



Playwork and the Early Years Foundation Stage

Guidelines for York Playworkers and Managers

Introduction: This document has been produced in response to the needs of the sector; to outline the new duties of the Early Years Foundation Stage (the EYFS) and its implications for Playwork. It will provide guidance that enables Playwork settings to feel confident to engage with EYFS and begin to understand how it can complement the Playwork principles which should be a fundamental part of any setting offering play to children and young people. Its contents include:

- ❖ Responsibilities of the Early Years Foundation Stage
- ❖ The welfare requirements
- ❖ The learning and development requirements
- ❖ Key workers
- ❖ Observation
- ❖ Risk assessment and safeguarding
- ❖ How we do it in Playwork
- ❖ Demonstrating what we do and providing the evidence
- ❖ Ofsted inspections
- ❖ Training Calendar

These guidelines are for organisations which regard Play and Playwork as an integral part of what they do and are able to work in accordance with the Playwork Principles. Holiday playschemes and after school play clubs as well as adventure playgrounds and playcentres might find these guidelines useful especially if they are working with young children. The guidelines do not deal with all of the requirements of the EYFS but concentrate on the most important issues for Playwork. They aim to show that the EYFS requirements do not conflict with the Playwork Principles and to offer ways to demonstrate and provide evidence that play settings can and do meet the EYFS requirements.

The approach adopted in these guidelines is '**This is how we do it in Playwork**'. Much of its information is taken from ...

- ❖ The 2008 briefing produced by Play England and SkillsActive.
- ❖ Are you ready for inspection (2008), London, Office for Standards in Education
- ❖ Early Years self-evaluation form (2008) London, Ofsted
- ❖ Framework for the Regulation of those on the Early Years and Childcare Registers (2008) Ofsted

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September 2009

- ❖ Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2007), London, Department for Children Schools and Families
- ❖ Best play: What play provision should do for children (2000) National Playing Fields Association
- ❖ Play provision, the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Ofsted Early Years Registration process in England. Policy Summary, Play England and SkillsActive May 2009

Joining the Early Years Register

The Childcare Act 2006 introduced new requirements and arrangements for registering provision for children and young people which involve joining either the Early Years Register or the Childcare Register or both.

Ofsted is responsible for maintaining and regulating clubs which join these registers and registration requirements affect Playwork settings according to what type of provision they are. Those that work with children from birth to 31st August following their 5th Birthday should join the Early Years register.

Any provision which joins the Early Years register must meet the EYFS requirements and its practitioners should have a working knowledge of the EYFS.

For more info visit www.ofsted.gov.uk

What is the EYFS?

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a framework that provides assurance that provision for young children helps them to thrive and keeps them safe. It is based on the assumption that what happens in a child's early years has a major impact on that child's future life chances. The EYFS is therefore providing a foundation for children to make the most of their abilities as they grow.

It sets standards, provides for equality of opportunity, creates a framework for partnership working, improves quality and consistency and lays secure foundations for future learning.

The EYFS replaces three other frameworks which will be abolish:

- Curriculum guidance of the foundation stage,
- Birth to Three matters
- The National Standards for under 8's Daycare and childminding

The EYFS is given legal force through an Order and Regulations made under the 2006 Act. From September 2008, it became mandatory for all schools and early years providers in Ofsted registered settings attended by young children. Registered settings have a duty to ensure that their early years provision complies with the EYFS requirements, both in terms of the welfare requirements and the learning and development framework as set out in the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The *Statutory Framework* says: 'All areas must be delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance between adult led and child initiated activities.'

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September 2009

Settings need to provide individualised opportunities based on each child's needs, particularly those related to ethnicity, language and disability. Play settings are not required to formally teach reading and writing, but should provide opportunities for children to choose to engage in pre-literacy activities. This could include having a range of books available for children to freely access, opportunities for mark making, opportunities for children to socialise, opportunities for writing during role play etc

Themes and principles

The EYFS is built around 4 themes which express important principles underpinning practice in the care, learning and development of young children. Each Principle is supported by four commitments which describe how the principle can be put into practice.

