

Section One

Play is child-centred and child lead, it should be fun and chosen by the child, children are interacting and motivated, exploring their knowledge and understanding of the ability. Whilst playing, children learn to problem solve they learn to communicate with others. When children are playing, they learn how to maintain a relationship. Play supports children with their cognitive development, it is a way for the children to interlink with the environment around them, children can safely explore their strengths and weaknesses and playing the role of an adult, they learn to form relationships with professionals and other children.

We have a biological drive to play when a child plays its fulfilling and enjoyable. Play is having fun and engaged with the child/children it opens new opportunities it must be chosen by the child. Play changes as the child grows in the first year its sensory play, feeling moving and touching, the second year is parallel play and pretend play with a toy, the three year the play expands to social and motor skills and three-five years the play involves more complex play such as imaginative play plus social play with others. Children's Lifetime (No Date).

When a child chooses to play freely, they can take control of their learning, there no correct way to play, freely chosen play supports the child's development, health, and well-being.

Children need a variety of unstructured play from birth to teenagers. The parent/Caregiver can connect with the child through play, they should not direct the play. It is important that the child has time, freedom, and choice of play to get the most out of the play and develop their skills holistically. NIDirect Government Service (No Date).

Play is important for children because it teaches them to interact with others and think creatively. The benefit of play is countless it supports the child to develop cognitively, physically, socially, and emotionally, play is holistic it looks at the child with their development. Play promotes critical thinking and a healthy development it supports the child's memory and understanding of cause and effort. The way children play can be different, considering their age and interests. Play develops the child's P.I.L.E.S. Physical, intellectual, Language, Emotional and Social development. Zapata (2020)

Play has been paramount for children "The right to play" has been incorporated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child. Article - 31

The seven types of play are supported in practice holistically they are planned with the child to enable them to develop their skills and P.I.L.E.S are being supported, the resources are chosen with the child's age and ability at the forefront of their learning.

The resources for play need to be appropriate for the child and the developmental age, if the child has additional Needs to the play can be adapted to their needs to ensure the play is suitable for them to learn.

Age-Appropriate Play considers the developing child and their abilities it's important that play is appropriate for the child age is because its key to their emerging sense of self and the environment around them. Children develop at different rates the play needs to be safe, stimulating and engaging. Age-appropriate play focuses on the child's overall development. The resources are for the child's developmental age and are safe for the children to access. Using age-appropriate play is not only for safety it's important for the child's development. The correct activities will let the children express and enjoy the play, develop vital skills, and explore their imaginations. For each age range the play should offer the child different experiences and opportunities, this will support the child's social, cognitive, and physical development. Grounds for Play (No Date).

Nature Play gives children to chance to explore and understand nature and the outdoors. From seeing a worm move to balancing on a log, nature play is child-directed and child-initiated. Children benefit from the outdoors and having daily connections with nature. The use of natural-materials in play allows the child to link the outside to inside and learn to care for plants and experience the natural world. The outdoors space needs to be designed to enable the children to learn and explore. From creating pathways and choosing the play equipment the area needs to provide a multiple opportunity to learn. Grounds for Play (No Date).

Playing outdoors promotes the child's self-confidence, resilience, experimentation, wild imaginations also friendships and behaviour. Nature play supports the classroom behaviour, motivation, and the readiness to learn, reduces the attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. The benefit of nature play will continue in adulthood. It gives the child skills which will relate to later in life with employment, communicating and working with others. Whittle (2016)

Section Two

Play is key part of a child's development; children learn through play they explore their environment and build on their knowledge. Self-directed play, the play chosen by the child and directed, it provides motivation, self-regulation and the child's learning, the role of an adult is important in their development - language skills. According to others, when children play with their peers or on the own it is typically about ideas, they are familiar with which therefore limits the child's learning further and developing new skills. Bowman (2014) as cited in Wasik et al (2016)

An important part of an adult role in pedagogical interaction with children is the language they use; it has been seen that when effective language is being used the child's development is based upon open questioning and problem solving. Alexander 2004; Chappell et al. 2008; Siraj-Blatchford et al. 2002, as cited in McInnes et al 2013). The role of the practitioner is important to the child's development. Ashiabi (2007). A good pedagogy in early years the adult will take on a variety of separate roles throughout the school day, from adult-led activities to child-led play. According to the Researching Effective Pedagogy in the early years (REPEY) project. Siraj-Blatchford et al (2002) the findings were that effective schools use both adult-led and child-led activities the practitioner needs to show engagement and interact with the children who are building on their own imagination through play. Bennett et al (1997) McInnes et al 2011; Pascal 1990, as cited in McInnes et al (2013).

