

Jordan MacDonald

Leadership skills in entrepreneurship portfolio ECEY6012

I acknowledge the use of (CHAT GPT) on (9th February 2026) to create a business style poster to support my idea. I edited the wording suggestions with my own ideas.

I acknowledge the use of (CHAT GPT) on (8th February 2026) to help me with ideas for a business name.

I acknowledge the use of (CHAT GPT) on (12th February 2026) to find me options for service name ideas.

I acknowledge the use of (CHAT GPT) on (1st March 2026) to give me suggestions for subheadings for my Part 2b using all my own written work.

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

Contents:

Component 1 – Business pitch – 10 minutes

Component 2a – Business Plan

Component 2b – Academic writing

Reference list

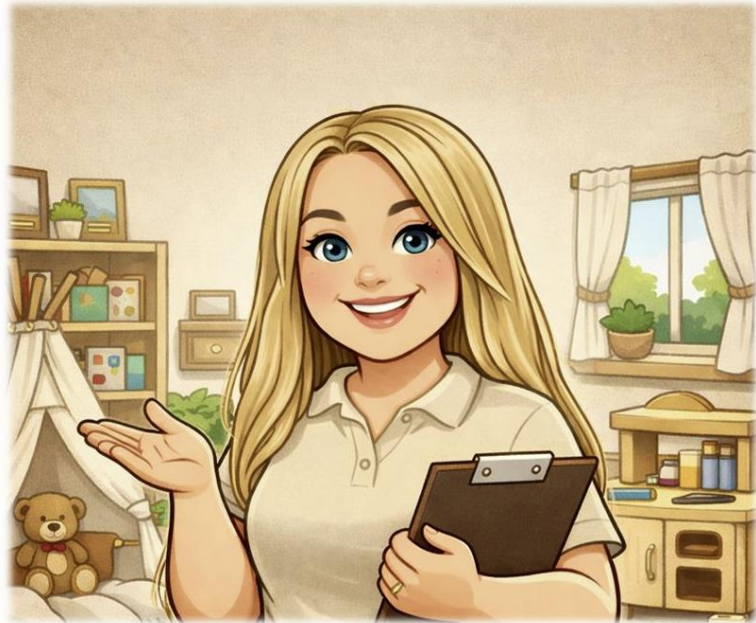
Component 1 – Business pitch PowerPoint screen shots

Welcome & Introduction

- Prynhawn da
- I am very excited to be presenting to you today, my idea of a service that supports child development

Presented by Jordan MacDonald
2411206

2/23/2026



- I have been an early years practitioner for over 5 years and from my professional experience I understand the importance of effective environments in supporting child development.
- With many early years settings now embracing a free play approach, it is more important than ever that classrooms are thoughtfully organised and presented in ways that encourages independence and sparks curiosity (Birth to 5 Matters, 2021).
- Observations within my setting highlighted that not all areas were effectively supporting purposeful play, ultimately limiting opportunities for child development
- From this, I began create a plan to enhance the learning space, focusing on improving accessibility, using open-ended resources and enabling independence.
- In doing this, I quickly realised that I had the knowledge and skills to create an effective learning space; however, finding the time to implement these changes alongside my daily responsibilities was a significant challenge.
- This prompted me to consider whether professionals like me who wanted to create amazing spaces for their children were being held back by similar challenges.
- Conversations with colleagues confirmed that time was a common restriction and that limited funding and lack of experience was also preventing them from transforming their environments effectively.

2/23/2026



Introducing.....

It was from that thought that I created my business concept.

Introducing to you....



