential practice managers and school leaders incorporate the Rights of the Child into their policies and practice.

The Welsh Assembly Government (2002) was the first country in the United Kingdom to introduce a national policy focusing on the play of children and firmly believes children participating in freely chosen play which has no end goal, self-directed and is fundamental towards healthy development. Likewise, the Republic of Ireland's policy on play states the fact that children participating in play should be on a voluntary basis which is not forced and freely chosen by the child encouraging them to become independent, confident, and resourceful (National children's office, 2004).

Practitioners are in a unique position in early years settings to support children's learning through play without taking over and disrupting the natural processes of play. Botrill (2018) suggests that what children want is for adults to listen, observe, join in at their level during play with practitioners having an awareness of each child's developmental needs, adjusting body language, vocabulary, and tone modelling kindness, turn taking and positive language. Through this practitioners will have the understanding that children are experiencing quality early years provision by enabling them to participate in play freely. According to Brown (2014) it is only through play children can control experiences and practitioners should follow the children's lead. Moreover, Brown suggests adults feel the need to interfere to avert children getting hurt, they appear to find something difficult or to resolve disputes. Brown states that

practitioners need to believe in children's own strengths and ability for problem solving and not adulterate children's experiences.

There is some evidence to suggest that there are barriers in some settings supporting free play. McInnes *et al* (2013) suggests that for some early year's practitioners engaging and interacting in child led play can be difficult due to the differences between what is believed and what is put into practice. Moreover, Play Wales (2013) points out that practitioners can markedly affect play for children by the way in which play is perceived. For example, adults decide the amount of time needed for play, adults charge experiences for children by allowing certain play, adults decide how space is used and adults decide which materials are suitable and provided.

To overcome these barriers, it is vital for practitioners to take into consideration the value of child-initiated play opportunities and develop a clear understanding of what enables children to participate in child led play (Department for children, schools, and families, 2009). Furthermore, children learn during play from peers and must be given opportunities to participate in child led play that is not strictly structured by adults but encouraged by skilled practitioners who in turn can extend play opportunities by taking play cues from the children and joining in without taking over the natural process of play. This would involve a child inviting an adult to play, making a cup of tea in the home corner, or a look or gesture (Miller and Almon, 2009).

Practitioners can support child-initiated play by providing a range of physical items in the play environment. Hudson (2005) suggests several objects can be used to support and encourage child led play. For example, musical instruments, dressing up costumes, various sized balls, arts and crafts, outdoor resources such as natural materials, earth, pebbles, and logs are all linked to children's emotional, social a physical development through play. When practitioners have an understanding that play is a meaningful part of childhood, growth and development, children will learn through their own initiative, curiosity, and exploration (Ranz-Smith, 2007).

Observation method – The foundation phase profile

According to Wainwright (2021) the foundation phase is a play-based curriculum and is considered a fundamental part of education for young children. Introduced by the Welsh

Government for nurseries and primary school aged children 3-7 the foundation phase framework is statutory for Welsh early years education to encourage children to learn effectively through creativity, fun and imagination (Monmouthshire sir fynwy, 2022).

The foundation phase profile is the statutory method of assessment used to illustrate a holistic view of children's abilities through 2 sets of skills ladders in several areas of learning. These areas are personal and social development, language literacy and communication skills, mathematical development, and physical development (National day nurseries association, no date). Sharman, Cross and Vennis (2015) state that the foundation phase profile (FPP) encapsulates children's level of learning and development based purely on assessment through observation without the need for testing or set tasks by skilled practitioners in the early year's environment.

There are 2 parts to the foundation phase profile, the compact profile, and a full profile. Both assessments result in a score for outcomes to give practitioners a view of children's progress. Practitioners carry out a baseline assessment using the compact profile with children during the first six weeks on beginning Reception class. This gives practitioners a snapshot of the developmental level of a child on the FPP across the areas of learning. The results are submitted to the Welsh Government at the end of their year in Reception and ready to move on to year 1 (Matheson, 2013).