- 1. A unique child:** recognises that every child is a competent learner from birth, who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. The commitments are focused around child development, inclusive practice and safety, health and well-being.
- 2. Positive relationships:** describes how children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or key people in their lives. The commitments are focussed around respecting each other, partnership with parents, supporting learning and the role of the key person.
- 3. Enabling environments** explains that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. The commitments concern observation, assessment and planning, support for every child, the learning environment and the wider context...transitions, continuity and multi-agency working.
- 4. Learning and development** recognises that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and that all areas of learning and development are equally important and interconnected. Commitments are focussed around play and exploration, active learning, creativity and critical thinking and the areas of learning and development.

The EYFS requirements are laid out in two parts...

1. The learning and development requirements

The EYFS has **six areas of learning and development**. All are connected to each other and are of equal importance and all are underpinned by the principles of the EYFS

- 1. Personal, social and emotional development**
- 2. Communication, language and literacy**
- 3. Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy**
- 4. Knowledge and understanding of the world**
- 5. Physical development**
- 6. Creative development**

The EYFS Statutory Framework says that none can be delivered in isolation from the others. All depend upon each other to support a rounded approach to development. All must be delivered through planned purposeful play with a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities.

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Each of the six areas of learning and development comprise **three elements**:

The early learning goals...the knowledge, skills and understanding which children should have acquired by the end of the academic year in which they reach the age of five

The educational programmes...the matters, skills and processes which are required to be taught to children

The assessment arrangements...to ascertain their achievements

Play settings meet the EYFS learning and development requirements through...

Affective play spaces that pay attention to, provide for and support a variety of behaviours, feelings and moods that children and young people bring with them or which occur during their play. These spaces have particular areas and materials and props that at different times stimulate or encourage the expression, experience of and experimentation with a range of emotions.

Transient play spaces that get changed, modified and adapted, deconstructed, reconstructed and broken into sections, via moveable resources or **loose parts**. Change can be spontaneous or planned

Loose parts that can be carried, rolled, lifted, piled or combined. Loose parts are anything that can be moved and manipulated to create new structures and experiences, for example, bikes, trolleys, ropes, climbing structures, paints and colours, fabrics, calendars, clocks, dressing up stuff, mirrors, wood, building blocks, planks, tables, trestles, cushions.

A play environment for all 'play types' or categories that describe the way children and young people play. Current research suggests there are 16 play types that often overlap, happen more than one at a time and change from one to the other and back again very rapidly. **Play types** can be mistaken for difficult, challenging, dangerous or unacceptable behaviour

Playworkers who...

- Can provide an environment that stimulates play so that children can be imaginative and creative.
- Can provide the resources and loose parts that enable this to happen.
- Can move stuff around to suggest ideas, to promote imagination and exploration.
- Seek to develop an overall ambience of welcome, acceptance, freedom and playfulness.
- Know about play types and play cues, how to identify them when they are happening, how to provide for them and how to respond in an appropriately way.
- Can risk assess.

The EYFS Profile is a way of summing up each child's development and learning at the end of the EYFS. It is based on observation and assessment of the child's achievements, interests and learning styles. It is completed by the child's primary care setting, however Play settings should feed in their observations about the child.

Observations by the primary setting are matched to the expectations of early learning goals and are also used to identify learning priorities and to plan relevant and motivating experiences. Play settings must make ongoing observations on children in the early years group. Observations should not be intrusive, and recordings of these need not be time consuming.

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2. The welfare requirements

Have the force of regulation and must be met by all providers

The welfare requirements are based on the principle that children learn best (or play best) when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are being met and when they have positive relationships with adults and others.

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They are designed to support providers in creating places that are welcoming, safe and stimulating and where children are able to enjoy learning through play, to grow in confidence and to fulfil their potential.

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The General legal requirements are expanded upon with more detailed Specific legal requirements.

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There is also statutory guidance to be used when seeking to fulfil the legal requirements.