Business Overview

- My business idea focuses on empowering early years practitioners to enhance their learning environment, contributing to positive learning outcomes (Bottrill, 2022).
- By working collaboratively with practitioners, I aim to support the transformation of their learning environments into spaces that promote holistic child development (Department for Education, 2025).
- When the environment is thoughtfully designed, practitioners can dedicate more time to high-quality teaching and focus on reaching each child's fullest potential (Burnham, 2016).
- I currently offer two levels of support: The thoughtful review provides a bespoke action plan with practical recommendations for practitioners to implement in their own time, or they can opt for a full thoughtful transformation service, where I bring the agreed vision to life by physically redesign the space on their behalf.
- Either way, I prioritise sustainability by making suggestions to reuse and or repurpose existing resources wherever possible and use recycled or low-cost materials to enhance provision (The Curiosity Approach, 2018). This helps to reduce waste and avoid unnecessary purchases.
- Through my services and with my support, practitioners can create environments that truly work to support children's development and align with current guidance set out by Welsh Government (2024)

2/23/2026

5



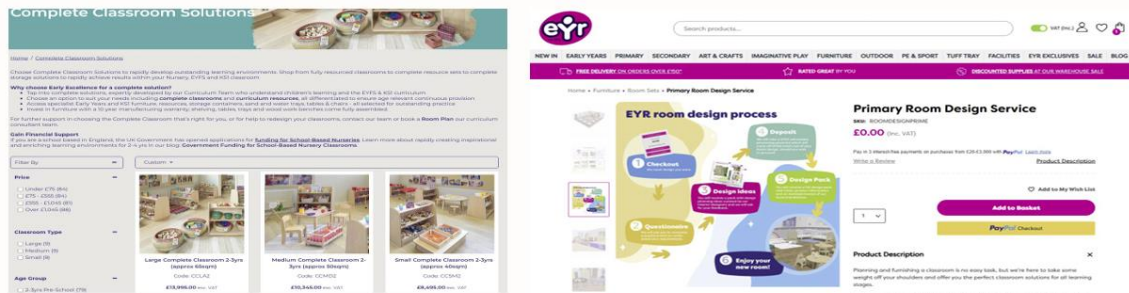
Importance of the environment



2/23/2026

- Department for Education (2024) says that the environment must reflect the unique needs of each child. That is why I work collaboratively with practitioners, as they know their children best. Together we can develop tailored spaces that respond directly to the specific needs and interests of each child within the setting.
- This includes ensuring environments are inclusive and accessible, allowing all children to fully participate in learning opportunities, regardless of inequalities. An inclusive environment actively removes barriers and is reflective of all cultures and backgrounds (Devarakonda, 2021). Encompassing a sense of Cynefin, in other words a sense of belonging.
- Lunga, Esterhuizen and Koen (2022) highlight how environments rich with meaningful play opportunities support children's holistic development.
- By using open-ended resources such as recycled materials and loose parts, we can create opportunities for exploration and spark children's curiosity. These versatile materials also encourage creativity and problem-solving while reinforcing my commitment to sustainability (Daly and Beloglovsky, 2015).

Market Research



- Are there any ideas like mine that already exist?
- Google highlighted other competitors like the Early Excellence (2024) and Early Years Resources (2026)
- Similarities – Both businesses promote classroom transformation services to support child development
- Differences – While these companies claim to offer free personalised room designs, their services are conditioned by minimum spends. They offer classroom packages, prompting customers to purchase their own products rather than offering a truly personalised services.
- How does my business compare? By prioritising sustainability, reusing and repurposing existing resources, I can create unique spaces, without the need for excessive spending, at a much lower cost.
- Demand for service – I believe practitioners are calling out for this type of support, however they may be unaware that such services exist or if they do know about them, I believe companies like Early Excellence and Early Years Resources may be a stretch too far for some budgets.

2/23/2026

Financial considerations



2/23/2026

- As I am using my own time and expertise to guide the business, initial start-up costs such as travel expenses and public liability insurance will be self-funded.
- Over time, I plan to reinvest my earnings back into the business to support its growth, with the goal of developing my consultancy services into a full-time career.
- My pricing structure has been guided by the Business Accounting Team (2025), which offers recommended fee ranges for consultancy services. I have positioned my fees within the mid-range, as I believe this reflects both my experience and the value of the service I offer.

Marketing and Promotion



2/23/2026

For marketing my services, I plan to use my social media platform to showcase what I do by sharing examples of my work, to help maximise exposure of my services without using costly advertising strategies.