The purpose of the full profile is to support practitioners in assessing children through the foundation phase to the end of year 2 and covers a broader spectrum of skills to enable practitioners to understand how the children have developed through the foundation phase. It has been said the full profile also gives a picture of children who may be of concern developmentally and enables practitioners to plan ahead and involve other agencies to support children and put in place interventions that may be needed (Welsh Government, no date)

One question needing to be asked is how is the foundation phase profile observations carried out in practice? The Welsh Government (2017) states that practitioners must be made aware of their duty by line managers and Headteachers when carrying out assessments and ensure that the baseline assessment is completed within the child's first 6 weeks of starting Reception.

Thomas and Lewis (2016) believe observing children is fundamental to the foundation phase curriculum and regular observation enables practitioners to plan activities and provide resources for all children centred around their individual needs. In addition to this, Lewis, and Thomas state that when children are observed in the early years environment regularly it enables practitioners to know each child and their needs as individuals, recognise and plan for progression, specify children's abilities and development throughout the areas of learning and share information on progress and next steps with staff and parents with the aim of moving forward. Waters (2016) suggests when observing children in the foundation phase this should be done so through a variety of surroundings including, using the outdoor environment, playing alone, small groups of peers and working with an adult.

However, there are some situations that can affect the process of observation and therefore not give a true reflection of where the child is developmentally (Glazzard, 2010). For example, during the compact profile stage, as the children are in their first 6 weeks of reception, practitioners are providing activities and resource's that are not necessarily what the child may have chosen. One question needing to be asked is, is the first 6 weeks a suitable time period to give a true picture of where the child is developmentally given that children have just joined a new setting with new adults who have not had enough time to get to know the children as individuals. Another issue is the adulteration of play, practitioners must use their skills and expertise to recognise play cues from children and enhance play by asking open ended questions rather than leading the play situation (Barber and Smith, 2010). Furthermore, has the child had sufficient time in the setting for assessments to have a true reflection of the child's ability? The Department for Education (2022) states that practitioners using their professional expertise and having a good understanding of child development can use this knowledge to assess children effectively and build a holistic view of the child over the course of their time in the foundation phase.

Importance of play and observation

Moyles (2010) suggests child led play offers practitioners a significant opportunity to observe children who are not constrained by activities planned by adults, this allows children to thrive and feel a sense of empowerment when in control of their learning. Furthermore, Fisher (2010, quoted in Moyles, 2010, p.19) believes that play means children explore using imagination, pushing the boundaries of their own limitations and reasoning without being limited by adults.

However, Bandura's social learning theory suggests that children learn by observing, copying actions, languages, mannerisms, and emotional responses of others in the social environment therefore suggests adults play an important role when interacting with children (Aubrey and Riley, 2019). Friedrich Froebel believed play enables children the freedom of expression and allows them to be themselves. Furthermore, play is at the centre of learning for children, and it is through these means children build a knowledge and understanding of the world around them (Bruce, 2012).

One study carried out by King and Howard (2002) investigated how children play in the presence of adults and without. Howard's study suggests that children's perception of play differ greatly to that of practitioners and that what adults deem to be suitable activities for creative development differ according to that of the child's perception. Furthermore, time spent with adults leading play leads to a reduced window of opportunity for free play and that adult's taking control of play opportunities inhibits play greatly therefore has a detrimental effect for the development of self-esteem, confidence, and independence. Similarly, according to Robson and Rowe (2012) a study carried out observing children found that adults involved in initiating play and making play opportunities possible is important however, children initiating, and participating in their own play were found to be more engaged and more enthusiastic. Furthermore, this showed that children displayed the highest level of interest and engagement when involved in child led play than that led by an adult. Another study by McInnes *et al* (2013) states that play is a significant opportunity for development and learning but this can be inhibited when adults are involved, when children can be seen to perceive the activity as work rather than play. Ashiabi (2007) suggests that the role of practitioners is important for the development of children, in addition to this a blended approach of child led activities and skilful adult interaction can enhance experiences for children through play (Bell *et al*, 2002). McInnes concludes that children engaging in play where adults are available but not in immediate vicinity, participate in activities naturally and will use play cues to engage with practitioners. This is where the skills, knowledge and understanding of play of adults becomes important in allowing the natural flow of play not to be disrupted but enhanced by playful engagement.

