

Section 1

Abstract:

The writing is intended to assist teachers in becoming more confident and competent practitioners, as well as activities involving working in the setting of a play and informal curriculum practise. Many men and women, practitioners, and the majority of society in our globe are concerned that their children will receive adequate education in classrooms and will lead happy and productive lives in the future. For many years, tensions have existed in the United Kingdom between pre-school pedagogical traditions, which tend to use developmentally focused techniques, and primary school's more formal or subject-centered curriculum framework. A play-based early years curriculum, known as the Foundation Phase, was implemented in September 2010 in response to international research findings and practise, and is now the mandatory curriculum for all three to seven-year-olds in Wales. It promotes creativity and imagination in youngsters, as well as making learning more interesting and effective.¹(Welsh Government, 2015). The examination of this experience yielded four major insights, which are outlined in this report. The importance of teacher's confidence and competence; teaching reading in a play-based curriculum; and smoothing transitions in a play-based curriculum are among them.

Introduction:

In recent years, play-based learning (PBL) has sparked interest, debate, and controversy. There is no definitional agreement, which could have unfavourable effects when it comes to realising its potential in professional practise. They demonstrate that they have varying perspectives on the degree of conceptual congruence between play and learning according to situations. There is a widespread trend both nationally and internationally to recognise early childhood education as a separate phase in children's development that should be marked by a curriculum that emphasises whole-child learning and teaching methods that are suited for young children.²(OECD 2001; Bertram and Pascal 2002). While individuals may take on a variety of responsibilities in play - based learning (PBL), they also voice reservations about how and when to

participate. Finally, practitioners report encountering numerous obstacles in implementing play - based learning, the most significant of which being policy and curricular delivery pressure. We emphasise both overall trends and local nuances throughout our analysis. The practitioner's knowledge of practise causes them to think twice before making a decision, and they always strive for goals that are both demanding and attainable for children. This research-based information aids us in predicting which experiences will benefit children's learning and development. Teachers must get to know each child in the group well if they are to provide suitable practise. This involves a range of techniques, including observation of children's learning, clinical interviews, study of children's work, individual child assessments, and discussions with families about their living spaces, among others. Childhood education encompasses not just a set of instructional techniques and tactics, but also the science of teaching and learning, as well as the many other parts of my work as an Education Officer. It's also a teaching technique. Playful learning is one type of activity that is part of the curriculum and learning process for young children. Concern for putting the child's well-being at the centre of early childhood care and education, laying secure foundations for learning beyond the school years, and developing a more unified approach to early childhood provision so that young children can successfully manage the transition from pre-school to primary school Early childhood education, on the other hand, can cover children from three to eight years old, and children may transition from pre-school to compulsory schooling at varying times depending on where they reside. Tensions occur between preschool educational traditions, which tend to use developmentally focused techniques, and primary school's more formal or subject-based curriculum structure. The Walsh et al.formal method is described by Wood and Bennett (1999)³ as mostly teacher-led, with a concentration on reading and numeracy, and learning via repetition and practise to attain mastery and competence. A developmentally appropriate approach, on the other hand, encourages children to learn via play, provides options and alternative activities to build independence, and recommends a mix of child-initiated activities and teacher/practitioner direction.

Methodology:

Both child-initiated and teacher-supported learning are included in a play-based approach. Through exchanges that attempt to expand their thinking to higher levels, the teacher fosters children's learning and curiosity. Children leave their homes and familiar environments to learn from a variety of individuals, including their classmates and teachers. Children have an inherent need to play. A play-based curriculum capitalises on this incentive by utilising play as a learning environment. Children may use their imaginations to explore, experiment, discover, and solve issues in this setting.⁴(Anne-Marie Morrissey, Rouse and Robertson, 2018). Following that, in the five major areas of practise, early childhood authorities make discursive decisions: The first criterion for developmentally appropriate practices is to foster a loving community of learners. Children's expectations of how they will be treated at this age, as well as how they would treat others, are heavily influenced by their experiences in early infancy. The community's duty is to foster such development and learning by providing a physical, emotional, and cognitive environment. From birth, children's connections and interactions with adults are essential factors of their growth and learning. The information, skills, abilities, and understandings that students are to gain, as well as the preparations for the learning experiences through which those gains will occur, are all part of the curriculum that is designed to attain essential goals. Observing and evaluating children's growth and learning in relation to Teachers and programmes must assess children's growth and learning in order to design, administer, and evaluate the efficacy of classroom activities. It is critical for the development of reciprocal connections with families.