The requirements are:

1. Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare:

- a) The provider must take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and includes specific requirements concerning: safeguarding, information and complaints, premises and security, outings, equality of opportunity.
- b) The provider must promote the good health of the children, take necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection and take appropriate action when they are ill, including specific requirements concerning medicines, illnesses and injuries, food and drink and smoking.
- c) Children's behaviour must be managed effectively and in a manner appropriate for their stage of development and particular individual needs, including specific requirements concerning behaviour management.

2. Suitable people:

- a) The provider must ensure that adults looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so, including specific requirements concerning safe recruitment, what to notify Ofsted about and alcohol and other substances.
- b) Adults looking after children must have appropriate qualifications, training, skills and knowledge.
- c) Staffing arrangements must be organised to ensure safety and to meet the needs of the children including specific requirements concerning adult to child ratios.

3. Suitable premises: outdoor and indoor spaces, furniture, equipment and toys must be safe and suitable for their purpose, including specific requirements concerning risk assessment and premises.

Organisation: providers must plan and organise their systems to ensure that every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience that is tailored to meet their individual needs, including specific requirements concerning effective systems, key person, indoor

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and outdoor play, observational assessment, and planning for and provision of appropriate experiences.

Documentation: providers must maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe and efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of children, including specific requirements concerning policies and procedures, data, records, information and documentation that must be kept, that must be submitted and that must be displayed.

Separate policies for EYFS are not required as long as existing policies meet all requirements
Policies must be written, given to all staff and be accessible and explained to parents

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Play settings meet the EYFS welfare requirements through...

A key playworker who's role is to help young children become familiar with the provision and to feel confident and safe within it, developing a genuine bond with the child and the child's parents, offering a settled and consistent relationship, to meet the needs of each child and respond sensitively to their feelings, ideas, and behaviour, talking to parents to make sure that the child is being cared for appropriately, to record observations.

Risk assessment and risk management which all play settings will be carrying out and recording. The government has accepted that children need to take risks when they play. The Play Safety Forum position statement 'Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation guidance' (Play England 2008) explains the new approach to balancing safety with the benefits of offering children challenging play opportunities. Safety is important but play settings must not restrict access to 'good' risks which help children to learn and develop. Playworkers leave children and young people to play with or around risk as well as adapt the way children and young people are playing if the level of risk is considered too high

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children for which all Playwork settings will have arrangements in place. The play sector briefing 'Safeguarding children and young people within the play sector' (Play England, 2007) explains responsibilities and how to do it.

The suitability of play staff and their qualifications.

- Playleaders and deputies who have a full and relevant level 3 qualification as defined by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC). Half of all other staff must have a full and relevant level 2
- All practitioners will have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities
- Staff appraisals regularly carried out to identify training and professional development needs of staff
- Induction for new staff to show how the provision operates which will include evacuation procedures, child protection and health and safety issues.
- Enhanced CRB checks for all who have unsupervised access to children

The suitability of the play premises. This involves:

- Places for children to relax, play quietly, store their toys and personal belongings and for confidential information
- Access to outdoor space, space for free movement and well-spread play
- Risk assessments
- Clearly defined procedures for emergency evacuation of premises, appropriate fire detection and control equipment and practise drills
- Parts used by children for their sole use during the duration of the provision,
- Kitchen and toilet facilities and a place equipped for meals, snacks and drinks

Documents displayed: the certificate of registration and public liability insurance for the provision

Policies & procedures for:

- Safeguarding
- Promoting and ensuring equality of opportunity
- Concerns and complaints
- Arrival and departure procedures for children, staff, parents and visitors
- Administering medicines
- Smoking
- Staff intervention into children's behaviour
- Health and safety
- Staff contingency plans

Data & records for:

- Complaints and concerns
- All prescribed medicines administered
- Accidents and first aid
- Daily attendance and arrival and departure details of children
- Staff details, recruitment, training and qualifications, and references and CRB checks (number and date of issue)
- Name and address of all who have unsupervised access to children
- Children's details and details of who to contact, how and when
- Risk assessments
- Health and safety checks
- Daily staffing, staff/child ratios and key workers
- First aid certificates
- Fire drills, problems encountered and resolved