Practitioner need to create an environment for play, the space needs to be rich in resources, age-appropriate and meets the child's needs and ability, the resources need to be varied to encourage the children to play. Whitebread (2012).

Play supporting is outside the play frame and the play cycle, where the practitioner has minimum involvement in the play whilst observing, a small participation is at the end of the play frame, it supports the play cycle. There are four sections of the play cycle: Play Maintenance – The adult has no involvement with the child's play just observe, Simple Intervention – If a child's asks for a pencil the adult will respond, Medial Intervention – The adult has input into the play with ideas for the child to explore then leaves the play, Complex Intervention – The adult has an important role in the play with acting as the other children. King and Sturrock (2020).

The space needs to be holistic giving the child the opportunity for diverse types of play to happen. The child needs to feel in control of their choices, they need to express and have a sense of freedom, areas will have made more constrained than others. Giving the child a sense of feeling in control whilst in play they are more likely to see activities in a play-like manner McInnes et al (2009). Time is precious the children need to have a length of time to play which is not stopped to enjoy their play time. Communication is important throughout play with adults and other children, to develop relationships which will make the child more secure and to explore the world further. Howard and McInnes (2013).

The importance of self-directed play it builds the child's self-confidence which they do by exploring by themselves. They realise that they can do more by themselves, it is an achievement to make your own game and rules the child will feel successful. The child's independence grows the independence starts at an early age when the child feels safe. With the correct environment and opportunities, the children will become more creative. Self-directed play allows children to learn at their own pace with no time limit, goals to be achieved. When children create their own game and rules, they have to problem solve how the game is going to end. Internal motivation supports the child to have the joy of playing, trying innovative ideas and challenging themselves further, there is not end goal to play, they will find their own enjoyment in the play. Ledendecker (2020).

Both Reggio Emilia and Montessori approaches are similar however they used different methodologies, they are both child-centred and caring. Reggio Emilia approach the children are the leaders of their learning and they do not follow a strict curriculum; the practitioners are seen as guides who support the children to explore further. Montessori the children follow a general curriculum. The children are less involving with their own learning, the practitioners are the leader in their education. Self-directed learning in Montessori they can choose the activities that has planned by the teachers; however, they work independently which allows the child to learn/play at their own pace and when to move onto another area. Reggio Emilia are slightly different as the teacher plans the lesson to happen in real time. Reggio Emilia VS Montessori (2021).

Section Three

As part of the Welsh Government's Early Years Development and Assessment Framework (EYDAF), the Foundation Phase Profile provides assessment through their time in Foundation Phase, the profile supports practitioners to create an integrated approach to the children's learning.

The Foundation Phase Profile consists of two sets of development plan in the four areas of learning which are, Personal and Social, Well-being and Cultural Diversity, Language, Literacy and communication skills, Mathematical Development and Physical Development. When using the Foundation Phase Profile, the compact file is used to form a baseline and the full profile is used for teachers' assessments at the end of term. The profile is used to assess the consistent overview for the scoring the outcomes and progress report.

The outcomes that are displayed in the profile are reflected in the revised areas of learning (to incorporate the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) for Literacy, Language and Communication and Mathematical Development statutory from September 2015) and for the Social and Personal, Well-being and Cultural Diversity and Physical Development (published in 2008). The profile covers children from the age of six months to eighty-four months, the profile has three early stages which are Bronze, Silver and Gold. Foundation Phase Profile Handbook (2018).

According to research of the Foundation Phase Profile conducted by practitioners the report was overall positive with regards to both profiles, compact and full. The compact profile provides good evidence to the child's holistic ability and gives the practitioner a wide range of skills to be observed, it provides good evidence for planning and moving forward with the child at the forefront. The compact profile was better suited to the simpler areas of learning than others. The profile was seen to pick up on development issues for children with Additional Learning Needs at the starting point and moving forward, the profile is not used to access children with Additional Learning Needs other forms need to be completed, the profile is not assessable to all children. Gov.wales (2022). The profile enables the practitioner to support the report to strengthen the child's transition into Key Stage Two. Foundation Phase Profile (No Date).