One question needing to be asked is how can practitioners ensure observations are carried out fairly and accurately? Skinner's theory suggests that children learn behaviours from interacting and observing people around them therefore positive interactions with peers and adults are important for the development and wellbeing of children (Pound, 2014). Smidt (2005) believes

it is vital for practitioners to be vigilant and demonstrate an understanding of the importance of play when planning observations due to the fact that children's learning is directly affected by decisions adults plan for play opportunities. Palaiologou (2008) suggests it is important for practitioners to become a skilful observer by being objective during observation and not using one's own perceptions to record results, this is important because child and adult perception of play are somewhat different. Lidz (2003) believes practitioners must be trained up to date, be objective and unbiased when undertaking observations allowing children to play inhibited by the observer which will allow practitioners to make a more accurate observation regarding the development of the child.

There are many benefits to the observation of children during play. According to Sharman, Cross and Vennis (2004) observing children at play is always beneficial and enables practitioners to monitor, compare and identify potential concerns. Louis (2018) believes observing children during play allows practitioners to gain a good understanding of the interest of children which in turn enables practitioners to plan and create an exciting, stimulating, and playful learning environment for children to grow and flourish. When practitioners are observing children during play, they are witnessing the child's freedom of expression through personal choice, this encompasses how children express themselves, interact with peers, self-regulate, manage emotions, engagement in play opportunities and problem-solving skills (Landreth, 2012).

Reference list

- Andrews, M. (2017) *Exploring play for early childhood studies. First edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. (Accessed: 25th January 2022).
- Ashiabi, G.S. (2007) 'Play in the Preschool Classroom: Its Socioemotional Significance and the Teacher's Role in Play', *Early childhood education journal*, 35(2), pp. 199–207. doi:10.1007/s10643-007-0165-8. (Accessed: 17th February 2022).
- Aubrey, K. and Riley, A. (2019) *Understanding & using educational theories. 2nd edition*. London: SAGE Publications. (Accessed: 19th February 2022).
- Barber, J. and Paul-Smith, S. (2010) *Early years observation and planning in practice a practical guide for observation and planning in the EYFS*. London: Practical Pre-School Books. (Accessed: 15th February 2022).
- Bell, D. et al. (2002) *Researching effective pedagogy in the early years*. Norwich: DFES. (Accessed: 18th February 2022).

Bottrill, G. (2018) *Can I go & play now? rethinking the early years*. Los Angeles: SAGE. (Accessed: 6th February 2022).

Brown, F. (2014) *Play And Play work [electronic resource]: 101 Stories Of Children Playing*. :, McGraw-Hill Education. (Accessed: 10th February 2022).

Bruce, T. (2012) *Early childhood practice: Froebel today*. Los Angeles: SAGE. (Accessed: 29th January 2022).

Canning, N. (2011) *Play and practice in the early year's foundation stage*. Los Angeles: SAGE. (Accessed: 13th February 2022).

Daly, L. et al. (2015) *Loose parts: inspiring play in young children*. Saint Paul, Minnesota: Redleaf Press. (Accessed: 6th February 2022).

Department for children, schools and families (2009) *Learning, playing and interacting, good practice in the early year's foundation stage*. Available at: https://foundationyears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Learning_Playing_Interacting.pdf (Accessed: 10th February 2022)

Department for Education (2008). *Statutory framework for the early year's foundation stage. Setting the standards for learning, development, and care for children birth to five*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework_-_March_2021.pdf (Accessed: 12th February 2022).

