
Overview

Who is this unit for?

This unit is for those who plan and support children or young people's self-directed play activities. It is suitable for those working in any kind of school setting, including secondary schools, and would be particularly suitable for those involved in extended services.

What is this unit about?

This unit is about identifying the play needs and preferences of children and young people, developing play spaces that will meet these needs and supporting children and young people during play.

This unit contains four elements:

1. Collect and analyse information on play needs and preferences
2. Plan and prepare play spaces
3. Support self-directed play
4. Help children and young people to manage risk during play

Performance criteria

Collect and analyse information on play needs and preferences

- You must be able to:*
- P1 collect information on children and young people's play using a range of **methods**
 - P2 investigate and take account of the needs of children and young people who experience barriers to access
 - P3 analyse information to identify play needs
 - P4 consult with children and young people and take account of their ideas on play needs and preferences
 - P5 research and identify a range of play spaces and resources that will meet the play needs of children and young people

Plan and prepare play spaces

- You must be able to:*
- P6 plan **play spaces** that will meet the needs of children and young people and can be adapted by them to meet new needs
 - P7 make sure the play spaces provide for a range of different play types
 - P8 obtain the resources needed for these play spaces
 - P9 work within the available budget or find other creative ways of obtaining or making resources
 - P10 create the planned play spaces, involving children and young people wherever possible
 - P11 make sure that the range of play spaces will be accessible for all children and young people who could take part
 - P12 make sure the play spaces take account of health and safety requirements

Support self-directed play

- You must be able to:*
- P13 encourage children and young people to choose and explore the range of play spaces for themselves, providing support when necessary
 - P14 leave the content and intent of play to the children and young people
 - P15 enable play to occur uninterrupted
 - P16 enable children and young people to explore their own values
 - P17 ensure children and young people can develop in their own ways
 - P18 hold children and young people's play frames when necessary
 - P19 observe play and respond to play cues according to the stage in the play cycle

Help children and young people to manage risk during play

- You must be able to:*
- P20 allow children and young people to experience and explore risk during play

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- P21 identify **hazards** when they occur
- P22 assess the risks that these hazards pose in a way that is sensitive to the nature of the children and young people involved
- P23 raise children and young people's awareness of hazards and how to manage risk themselves
- P24 balance the risks involved with the benefits of challenge and stimulation
- P25 only intervene if the level of risk becomes unacceptable

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

- K1 relevant playwork assumptions and values that apply to this unit
- K2 the short- and long-term benefits of play
- K3 the playworker's role in supporting play
- K4 indicators/objectives you can use to evaluate play provision
- K5 behavioural modes associated with play:
 - K5.1 personally directed
 - K5.2 intrinsically motivated
 - K5.3 in secure context
 - K5.4 spontaneous
 - K5.5 goalless
 - K5.6 where the content and intent is under the control of the children and young people
- K6 the range of play types that are commonly accepted
- K7 how to provide for the following play types:
 - K7.1 communication play
 - K7.2 creative play
 - K7.3 deep play
 - K7.4 dramatic play
 - K7.5 exploratory play
 - K7.6 fantasy play
 - K7.7 imaginative play
 - K7.8 locomotor play
 - K7.9 mastery play
 - K7.10 object play
 - K7.11 role play
 - K7.12 rough and tumble
 - K7.13 social play
 - K7.14 socio-dramatic play
 - K7.15 symbolic play
- K8 the mood descriptors associated with play and how to recognise these:
 - K8.1 happy
 - K8.2 independent
 - K8.3 confident
 - K8.4 altruistic
 - K8.5 trusting
 - K8.6 balanced
 - K8.7 active or immersed
 - K8.8 at ease
- K9 the main stages of child development and how these affect children's play needs and behaviours
- K10 the particular needs of disabled children and how these need to be met

- when planning for and supporting play, including helping them to manage risk
- K11 why it is important to identify children and young people's play needs and preferences
 - K12 the types of information you can use to identify play needs and preferences and how to access these
 - K13 the barriers to access, including disability but taking account of others, that some children and young people may experience and how to address these
 - K14 why it is important to consult with children and young people on play needs and preferences
 - K15 effective methods of consulting with children and young people
 - K16 the range of different types of play spaces that can meet children and young people's needs and preferences
 - K17 how to plan play spaces that meet children and young people's play needs
 - K18 why it is important to create spaces that children and young people can adapt to their own needs
 - K19 how to obtain and/or create resources needed for a range of play spaces
 - K20 how to involve children and young people in the creation of play spaces
 - K21 the importance of access for all children and how to ensure this happens
 - K22 the health and safety requirements that are relevant to play spaces and how to ensure you take account of these
 - K23 why it is important for children and young people to choose and explore play spaces for themselves
 - K24 the types of support you may need to provide and how to decide when it is appropriate to provide support
 - K25 why it is important to leave the content and intent of play to children and young people
 - K26 why it is important to allow play to continue uninterrupted
 - K27 why it is important to allow children to develop in their own ways and not to show them 'better' ways of doing things when they are playing unless they ask
 - K28 the main stages of the play cycle
 - K29 how to define a play frame
 - K30 how to identify play cues
 - K31 how to identify when and how to respond to a play cue
 - K32 why risk is important in play and how to encourage and support acceptable risk-taking
 - K33 levels of risk acceptable according to organisational policies and procedures
 - K34 the range of hazards that may occur during children's play and how to recognise these
 - K35 the basic stages of child development and the implications these have for levels of risk