Promotion will take place through networking events and word of mouth referrals from professional relationships.

As my business grows, I am open to exploring other marketing strategies if needed.

Thank you for taking
the time to listen to
my presentation today

Do you have any
questions?



created by Jordan MacDonald
2411206

2/23/2026

Business plan created by Jordan MacDonald

The Thoughtful Space Consultant

“Supporting meaningful play through thoughtful design”

Contents:

1. **Business** **summary**
Business concept overview
2. **Welcome to The Thoughtful Space**
What we really do
3. **Impact of Environments**
Benefits of service and how it links to early years development
4. **Existing competitors**
What services already exist and how we stand out
5. **Financial considerations**
Funding approach and cost of services
6. **Marketing business**
Advertising suggestions
7. **Health and Safety**
Keeping everyone safe
8. **Future goals**
What's next?

Business **summary**

Business concept overview

My business concept aims to provide professional guidance to support early years settings in improving their existing environment by offering unique and tailored consultations. Throughout this business plan, the word *environment* will encompass both indoor and outdoor spaces. Bilton (2025) states that the outdoors is an extension of the indoor environment, and this connection should be reflected in the setting, interlinking the two spaces. By working closely with practitioners, together we can

achieve a learning space that promotes holistic child development, child-led play and enables independence, allowing practitioners to focus on their teaching priorities and observations to inform future planning.

As an experienced practitioner, I understand firsthand how important the learning environment is in supporting children's development, however I also recognise the barriers many practitioners face when trying to improve their settings, such as time constraints, lack of experience and low budgets. By offering personalised consultations, I can help improve and transform environments. Keeping sustainability at the heart of my work, I aim to redesign spaces using existing resources wherever possible, suggesting practical, low-budget recommendations where needed. This business offers creative and sustainable solutions to those barriers.

Welcome to The Thoughtful Space

What we really do

As mentioned in the business summary, I am an early years practitioner who has experienced firsthand the impact of environments on child development and how the challenges practitioners face can prevent them from improving their learning spaces.

This highlighted a clear gap for supportive services that could help to guide practitioners in transforming their learning spaces; from this, the idea for The Thoughtful Space Consultancy was created.

With many early years settings now embracing a free play approach in line with the Department for Education (2024) framework, it is more important than ever that classrooms are thoughtfully organised and presented in ways that support child-led learning, encourage independence and curiosity (Birth to 5 Matters, 2021).

The Thoughtful Space Consultancy prioritises sustainability, firstly by reusing and repurposing existing resources in the classroom but also promoting the use of recycled materials that are usually free or low cost, often available from local recycling centres or through parental engagement. The Curiosity Approach (2018) also promotes the

exploration of recycled materials; they recognise how these materials provide opportunities for open-ended play, promoting children's creativity and imagination.

To achieve a desired learning space, we have created two initial options;

The Thoughtful Review	The Thoughtful Transformation
❖ Initial consultation to brainstorm ideas, this can be face to face or online, whichever you prefer. ❖ On-site meeting to review the learning environment ❖ Receive a tailored plan with practical recommendations to implement. ❖ Follow-up review with an option to add physical transformation service later.	❖ Initial consultation to discuss changes ❖ On-site meeting to plan room transformation ❖ Collaborative redesign and hands-on room makeover ❖ One-month follow-up visit to assess and optimise the new space

The Thoughtful Review offers an impactful service that involves an initial consultation to get to know the client and my services better. A visit to the setting where I will undertake a full assessment of the learner's space, observe and record where I see opportunities for change and improvement, and then I will assess my observations, and within 7 days I will create a tailored plan with detailed suggestions and recommendations describing ways to change and improve the environment. With this service, the practitioner will use the guide to make physical changes themselves. A follow-up review will then take place after a mutually agreed time to evaluate what went well, if there are any problems and if needed, an opportunity to explore the option to extend into the "transformation" package.