There were some criticisms about the profile which is it is time-consuming and does not meet the need of the child enough, the profile needs to be completed within six weeks of the child starting Reception, this time frame does not give enough time to complete and show a true reflection of the child, children need time to bond and form an relationship with the staff members it is a large transition for the children the time frame does not give much time to form a relationship and observe the children, the profile seems to be a tick box exercise. For Children with Additional Learning Needs the profile when observing is wide and not clear enough, to identify any learning difficulties. Using the profile with children in a Welsh speaking school, who speak English at home can cause barriers with the language whilst filling in the profile, the child would come out scoring low due to the language being unfamiliar. Gov.wales (2022)

Furthermore, the foundation Phase Profile can involve parents/carers in their child's skill set, the profile allows the parents to meet with the practitioner to discuss their child's development, the information is wide and provides summative judgments. Gov.wales (2018). Parents/Carers can access information about the Foundation Phase Profile via the website, the information is easy to access plus the sections are informative and can be understood, the profile explained in detail, if parents have any questions regarding their child's development. Education Wales (No Date).

Practitioners need to have a full understanding of the Profile to perform the report, to ensure both sections are correct and accurate information about the child, if this has not been gained the report could have detrimental effect on the child, similarly if the report was completed by a new member of staff it could conflict with the regular practitioner regarding the child's progression. Foundation Phase Profile Handbook (2018).

The Foundation Phase profile is used in Wales which gives good standardisation throughout the schools. With the introduction of the new curriculum for Wales the observation and assessment had changed to progression steps to assess the children's progression.

Practitioners will need to familiarise themselves with the new way of collecting information and plan effectively to move the children forward in their learning and development.

Any observation and assessment tool being used has positive and negative connotations, the most important aspect is the information that is gathered needs to meet the needs of the child regarding their learning and development.

Section Four

The play work principles a framework for children to play in an early years setting, children need to play it is embedded in the brain, it is a essential that children are healthy and have a good well-being. The early years practitioner needs when to join in with the play and what impact it will have on the children. When children are engaged and happy, the assessments will reflect their skills. The Play work Principles, (No Date).

The importance of observing children whilst playing, practitioners can consider their development and play skills that the children are showing. Observing and assessment is paramount to professional play practice in every setting. In a school setting it is important that practitioners observe and assess as the amount of time the child is in the setting, they are in a place to track the child's progress and if an intervention or referral is needed, they can be put into place to support the child. Brassard and Boehm (2008). Observing children allows practitioners to articulate accurately this makes it is an important part of the role of the adult. Furthermore, assessing and observing children, the practitioners can provide the best possible play within a setting it could be educational, recreational, or therapeutic. Howard and McInnes (2013).

The play environment is important to ensure the child feels safe and secure, they will explore, and problem solve with more extent, the practitioner's role is ensuring the areas are rich to enable the children to be their best, while assessing the child the outcomes will be higher as the child is happy. Early Years Matter, (No Date).

Observing children in practice is important it should have the child at the centre and the knowing the knowledge of child development. Practitioners should have a good understanding of the observation/ assessment process. During the observation practitioners need to listen to the child plus watching them play, observations allow practitioners to understand the child's level of engagement, friendships, emotional state, good observations enable staff to analyse what has been observed and to move the children forward with their learning. Observations should take place indoors, outdoors, children playing on their own and playing with others to get the best information regarding the child.

Furthermore, observations need to be completed in a concise manner to be managed by the setting, the observation report will be used in future planning. Observations need to be planned and completed over a period of time, if a skill has been noticed it needs to be noted down. Children's fascinations can be observed and made the most of as it can extend the child's learning. Education Wales, (2022)

According to (Laevers et al. 1994) in two settings children were put in the same area to play one being free choice with an activity and the other one was the same activity with no free choice, the children who played freely were more engaged and their well-being was good, they enjoyed the area and was more focused on the activity. Howard and McInnes, (2012).

The study has showed that when children see an activity as play, they are more likely to be engaged and their cognitive development is seen as higher on the problem-solving tasks. When the child is performing the activity, they seem to be engaged to the end and completing the task. Thomas et al. (2006); McInnes et al. (2009). Working outdoors the role of the practitioner is essential to be fully involved and support the children to have the best experience possible, the outdoors need to be used all year round in different weather, as the children will learn about the change of seasons and explore how the environment changes. The adult needs to be embraced for all weather, to enable the children will feel safe, secure, and not afraid to brave the different weathers.

The staff members need to ensure that the children are embracing the outdoors and exploring the environment. During the outdoor session staff need to give the children the opportunities to co-exploration, active and learning alongside the children. Bilton and Crook, (2016).

Play Therapy is used to support children with difficulties in their lives, their emotions and feelings are brought out in the sessions, they have complete choice of what to play with and how to play, with no intervention or a little intervention from the therapist. This sessions are over a period of the time to work though the child difficulties or behavioural problems. It is important to realise the child's developmental process through the play. Play Therapy, (2015).

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