

Early years curricula.

Section one – The curriculum

This essay will explore the implementation and critiques of play based learning in the early years' curricula, with detailed consideration of how funding can influence a curriculum and its outcomes.

Play based learning is implemented across the whole of an educational setting, indoors and outdoors (Education endowment foundation, 2023). The Curriculum for Wales (2015) highlights that the curriculum framework focuses on the holistic development of the child and play based learning through, experiences, skills, and problem solving. The curriculum for Wales (2015) expects both outdoor and indoor environments to reach these holistic developments, including the expectations that areas are fun, stimulating, safe, and encourage natural curiosity. The foundation phase was determined as a facilitator of play based learning, where learning should meet the individual needs of children. Furthermore, when developing a play-based environment to follow the curriculum, according to Doctoroff (2002) and McLean (2022) it is not as simple as creating an environment across the board that suits all settings, it should be high quality and inclusive to the needs of each child, considering all abilities and interests. Moreover, Article 31 in the UNCRC (ND) state that it is a fundamental right of a child to have access to play, regardless of their abilities, thus, creating barriers to the simplicity of having resources and areas already in place, a belief from Education Endowment Foundation (2015).

The view on funding when looked at in detail proves the expenditure needed for developments exceed all available budgets (Welsh Government, 2015). In contrast to this, each year schools are given funding through the National funding formula (NFF). This money is provided by the government and when funding schools the amount of money varies. This is based on factors such as entitlement to free school meals and location. It is seen as a fair way to allocate funding, with the aims to provide the same level of education wherever a child goes to school, however what is deemed a fair system to allocate funding, does not mean schools are receiving the correct amount of funding to support a play-based environment or curriculum and the challenges it faces (Education funding, 2020 and Gov.uk,2021 A, Gov.uk 2021 B).

There are many challenges to be faced when implementing a play-based curriculum. According to Mclean (2022), adults play a significant role in supporting a play-based environment, however minimum consideration has been given to the views of play varying from adult to adult. Furthermore, the adults' views on play can influence the environment they provide for a child. It can be difficult for adults to support children in a play-based curricula, when they have little understanding of the needs to play and how it is implemented (McLean, 2022, and Sabar 2006). Sabar (2006) states that when adults are given a written explanation of the changes in a curriculum, this is not an effective way to implement the changes into practice. Although according to Gov.UK (2015) the foundation phase final report says that the Government provided extensive training, this was provided through eight learning modules. Ninety percent of lead practitioners reported that they found this training 'useful' to supporting the implementation of the foundation phase. In contrast to this Gov.UK (2015) had not made it mandatory to complete the eight modules therefore there were some exceptionally low numbers showing that practitioners had not completed the training moreover, one hundred percent of leaders and managers reporting completion of all eight modules.

Implementing a play-based environment can have a positive impact on children's development, however, the variation in how the environment is implemented suggest that further research and training is needed for this strategy to reach its full potential (Mclean, 2015 and Waters, 2015). As a result, this can become costly to some settings who may require further staff training. Training may be needed in areas such as, expanding an understanding of how to develop a play-based environment where learning can take place, or training to recognise when intervention is needed and when observations should take place during play (Education endowment foundation, 2023, Burgess, 2010, and Mclean 2022) According to Mclean (2022) knowing when to intervene in play is seen as a skill and can be further developed by gaining the knowledge. This is backed up by other researchers such as, Hunter (2014), and McInnes et.al (2011).

As recorded in the Foundation phase report (Gov.UK, 2015) it was not made clear to schools what funding they had received that allowed staff to attend training.

However, in recent times, the new curriculum has provided a detailed explanation of how funding may be used, including developing and progressing the new curriculum,

through expanding knowledge and understanding to support teaching (Welsh Government, 2023)