Theoretical insights:

Despite a long-standing consensus on the importance of play in early infancy, there are several ideas and conceptualizations of play ⁵(Bennett, Wood, and Rogers 1997; Bergen 2014). Indeed, rather than providing a uniform definition, the extensive scientific literature on play relies on a variety of viewpoints and attests to play's conceptual dispersion and complexity ⁶(see e.g. Sutton-Smith 1997). Given the diverse theoretical elements that also underpin learning, attempts to combine the two ideas have resulted in a plethora of research, with no definitional consensus ⁷(Brooker, Blaise, and Edwards

2014, 1). This is despite the fact that play is widely acknowledged as a foundation for learning in early infancy, as Brooker and colleagues explain. Learning via play appears to be a simple concept, yet it has significant implications. Play, according to Piaget, is essential for the development of intellect in children. His theory of play contends that as a kid grows older, their surroundings and play should help them improve their cognitive and verbal skills. ⁸(Hamid, 2018). Both Piaget and Vygotsky thought that via play, children can learn about the world, create ideas, and give meaning to their constantly shifting perspective. Play, according to Piaget, parallels development, but play, according to Vygotsky, stimulates growth. Play, according to Piaget (1969), allows youngsters to connect their experiences, knowledge, and understanding. Play, according to Vygotsky (1966), is essential for a person's cognitive growth. Although Vygotsky (1978) disagreed with Piaget regarding the existence of phases in play development, he did believe that play promotes the development of abstract thought. Vygotsky advocated for play-based learning in children of all ages, not only young children. He claimed that children may build important thinking structures through exploratory play and experiences. Smith (1998), ⁹Whitebread et al, (2017), argues that a definition of play is necessary, notwithstanding the difficulty in achieving a single, all-encompassing definition. Fisher (2002) agrees, stating that because there is no one meaning of the term, playful actions can be interpreted in a variety of ways. These theoretical concerns and empirical findings are employed as a platform that informs our data analysis and as a lens that allows for a theoretically rigorous investigation of issues raised by the synthesis research in the following sections.

Values and meaning of play-based learning:

A shift away from a teacher-led, formal approach in favour of more play-based, unstructured classroom practise Play lays the groundwork for the development of important social and emotional skills and knowledge. Children learn to form bonds with people, share, negotiate, and settle disputes, as well as develop self-advocacy abilities, via play. Children are also taught leadership skills via play. Children play to make sense of the world around them and to give an experience significance by linking it to what they already know. Children express and enhance their understanding of their

experiences via play.¹⁰(UNICEF, 2018). Play-based learning is critical for a child's social and emotional development, including the capacity to form healthy peer connections. Children learn to work together, collaborate, communicate effectively, solve problems, and settle disputes while they play together. Early childhood education that is centred on child-led and open-ended play is known as play-based learning. Play-based learning aids in the development of social skills, learning motivation, and even language and numeracy abilities in youngsters. Play involves taking initiative, paying attention, and being curious about the world.¹¹(Wonderschool, 2017). Finally, the lessons learned about the value and meaning of play from classroom observations and teachers' accounts of their experiences teaching children in Years 1, 2, and beyond point to the need for a greater emphasis on a "proactive and intentional pedagogy"¹³(Wood 2007b) through the medium of play, especially as children progress beyond Year 1. 'A pedagogy of play that respects the ideological heritage, and provides a theoretically rigorous basis for building harmony between playing, learning, and teaching,'¹⁴Wood argues (2004, 31).

