

ECEY6010

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Part 1

According to (Donaldson, 2015) The Welsh government has acknowledged the importance of children in Wales by practitioners having access to the curriculum and assessments which allow children to meet their presents needs that will support them for their future lives. Children are only in school for a short period of time, practitioners should use the time wisely and correctly to support children to grow to become capable and healthy learners. The curriculum in many countries has become a strongly contested area of national policy. Children's learning in school has never been more important yet, deciding what children learn in school is seen as challenging. The curriculum can offer framework for practitioners to complete different task or activities over allocated time and a description of what should be included in the activities or tasks. The curriculum adapts to chances over time in the respond to different circumstances, changes can occur to the curriculum from developments in educational theory, psychology and more recently in neuroscience. Changes can also occur due to the developments in social, political and economic circumstance.

Play

(Broadhead, Howard and Wood, 2010) states that play should be accepted in children's learning throughout their time in early years education through the pedagogy, as play has been recognised as a vital part of children's learning and has also been recognised in government thinking and fundings. Practitioners are under pressure to help support children to meet their developmental needs. Practitioners that understand the environments that learning through play encounters are able to plan well thought activities for the children whilst respecting children and trust their judgment, practitioners that are aware of the importance of learning through play are making time for children to experience play in their settings. According to (McInnes et al., 2011) Practitioners in early years should allow children to take part in play and learning that is supported by pedagogy. However, research has shown that practitioners have different beliefs about children learning through play and how they incorporate learning through play in the setting. A study resulted had shown the practitioners do not engage in the discussion of pedagogy in early years and there were concerns that practitioners did not understand the concept of play for children, many practitioners noted their lack of understanding on play and how play relates to pedagogy. This effected practitioners by tackling children's play differently than others, by practitioners not having the correct understanding of play can result in practitioners not being aware of how to approach their role in children's play. Studies also showed that practitioners are not comfortable with children taking part in play, child led play and allowing children to have their own choices when playing. Practitioners are deeply concerned with managing and monitoring children's play and how to support their development which could reflect back to practitioners not

having the correct acknowledgement on play. (Nidirect, 2018) states children that experience playing is a natural way of children keeping healthy, happy, encourages children's development. Through play children will learn about the environments around them and themselves, play will improve children's cognitive, physical, social and their well-being. Further more (My first five years, n.d.) states that play for children has been defined as a crucial part of children's development and each child should have the right to experience play, each childcare setting should have accesses to the curriculum and guidance in the Early year foundation stage. Children explore when taking part in play, many school are taking part more in play-based approach in the foundation stage indoors and outdoors that allows children to use what they already know to help them discover things that they are yet to know and understand, extending their learning development. Through play children will be required to think, understand, create experiment, predict, problem solves, communicate and use their imagination independently and with other children and independently. According to (Siraj and Kingston, 2014) During the second year of implementations there was a drop in the standers of relation to literacy and interactions compared to the first year, it was believed this was due to the lack of planning for children's individual needs and the lack of understanding of play by practitioners. Practitioners were often guided by setting leaders and head teachers due to the implementation of the Foundation phase being poor, in some cases it had worked well but other practitioners lacked the understanding of theoretical and research. School settings that did not have an understanding on how to support children's learning through play which resulted in practitioners having an unstructured play environment, which did not work. Due to the lack of practitioners knowledge this resulted in practitioners working with children in a more formal environment to meet the standers of children's learning, as learning through play had been misunderstood rather than practitioners acknowledging that children learning through play can extend their learning on mathematical concepts, methods and develop their language.

Training

(Coughlan, 2017) states that quality of teachers has been acknowledged as a key factor for school standards, department of education has commented that it is vital for practitioners to have training to keep up to date with skills to allow children to have the best learning outcome as possible, yet pressures on schools funding may have impact on training practitioners attending training. Research has shown that less achieving school were less likely to spend money on training, practitioners that had access to training were more successful. With changes in the curriculum, examination and assessments is it vital for practitioners to have access to training to widen their knowledge to support children within their setting. (Siraj and Kingston, 2014) states that practitioners should feel confident in delivering the foundation phrase by having a clear understanding on how children learn and develop to support their development, practitioners will also need training to develop their understanding on the foundation phrase curriculum. Some early years setting are able to attend training through the Foundation phrase, will others not have access due to the setting not having the funding for practitioners to have training. Allowing practitioners to have training extends their understanding on how language, literacy