The Thoughtful Transformation is ideal for practitioners who prefer support with physical implementation. The service begins in the same way as the "Review" with an initial consultation and an on-site meeting. I will take my findings away and produce a tailored plan. The biggest difference here is that I will return to the setting to implement the physical suggestions either by myself or together with the practitioner; they are welcome to be as involved as they would like.

Through my services and with my support, practitioners can create environments that truly work to support children's development and align with current policy (Welsh Government, 2024a)

Impact of Environments

Benefits of service and how it links to early years development

The learning environment has a substantial impact on how children effectively learn (Desailly, 2015). Research shows that learning environments created with children in mind provide opportunities for purposeful play that leads to meaningful learning and development (Moyle, 2015). According to the Department for Education (2024), environments should be created with each unique child in mind. By collaborating with practitioners, I plan to support the creation of environments that are unique to each setting, considering the interests and needs of each child. This includes ensuring environments are inclusive and accessible, allowing all children to fully participate in all learning opportunities (Devarakonda, 2021). I understand the need for effective environments goes further than simply what the physical environment can offer; it also shapes a child's emotional security when the space feels familiar, and children feel they have the freedom to be themselves in a safe playing environment, their emotional well-being is also developing. UNICEF UK (2022) highlight the need for children's well-being and positive mental health of children is a priority, and so ensuring they have an affective, secure environment to grow is essential to their development. With my support, I am committed to helping practitioners create the most effective environment to foster holistic development.

Although the environment plays a critical role in the success of learning outcomes (Besio, Bulgarelli and Stancheva-Popkostadinova, 2018). Practitioners remain responsible for the ongoing assessment of the environment, ensuring it continues to meet inclusive needs and provides appropriate learning opportunities that support the children's progress. Modelling positive behaviour and providing a nurturing environment are also essential in promoting children's confidence and wellbeing (Burnham, 2016; Garvey, 2017).

Existing competitors

What services already exist and how we stand out

Market research shows that companies such as Early Excellence (2024) and Early Years Resources (2026) provide services that also focus on improving the environment for young people. However, these companies primarily promote complete redesigns and costly furniture packages. Their websites advertise full classroom re-fits, claiming customers can receive “free” room designs. However, these offers are conditional upon minimum spends and are free only when purchased with furniture packages that start from £2,000 plus VAT. Similarly, Early Years Resources (2026) offers a “free” digital redesign, using furniture and resources exclusively from their website, consequently promoting their own product sales rather than truly developing a personalised learning environment. In contrast, The Thoughtful Space Consultancy, prioritises sustainability by redesigning spaces using existing resources and low-cost, second-hand or recycled materials rather than replacing existing environments. Our business approach helps support sustainability, subsequently helping to reduce financial barriers.

Financial considerations

Funding approach and cost of services

- **Cost of setup**

Initial startup costs will be self-funded and minimal, as the business relies on my professional knowledge to develop environments and plans to remain sustainable are in place; there will be no need for substantial material costs. I will use my current employment salary to cover essential expenses such as travel, public liability insurance and any other necessary professional costs. Following my first paid job, I plan to reinvest the consultancy fees back into the business. With the intention that as the business grows, the fees earned will begin to cover costs and ultimately provide me with a regular income.

- **Investments**

I am considering the following avenue for future investment to further develop the business;

Register as a Social Enterprise business. I believe my business would be eligible as a social enterprise because of its underlying values and commitment to improving the development of children, while focusing on sustainability, all of which align with the Social Enterprise UK (2025) guidance, who are committed to supporting businesses that reinvest profits to create positive social and environmental impact.

- **Cost of services**

My suggested consultancy fees are £300 for the Thoughtful Review and £750 for the Thoughtful Transformation, these fees are based on research for pricing relating to consultancy versus experience provided by Business Accounting Team (2025).

- **Help for school funding**

Welsh Government (2025) has committed to the future investment of early childhood development through a scheme called "Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme 2025-2028" whereby settings can apply for funding for several purposes, including improving existing childcare facilities. This means that my services would likely qualify for this investment. However, in some settings, funding may be the *only* option for accessing my services, meaning I can only provide services after funding is secured, which can be unreliable.