Role of an adult:

Staff duties in play-based activities vary depending on the sort of play that children engage in, as well as during the play itself. Adults may take on a greater supervisory role during outside play. They generally function as play facilitators in more structured events that take place inside, although they may also take on a formal teaching role in rare cases¹⁵(e.g. Miller and Smith 2004). Across subjects, educators identify and define a wide range of responsibilities. They may be categorised along a scale based on the nature of adult participation: at one end, the adult identifies as an information transmitter, and at the other end, the adult acts as an insider and a play-mate. According to our findings, the most prevalent role instructors describe taking is that of facilitating play. The participating ECE teacher in¹⁶Moon and Reifel's (2008) study in the United States explains play facilitation as, for example, setting up the atmosphere and offering various objects and resources so that the children may select what, how, and when they wish to play. It takes knowledge, experience, and talent to recognise when and how to intervene in children's play. Much of the research featured in this collection

reflected this perspective ¹⁷(e.g. Hunter and Walsh 2014; McInnes et al. 2011; Wood and Bennett 1997). Given the importance of play in a child's development, it's essential to understand our position as adults in children's play in order to encourage play and embrace development and learning. Adults may help a kid learn and develop via play by praising and encouraging it. ¹⁸(Renaie, n.d.).

Implementation:

Ultimately, meta-synthesis indicated that instructors face a wide range of problems and barriers while implementing play-based learning in their classrooms. These have been categorised into six basic categories: 1) legislative demands and curricular concerns, 2) parental attitudes and views, 3) teacher education and credentials, 4) collegiate peer pressure, 5) structural obstacles, and 6) children's characteristics. Overall, the first category – policy demands and curricular concerns – is by far the most often mentioned and discussed by instructors across the dataset, as well as one that is intricately linked to the majority of the remaining difficulties. Educators must strike a balance between giving time for uninterrupted free play and embedding or extending academic information in various ways inside playful activities to promote children's learning while adopting a continuum of play-based learning. ¹⁹(Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development, n.d.).

Conclusion:

This essay elucidated the meaning of play-based learning from my point of view. The classroom cameos also demonstrate how play, playfulness, and structure can be mixed to create a learning atmosphere that is both appropriate for young children and fosters good attitudes that will help them continue to study in school and beyond. In this developmentally appropriate approach, my philosophy for Early Learning is really important. I must adhere to the developmental practise principles in all of my work-related domains. Such an experience is something I must get via my job experiences and understanding of the importance of early years in teaching.

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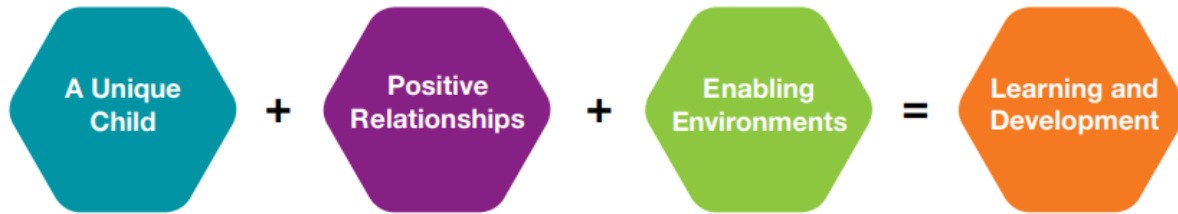
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Section 2

Every child is unique, and each one is capable of becoming resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured. Babies and little children develop at their own speed and in their own unique ways in all areas of development. Individuals and communities are valued in inclusion, and no kid or family is discriminated against. Young children are fragile, but when their well-being is protected by adults, they are kept safe and acquire resilience. Children's emotional, mental, social, environmental, and spiritual health are all affected by their health and well-being. ¹(Early Years Matters, n.d.). The University of Warwick believe, child development, inclusive practise, being safe, and health and well-being are among the commitments that promote this topic. It acknowledges that children are capable learners who grow in their own unique ways from an early age. We think that children and their families should be accepted and appreciated for who they are; we welcome children from all over the globe and enjoy the variety – as well as the challenges – that this brings to the nursery. Encourage your children to play outside and to recognise the value of exercise and rest. Set clear and consistent boundaries for the youngsters, and have realistic expectations of their skills. ²(warwick.ac.uk. n.d.). Through the Characteristics of Effective Learning, which flow through all domains of learning, the Unique Child seeks out to relate to people and things.

Children are born with the ability to learn and the desire to do so. They actively seek out opportunities to engage with others and the environment around them.