and numeracy in order to support children's development in the Foundation Phase and how as practitioners it is their role on supporting children's developments. (ThoughtCo, n.d.) states that practitioners can come into contact with changes in resources, curriculum, and training is not always available to practitioners to help to support them during the time of different changes, which can cause practitioners to become frustrated and make their work difficult as they try to figure out how to implement all the changes without the correct training or understanding. Furthermore (Kelly, 2016) states that practitioners keeping up to date with training is incredibly important when working in early years to ensure that practitioners carry out a high level of practice. Ofsted are interested in seeing how practitioners use their training to help support children's development in the setting, practitioners are able to share what they have learnt in training to other practitioners in their setting to help to meet the needs of the setting and children. If practitioners training and development needs are not met in the setting it may cause a negative impact on their level of work, as practitioners may feel as if they are not extending their knowledge resulting in their quality of teaching to suffer. Regular training for practitioners will allow practitioners to keep up to date with changes in legislation or changes in practice, which is vital for practitioners to help keep children safe and practitioners. Overall children's learning and development can have a positive impact with practitioners having access to all training as practitioners will gain confidence from training.

Outdoors

(Department for Education, 2021) states that Early years setting must provide outdoor opportunities for children and ensure that children have access to outdoors on daily basis. By children having the option to take part in outdoor activities can support children in my areas of their development in the early years. (Adran and Oes, n.d.) states that the Foundation Phase in Wales should promote discovery and independence for children in the outdoors environment for their learning. The Foundation Phase has noticed that the more practitioners see children engaged with learning outdoors, the more practitioners want to be outdoors with them. The outdoors offers stimuli such as weather, noise, smells and textures which supports children's development, it furthermore supports children's special, physical and creative skills which allows children to be able to learn better and to carry out high standards of learning through their lives. (Cowper, 2019) states that outdoor play allows children to gain an understand of the world around them and develop their skills such as their creativity and their imagination which supports children with their learning in the early years, but when it comes to practitioners taking children's play and learning outside in formal education it is not allows done in school settings. Practitioners express that outdoor learning comes with risk or risky play for the children which not all practitioners are fond of, children will experience risk all throughout their lives every day with some risks greater than others. The outdoor learning environment allows children to learn the risks and play in a fun environment, they will begin to understand boundaries from harm when playing which is vital for their development. Risky play is allowing children to take different opportunities for new experiences, practitioners need to gain confidences with outdoors learning in order to allow children to have access to the outdoors. Scotland want to allow children to experience the outdoors in their everyday lives. (Council for learning

outside the classroom, 2019) states that children are spending less time outdoors due to concerns of children's safety, traffic, crime and parental's worries. Technology has also had an impact on children experiencing the outdoors, for this reason educational settings have the best opportunities to give children access to outdoor environments with curriculum based lesson in many subjects. Practitioners agreed that children experience freedom when outside more than indoor learning, children were able to express themselves which allowed them to be able to move more freely. Practitioners had concerns on the safety of the children when outdoors, but as children became more familiar with the outdoor learning, they began to respect rules and boundaries that were put into place by practitioners. Practitioners found it difficult to assess children's learning outdoors and with the pressure to evidence learning it was difficult for practitioners, it was found to be a reason why practitioners did not use the outdoors. (Outdoor Classroom Day, 2018) state that practitioners are not using outdoors learning due to the pressure of the curriculum and blamed the weather for stopping children from going outdoors. A study showed that practitioners noticed that children's social skills were improved by spending time outdoors and that the children seemed happier, it was also noted that practitioners found that children concentrated more on learning when taking part in outdoor learning rather than indoors. According to (Kelly, 2016) a survey results shown that practitioners found it difficult to offer a high standard of learning with the outdoors, it also shown that practitioners need further training on this area of learning for the children. The survey highlighted that practitioners have concerns of risk for children in the outdoors and the lack of resources for children to use in their play also had an impact on practitioners including outdoor play in their setting. Parents also have concerns on outdoors learning for their children due to bad weather, health and safety and concerns about children getting dirty. Practitioners are able to share their knowledge on the benefits of outdoor learning to parents and others.

