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Awe and Wonder Assignment (ECEY5005/C)

Part 1 – Photograph



(Source: Pentagon Play, 2019)

Part 2

According to the Welsh Government, childcare professionals should provide children with experiences that are exciting and creative to encourage significant and holistic learning whilst at a setting. As a childcare provider, observations should be used in an effective way to aid planning and create resources to ensure an environment that supports children and holistic development and learning.

Children should also experience learning outdoors as it supports many components of children's development such as physical, social, emotional and well-being. An outdoor environment can aid confidence in children, improve skills and encourage awe and wonder in young people by giving opportunities to explore the world around. Being outdoors can also allow children to explore own senses such as smell, touch and what can be heard which will provide scientific and authentic experiences. (Welsh Government, 2019)

According to the Welsh Government, children should have the opportunity to experience physical activities inside and outside of the classroom using a vast number of resources and equipment to aid learning. Allowing children to experience physical activities will promote use of gross and fine motor skills, balance and co-ordination as well as teaching children how to manage hazards and risks. These spaces that children use for outdoor and indoor play provide them with a way of expressing own emotions in a physical

and creative way. By providing children with effective and enabling environments, this will allow them to explore awe, wonder and the sense of curiosity about the world around them. This will inspire children to discover and use imagination towards their own learning. (Welsh Government, 2022)

In the photo I have chosen, there are many areas that add to the outdoor provision within this school setting. There will be children aged between 5 and 6 who have access to this as well as two teachers and teaching assistants. Adult supervision is essential but child-led play is encouraged as much as possible with little adult interruption involved. Practitioners should observe and take notes whilst watching children play in each area to aid future planning for the curriculum. From above, there is a mathematical area, a stage where children can perform, a messy play and mud kitchen area, a sand and water play area, a construction area as well as a physical play area. These areas of the outdoor provision all support children's learning and development in many ways such as promoting the use of fine and gross motor skills, mathematical thinking, exploration of knowledge and understanding of the world as well as discovering the world of science to name a few.

The mathematical area includes many resources such as giant sized numicon, tyres and sorting hoops which the children could use to create venn diagrams to sort objects and materials. The children will be encouraged to use the resources as well as create mathematical problems for themselves and a friend to work on. I would also encourage children to incorporate mathematics into their learning by collecting natural objects and resources such as leaves sticks, stones and flowers and ask them to sort them into three different groups using the sorting hoops. Children would be supported to use their own imagination whilst taking part in all activities to promote being curious, awe and wonder. I would create a 'maths box' which would include some natural materials such as leaves, stones and chalks for children to use at own convenience to enhance learning, scientific and mathematical experiences outside of the indoor classroom. The use of sorting hoops to create venn diagrams supports the Curriculum for Wales (2022) Mathematical and Numeracy area of learning and experience as this document expects children to be able to sort items using a venn diagram as well as representing data using a various number of methods. By incorporating mathematics into the curriculum, children will have the opportunity to develop own mathematical understandings and be introduced to problem solving.

According to the Welsh Government (2022), children should have the opportunity to develop a mathematical understanding of the world around. It is essential that practitioners allow children to take time to explore and discover when problem solving mathematical concepts. The ability to problem solve does not come easy so children must have time to work out the answers to problems without adult intervention.

The messy play and mud kitchen area are popular with the children as it promotes many different key aspects of children's learning such as science and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children can communicate with others and have the freedom to make own decisions and choices which encourages inclusive practice and having control over their own learning. By incorporating natural materials in the mud kitchen alongside objects that may be found at home such as kitchen utensils will allow children to explore and thrive on learning in more depth. By embodying a mud kitchen and messy play into learning, it is ensuring a child led approach to study and embracing the curiosity approach. An activity the children can participate in would be to create own potions using natural materials and communicate with friends to list what it consists of, mathematics will be incorporated into this activity as children will be encouraged to list how many items are in each potion. This activity will also promote scientific skills as children are learning more about natural materials and how to use them. Another idea for the mud kitchen area would be to introduce a wormery or bug hotel for the children to explore and use. This will allow children to explore own curiosity, the life cycle of living things and ask many questions. Children will also be encouraged to use imaginative play. Equipment such as magnifying glasses and tubs will be provided within these areas so children can explore nature in full.