According to Homrich-Knieling (2023) and Joy (2021) in order to successfully apply a play-based curriculum, it needs to be understood that it is more than simply applying a curriculum to a setting. Homrich-Knieling (2023) believes it should be taken into consideration that professional learning needs to take place, alongside collaborative monitoring, feedback, and critical reflection. Moreover, King (2019) highlights how teachers still find it difficult to find the time to have collaborative critical conversation and discussions. Joy (2021) believes having an up-to-date professional learning teaching practice, has proven to increase teachers' satisfaction. Despite these outcomes and benefits there is still no formal entitlement given to schools from the government to cover the costs of high-quality professional learning (Education policy institute 2021). Having a deeper understanding is fundamental to providing high quality education and a crucial element for children's learning outcomes (Joy 2021 and Jones, 2023). In contrast to this King (2019) believes many teachers enter their roles to make a difference. Focusing on play-based environments that highlight Childrens' strengths and learning that is meaningful to them, however these goals can become shadowed, as education and the Government focuses on improving standards and outcomes to increase knowledge economy. According to Waters (2015) a play environment should be positive and fun to enable this, adults should feel heard and supported throughout, moreover, when adults are supported, this can make a transition exciting, and seen as an opportunity to learn (Homrich-Knieling, 2023 and Waters, 2015).

Educational endowment foundation (2023) believe that to implement play-based learning across settings comes at minimal cost, as settings are believed to already provide the resources and areas needed to carry out what is expected in a play-based environment. However according to the results taken from the final foundation phase report, funding for outdoor space and making changes to existing premises was a huge factor highlighted in schools and non-maintained settings. The lack of funding for resources was acknowledged as a reoccurring barrier to implementing the foundation phase to its full potential (Welsh Government, 2015). Gov.UK (2021) state that schools have been confined to what building developments can be undertaken with funding, however the Government have highlighted this issue and

believe the capital budget should be allowed to be used more flexibly in future (Gov.uk, 2021). According to Keppler (2023) providing resources for schools should not be an afterthought in a world where education is supposed to be progressing. Lack of Government funding has become a reoccurring and major barrier to the implementation of learning in classrooms. The cost of resources and the limits to where teachers are able to spend them has become a main challenge raised in the curriculum report (Department for education, 2018, Welsh government, 2015 and National education union, 2023). The pressure of having a budget meant that adults felt that choosing the correct resources was challenging, it was reported that adults felt it was easier to make their own resources to meet the individual needs of children in the classroom, than have to choose resources they may need meet the unique child's requirements (Department for education, 2018 and National Education union, 2023).

Barrier's adults highlighted frequently when having to utilise a play-based curriculum were the specifications the government had provided, and the requirements of assessing children and their academic progression (National education union, 2023). The criteria expects adults to assess children as individuals in a play-based environment, however through lack of training seventy eight percent of assessments recorded in the foundation phase report, were adult led (Welsh government, 2015). Moreover, more than twenty five percent of studies have reported that teachers feel pressured by the government through policies and expectations of the delivery of the curriculum, therefore creating an obstacle to the way they deliver a play-based curriculum. The UNCRC (ND) and National education union (2023) state that play should be natural and driven by children, pressures should be removed from adults to allow for a calmer and more natural environment, where children can be free to explore, allowing for greater emotional well-being and enabling learning and development. As written into the UNCRC (UNICEF, ND) children have a right to play, rest and the enjoy activities they enjoy, allowing them to express themselves, this should be possible regardless of abilities. The curriculum highlights these rights and the rights to play, however, in practice adults are continuously faced with barriers that prevent the play-based curriculum being implemented to the standard that it is written in (Welsh government, 2015 and Keppler, 2023).

Section two- The 'unique child'

In this section the methods of assessments and tracking progress will be critically evaluated against the consideration of the unique child within a play-based curriculum.

According to Castle (2023) the dedications to supporting the unique child are based on health and well-being. The unique child focuses on implementing an inclusive practise that recognises children as individuals, taking into consideration that they develop at varying rates. It is a system that acknowledges that all areas of development are of equal importance (Castle, 2023 and Early years matters, 2023). Moreover, Fairchild (2020) believe that supporting the unique child in practice, and in a play-based environment that aims to aid learning, development, and care faces challenges. One of these challenges being how the attainment of a child is measured focusing on the child as an individual, whilst maintaining equality and diversity (Fairchild, 2020 and Dalton, 2018, p.14).