Part 2 - Unique child

(Early Years Matters, 2021) states that every child is unique. children develop at different stages at their own pace and in their unique ways. Children and their family members should be valued and not discriminated for their differences. According to (Early Years Matters, 2022) there are four themes of the revised EYFS, a unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments and learning and development. All four themes play a role in how the children will develop, play and learn within their setting. Practitioners play a role in supporting children by understanding and observing children in their development to be able to put plans into place to support them as they develop or if practitioners identify any additional needs that the children may have. All individuals should be valued and respected in the setting, no children or their family members should be discriminated due to their race, religious beliefs, or their abilities. The setting should allow children to develop in their own unique ways and promote equal opportunities that children and family members feel safe and included. (Bisford and Hodson, 2011) states that over the years there have been number of debates about the ages of children's development stages. It is now recognised that children develop milestones at different speeds which is normal, for example some children may walk at 9 months and others do not begin to walk until they are 15 months old. Every child is unique and will develop at their own

pace, practitioners are able to plan activities to support children to meet their development milestones and to support their learning. However, The Early years foundation stage recognises if children are a competent learner and a skilful communicator. The birth to three matters framework allowed practitioners to challenge traditional notions of describing children's development in different stages, instead of viewing the children in a holistic and multidimensional way. It was recognised that children have their own unique personalities, thoughts, emotions, ideas, and skills from birth. The Early years foundation that highlights that all children should be treated equally regardless of their race, religion, their abilities, gender, what type of family they come from, what language they can or are able to speak, what their parents do, or whether they come from a wealthy background or poor. Practitioners have the role to ensure that the setting provides activities that reflects on different cultures and languages that can reflect on the children's home environments by using correct resources such as different food, music or celebrations. (app.croneri.co.uk, n.d.) states that the Te Whariki approach acknowledges the importance of social and cultural learning, relationships with others, different environment settings and objects in the curriculum. There are four principles in the Te Whariki curriculum, Empowerment, Holistic Development, family, community and relationships. Empowerment in the curriculum encourages children to learn and grow where they are valued and appreciated which will support children's learning and development. Holistic development is built up of several factors that supports aspects of learning which are cognitive, physical, emotional, spiritual, social, and cultural. Practitioners need to have a good understanding on how the uniqueness of the children may have an impact on their development. Family and community are considered essential to the curriculum, practitioners should have a good understanding of the children's culture, beliefs', traditions, knowledge and their community in order to support the children's wellbeing. Practitioners should value all children's differences and respect parents' wishes for their children. As children develop, they will be being to experience different relationships with environments, objects and build relationships with other people. Relationships that children experience should be respectful and should bring encouragement to the children to grow with correct tools in an environment where children feel safe to develop. According to (Snow and Van Hemel, 2008) assessing children's development and learning has recently been highlighted as important for practitioners and children. Assessment activities can be beneficial for the children as it allows practitioners to provide information to their caregivers and other practitioners to help improve the children's care and their education development. However, children may become anxious or incompetent while being assessed by practitioners. (Pacey, no date) state Practitioners are able to carry out observations on the children within the settings, observations will allow practitioners to understand the needs of each child individually as a unique child. By practitioners observing the uniqueness of children, they will learn that each children's personalities differ even when the children come from the same family or similar backgrounds. By carrying out observation's practitioners will become familiar with each children's likes, dislikes, their needs and what stage the children are at with their development, allowing practitioners to analyse and to plan for children's correct needs to support their development further. Some children within the setting may exceed in their

development more than their expected level in one or more areas of learning, where other children may need more support from practitioners to help them become interested in what they need to learn more with motivation to meet the expected level. Practitioners have the duty in meeting the needs of all children that they care for in their setting. According to (Twinkl.co.uk, 2023) The Welsh curriculum and assessment arrangements are built on progression. Children learn at different rates and learn in different ways to reach their development stages. The curriculum for Wales guidance has been informed by international evidence of what it means to make progress in children's learning. Children's progression should be supported by practitioners through deep learning to enable children to widen their knowledge of learning over a period of time, the curriculum reflects that positive progression can be improved by assessment that allows practitioners to plan learning and teaching. Assessments should help practitioners to focus on moving the children's learning forward (WatchMeGrow 2016) states that practitioners are able to observe children as they play, communicate, think, and learn. By observing children, it allows practitioners to gain an understanding of how they see the world around them and their personalities. However, by practitioners using the check list observation method to tick off what the children are able to do, this will result in the practitioners missing the opportunity to analyse the unique nature of children's thinking, their level of understanding and learning. Practitioners often observe children on how much they are able to count, how many shapes that they are able to correctly identify or if they are able to identify the colour when asked practitioners, instead of observing their learning as they began to question and become curious. According to (Kelly 2015) When practitioners track children's progress in Early years to gain an understanding of what stage children are at with their development and to identify where children need support, it allows practitioners to be able to share information on the children's progress with parents and professionals if needed. Parents will be able to support children's development and learning at home. Practitioners are able to use various option methods to track children's development such as progress summary's, Individual and group cohort trackers. Different documents can be used to suit the setting and children. Furthermore (Nursery Resources | Blog, 2019) states that the most important reason for tracking children's progress in Early years is for practitioners to check if the children's overall development is on the correct track. Practitioners are required to indicate how children in their setting make progress with their learning and development to ensure they are reaching their full potential. Practitioners should be tracking children's progress regularly which will allow practitioners to identify if any of the children within the setting need support in different areas of development to ensure that they will be able to succeed. Children that are delayed with extra support may result in developmental disabilities in later life. One in six children have a developmental disability and only half get identified before starting a school setting, even though it is unclear on what causes children to have delays on development, early intervention can help support children.