I would also incorporate soil, seeds and equipment such as pots, spades, buckets, and forks to ensure children have the opportunity to learn more in depth about plants and living things. The Curriculum for Wales (2020) states that children should be able to see that plants and animals are part of the world and are living things that are growing each day. Whilst using these resource to plant the seeds, I would encourage the children to discuss predictions of how tall the plants would grow and how often they would need to be watered. This supports the Curriculum for Wales (2020) as one of the next progression steps would be to use own knowledge to create predictions based on scientific discoveries. The use of soil, seeds and other equipment used for planting and gardening supports the science and technology section of the Curriculum for Wales (2020) which allows children to explore and discover new

information about nature and natural world. As an extension activity, I would hand out worksheets of a Scavenger Hunt for the children to participate in including many natural objects hidden around the outdoor provision for the children to go and hunt down in pairs. By working with friends, children will be encouraged to communicate and work together to problem solve and make informed decisions based on the activity.

The construction area will be for children who will want to build and create new fabrications and designs. In this area, I would provide many resources such as spades, wooden and foam blocks, Lego, buckets and rakes so children can use own imagination and communicate with friends to participate in experiential learning whilst being outdoors. The use of construction play can promote children's social skills as they take on different roles of people who work in construction such as builders and communicate with friends to initiate play whilst making decisions and problem solving. Children will be encouraged to build using resources and imagination to see what can be made.



(Source: Pentagon Play, 2021)

The sand and water play area will include various equipment for children to play with including water wheels, jugs, spades, buckets and sieves. This equipment will enhance science and mathematical skills for children allowing individuals to participate in experiential learning and also engage in fine and gross motor skill activities. Throughout the use of sand and water play, children are encouraged to communicate with friends and to share. These key aspects of communication allow children to experience the emotions of others and how to be empathetic. Playing with water outdoors can provide children with many learning opportunities and increase engaging experiences.

Being outdoors offers a larger space to explore and play and water that flows is simple to access whilst being outside. When playing with water indoors, play can be limited as the water may get onto the floor following vigorous play which could result in accidents but whilst being outside, there are many more opportunities for water play outside of the water tray. For example, whilst being at the beach there may be rock pools to explore into or being in a woodland there may be ponds for children to discover what lives within and also promote learning about science and nature whilst being under adult supervision. (White, 2013)

Water play provides many interesting conversations between children and adults and various questions being generated such as 'Why is water clear?' and 'How many objects can float in this water tray?'. All children are encouraged to explore own curiosity through water play which also promotes mathematical concepts when thinking about objects that float and sink. Water play also offers multi-sensory opportunities for children to get involved in becoming familiar with own senses and how to use them also. (White, 2013)



(Source: Pentagon Play, ND)

Another activity that promotes gross motor skills for children would be the area which includes a climbing frame. As well as participating in exercise, children will be able to improve gross motor movement, balance as well as coordination by climbing up and down the frame using their arms and legs. Children will be encouraged to think how an animal would climb up and down a tree and use their imagination to play and explore.

Part 3 – Risk Benefit Assessment

Experience exploring outdoor area in photograph	How will children benefit from this activity?	Hazards and risks	Who is at risk of harm?	What precautions are in place to reduce the risk of accidents?	Overall risk after precautions RATING: L/M/H

Water play	This will benefit children as it will allow individuals to take risks and increase confidence. This will also give children the experience of playing with water, enhancing many skills such as science and mathematics..	The hazards and risks associated with water play can include slipping and falling over resulting in various injuries. These risks can be for both children as well as practitioners, especially if water gets on to the floor.	Both the children and professionals are at risk.	If there are more staff to supervise the children who are playing with water as well as the children who are playing and experiencing the outdoors, then accidents and incidents are less likely and less problematic.	Low
Uneven ground	Being outdoors where there may be uneven ground will allow children to take risks as well as experience balancing on own terms which will benefit own development and enhance new experiences.	The risks associated with being on uneven ground can include falling over and tripping resulting in injuries both to the child and adults who are supervising play.	Both the children and adults who are supervising.	If both staff and children wear sensible and suitable footwear for the location, then accidents and injuries are more likely to be avoided. Examples of footwear could be wellington boots for muddy and messy surfaces and old trainers for dirty woodland areas with uneven ground.	Low
Sharp objects and/or corners	Some areas outdoors may have sharp corners such as the performance stage and sharp objects such as some utensils in the mud kitchen and messy play area	Tripping or falling over onto sharp corners will result in injuries. Utensils from the mud kitchen may result in injuries especially if children are	Children and adults who are supervising.	More staff supervising each area and ensuring children are using equipment correctly, not running whilst holding sharp objects and ensuring safe play is occurring on the performance stage.	Low