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Playwork and the Early Years Foundation Stage: A summary

- All play provision for children from birth to 31st August following their 5th birthday must deliver the EYFS.
- Ofsted distinguishes between primary and non-primary providers. The setting in which the child spends most of its early years education is the primary setting and non-primary settings are those in which the child spends relatively short periods of time.
- Play settings are not usually the primary setting for EYFS. What play settings do should complement and not duplicate the primary provider's activity.
- The Learning and Development requirements are new for Playwork
- All play settings should be working in accordance with the Playwork Principles. This means they will be in a good position to satisfy the Learning and Development requirements of the EYFS
- All settings must record what they see but this must not be intrusive or time consuming.
- Non primary settings are not required to teach reading and writing.
- A child may need support on specific issues, for example, speaking or listening and therefore might benefit from play opportunities that involve conversation
- The EYFS Welfare requirements are similar to the National Daycare Standards requirements for Playwork
- Play provision cannot let children in the early years age group leave the play setting unaccompanied, even if the provision is 'open access'
- Primary providers will be responsible for completing the early years profile
- Play settings may be asked to feed observations into this profile

What Playworkers need to know about and understand:

The origins and purpose
of the EYFS
Its themes, principles and
commitments

The learning and development requirements
The welfare requirements
The Playwork principles (**Appendix A**)
What play environments should provide opportunities for
Play props and Loose parts
Play types (**Appendix B**)

The EYFS is a flexible framework that enables play provision to develop its own methods to meet its requirements and to demonstrate to inspectors how it does it. The statutory framework says that:

1. Children need space and time to play both outdoors and indoors.
2. Children have to experience play physically and emotionally.
3. In their play children use the experiences they have and extend them to build on ideas, concepts and skills.
4. Whilst playing children can express fears and relive anxious experience.
5. Play comes naturally and spontaneously to most children but some may need support.
6. Practitioners plan and resource a challenging environment where children's play can be supported and extended.

If they are working in accordance with the Playwork Principles play settings will already be providing for play in these ways.

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Demonstrating how Playwork settings contribute to the EYFS requirements

“Play provision needs to be able to state clearly and concisely how they are both respecting children’s right and culture and allowing children to develop and grow through play.” (NPFA, Playlink, Children’s Play Council 2000)



Heres a few ideas.....

Show that you understand and operate in accordance with the Playwork Principles:

Display them around the play setting. Concentrate on one at a time for a week or a month. Ask, for each principle, 'How do we do this?' Do it at staff meetings, do it with the children.

Ensure that essential standards of play provision are in place: that props and loose parts are available for all play types, a varied and interesting social, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional environment is provided and that adults wait to be invited to play and organise only when children want it so that the content and intent of play is left to children If you haven't done a play quality assurance procedure, then undertake a regular Play Environment Audit (**Appendix C**).

Keep information about how parents and others view the play provision: from, for example, parent's questionnaires, letters, comments book, to give a fuller picture of your provision and to help inspectors see how well you work with parents to ensure best outcomes for children.

Keep information about changes or improvements made as a result of parents' comments and information: it shows how you have acted on parents' views to improve outcomes. Record changes and improvements in staff meeting notes, in monitoring and evaluation reports and in newsletters or your annual report.

Show that you understand the learning and development and the welfare requirements of the EYFS. Put together a checklist, have a staff meeting (and take notes), ask questions on it or have a quiz to familiarise yourself with one part of it each month. Find the links between the EYFS and the Playwork Principles

Complete an EYFS self-evaluation form: to indicate that you are continually seeking to improve the provision, to show improvements you have made and what difference they have made to children. This will also provide evidence of how you do the EYFS. Do it in small chunks as a team activity.

Show evidence of quality improvement through:

- Commitments made - aims, policies and procedures
- Actions taken – minutes of meetings, day books, reflective logs
- Review of systems – audits, evaluations, supervision feedback

Refer to and undertake a quality assurance scheme, such as 'Steps to Quality'. Point this out to inspectors to demonstrate how quality assurance leads to improvement of the setting which in turn improves outcomes for children in the EYFS.