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K36 how to assess risk according to age and stage of development

K37 the importance of balancing risk with the benefits of challenge and stimulation

Additional Information

Scope/range related to performance criteria

Collect and analyse information on play needs and preferences

1. **Methods**
 - 1.1. researching playwork theory and practice
 - 1.2. observing children and young people at play
 - 1.3. interacting with children and young people

Plan and prepare play spaces

2. **Play spaces**
 - 2.1. for physical play
 - 2.2. for affective play
 - 2.3. transient
 - 2.4. permanent

Support self-directed play

3. **Play spaces**
 - 3.1. for physical play
 - 3.2. for affective play
 - 3.3. transient
 - 3.4. permanent

Help children and young people to manage risk during play

4. **Hazards**
 - 4.1. physical
 - 4.2. emotional
 - 4.3. behavioural
 - 4.4. environmental

Glossary

Affective play

play that involves the children or young people experiencing or experimenting with emotions, feelings and attitudes

Barriers to access

things that prevent or discourage children and young people from taking part in play provision. These may include physical barriers for disabled children, but could also include wider issues such as discrimination, lack of positive images, lack of culturally acceptable activities and customs, language barriers and many other factors that affect different communities

Children and young people

non-disabled and disabled children and young people in the age range four to six years, both girls and boys, from all cultures and backgrounds

Communication play

play using words, nuances or gestures, e.g. mime, jokes, play acting, mickey-taking, singing, debate, poetry

Creative play

play which allows a new response, the transformation of information, awareness of new connections, with an element of surprise, e.g. enjoying creation with a range of materials and tools, for its own sake

Deep play

play which allows the child to encounter risky or even potentially life-threatening experiences, to develop survival skills and conquer fear, e.g. leaping onto an aerial runway, riding a bike on a parapet, balancing on a high beam

Disabled children

children with impairments who experience barriers to accessing mainstream childcare and play facilities. This includes children with physical and sensory impairments, learning and communication difficulties, medical conditions, and challenging and complex needs which may be permanent or temporary

Dramatic play

play which dramatises events in which the child is not a direct participator, e.g. presentation of a TV show, an event on the street, a religious or festive event, even a funeral

Exploratory play

play to access factual information consisting of manipulative behaviours such as handling, throwing, banging or mouthing objects, e.g. engaging with an object or area and, either by manipulation or movement, assessing its properties, possibilities and content, such as stacking bricks

Fantasy play

play which rearranges the world in the child's way, a way which is unlikely to occur, e.g. playing at being a pilot flying around the world or the owner of an expensive car

Hazard

something that may cause harm to the health, safety and welfare of users of the play setting, e.g. broken glass, faulty play equipment, doors being left open that should be closed

Imaginative play

play where the conventional rules which govern the physical world do not apply, e.g. imagining you are, or pretending to be, a tree or ship, or patting a dog which is not there

Locomotor play

movement in any and every direction for its own sake, e.g. chase, tag, hide and seek, tree climbing

Mastery play

control of the physical and affective ingredients of the environments, e.g. digging holes, changing the course of streams, constructing shelters, building fires

Object play

play which uses infinite and interesting sequences of hand– eye manipulations and movements, such as examination and novel use of any object, eg. cloth, paintbrush, cup

Permanent

something that lasts, or is intended to last, for a long time

Play

play is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated

Play cues*

facial expressions, language or body language that communicate the child or young person's wish to play or invite others to play

Play cycle*

the full flow of play from the first play cue from the child, its return from the outside world, the child's response to the return and the further development of play to the point where play is complete

Play frame*

a material or non-material boundary that keeps the play intact

Play needs

the individual needs of children to play

Play space

any area that supports and enriches the potential for children to play

Risk

Plan and support self-directed play

the likelihood of a hazard actually causing harm; this will often be influenced by the age or stage of development of the children and young people involved

Role play

play exploring ways of being, although not normally of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature, e.g. brushing with a broom, dialling with a telephone, driving a car

Rough and tumble play

close-encounter play which is less to do with fighting and more to do with touching, tickling, gauging relative strength, discovering physical flexibility and the exhilaration of display, e.g. playful fighting, wrestling and chasing where the children involved are obviously unhurt and give every indication that they are enjoying themselves

Social play

play during which the rules and criteria for social engagement and interaction can be revealed, explored and amended, e.g. any social or interactive situation which contains an expectation on all parties that they will abide by the rules or protocols, i.e. games, conversations, making something together

Socio-dramatic play

the enactment of real and potential experiences of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature, e.g. playing at house, going to the shops, being mothers and fathers, organising a meal or even having a row

Symbolic play

play which allows control, gradual exploration and increased understanding, without the risk of being out of one's depth, e.g. using a piece of wood to symbolise a person, or a piece of string to symbolise a wedding ring

Transient

not permanent

* Gordon Sturrock and Perry Else, 1998, The playground as therapeutic space: playwork as healing (known as "The Colorado Paper"), published in Play in a Changing Society: Research, Design, Application, IPA/USA, Little Rock, USA. Available as a PDF free of charge from www.ludemos.co.uk or info.ludemos@virgin.net

Links to other NOS

TDASTL10 Support children's play and learning

TDASTL15 Support children and young people's play

Origin of this unit

This unit is taken from the National Occupational Standards in Playwork where

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Plan and support self-directed play

it appears as unit PW9.

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Plan and support self-directed play

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Suite Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools

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