Department for Education (2022) *Early years foundation stage profile*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1024319/Early_years_foundation_stage_profile_handbook_2022.pdf (Accessed: 13th February 2022)

DfCFS (2008) *Statutory framework for the early year's foundation stage*. Available at: https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/6413/7/statutory-framework_Redacted.pdf (Accessed: 3rd February 2022).

Duffy, B. (2006) *Supporting creativity and imagination in the early years. 2nd ed*. Buckingham [England: Open University Press. (Accessed: 5th February 2022).

Else, P. (2014) *Making sense of play: supporting children in their play*. Maidenhead, England: Open University Press. (Accessed: 5th February 2022).

Encyclopaedia of Children's Health (no date) *Play*. Available at: <http://www.healthofchildren.com/P/Play.html> (Accessed: 25th January 2022).

Garrick, R. (2009) *Playing outdoors in the early years. 2nd ed*. (Accessed: 15th February 2022).

Glazzard, J. (2010) *Assessment for learning in the early year's foundation stage*. London: SAGE. (Accessed: 12th February 2022).

Grimmer, T. (2019) *Calling all superheroes: supporting and developing superhero play in the early years*. Abingdon, Oxon; Routledge. (Accessed: 15th February 2022).

Hoffmann, J.D. and Russ, S.W. (2016) 'Fostering Pretend Play Skills and Creativity in Elementary School Girls: A Group Play Intervention', *Psychology of aesthetics, creativity, and the arts*, 10(1), pp. 114–125. doi:10.1037/aca000039. (Accessed: 6th February 2022).

Hudson, S.D. (2005) 'Playthings and Equipment that Encourage Child Initiated Play', *Teaching elementary physical education*, 16(2), p. 25–. (Accessed: 10th February 2022).

King and Howard (2019). *Children's perception of choice in their play at home, in the school playground and the after school club*. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332684662_King_and_Howard_-_Children%27s_Perception_of_Choice_in_their_Play_at_Home_in_the_School_Playground_and_the_After_School_Club (Accessed: 3rd February 2022).

Kinney, L. and Wharton, P. (2015) *An encounter with Reggio Emilia: children and adults in transformation*. Second edition. Abingdon, Oxon; Routledge. (Accessed: 6th February 2022).

Landreth, G.L. (2012) *Play therapy: the art of the relationship*. 3rd ed. New York, N.Y: Routledge. doi:10.4324/9780203835159. (Accessed: 19th February 2022).

Learning and teaching Scotland (2006). *The Reggio Emilia approach to Early Years Education*. Available at: https://education.gov.scot/nih/Documents/ELC/ELC35_ReggioEmilia/ELC35_ReggioAug06.pdf (Accessed: 6th February 2022).

Lidz, C.S. (2003) *Early childhood assessment*. New York: John Wiley & Sons. (Accessed: 19th February 2022).

Louis (2018) *Why observe children at play?* Available at: <https://www.himama.com/blog/why-observe-children-at-play/> (Accessed: 19th February 2022).

Matheson, D. (2013) *An introduction to the study of education* [electronic resource]. 4th ed. London: Routledge. (Accessed: 19th February 2022).

McInnes, K. et al. (2013) 'The nature of adult-child interaction in the early years classroom: Implications for children's perceptions of play and subsequent learning behaviour', *European early childhood education research journal*, 21(2), pp. 268–282. doi:10.1080/1350293X.2013.789194. (Accessed: 19th February 2022).

Miller, E. and Almon, J. (2009) 'Crisis in the kindergarten: why children need to play in school', *The Education digest*, 75(1), p. 42–. (Accessed: 10th February 2022).

Monmouthshire sir fynwy (2022) *The benefits of foundation phase nursery (FPN)*. Available at: <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/the-benefits-of-foundation-phase-nursery-fpn/> (Accessed: 12th February 2022).

Moyles, J. (2010) *The excellence of play*. 3rd ed. Berkshire, England: McGraw-Hill. (Accessed: 19th February 2022).