According to Department for education (2015) children need play, exploration, creativity, and physical play to develop accordingly and to reach milestones. However, all children develop at different rates, therefore tracking progress based on milestone expectations can be difficult (department for education, 2015). The foundation phase (Welsh gov, 2015, B) highlighted the importance of allowing children to learn new skills, and have the opportunities to practise, reflect and evaluate their own progress in a play-based environment. However, despite using observations to assess children being a core element to the foundation phase, a high number of observations would still occur during focused literacy and numeracy activities (Welsh Gov, 2015 B and Masipa, 2013). Early years matters (2023) believes this does not support the unique child's needs. Observing children is vital, however observing children as unique, allows adults to witness first hand a child's abilities and talents. Observing children alone also allows adults to gauge a child's next steps in development or where they may need extra support (Masipa, 2013 and Early years matters, 2023) Moreover, according to Dann (2002, P. 176) and Welsh gov (2015, B) if assessments are seen as an important part of learning, that we allow children to be a part of, and children are given the opportunities to self-assess

through a play-based environment, children will begin to make their own judgements about their progress and next steps of development naturally (Dann, 2002, p.176).

The foundation phase used holistic activities to gather observations and other formative assessments following the seven areas of learning. According to Masipa (2013) research proved that although teachers were assessing children as individuals following these seven areas, children were still being assessed in the same ways, therefore this was not an inclusive method of assessment. Without inclusive methods of assessments teachers are unable to find ways in which a child learns (Bourke and mentis, 2014). A report was carried out by Graham Donaldson and results found, that no two schools are the same, and no curriculum would be implemented the same way as children are unique. Schools have been given permission to break away from the tick box assessment expectations and implement things differently (The curriculum for Wales, 2022 and Successful futures, 2015). Therefore, teachers found themselves standing back from gathering evidence of development and spent more time with the children, allowing them to get to know children as the unique child, this led to improved accuracy to observations, and more empowered teachers who felt their own judgment was welcomed (Edwards, 2020 and Successful futures, 2015). In contrast to this, Schools week (2018) believe that children should be tested more often, to build a bigger picture of learning. Furthermore, children should be tested from a more holistic approach that focuses on how interested an individual is in a certain subject, and the knowledge they hold.

Despite these views, the early years foundation stage is beginning to reflect the Te Whariki curriculum in terms of its values. The Te Whariki curriculum believes that children interact with their surroundings and the environment, it is believed that learning opportunities to suit children as unique individuals can be found in any environment (Veazey, 2020). Similarly, the new curriculum stated that the environment a child attends is irrelevant, the environment aims are to nurture and support children's individual needs (Welsh Government, 2021). Te Whariki focuses completely on the unique child and also their family. Considering a child's potential and the capabilities of their imagination (Veazey, 2020 and Solar and Miller, 2010). According to Kamini (2019) when assessing in the Te Whariki curriculum children are not assessed against milestones, assessments are purely focused on what an individual child is attempting to achieve through play and within a play-based

environment. Teachers are encouraged to motivate children to reach their full potential through their own personal interests (Which school advisor, 2016). Solar and Miller (2020) describe learning stories as one way of observing children that avoids assessing a child on specific skills and checking their skills against a list. It focuses more on their personal development in a non-bias way. Te Whariki curriculum is seen as successful as it combines, philosophies, approaches, and context, in order to create a unique, identifiable curriculum that suits, the child, the adult, and the environment (which school advisor, 2016 and Solar and Miller, 2020). Although there are some similarities between how the foundation stage and Te Whariki that aim to suit the unique child in a play-based environment, the differences in implementation and assessment are significant. The EYFS is much more detailed and explicit, whereas Te Whariki, has much more freedom (Solar and Miller, 2010, Welsh government, 2015).

It is written in the early year foundation stage framework, that children should be treated as individuals, in contradiction to this they also wrote that all children 'must' be assessed following the early years' goals (Department for education, 2023). In contrast to this, children with high needs challenge a standard view of what it means to learn and to assess, assessment expectations need to be flexible and understanding (Bourke and Mentis, 2014 and Kilgour, 2024). When adults do not observe a child as a whole child, adults are unable to effectively implement further learning and next steps into the environment. According to Kilgour (2024) Whole child assessments are often bias judgements, although through experience and training adults are able to focus less on expectations and more on the developments of a child as an individual, allowing for a play environment that teachers can adapt accordingly (Bolt and Roach 2009, p. 17-20, and Kilgour, 2024). Furthermore, not observing a child as an individual can also create barriers in finding the correct ways to communicate with families, the child, and even funding opportunities that would support funding for high needs in a setting (Bourke and Mentis, 2014). Individual development plans came into action in 2022, and National autistic society (2024) and Sense (2023) believe this meets the requirements of a unique child with additional learning needs, as it provides a description of an individual child's needs and what support would be required from their education in terms of progression. Although Welsh parliament (2022) raised concerns, that the lower need cases of ALN learner