Marketing business

Advertising suggestions

The primary focus market will initially be early years settings, specifically targeting early years practitioners and nursery leaders, as they are the most influential decision-makers regarding environment development. Promotion will take place through networking events, word of mouth referrals from professional relationships and online engagement, such as social media promotion, to help maximise exposure of my services without using costly advertising strategies.

Health and Safety

Keeping everyone safe

When working in environments where children are present such as schools, the Department for Education (2022) places health and safety responsibility on the school and its leaders to ensure they are mitigating risks for staff and pupils. Any external professionals working on site must adhere to the school's health and safety policy and complete appropriate risk assessments for the work being carried out.

As a professional, I am committed to working in accordance with the UK Government (1974) Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, ensuring all work I plan to conduct is risk assessed and carried out safely. Before I carry out any environment changes I will review potential hazards and ensure the service is implemented in line with the settings' individual policies, ultimately safeguarding myself, staff and the children.

Additionally, I have a valid criminal record check certificate issued by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), enabling me to work within environments where children may be present (GOVexplained, 2025). This is particularly important when I complete on site meetings, as when appropriate, I aim to complete this part of my service with the children present. This allows me to collect children's perspectives so that I can include them in the decision-making process that affects them.

Future goals

What's next?

- Establish partnerships with Swansea council education departments, to promote my service, allowing all maintained and non-maintained settings to achieve enabling environments.
- Develop The Thoughtful Space Consultancy into a sustainable full-time role within the next 5 years
- Explore the option of franchising nationally, enabling other qualified professionals to provide settings across the UK with impactful environments under The Thoughtful Space Consultancy brand.
-

Component 2b – Academic writing

Introduction

This section highlights the importance of the environment's influence in child development and how The Thoughtful Space Consultancy aligns with theory, research and policy. While also analysing the barriers to withholding settings from being able to achieve enabling environments.

Theoretical perspectives on the Early Years environment

The significance of the Early Years environment in underpinning holistic child development is consistently highlighted in theory (Birth to 5 Matters, 2021; Canning, and Rekers; cited in Waters-Davies, J., 2022). Educational approaches such as Loris Malaguzzi's, Reggio Emilia Approach and Maria Montessori's, Montessori Approach, place the environment as an equal role in supporting children's learning and development alongside support from practitioners and parental engagement (Strong-Wilson and Ellis, 2007; Reggio Inspired, 2025).

Furthermore, modern approaches, such as The Curiosity Approach (2017) have been inspired by the philosophy of theorists, including Reggio Emilia and Montessori and have further developed their approaches to reflect emerging understandings of child development and practice. Central to these approaches is the creation of environments rich in resources that enable children's physical, social, emotional and cognitive development. They advocate for child-led learning emphasising the importance of purposeful play and positioning the environment as an active element in achieving holistic development.

The business plan has been created with the impact of these approaches, with the holistic development of children in mind. However, it is also important to consider factors that may act as barriers to influencing the environment.

Policy and Leadership responsibilities

Most early years settings now follow a play-based learning curriculum that emphasises enabling environments, as outlined by Welsh Government (2025) and Welsh Government (2015). However, these guidelines provide limited detail on how to adapt the environment effectively to support learning, leaving leaders responsible for

interpreting the curriculum for themselves. As the early years curriculum is continually evolving, O'Sullivan (2015) argues that it is essential to have strong leaders who can guide their team towards a shared vision of an environment that reflects the children and supports their learning outcomes.