Moyles, J.R. (2010) *The excellence of play*. 3rd ed. Maidenhead [England]; Open University Press. (Accessed: 18th February 2022).

National Children's Office (2004) *READY, STEADY, PLAY! A national play policy*. Available at: <https://assets.gov.ie/24440/03bb09b94dec4bf4b6b43d617ff8cb58.pdf> (Accessed: 6th February 2022).

National day nurseries association (no date) *Foundation Phase*. Available at: https://www.ndna.org.uk/NDNA/Cymru/Knowledge_Hub/The_Foundation_Phase.aspx (Accessed: 12th February 2022).

Palaiologou, I. (2008) *Childhood observation*. Exeter [England: Learning Matters. (Accessed: 19th February 2022).

Paley, V.G. (2006) *A child's work: the importance of fantasy play*. Chicago, [Ill.]; University of Chicago Press. (Accessed: 6th February 2022).

Play Wales (2013). *The role of adults in children's play*. Available at: <https://www.playwales.org.uk/login/uploaded/documents/INFORMATION%20SHEETS/role%20of%20adults%20in%20childrens%20play.pdf> (Accessed: 6th February 2022).

Pound, L. (2014) *How children learn: educational theories and approaches - from Comenius the father of modern education to giants such as Piaget, Vygotsky and Malaguzzi. New and improved edition*. London: Practical Pre-School Books. (Accessed: 19th February 2022).

Ranz-Smith, D.J. (2007) 'Teacher Perception of Play: In Leaving No Child Behind Are Teachers Leaving Childhood Behind?', *Early education and development*, 18(2), pp. 271–303. doi:10.1080/10409280701280425. (Accessed: 10th February 2022).

Robson, S. and Rowe, V. (2012) 'Observing young children's creative thinking: engagement, involvement and persistence', *International journal of early years education*, 20(4), pp. 349–364. doi:10.1080/09669760.2012.743098. (Accessed: 19th February 2022).

Russ, S.W. (2014) *Pretend play in childhood: foundation of adult creativity*. First edition. Washington, District of Columbia: American Psychological Association. (Accessed: 6th February 2022).

Russ, S.W., Robins, A.L. and Christiano, B.A. (1999) 'Pretend Play: Longitudinal Prediction of Creativity and Affect in Fantasy in Children', *Creativity research journal*, 12(2), pp. 129–139. doi:10.1207/s15326934crj1202_5. (Accessed: 6th February 2022).

Scharer, J (2017). *Supporting young children's learning in a dramatic play environment*. Available at: <https://journals.uvic.ca/index.php/jcs/article/view/17895/7538> (Accessed: 5th February 2022).

Sharman, C., Cross, W. and Vennis, D. (2004) *Observing children: a practical guide*. 3rd ed. London: Continuum. (Accessed: 18th February 2022).

Sharman, C., Cross, W. and Vennis, D. (2015) *Summative assessment in the early years: a guide to observational techniques for anyone working with young children*. London, England;: Bloomsbury Education. (Accessed: 12th February 2022).

Sheridan, M.D. (Mary D., Alderson, D. and Howard, J. (2011) *Play in early childhood: from birth to six years*. 3rd ed., rev. and updated / by Justine Howard and Dawn Alderson. London;: Routledge.

Sheridan, M.D. Mary D. et al. (1999) *Play in early childhood from birth to six years*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge. (Accessed: 5th February 2022).

Smidt, S. (2005) *Observing, Assessing and Planning for Children in the Early Years*. London: Routledge Falmer. (Accessed: 19th February 2022).

Smidt, S. (2010) *Playing to learn: the role of play in the early years*. London: Routledge. (Accessed: 3rd February 2022).

Smith, P.K. (2009) *Children and play*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. (Accessed: 25th January 2022).

Sutton-Smith, B. (1966) 'Piaget on play: A critique', *Psychological review*, 73(1), pp. 104–110. doi:10.1037/h0022601. (Accessed: 13th February 2022).