may be left behind and not qualify to receive IDPs as it would be extra work to provide individual IDPs for all learners with ALN. Pacey (2024) highlight that adults also need to be mindful that Children with ALN may not be diagnosed at the beginning of joining a setting, and the observations and assessments carried out on individual children may play a part in identifying progression levels that could link to ALN needs (Pacey, 2024).

Piaget believed in two stages developments, the heteronomous stage and the co-operation and autonomy stage, however age stage expectations such as this do not take into consideration the socio-cultural factors a child entails (Bourn, 2017). In contrast to Piaget's stages of development Huang (2018) believes that the unique child is not just focusing on how a child progresses in a play-based environment, or their resources and surroundings in education. A huge factor in a child's development is linked to the culture they grow up in. Vygotsky also believed that every child is also unique in their personal environment and the world around them, there are many different inputs and specifications in culture that impact and child's beliefs and the way they behave that could lead to differences in development. (McLeod, 2024). Language can play a huge part in a child's progression and how they think, moreover, the focus topics of conversations in culture vary, resulting in a difference in priorities and the rules that coincide with these beliefs. These differences can play a part in how a child views themselves as individuals and their self-belief (Huang, 2018 and McLeod, 2024). In order to support the unique child through culture, practitioners should act as role models, to help children to become curious about a diverse world (Gov.UK, ND).

Children in a play-based curriculum should feel respected, and their uniqueness should be celebrated, this will allow children to embrace their individuality and create a sense of identity (Porter, 2021). Ken Robinson believes that if we do not allow children to make mistakes, learn and grow independently, then nothing new will ever be invented. Children need to explore, experiment, and problem solve to allow unique individuals to become creative (TED, 2021).

Section three – Ambitious capable learners in the new curriculum.

According to Welsh Government (2022) Children in the new curriculum for Wales will be supported to develop and become ambitious capable learners, as part of the four purposes in the new curriculum. Equal (2023) believe the expectations of enabling a capable learner is to allow children to become confident individuals who love to learn and show excitement towards personal development and learning new skills. Setting up the foundations within the curriculum to create ambitious learners, is said to set children up to succeed in life. Children develop a readiness to continue to learn throughout their lives (Equal 2023, Building learner power, 2018 and Estyn, 2017). All children should have access to an ambitious curriculum regardless of their starting point in development. Children who find learning more difficult should have opportunities to become ambitious learners, adults can implement strategies that allow children to have the same opportunities by scaffolding learning, group work or modelling (Moore, 2022).

Allowing children to take control of their learning in the new curriculum, allows for mistakes and problem solving, Children need to be aware that mistakes are part of life, when children are not afraid to make mistakes in setting, they are more likely to try new things (Singh, ND). Estyn (2017) believes that children see their mistakes as learning opportunities and will begin to know their own learning needs. Ken Robinson believes that education can set you up to comply and that there are only right or wrong answers (TED, 2021). However, research has shown that making mistakes enhances, creativity, performance, and memory (Emamzadeh, 2022). Ways in which children can take control of their learning in a play-based curriculum can be through, having more access, flexibility in routines, involvement in planning and next steps, self-assessments, and reflection on activities and sessions (Teach thought, 2019 and Pandolpho, 2018). Practitioners can find allowing children to take control of planning and reflecting quite daunting, however allowing children to do this independently can highlight a child's interest and their next steps to the practitioners (Kelly 2016).

Cerino (2021) states that to enable capable learners in the new curriculum, the environment would need to be open to explore freely. Inspiring early years (2020) believe that a play-based environment should include areas that encourage

exploration and opportunities to become capable learners, the area should also be safe and secure to allow complete independence. Open play-based environments allow children to make their own decisions, such as where they would like to play, and what they would like to do. A play-based setting with choices creates curiosity, imagination, and experimentation. However, complete control over a setting is unnecessary. Children still need guidance from adults to make good choices and take responsibility for the choices they make (National quality standard professional learning program, 2013, Cerino, 2021, and Inspiring early years, 2020).