		running whilst holding them.			
Playing at height	Children who play on the performance stage or climbing area may be at risk of falling off and creating injuries. Having access to this stage and climbing area will also benefit children in regards to learning by taking risks.	Children could trip and fall off the performance stage.	Children are at risk.	If more staff are present to supervise children who decide to use the stage and climbing area, incidents can be avoided.	Low
Weather Effects	Children who are playing outside may be at risk of getting injured if playing outside in torrential rain or a thunderstorm. Also, if the weather is very windy then this could be a potential risk too.	Children could slip and fall if the ground is wet and if the weather is very windy, objects may get blown around the areas and accidentally hurt a child.	Both practitioners and children are at risk.	If weather starts to become problematic, all objects and equipment are to be stored away safely and correctly to ensure the safety of both children and practitioners.	Low
The use of old equipment and resources	Children who play outside may encounter faulty equipment especially if it is old such as broken magnifying glasses and broken utensils from the mud kitchen.	Broken equipment can be sharp and if not identified early, could cause injuries and accidents to both children and adults.	Both adults supervising and children are at risk of harm.	More adult supervision in areas can avoid accidents from happening. Children should be made aware that any broken equipment should be reported to a practitioner so it can either be fixed or thrown away to ensure safety for everyone.	Low

Part 4

Being outdoors promotes freedom of choice and offers a nature that being inside creates limitations to. The freedom that children experience outdoors can allow children to experience playing with friends in bigger spaces and feel more at ease with the world around, children are able to explore and discover being closer to nature creating authentic and engaging experiences. (Richardson, 2013)

The outdoors can also encourage children to use senses to discover the world of outdoors as young people use the five senses to learn and discover new experiences. The curriculum for Wales includes four main areas for learning. These include being creative and innovative, being a critical thinker and problem solver, planning, organising and effectiveness. (Welsh Government, 2022)

Outdoor learning can aid young people to establish connections to own locality. This type of learning can be applied to create a sense of belonging or the Welsh word being 'cynefin'. Children should be encouraged by practitioners to make use of resources from surroundings and use own imagination to participate within experiential learning whilst being outside of the classroom. (ERW, 2020)

The Foundation Phase has created an outdoor learning handbook available for childcare professionals to aid learning and create stimulating experiences for children. Practitioners can use this handbook to ensure effective learning for children and young people whilst being outdoors.

Whilst being outdoors, children have the opportunity to intensify all aspects of development including physical, social, personal and creativity. Children participate in more activities that involve exercise which improves fitness levels. (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009)

However, there may be barriers to children's learning whilst being outdoors. These will include potential risks and hazards that may occur whilst being outdoors. It is essential for practitioners to ensure that a risk assessment is completed before any type of outdoor activities or learning can take place. This will include all outdoor resources and materials to be assessed to reach an outcome which will promote experiential learning as well as safe play, these resources need to be stored correctly and safely in order to keep individuals safe from harm. Staff who supervise outdoor play should also be trained in relevant fields suitable for this type of learning such as First Aid as well as Health and Safety. Any accidents that occur whilst experiencing the outdoors, should be recorded and reported to parents or guardians of the children. (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009)

According to the Welsh Assembly Government (2009) observations made whilst watching children participate in outdoor activities will allow childcare professionals to create a judgement on children's skills and assess capabilities and abilities. Observations can also regulate any areas that a child may be struggling in and how to continue and support the individual. Information gathered from observation should be recorded and implemented within planning to create support and further guidance for children. Observing children both indoors and outdoors will determine whether behaviour is different in both locations.