However, development is not a one-way street. It is contingent on each child's ability to participate in positive interactions and enabling circumstances. All of the development recommendations are based on the EYFS' four themes. Its three components rely on themes, principles and practices.



A unique child:

- comprehend and monitor each child's growth and learning, measure progress, and make plans for the future
- assist newborns and children in developing a good sense of their own identity and culture; identify any areas in which extra assistance is required; keep children safe; appreciate and respect all children and families equally

Positive relationships:

Positive connections teach children to be resilient and self-sufficient.

Positive relationships are warm and caring, and they promote a sense of belonging. They are sensitive and attentive to the child's needs, feelings, and interests. They are supportive of the child's own efforts and independence. They are consistent in providing clear limits. They are stimulating.

Enabling environments:

Children learn and grow effectively in supportive situations where their experiences are tailored to their specific requirements and a strong collaboration exists between practitioners, parents, and caregivers.

- appreciate all individuals in a supportive environment
- are enthusiastic about education

They provide:

- exciting materials that are relevant to all of the children's cultures and communities • abundant learning possibilities via play and fun teaching
- encouragement for children to take chances and try new things

Learning and development:

Children grow and learn in a variety of ways. The framework applies to all children in early childhood education and care, including those with special educational needs and disabilities. Children are taught through ensuring that they have challenging, enjoyable experiences in all areas of learning and development.

They encourage the qualities of successful early learning.

- Exploring and playing
- Active learning
- Creating and critical thinking

³(Early Education, 2012).

Children can gain the skills they need in a regulated setting with the assistance and supervision of an experienced teacher who understands how to transform interests and experiences into learning opportunities. Children's learning ability improves when they use all of their senses in learning activities, according to research. All of the senses are included in learning with a play-based curriculum. In play-based learning, children are continuously making decisions and assumptions. They may then put their theories to the test and figure out how to solve difficulties. Children can gain the skills they need in a structured setting with the aid and supervision of an experienced teacher who understands how to transform their interests and experiences into learning opportunities. ⁴(Ward, n.d.). Play-based learning is defined as a "environment for learning through which children organise and make sense of their social surroundings as they engage actively with people, things, and representations," according to the Early Years Learning Framework. ⁵(bestchance Child Family Care, n.d.).

Lev Vygotsky (1896 – 1934)

Vygotsky also believed that children build their knowledge and learning, but in a socio-cultural framework. His thesis is founded on the notion that language and cognitive development are inextricably linked, and that infants gain their understanding of the world via language. The social component of play, learning, and development is

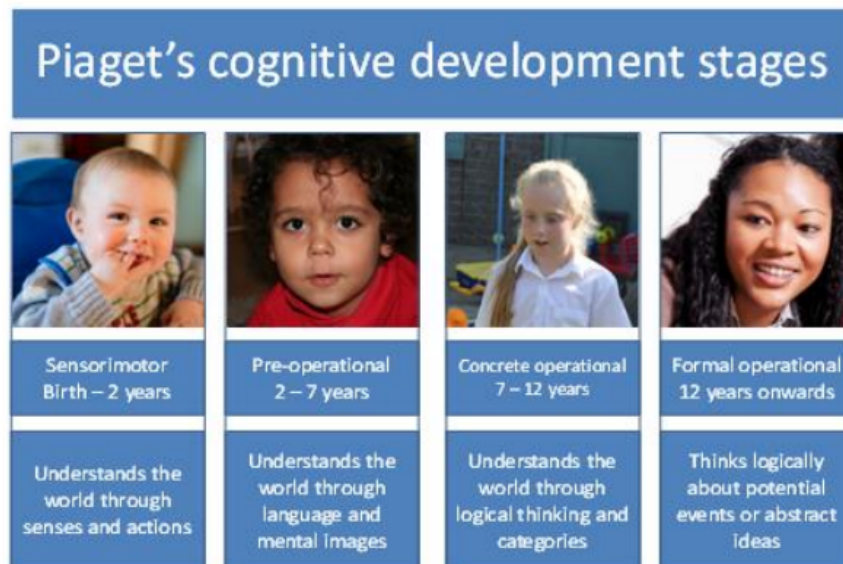
highlighted in Vygotsky's theory. It also emphasises the value of both adult-directed and child-directed play. Wales, the Foundation Phase emphasises personal and social development, well-being, and cultural diversity, and children's abilities are built across all areas of learning via involvement in experiential learning activities both inside and outdoors. Within and beyond the home, children learn about themselves and their interactions with other children and adults. ⁷(Foundation Phase Framework, 2015). Adults must be aware of children's play and growth in order to know when to intervene to help them learn more effectively. Adults may collaborate with kids to help them expand and challenge their learning. If the kids run into a difficulty, they may have a conversation about how to best fix it; solutions will be proposed and tried until they find a solution that works for them. Vygotsky's philosophy, like others', encourages learning via exciting and demanding play.