The new curriculum for Wales believes that the benefits of outdoor learning are endless in creating capable learners. Outdoor learning has become key to implementing a child centred pedagogy. Outdoor learning can fulfil the role of ambitious capable learners in the curriculum as sometimes children struggle to acknowledge learning as part of everyday life. Learning in the outdoors allows children to understand the depths to learning in everyday life, therefore creating ambitious learners who are preparing to continue to learn throughout their lives (Learning through landscapes, 2023, Welsh government, 2022 and Inspiring early years, 2020).

According to Vinikas (2023) implementing curious learners into the curriculum can only work when the children are central to the environment. A practitioner's responsibility would be to structure a learning environment and not take control of it. Practitioners need to become enabling adults. Strong relationships between practitioners and children need to be built and a level of trust is to be gained through open communication, encouragement and ensuring the child's voice is taken seriously and they are heard (Vinikas, 2023, Tes, 2014). In contrast to this Murray (2019) highlights that the term 'Children's voice' is often seen as a collective, and that all children have the same view, however children need to be seen as individuals and have their personal views taken seriously in order to implement ambitious capable learners into the new curriculum (Murray, 2019).

According to Wesh Government (2023) when a setting has enabling adults this can create curious learners, it allows children to become resilient, take risks and challenge themselves in ways they would not in an adult controlled environment. In order to implement capable learners into the curriculum, adults need to know the

whole child, this can be done through observations, observing a child allows adults to help children take control of their individual goals (Welsh Government, 2023).

When children struggle to reach their goals, enabling adults can share experiences of times when they struggled but overcame the difficulties, because of their love and passion for a particular area of learning (McCombs, 2015 and Welsh Government, 2023).

Research suggests that children are born scientists and from the day they are born they are capable of exploring their environment and learning from it (McClure, 2017). When implementing ambitious capable learners into the curriculum, ideally practitioners need to keep the ambition alive. Laser (2017) believe that to support this children should be encouraged to explore their full potential, challenged to limits they didn't expect to reach, then praised for their successes, and encouraged that anything is possible (Vikas 2024 and McCure, 2017). Children are capable of reaching their personal goals when given control of their world. According to McCure, (2017) being in control allows children to become independent and value their own identity. It allows helps children to realise their opinions and beliefs are important and valued by those around them, developing an understanding that their voice is important and should be heard (UNICEF, ND, and Laser, 2017)

Early years curricula references

Bolt, S and Roach A. (2009) *Inclusive Assessment and Accountability: A Guide to Accommodations for Students with Diverse Needs*. New York: Guilford press.

Bourke, R and Mentis, M. (2014) 'An assessment framework for inclusive education: integrating assessment approaches.' *Assessments in education: Principles, policies, and practice*, 21 (4), pp. 384-397. Available at:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2014.888332>

Bourn, D. (2017) *Childhood development stages and learning on global issues*.

Available at: [253_global_learning.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/611112/253_global_learning.pdf) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

Building learning power. (2018) *Ambitious capable learners*. Available at:

[AmbitiousCapableLearners_v9_Part1.pdf \(buildinglearningpower.com\)](https://www.buildinglearningpower.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/AmbitiousCapableLearners_v9_Part1.pdf) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

Burgess, K, Robertson, G, Patterson, C. (2010) Curriculum implementation: Decisions of early childhood teachers. 'Australasian journal of early childhood' 35. (3). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/183693911003500307>

Castle, D. (2023) *A unique child*. Available at: [A Unique Child \(warwick.ac.uk\)](https://www.warwick.ac.uk/news-events/news/2023/a-unique-child) (Accessed: 13 January 2024).

Cerino, A. (2021) 'The importance of recognising and promoting independence in young children: the role of the environment and the Danish Forest school approach' *Education 3-13*. (51), pp. 685-694. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2021.2000468>

Curriculum for Wales. (2015) *The foundation phase*. Available at: [foundation-phase-framework-revised-2015.pdf \(gov.wales\)](https://curriculum.wales/foundation-phase-framework-revised-2015.pdf) (Accessed: 4 January 2024).