Barriers to achieving enabling environments

Unfortunately, several barriers are stopping the development of effective learning spaces. McNair (2023) believes that when the learning environment allows for time to play and represents their lived experiences, this benefits both the children and the practitioners; however, they also recognise that some practitioners are feeling academic outcome pressures from higher authorities, meaning their day often feels rushed, and a lack of time becomes a barrier to providing impactful play time. Additionally, not all staff share the same enthusiasm for change and development, meaning outdated perspectives result in resistance to change, which can further impede the development of high-quality environments (Bottrill, 2022, p. 128) Bruce (2021) believes it is essential that all staff are adequately trained, especially in the early years sector as the early years of a child's life are the foundations of who they will become as an adult. Guidance written by Welsh Government (2024a), highlights the impact the environment has on child development, and relies on practitioners to respect the voice of the child in influencing their own learning in line with Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Childs (1989) (UNCRC) where children have the right to be involved in the decisions that directly affect them. This is why it is fundamental that practitioners work together and closely observe children in the settings to better understand them, so that they can develop an environment that is inclusive to each child's individual interests and needs (Brodie, 2015; Sharman, Cross and Vennis, 2015). Similarly, Smidt (2015) says that by observing what motivates children to learn, practitioners can design environments that best support their learning. This can be achieved by creating spaces that reflect children's personal identities and provide appropriate challenges to further development. However, the question remains unanswered: how can this be achieved in all settings if there are still staff working with outdated views and training?

Research highlights how children's behaviour is influenced by many factors such as additional learning needs home life and environmental factors (Hester, Moran and

Richards, 2021; Waters-Davies, 2022; Panthi, N. *et al.*, 2025). Murphy (2025) states that when the environment represents a calm, organised and stimulating space, this allows children, especially those with additional learning needs, flexibility to relax and integrate with the environment. When a child feels comfortable in their physical environment, they are more likely to create secure attachments with the adults around them, which helps promote emotional well-being (Department for Education, 2019). Demonstrating how environments, both physical and emotional, influence holistic development (McMahon and Dyer, 2018).

Sustainability in practice

Sustainability is a core principle of The Thoughtful Space Consultancy, while it promotes the repurposing of existing resources, Dovigo and Alici (2025) emphasise that sustainability begins with environmental changes; however, true awareness needs to be embedded in a whole school approach where practitioners are fully embraced by modelling sustainable behaviours such as recycling, respecting resources, and going beyond simply having a awareness of sustainability, this means settings are responsible for carrying on the business' commitment to sustainability even after their work is complete.

Business aims and alignment with policy

Long term The aims of The Thoughtful Space Consultancy closely align with current Welsh Government and Early Years policy frameworks. The Welsh Government (2025) draws attention to the importance of enabling environments and play-based learning. Similarly, the framework written by the Department for Education (2024) identifies the environment as an essential part of promoting independence, purposeful play and development. Both frameworks place the environment at the centre of supporting holistic development. However, it must be acknowledged that this service alone is not enough to resolve all workplace challenges, and that continuous professional development and learning is essential to achieving long term improvement in practice (Garvey, 2017).

Conclusion

In conclusion, theory, framework and policy consistently demonstrate that the early years environment plays a pivotal role in supporting children's holistic development.

The Thoughtful Space aligns closely with these principles by promoting independence, child-led learning and sustainability. However, while The Thoughtful Space Consultancy offers environmental enhancements to support development, it cannot be relied upon to resolve all working challenges. Ongoing, continual professional development and strong leadership skills are essential in ensuring children can continue to learn and develop in their environments.

ECEY6012 – Reference List

Birth to 5 Matters (2021) *Learning Environments, Birth to 5 matters*. Available at: <https://birthto5matters.org.uk/learning-environments/>. (Accessed: 8 February 2026)

Bilton, H. (2025) *Planning for outdoor learning : a practical guide for the early years*. London: Routledge.

Business Accounting Team (2025) *How Much Should Consultants Charge Per Hour or Day? A UK Pricing Guide*, *Business-accounting.co.uk*. Business Accounting. Available at: <https://www.business-accounting.co.uk/blog/consultant-hourly-day-rates-uk>. (Accessed: 21 February 2026)

Bloom (2023) Exploring the Montessori Classroom: What Your Child Will Experience, Bloom. Available at: <https://www.bloom.edu.ba/post/exploring-the-montessori-classroom-what-your-child-will-experience>. (Accessed: 20 February 2026) IMAGE

Besio, S, Bulgarelli, D and Stancheva-Popkostadinova, V. (2018) *Evaluation of Childrens' Play : Tools and Methods*. Berlin: Sciendo. Available at: <https://research-ebsco-com.uwtsd.idm.oclc.org/linkprocessor/plink?id=d6358f0c-53da-3cf4-8013-03e6aaee3e8c> (Accessed: 16 February 2026).