Jean Piaget (1896 – 1980)

Piaget was a constructivist, which means he believed that children 'build' their own beliefs and knowledge of the world based on their experiences. He regarded learning as a continuous process in which infants develop their knowledge using what he called "schema.". From birth to maturity, Piaget believed that children go through four developmental stages: Sensori – motor stage (birth to 18/24 months), during this period, the infant is becoming aware of their immediate surroundings and the impact they may have on it. During this period, the kid will learn about 'object permanence,' which is the concept that something exists even if you can't see it. (There are references to attachment theory in this part, which you will learn about in section 9.) They'll start using symbolic language as well. Pre-operational stage (18/24 months–7 years), at this age, children are highly egocentric; they feel that the world revolves around them and their wants, and they have a hard time seeing things from other people's perspectives.

Piaget's study also discovered that children of this age lack the ability to preserve - to comprehend that simply because one kid has a drink in a tall narrow glass and the other gets a drink in a short broad glass, the first child does not have more. Even if kids observe the adult start with two drinks in the same glass, filled to the same level, they will believe this. Concrete-operational stage (7–11 years), The notion of conservation is

now understood by children. They can also solve issues, although they will almost always need to rely on props or items to do so. Formal operational stage (11–adult), They may now think abstractly and explore scenarios and issues that they have not personally encountered. The capacity to think critically about increasingly difficult logic, mathematics, and scientific topics improves. Some young individuals with specific needs or disabilities may never reach this developmental stage. Piaget believed that development occurs before learning, and that the quantity and complexity of the schema will alter as the child progresses through each stage of development. It's also crucial to remember that Piaget considered children's thinking to be distinct from that of adults, and so they will learn in different ways. ⁸(Evidence Based Approaches to Child Development, 2021).



Wales, through the processes of planning, developing, and reflecting, the practitioner may assist children develop their thinking across the curriculum, allowing them to get a better knowledge and explore and make sense of their surroundings. ⁹(Foundation Phase-Learning and Teaching Pedagogy, Welsh Government 2008).

By carefully matching what they give to a child's present requirements, development concerns can assist practitioners promote children's learning and development. Continuous formative evaluation is at the heart of good early childhood education.

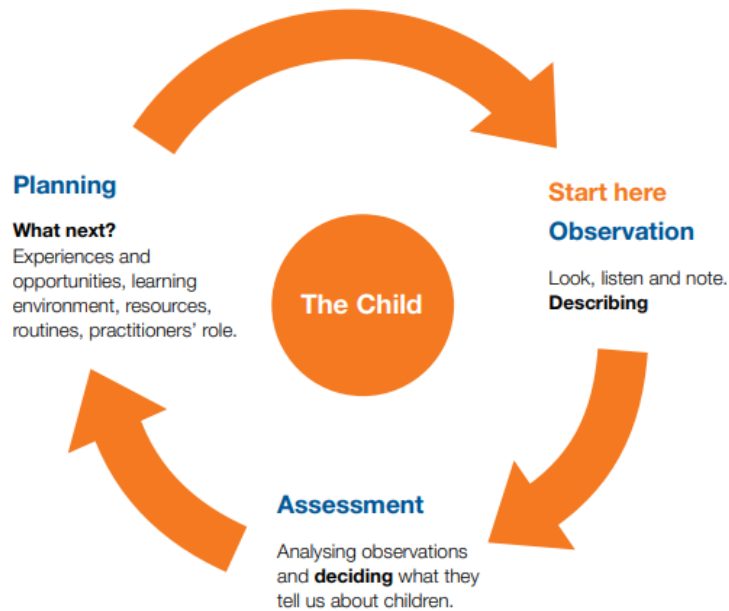
Observation is the process of looking at and listening to children in order to determine how they are developing, what they enjoy doing, and what they are learning through their play and the experiences available. The importance of kid observation cannot be overstated. Because each kid possesses a unique set of traits and capabilities, observations in various settings are used to document these. Always begin with the child. Adults may learn a lot about children by watching what they do, what their interests are, and who and what resources they like to play with. The Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage document's Observing What a Child Is Learning method can help you establish systematic observations. As part of everyday activities, observations are carried out on a regular basis. Discussing them with the kid, their parents, and team members provides a foundation for a holistic approach that keeps the child at the centre of all that is planned. ¹⁰(Early Years Matters, 2021). Observe children as they act and interact in their play, daily activities, and scheduled activities, and learn about the child's activities at home from his or her parents.