Dalton, J. (2018) *Advanced work-based practice in the early years*. Routledge: London.

Dann, R. (2002) *Promoting assessment as learning*. Routledge: London.

Department for education. (2015) *What to expect, when?* Available at: [what to expect when. a parents guide.pdf \(eyalliance.org.uk\)](https://www.eyalliance.org.uk/what-to-expect-when-a-parents-guide.pdf) (Accessed: 13 January 2024).

Department for Education. (2018) *Use and perceptions of curriculum support resources in schools*. Available at: [Use and perceptions of curriculum support resources in schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/714442/Use-and-perceptions-of-curriculum-support-resources-in-schools.pdf) (Accessed: 9 January 2024).

Department for education. (2023) *Early years foundation stage statutory framework*. Available at: [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1184442/Early-years-foundation-stage-statutory-framework.pdf)

Department of education. (ND) *Play matters*. Available at: [Play Matters | Department of Education \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/play-matters) (Accessed: 5 January 2024).

Doctoroff, S. (2001) 'Adapting the physical environment to meet the needs of all young children for play', *Early childhood educational journal*. 29, p. 109. Available at: [Adapting.pdf \(smccd.edu\)](https://www.smccd.edu/adapting.pdf)

Early years matter. (2023) *Observation, Assessment, and planning*. Available at: [Observation, Assessment and Planning - Early Years Matters](https://www.earlyyears.gov.uk/observation-assessment-and-planning) (Accessed: 13 January 2024).

Early years matters. (2023) *A unique child*. Available at: [A Unique Child - Early Years Matters](https://www.earlyyears.gov.uk/a-unique-child) (Accessed: 13 January 2024).

Education endowment foundation. (2015). *Play-based learning*. Available at: [Play-based learning | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/play-based-learning) (Accessed: 22 December 2023).

Education policy institute. (2019) *The cost of high-quality professional development for teachers in England*. Available at: [The cost of high-quality professional development for teachers in England - Education Policy Institute \(epi.org.uk\)](https://www.epi.org.uk/the-cost-of-high-quality-professional-development-for-teachers-in-england) (Accessed: 9 January 2024).

Edwards, H. (2020) *Assessment tick lists in the early years*. Available at: [Assessment ticklists in the early years | Tapestry UK](https://www.tapestry.co.uk/assessment-ticklists-in-the-early-years) (Assessed: 17 January 2024).

Emamzadeh, A. (2022) *To learn better, make mistakes*. Available at: [To Learn Better, Make Mistakes | Psychology Today](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/articles/202202/to-learn-better-make-mistakes) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

Equal. (2023) *Curriculum for Wales: The Four purposes*. Available at: [Curriculum for Wales: The Four Purposes \(equaleducationpartners.com\)](https://equaleducationpartners.com) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

Estyn. (2017) *Encouraging independent learners*. Available at: [Encouraging independent learners | Estyn \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

Fairchild, N. (2020) *The early years foundation stage 2021: challenges and opportunities*. Available at: [The early years foundation stage \(2021\): Challenges and opportunities | BERA](#) (Accessed: 13 January 2024).

Gov.uk. (2021) *The education hub – how does school funding work and how does the budget effect it*. Available at: [How does school funding work and how does the Budget affect it? - The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](#) (Accessed: 3 January 2024).

Gov.uk. (2021) *The education hub – what you need to know about how we're making it fairer for all*. Available at: [School funding: What you need to know about how we're making it fairer for all - The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](#) (Accessed: 3 January 2024).

Gov.UK. (ND) *Diverse world*. Available at: [Diverse world - Help for early years providers - GOV.UK \(education.gov.uk\)](#) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

Homrich-Knieling, M. (2023) *Things to consider before your school adopts a new curriculum*. Available at: [Things to Consider Before Adopting a New Curriculum – BetterLesson](#) (Accessed: 8 January 2024).

Huang, C. (2018) *How culture influences children's development*. Available at: [How culture influences children's development \(theconversation.com\)](#) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

Hunter, T and Walsh, G. (2014). "From Policy to Practice?: The Reality of Play in Primary School Classes in Northern Ireland." *International Journal of Early Years Education* 22 (1), p. 19–36. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2013.830561>.