Bottrill, G. (2022) *Can I Go and Play Now?* Sage Publications UK.

Brodie, K. (2015) *Inclusion and early years practice*. Abingdon: Routledge

Brodie, K. (2018) *The holistic care and development of children from birth to three : an essential guide for students and practitioners*. Routledge.

Buckinghamshire Council (2025) *Learning Environment | Early Years*. Available at: <https://earlyyearsweb.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/learning-environment/#>. (Accessed: 15 February 2026)

Burnham, L. (2016) *How to be an outstanding early years practitioner*. London, England: Bloomsbury.

Canning, N and Rekers, A.; cited in Waters-Davies, J. (2022) *Introduction to play*. Sage.

Daly, L. and Beloglovsky, M. (2015) *Loose parts : inspiring play in young children*. St. Paul, MN: Releaf Press.

Devarakonda, C. (2021) *Promoting inclusion and diversity in early years settings : a professional guide to ethnicity, religion, culture and language*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publisher. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781805014652>.

Department for Education (2024) *Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (EYFS)*, GOV.UK. Department for Education. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>. (Accessed: 12 February 2026).

Department for Education (2025) *Early years foundation stage statutory framework For group and school-based providers Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68c024cb8c6d992f23edd79c/Early_years_foundation_stage_statutory_framework_-_for_group_and_school-based_providers.pdf.pdf. (Accessed: 22 February 2026).

Department for Education (2019). *Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*. Crown Copyright.

Department for Education (2022) *Health and safety: Responsibilities and Duties for Schools*, GOV.UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-advice-for-schools/responsibilities-and-duties-for-schools>.

Desailly, J. (2015) *Creativity in the Primary Classroom*. Sage.

Dovigo, F and Alici, S (2025). *Promoting Transformative Practices for Sustainability in Early Childhood Education and Care*. Taylor & Francis.

Early Excellence (2024) *Transform Your Classroom Environments*. Available at: <https://earlyexcellence.com/get-equipped/transform-your-classroom/>. (Accessed: 8 February 2026)

Early Years Resources (2026) *Room Design Service | Early Years Resources* Available at: <https://www.earlyyearsresources.co.uk/room-design-service/> (Accessed: 8 February 2026).

Envoplan (2020) *The importance of purposeful classroom design*. Available at: <https://envoplan.co.uk/education-news/the-importance-of-purposeful-classroom-design/>. (Accessed: 8 February 2026).

Garvey, D (2017) *Performance Management in Early Years Settings : A Practical Guide for Leaders and Managers*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Available at: <https://research-ebsco-com.uwtsd.idm.oclc.org/linkprocessor/plink?id=254797b8-537c-3d86-8d11-02341ad66a55> (Accessed: 16 February 2026).

GOVexplained (2025). DBS Check | Guide 2026: How to Apply & What Level You Need | Government guidance simplified. Available at: https://govexplained.co.uk/work-and-id/pay-and-employment/dbs-check/#Who_Needs_a_DBS_Check (Accessed: 21 February 2026).

Hester, S., Moran, L. and Richards, E. (2021) 'Reimagining Children's Behaviour and Behaviour Management "Otherwise": a Critical Commentary on the English Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)', *Child Care in Practice*, 28(3), pp. 1–16. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13575279.2021.1895075>.

Kaplan Early Learning (2022) *Block Labels - 85 Dark Brown, Adhesive, Precut Labels*, Kaplan Early Learning Company. Available at: <https://www.kaplanco.com/product/87838/block-labels-85-dark-brown-adhesive-precut->

[labels?c=3%7CMB1002&srsId=AfmBOoojV8QEGqGNTtHTInLfnGX509ybgtVtVj2eDrg0GOie4AE6T5pX](https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v12i1.1133) (Accessed: 21 February 2026). IMAGE

Lunga, P., Esterhuizen, S. and Koen, M. (2022) "Play-based pedagogy: An approach to advance young children's holistic development," *South African journal of childhood education*, 12(1), pp. 1–12. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v12i1.1133>.