Ongoing assessment is what practitioners do on a daily basis to make decisions about what the child has learned or can do already so that the child can progress in their learning – this is sometimes referred to as 'formative' assessment because it informs the next steps that are planned with the child and the parent. In the Revised EYFS, another form of evaluation known as "summative" assessment occurs twice. The first assessment occurs when a child is between the ages of 24 and 36 months; the results are recorded, and parents and practitioners use the information to identify a child's strengths and learning needs; the second assessment occurs near the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, when children are in their final term of reception class. This 'compiles' all of the information gathered from the child's ongoing evaluations. This information is added to a record of children's accomplishment that is linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) - which shows how far different children have progressed in the Revised EYFS' seven areas of learning and development. ¹⁰(Early Years Matters, 2021 and GOV.UK, n.d.). Consider the development examples in the

columns labelled 'Unique Kid: Observing What Children Can Do' to help you figure out where your child is on their developmental path.

Early childhood planning is about fulfilling the needs of young children so that they can play and learn in ways that will help them develop skills and knowledge throughout the Prime and Specific areas of learning in the EYFS. Because each school and setting is unique for a variety of reasons, planning differs from school to school and setting to setting. The medium-term plans, which are made to ensure that certain areas of learning are addressed over six weeks or a half term, are placed between long-term planning and the experiences that are planned for children on a daily and weekly basis – for example, focusing on particular stories to help children think about 'friendship'. All planning, however, should be flexible and utilised as a guide rather than being strictly adhered to. The most essential planning is short-term daily/weekly planning, which is based on talks with the children and their parents and is centred on their present interests. The ephemeral yet powerful interests of this youngster on this particular day are the essence of short-term planning. ¹⁰(Early Years Matters, 2021). Reflect on the advice on "Positive Relationships" and "Enabling Environments" to help the kid enhance and deepen their present learning and development. Things that practitioners may do to help students learn. In response to the children with whom they engage, practitioners will create a variety of additional techniques.

Use the development statements to highlight areas where the child's present learning and development may be challenged and extended, as needed (planning).



Assessment and progress monitoring were seen to be beneficial only if they were utilised effectively to promote learning and development, identify students who needed more help, and contribute to curriculum preparation. Inconsistent practise that failed to accurately represent a child's developmental stage or how far they had advanced might jeopardise effective evaluation and progress monitoring. ¹¹(Callanan et al., 2017).

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Section 3

Op-I

Looking from an angle of an Early Years practitioners view, implementing a play based curriculum is not all easy as it sounds. When implementing a play based curriculum many factors have to be considered. A play-based curriculum develops motivation by utilising play as a learning environment. Both child-initiated and teacher-supported learning are included in a play-based approach. Through exchanges that attempt to expand their thinking to higher levels, the teacher fosters children's learning and curiosity.