Bubikova-Moan, J, Hjetland, H, and Wollscheid, S. (2019) 'ECE teachers' views on play-based learning: a systematic review' *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 27 (6), p. 776-800. Available at DOI: [10.1080/1350293X.2019.1678717](https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2019.1678717)

Jones. (2023) *Teachers' professional development remains a work in progress*. Available at: [Teachers' professional development remains a work in progress - Ofsted: schools and further education & skills \(FES\) \(blog.gov.uk\)](#) (Accessed: 8 January 2024).

Joy, K. (2021) *How to implement effective professional development for teacher*. Available at: [Implementing effective professional development for teachers | Cambridge](#) (Accessed: 8 January 2024).

Kelly. (2016) *Implementing children's individual planning*. Available at: [Implementing Children's Individual Planning - Early Years Careers](#) Accessed: 20 January 2024).

Kilgour, S. (2024) *Inclusive assessment: How to do it in early years*. Available at: [Inclusive assessment – How to do it in Early Years | A Unique Child | Teach Early Years](#) (Accessed: 14 January 2024).

King, F. (2019) Professional learning: empowering teachers? '*Professional development in education*', 45 (2), p. 169-172. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2019.1580849>

Laser, A. (2017) 'Encouraging your child to lead' *NAEYC*, 3, July. Available at: [Encouraging Your Child to Lead | NAEYC](#) (Accessed: 20 January 2024).

Learning through landscapes. (2023) *How outdoor learning can help you fulfil the four purposes of the curriculum for Wales*. Available at: [How outdoor learning can help you fulfil the four purposes of the new Curriculum for Wales \(Itl.org.uk\)](#) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

McClure, E. (2017) *More than a foundation: young children are capable STEM learners*. Available at: [More Than a Foundation: Young Children Are Capable STEM Learners | NAEYC](#) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

McCombs, B. (2015) *Developing reasonable and autonomous learners: A key to motivating students*. Available at: [Developing responsible and autonomous learners: A key to motivating students \(apa.org\)](#) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

McInnes, K, Howard, J, Miles, G and, Crowley, K. (2011) 'Differences in Practitioners' Understanding of Play and How This Influences Pedagogy and Children's Perceptions of Play.' *Early Years* 31 (2), p.121–133. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09575146.2011.572870>.

McLean, K, Lake, G, Wild, M, Licandro, U, Evangelou, M. (2022) 'Perspectives of play and play-based learning: What do adults think play is?' *Australasian journal of early childhood*. 48 (1). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/18369391221130790>

McLeod, S. (2024) *Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development*. Available at: [Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory Of Cognitive Development \(simplypsychology.org\)](#) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

Moore, M. (2022) *How to design an ambitious primary curriculum*. Available at: [How to design an ambitious primary curriculum | Cornerstones Education](#) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

Murray, J. (2014) Hearing young children's voices. '*International journey of early years education*' 27, p. 1-5. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2018.1563352>

Sabar, N and Shafriri, N. (1981) 'The Need for Teacher Training in Curriculum Development.' *Journal of In-Service Education*. 8 (1), p. 22-27. Available at: DOI: 10.1080/0305763810080105

National autistic society. (2024) *Individual development plans*. Available at: [Individual development plans \(autism.org.uk\)](#) (Accessed: 14 January 2024).

National education union. (2023). *Current school funding levels are inadequate*. Available at: [Current school funding levels are inadequate | National Education Union \(neu.org.uk\)](#) (Accessed: 8 January 2024).

National quality standard professional learning program. (2013) *Promoting independence and agency*. Available at: [NQS PLP E-Newsletter No64.pdf \(bcc.edu.au\)](#) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

Pacey. (2024) *An inclusive practice*. Available at: [An inclusive practice | PACEY](#) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

Pandolpho, B. (2018) *Putting students in charge of their learning*. Available at: [Putting Students in Charge of Their Learning | Edutopia](#) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

Porter, L. (2021) *EYFS 'the unique child' explained*. Available at: [EYFS 'The Unique Child' Explained - Sophie's Nursery \(sophiesnursery.com\)](#) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

Schools' week. (2018) *Ofsted's curriculum focus 'risks being tick box exercise'*. Available at: [Ofsted's curriculum focus 'risks being a tick-box exercise' \(schoolsweek.co.uk\)](#) (Accessed: 17 January 2024).