McMahon, S. and Dyer, M. (2018) *Advanced work-based practice in the early years: a guide for students*. Routledge.

Moyles, J.R. (2015) *The Excellence of Play*. 4th edn. Open University Press.

Social Enterprise UK (2025) *Start your social enterprise, The Social Enterprise Guide*. Available at: <https://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/app/uploads/2022/07/Start-your-social-enterprise-guide-1.pdf> (Accessed 18 February 2026).

McNair, D.L. (2023) *Slow Pedagogy | Unhurried Early Years*, www.communityplaythings.co.uk. Available at: <https://www.communityplaythings.co.uk/learning-library/articles/slow-pedagogy>. Accessed: 28 February 2026)

Murphy, K. (2025) *Neurodiversity-affirming practices in early childhood : an empowering guide to diverse development and play*. London: Routledge.

O'Sullivan, J (2015) *Successful Leadership in the Early Years : A Practical Guide to Leadership Strategies That Can Have Proven Results*. Second edition. London, UK: Featherstone. Available at: <https://research-ebSCO-com.uwtsd.idm.oclc.org/linkprocessor/plink?id=15b6972f-82ad-36ac-8d24-f9688146448e> (Accessed: 1 February 2026).

Panthi, N., Thorpe, K., Houen, S., Casey, C and Staton, S. (2025) 'The challenges of challenging behaviour: early childhood educators' understandings of child behaviour and impact on occupational wellbeing', *Teachers and Teaching*, pp. 1–15. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2025.2463018>.

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: Bloomsbury Education.

Strong-Wilson, T. and Ellis, J. (2007) 'Children and Place: Reggio Emilia's Environment as Third Teacher', *Theory into Practice*, 46(1), pp. 40–47. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405840709336547>.

Smidt, S. (2015) *Observing young children : the role of observation and assessment in early childhood settings*. Routledge.

Reggio Inspired (2025) *Reggio-Inspired Teaching & Parenting, Reggio-Inspired Teaching & Parenting*. Available at: <https://reggio-inspired.com/blog/2025/9/4/environment-as-the-third-teacher-what-it-means-why-it-matters>.

The Curiosity Approach (2017) *THE CURIOSITY APPROACH*, *Thecuriosityapproach.com*. Available at: <https://www.thecuriosityapproach.com/blog/Lets-explore>. (Accessed: 26 February 2026)

UK Government (1974) *Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974*, *Legislation.gov.uk*. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37>. (Accessed 19 February 2026)

UNCRC (1989) UN convention on the rights of the child (UNCRC), unicef. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>. (Accessed: 26 February 2026)

Waters-Davies, J. (2022) *Introduction to Play*. SAGE.

Woods, A. (2017) *Child-initiated play and learning : planning for possibilities in the early years*. Second edition. London ; Routledge. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315541969>

Welsh Government (2015) *Early Years Outcomes Framework*. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-07/early-years-outcomes-framework.pdf>. (Accessed: 26 February 2026)

Welsh Government (2024a) *Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care Plan in Wales (Detailed version) 2 Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care Plan in Wales*.

Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-03/early-childhood-play-learning-care-plan.pdf>. (Accessed 12 February 2026)

Welsh Government (2024b) *Progress of schools, settings and local authorities in supporting pupils with additional learning needs: government reponse [HTML]* | GOV.WALES, GOV.WALES. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/progress-schools-settings-and-local-authorities-supporting-pupils-additional-learning-needs-html>. (Accessed: 28 February 2026)

Welsh Government (2025) *Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme 2025-2028 [HTML]* | GOV.WALES. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/childcare-and-early-years-capital-programme-2025-2028-html> (Accessed: 18 February 2026).

Welsh Government (2011) *Health and safety for school children*, GOV.UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/health-safety-school-children>. (Accessed 19 February 2026)