The Foundation Phase, a new holistic play-based learning continuum for children aged three to seven years old, was launched by the Welsh Assembly Government in 2008. With a growing understanding of the importance of physical literacy and the role that Physical Education plays in its development, a three-phase complementarity mixed methods study examined the impact of this new curriculum on pupils' physical literacy, finding that the Foundation Phase contributes positively to physical literacy development. The Foundation Phase curriculum encourages and embraces diversity while promoting equality of opportunity and ideals. Positive relationships with the home are encouraged, as is an understanding of the importance of parents/caregivers. It is acknowledged that the earliest instructors of children are recognised. The important business of 'play' provides the channel for children to learn through first-hand experience activities. Children practise and solidify their learning via play. Individually, in small groups, experiment with ideas, take risks, solve issues, and make decisions as well as in huge groupings. Children get a better knowledge of themselves and the world around them via firsthand experiences. At the heart of it all is the development of a child's self-image, as well as emotions of self-worth and self-esteem. The Foundation Phase curriculum is designed as a four-year (three to seven-year) progressive framework to address the various requirements of all children, including those who are younger in development and those who are more capable. Children's growth and natural eagerness to explore and learn via firsthand experiences are aided by indoor and outdoor surroundings that are entertaining, engaging, stimulating, and safe. The Foundation Phase setting should encourage children to explore and be self-sufficient, with a stronger emphasis on using the outdoors as a learning resource.

Practitioners need to comprehend how children develop and design a curriculum that takes into consideration the developmental requirements of children as well as the skills they will need to become competent learners. Barriers to experiencing play, learning, and engagement caused by physical, sensory, communication, or learning problems must also be considered. It's about teachers and other educators recognising, motivating, and pushing children's learning abilities. Involvement of practitioners in children's learning is critical, especially when interactions entail open inquiry, sharing and prolonged thinking. a mix of organised learning through child-initiated activities and activities guided by professionals. Practitioners in the Foundation Phase should recognise past learning and achievement, provide options, challenge children with care and compassion, support them, and help them progress in their learning. The Foundation Phase curriculum should be flexible enough to allow practitioners working with children to create and deliver a curriculum that is appropriate for both children at an early stage of development and those who are more capable. A wide, balanced, and diversified education is required for children. Children should grow, develop, and advance in their development via proper planned and organised experiences in the Areas of Learning.

Provide counsel and assistance, customised programmes, and support networks for school and family to kids with learning and/or behavioural issues. Teacher practise is influenced by the following theorists: Vygotsky - social engagement and supporting the child to reach their full potential by providing work that is just above their individual capability (Cullen, 2001); Piaget - individualised learning experiences (Cullen, 2001).

Showing learners how to play with developmentally appropriate toys and puzzles through modelled instruction. Using problems that demand math skills and are related to current learning objectives. Allowing learners to engage with puzzles and have unstructured playtime. Interacting with the students, prompting and directing them with questions. Finishing the learning exercise by having a group conversation about what students learned.

Play-based learning in early childhood classrooms allows educators to promote learning across all learning areas of the Welsh Curriculum while also catering to the growing interests of young children. Teachers that use this method think about a variety of ways to assist play, the level of support needed within the play, and the roles they play as play participants. Young learners benefit from adult engagement in play, which includes modelling, open-ended inquiry, reinforcement, encouragement, interaction, provocation, and longer dialogues. However, nuanced awareness of the adult position in the play is required to ensure that the play is neither dominant or constantly stage managed' by the teacher while maintaining a focus on Welsh Curriculum study area content.

When thinking about how to introduce and promote play-based learning in the classroom, it's critical to recognise the importance of play in learning. Families may hold differing viewpoints on the importance of play, which may reflect personal beliefs, cultural experiences and expectations, or represent popular social media attitudes and perspectives. Parents' willingness to support play-based learning in the classroom is likely to be influenced by the ability to communicate why it is important and the benefits it provides to young learners. It's also beneficial to be aware of each learner's play preferences and cultural background, since learners' play expectations will reflect their cultural, community, and family experiences. When thinking about how to promote play-based learning in the context of Australian Curriculum learning and assessment priorities, inviting young learners to express their thoughts about play, what they enjoy to play with, and with whom is a good place to start.

With the implementation of the Children and Young People's Strategy, more thought will be given to how new play and leisure activities may be encouraged. Providing safe, accessible, inclusive spaces for play and socialisation for all children, including those with disabilities and those living in marginalised, vulnerable, or disadvantaged situations, has numerous benefits in terms of physical and mental health, education, skill development, and social confidence, as well as contributing to community cohesion.

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