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Communicate and liaise with the primary setting: In order to familiarise your play setting with what the primary setting is doing (early learning goals) and the primary setting with what the play setting is doing (providing for quality play) and to establish your willingness and openness to work in partnership for the welfare of the child.

- **Write** to the primary setting introducing your club as an Early Years setting and suggest a meeting
- **Invite** the nursery or reception class teacher to your club
- **Establish:**
 - i. What you do
 - ii. What you can do to support children in the EYFS
 - iii. How the primary setting wants you to help
 - iv. How and when you will communicate and exchange information
- **Keep a written record** of your invitations to the primary setting and all other meetings and conversations.

Observe and record. Playworkers are constantly making observations of what and how children are playing. Observations are done in order to improve understanding of play and children's play behaviour and to make judgements about interventions that change and develop what is offered to support play. Playworkers now need to record what they see. You might want to try and match what you are seeing (play behaviour) with the early learning goals and educational programme in order to feel more confident about how your play setting meets the EYFS requirements.

Do risk assessments.

- a) Everyday and all the time through watching and listening
- b) Starting with a health and safety checklist to identify hazards
- c) When going out on a trip

Risk assessment is done all the time on site as well as on trips. They can also result from checklist exercises that have identified hazards.

Risk assessment means:

Identify hazard (something that may cause harm to health, safety and welfare of users of play space)

Assess level of risk (likelihood of hazard causing harm will be affected by context, position or ability of child)

Take action to control or reduce risk if necessary.

The decision to act depends upon the risk being calculated as **Acceptable** = perceived as dangerous and potentially harmful, but the benefits of play experience outweigh the harm that may occur **or** **Unacceptable** = play behaviour likely to result in serious injury or death.

Record and report welfare and safeguarding concerns. All Playwork settings are responsible for having arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Report in accordance

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with the Play Safety Forum position statement 'Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation guidance' (Play England 2008). It explains your responsibilities and how to do it.

Put together and have available a portfolio of all the policies, procedures and documents that inform and determine the way the setting is run, for all Playworkers, children, parents and others to look through whenever they feel like it. This, your 'organizational framework', says what the staff and managers agree to and what they should and should not do in particular situations or about particular issues.

Show that Playworkers are able to contribute to reviewing and writing policies and procedures in order to ensure:

- a) Familiarity with and understanding of them
- b) That they represent children and young people's need for and rights to good quality play provision
- c) That they are not more important than the children and young people for whom the setting is operated.

Attach a page to every policy, procedure or other document which invites comments and questions from Playworkers, children, parents and others about that particular document which can then be discussed next time it is reviewed.

Discuss at least one policy at each staff meeting and record the discussion, decisions and changes.

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Inspections

Inspectors must "take account of the nature and spirit of the provision when making judgements" (Evaluating Early Years provision in settings, Ofsted 2008)

Ofsted carries out inspections once a play setting is registered onto the Early Years register. They may inspect, with little or no notice, at any time whilst registration is current and all provision will be inspected at least once every three years.

Inspectors are looking for what it is like for a child at the play provision. They consider how well you and the staff deliver the EYFS and how, as a result, children are helped to achieve the five outcomes of every child matters: **being healthy staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, achieving economic well-being**, all considered a basic entitlement for children.

Inspectors make 4 main judgements:

1. How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of the children?
2. How effectively are the children helped to learn and develop?
3. How effectively is the welfare of children promoted?
4. How effectively is the provision led and managed?