Thomas, A. and Lewis, A. (2016) *An introduction to the foundation phase: early years curriculum in Wales*. London;: Bloomsbury Academic. (Accessed: 13th February 2022).

Thornton, L. and Brunton, P. (2005) *Understanding the Reggio approach: reflections on the early childhood experience of Reggio Emilia*. London: David Fulton. (Accessed: 6th February 2022).

Tonkin, A. and Whitaker, J. (2019) *Play and playfulness for public health and wellbeing*. Abingdon, Oxon; Routledge. doi:10.4324/9781351010450. (Accessed: 25th January 2022).

UNICEF (no date, b) *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Available at: [https://downloads.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/UNCRC_united_nations_convention_on_the_rights_of_the_child.pdf?_ad=sd=www.unicef.org.uk.1644143744814&_ad_ca=so%3DGoogle%26me%3Dorganic%26ca%3D\(not%2520set\)%26co%3D\(not%2520set\)%26ke%3D\(not%2520set\).1644143744814&_ad_cw=1644143714418.1644143744814&_ad_id=74f3a412-0506-4db3-bba2-278b919a97d2.1644143714.2.1644143714.1644143714.38abcd9-5772-43c4-9db4-29f9e8c99657.1644143744814&_ga=2.81985878.1165733322.1644143714-1542743531.1644143714](https://downloads.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/UNCRC_united_nations_convention_on_the_rights_of_the_child.pdf?_ad=sd=www.unicef.org.uk.1644143744814&_ad_ca=so%3DGoogle%26me%3Dorganic%26ca%3D(not%2520set)%26co%3D(not%2520set)%26ke%3D(not%2520set).1644143744814&_ad_cw=1644143714418.1644143744814&_ad_id=74f3a412-0506-4db3-bba2-278b919a97d2.1644143714.2.1644143714.1644143714.38abcd9-5772-43c4-9db4-29f9e8c99657.1644143744814&_ga=2.81985878.1165733322.1644143714-1542743531.1644143714) (Accessed: 6th February 2022).

UNICEF (No date). *How we protect children's rights with the UN convention on the rights of the child*. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/> (Accessed: 6th February 2022).

Wainwright, N. (2021) '*The foundation phase in Wales, outdoor learning and motor development*'. (Accessed: 12th February 2022).

Waters, J. (2016) '*The Foundation Phase in Wales – time to grow up?*' (Accessed: 13th February 2022).

Welsh Assembly Government (2002) *Play Policy*. Available at: <https://a-better.wales/pages/play-wales/pages/resources/WAG-play-policy-2002.pdf> (Accessed: 6th February 2022).

Welsh Assembly Government (2009). *The Foundation Phase Outdoors handbook*. Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/storage/fcb8539c-9be7-4883-8542-35d7b54b56f2/foundation-phase-outdoor-learning-handbook.pdf> (Accessed: 5th February 2022).

Welsh Government (2017) *Foundation Phase Profile Handbook*. Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/storage/f9d85dba-85a4-4e87-bb58-a24730ad7e57/foundation-phase-profile-handbook-revised-september-2017.pdf> (Accessed: 13th February 2022).

Welsh Government (no date) *Foundation Phase Profile frequently asked questions*. Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/840fa930-c037-4669-8251-4794991f9e91/frequently-asked-questions.pdf> (Accessed: 13th February 2022).

Welsh Government Education Wales (2019) *Statutory assessment arrangements for the Foundation Phase and end of Key Stages 2 and 3*. Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/53889241-676d-4e36-8e69-b9129f8ccf51/statutory-assessment-arrangements-for-the-foundation-phase-and-end-of-key-stages-2-and-3-190909.pdf> (Accessed: 13th February 2022).

White, J. (2014) *Playing and learning outdoors: making provision for high quality experiences in the outdoor environment with children 3-7*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge. doi:10.4324/9780203105429. (Accessed: 3rd February 2022).