Sense. (2023) *Additional learning needs in Wales*. Available at: [Additional learning needs in Wales - Sense](#) (Accessed: 14 January 2024).

Singh, A. (ND) *How the teach kids to embrace failure and learn from mistakes 12 ways*. Available at: [How To Teach Kids to Embrace Failure and Learn From Mistakes- 12 Ways — Educator Mom Hub | Supporting Moms of Young Children](#) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

Solar, J and Miller, M. (2010) 'The Struggle for Early Childhood Curricula: A comparison of the English Foundation Stage Curriculum, Te Whāriki and Reggio Emilia' *Early years education* 11, p.57-68. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966976032000066091>

Stokes, H. (2023) *The barriers to utilising play-based learning in England's primary school classrooms*. Available at: [The barriers to utilising play-based learning in England's primary school classrooms | BPS](#) (Accessed: 9 January 2024).

Successful futures. (2015) *Looking at the Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales*. Available at: [succesful-futures-a-summary-of-professor-graham-donaldsons-report.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

Teach thought. (2019) *10 ways to give student more control of their education*. Available at: [Ways to Give Students More Control of Their Education \(teachthought.com\)](#) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

TED. (2021) *Why schools need to embrace kids' creativity*. Available at: [Bing Videos](#) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

Tes. (2014) *How to develop independent learners*. Available at: [tes strategies to develop independent learners.pdf](#) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

UNICEF. (ND) *How do we protect children's rights*. Available at: [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child - UNICEF UK](#) (Accessed: 20 January 2024).

Vikas, E. (2024) *Helping children become more ambitious*. Available at: [Helping children become more ambitious - Epistemo Vikas Leadership School](#) (Accessed: 20 January 2024).

Vinikas, I. (2023) *Independent learning: What it is and how it works*. Available at: [Independent Learning: What It Is and How It Works - Kaltura](#) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

Waters, J. (2016). *The foundation phase in Wales- Time to grow up?* Available at: [Microsoft Word - Final%20author%20version%20WJE\[1\].docx \(uwtsd.ac.uk\)](#) (Accessed: 4 January 2024).

Welsh Government. (2015) *Foundation phase framework*. Available at: [foundation-phase-framework-revised-2015.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#) (Accessed: 22 December 2023).

Welsh government. (2015) *Foundation phase profile*. Available at: [frequently-asked-questions.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#) (Accessed: 13 January 2024).

Welsh Government. (2015). *Evaluating the foundation phase final report*. Available at: [Evaluating the Foundation Phase: Final report \(gov.wales\)](#) (Accessed: 22 December 2023).

Welsh Government. (2021) *Evaluation of the childcare offer for Wales: Year 4*. Available at: [Evaluation of the Childcare Offer for Wales: year 4 \(emerging findings\) | GOV.WALES](#) (Accessed: 14 January 2024).

Welsh Government. (2022) *Developing a vision for curriculum design*. Available at: [Developing a vision for curriculum design - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

Welsh Government. (2023) *Curriculum for Wales planning and priorities guide*.

Available at: [220217-curriculum-planning-and-priorities-guide.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

(Accessed: 22 December 2023).

Welsh Government. (2023) *Curriculum for Wales: the journey to curriculum roll-out*.

Available at: [Curriculum for Wales: the journey to curriculum roll-out - Hwb](#)

[\(gov.wales\)](#) (Accessed: 8 January 2024).

Welsh government. (2023) *Enabling learners*. Available at: [Enabling learning - Hwb](#)

[\(gov.wales\)](#) (Accessed: 19 January 2024).

Welsh parliament. (2022) The new Additional Learning Needs system: the tough task of implementation. Available at: [The new Additional Learning Needs system: the](#)

[tough task of implementation \(senedd.wales\)](#) (Accessed: 14 January 2024).

Which school advisor. (2016) *Te Whariki*. Available at: [In-depth Guide to Te Whāriki,](#)

[plus all UK schools following it \(whichschooladvisor.com\)](#) (Accessed: 17 January

2024).