Why is outdoors play important for children in The Early Years?

As an Early Years practitioner that has studied the importance of children experiencing learning activities outdoors, I would like to allow other practitioners to gain a better understanding of why children should have opportunities for outdoor learning in their settings. In the 1900s a French theorist, Jean Piaget developed a theory of cognitive development based on how children become aware of the world. The environment where children learn within would impact their development and their understanding of the world, Piaget believed that the outdoors learning environment allowed children to enhance their development and understanding. (Taylor, 2018)

(Welsh Assembly Government, 2009) states that The Foundation Phase in Wales allows children to have experiences in learning outdoors, where children are able to undertake experiential learning that the outdoors has to offer. The outdoor environment offers opportunities for children to be creative, to explore different risks and offers a large area of space for children to be able to move around and different weather conditions, sounds, smells and textures can contribute to the children's learning environment. The outdoor environment furthermore improves the quality of children's development in many areas. (Welsh Government, 2014) Highlights that The Foundation Phase significance the importance of outdoor learning through play for children in the early years. It is vital for practitioners to understand the benefits for children being exposed to outdoors learning, where appropriate activities can be planned that can allow children to become familiar and make sense of the world around them. Practitioners are able to allow children to have free play outdoors, allowing children to have the opportunity to carry out their own curiosity and to find out their own interests on the outdoor environment. Children should have access to the outdoors in all different weather conditions, the outdoors environment offers not only a positive impact on children's development, but also on their health and well-being. According to (Team, 2016) Outdoor learning allows children to connect with the environment which also benefits children's health. Children will begin to develop awareness of the world that they live in, children will come into contact with nature and will allow children to gain an understanding of the importance of plants, animals and other creatures. The outdoor environment can allow opportunities for children to move free in an open space, children's movement can support their brain development and learning.

(Welsh Government, 2015) Practitioners have stated that children's outdoor learning experiences rely on the weather. should children experience all types of weather that will improve their development? According to (Foundation Phase evaluation, 2015) Practitioners have stated that learning opportunities for children are often decided based on weather conditions. Children are observed engaging in more vigorous and dynamic activities when they are outdoors.

According to (McMartin, Toronto and ON, 2014) Children that have access to the outdoors in challenging weather conditions are more positive, creative and adapt better, after all children develop in all different types of weathers across the world.

Challenging weather allows children to experience risks that supports their development, allowing children to have access to risks is decreasing which may have a negative impact on how children prepare for risks in the future. According to (Kelly, 2016) Children should be entitled to outdoor learning regardless of the weather, children's settings can allow this to happen by having good resources such as an outdoor sheltered area, children are able to wear appropriate clothing to suit all different weather conditions during different seasons throughout the year which will allow the children to gain a better understanding of the world around them whilst having the opportunities to experience sensory experiences. Children's play should not be restricted due to weather conditions, weather should be embraced in their learning through play. According to (White, 2014) children have the right to experience outdoor learning. The outdoor environment can allow children to thrive when learning through play in the outdoors whilst coming into contact with real experiences and exploring in an environment where children's bodies and minds are able to develop. Children need opportunities to play outdoors, when children are given the choice to play outdoors most children want to. The outdoors offers children to have access to fresh air and direct experiences of how different weathers feel, children will come into contact with nature and living things that will expand their curiosity of the world around them and express different feelings.

Conclusion of outdoor play

Outdoor play support's children in their early years development and all children should have access to the outdoors within their setting and experience the world for themselves in all types of weather whilst wearing appropriate clothing. Early years settings should keep practitioners updated with the curriculum and The Foundation Phase in order to allow children to have best outcomes of learning.

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