Most schools in Wales now foster the Forest schools Approach. This is a way of learning and developing skills being outdoors using the Foundation Phase curriculum for Wales. Schools may have received funding to create a forest school area for children to use and some schools may visit places off site. When children have a forest school session, the leader allows for experiential learning as well as multi-sensory, first-hand experiences for children to learn about nature and the world of outdoors. Participating in forest school sessions can allow children to communicate with others and show curiosity as well as appreciate nature and the world of science in greater depth which will encourage higher self-confidence. Children may be faced with new hazards risks that may not occur indoors but whilst discussing with others, children will be able to make new decisions and develop self-esteem and confidence when facing new challenges. (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009)

Outdoor learning can offer children many opportunities to explore curiosity and wonder such as providing many sensory first-hand experiences which involve natural materials. Children can explore risks, hazards as well as challenges that may arise whilst

engaging in outdoor activities and exploring nature. Learning outdoors can also allow children to explore all areas of the curriculum and learn new information. (Froebel Trust, ND)

Friedrich Froebel created the first ever pre-school 'kindergarten' in 1836 for young people 7 years old and younger to experience learning through play. Froebel believed that learning through play is of paramount importance in childhood development and allows for own understanding of the world. (Froebel Trust, ND)

The Froebel Trust motivates early learning and experiences and allows for children to become free, independent learners by exploring inside and outside of the classroom in various ways. All children learn from first hand experiences, the Froebel Trust acknowledges this and appreciates children. Being reflective is also of high importance when it comes to learning as it allows for improvements to be made and progression to be recognised in order to move forward. (Froebel Trust, ND)

Froebel believed that all children should be able to experience nature at its fullest including plants and animals but in its widest form. Experiencing play outdoors will allow children to be able to view nature in a more natural environment. (Froebel Trust, ND)

Frederich Froebel believed that kindergartens should have a garden area space for children to learn and develop skills further and that practitioners should nurture the children's learning outside of the classroom just as much as it is inside. Froebel also believed that children learn by encountering first hand experiences and by doing. Children progress better when emotionally stable and having created good relationships with others such as friends and practitioners. (Froebel Trust, ND)

Froebel created a garden for all kindergarten children and offered rich learning opportunities through gardening. This would promote understanding of the natural world and children's curiosity into own learning and development. Every child had a small space in Froebel's Garden and could grow own plants using seeds and use the plants that grow. Gardening also gave children a deeper understanding into life cycles of plants and living things and it was a first-hand experience that children received through the use of gardening. (Froebel Trust, ND)

The Curriculum for Wales (2021) provide 4 purposes that act as aims for all schools to allow learners to adapt into inspiring learners who are ready to learn, creative supporters, ethical members of the community as well as fit and healthy individuals. By providing children with many opportunities inside and outside of the classroom, it is possible that young people will become these types of learners due to many inspiring and effective learning experiences and opportunities.

Adults and practitioners who engage in outdoor play with children should be role models when it comes down to children being inspired to learn outdoors, good behaviour and attitudes of practitioners play an essential part of a child's everyday life. Practitioners should be encouraging, motivating and engaging towards children in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for outdoor learning. (Waller. T, 2011)

Education Scotland (2020) believe that being outside and physical is an essential component to childhood and healthy development. Learning outdoors can allow children to engage and express own emotions and feelings in larger spaces and areas creating a sense of freedom.

The Welsh Assembly Government (ND) has created a guide named 'First Steps Outdoors' which aims to support practitioners and adults on how to take learning and teaching outside of the classroom. This guide states that children should be able to enjoy and be provided with an understanding of the outside natural world, opportunities to develop new skills and be able to explore the world around. Having an outdoor area within setting that is well planned allows children to be faced with rich learning environments and offers an extension of learning that is completed indoors. A child can express own emotions whilst being outdoors in a larger area especially if there are certain quiet places that are calming and stimulating and places to be loud and imaginative, a child will be able to develop holistically whilst expressing and discovering different feelings and emotions whilst being outdoors. Mathematics and numeracy can be underpinned using problem solving whilst engaging in outdoor activities, being able to use a larger area outdoors can offer children many more learning opportunities than indoors. Taking part in experiences outdoors will also allow children to learn skills that can be applied to everyday life and activities such as a growth in self-esteem and confidence, being a natural leader and being able to make decisions independently. Being respectful towards nature and the natural world is also another trait that

children will develop from participating in outdoor learning and activities, this will also be learned from practitioners who are supporting.

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