The quality of the setting will be evaluated against the key and supplementary judgements set out in the **Early Years Evaluation schedule** as follows:

1. Description of setting

2. The overall effectiveness of the early years provision. Inspectors report on how effective the provision is in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS:

- a) How well the provision promotes inclusive practice
- b) The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement

3. What steps need to be taken to improve provision? Inspectors report on:

- Any recommendations to improve the quality and standards of early years provision and/or
- Any action required to ensure the requirements of the EYFS are met and/or
- Whether Ofsted intends to take enforcement action in respect of the early years provision

4. The leadership and management of the provision. Inspectors evaluate and report on how well the early years provision is led and managed, taking account of all requirements of the EYFS:

- a) The effectiveness of the setting's self evaluation including the steps taken to promote improvement
- b) How well the setting works in partnership with parents and others
- c) How well children are safeguarded

5. The quality and standards of the provision. Inspectors must evaluate and report on

- How effectively children in the EYFS are helped to learn and develop taking account of the learning and development requirements of the EYFS
- How effectively the welfare of children in the EYFS is promoted taking account of the general and specific welfare requirements of the EYFS in terms of how well both these aspects of provision help children to stay safe, be healthy, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being.

There is a self-evaluation form which covers all of the above and which helps prepare for inspections and to prepare an appropriate Playwork response.

After the inspection the inspector will give feedback. It is an opportunity to question and provide further information.

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EYFS Early learning goals and educational programme	How we do it in Playwork
<p>Personal, social and emotional development: Experiences and support for children to develop, to help to know themselves and what they can do, for a positive sense of self and others, for respect for others and for social skills, emotional well-being and a disposition to learn.</p>	<p>Opportunities to play alone or with others, interaction with individuals and groups of different age, ability, interest, gender, ethnicity and culture, opportunities to negotiate, compete, co-operate, resolve conflict, taking responsibility, opportunities to be leader/follower, powerful/powerless, in/out of control, brave/cowardly and freedom to imitate and pretend for...</p> <p>Role play, Social play, Dramatic play, Socio-dramatic play, Imaginative play and Deep play</p>
<p>Communication, language and literacy: support to extend competence in communication, speaking and listening, being read to and beginning to read and write. Opportunities and encouragement to use skills in a range of situations and for a range of purposes. Support in developing the confidence and a disposition to do so.</p>	<p>Spaces of different size and shape, manufactured and natural materials of different colours and shapes, stuff for dressing up, opportunities to perform for...</p> <p>Communication play, Role play, Fantasy play, Dramatic play, Social play and Socio-dramatic play</p>
<p>Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy: in a broad range of contexts in which children can explore, enjoy, learn, practise and talk about their developing understanding. Opportunities to practise and extend skills and to gain confidence and competence in their use</p>	<p>Tools for building and deconstruction, opportunities for making and mending, freedom to make concoctions, activity which test the limits of capability for...</p> <p>Communication play, Mastery play, Exploratory play, Creative play and Deep play</p>
<p>Knowledge and understanding of the world: developing knowledge, skills and understanding that helps make sense of the world. Opportunities to use a range of tools and work with a range of materials, encounter creatures, people, plants and objects in their natural environments and real life situations, to undertake experiments.</p>	<p>Dark and bright spaces, places to hide, places and tools for digging, possibilities for playing in water, mud and puddles, access to snow, rain, wind and sun for...</p> <p>Exploratory play, Mastery play, Object play, Locomotor play, Recapitulative play, Symbolic play and Creative play</p>
<p>Physical development: use of senses to learn about the world around and to make connections between new information and what is already known. Developing understanding of the importance of physical activity and making healthy choices in relation to food. Opportunities to be active and interactive and to improve skills of co-ordination, control, manipulation and movement.</p>	<p>Access to different heights, spaces of different size and shape, places to hide, freely chosen access to outdoors, activity which test the limits of capability, places for running, jumping, rolling, balancing, and going fast for...</p> <p>Locomotor play, Exploratory play, Mastery Play, Rough and Tumble play and Social play</p>
<p>Creative development: extended by provision of support for curiosity, exhilaration and play.</p>	<p>Places to inspire mystery and imagination, opportunities for building, demolishing and</p>

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Opportunities to explore and share thoughts, ideas and feelings through, for example, art, music, movement, dance, imaginative and role play activities, mathematics, design and technology.

transforming the environment for...
**Communication play, Creative play,
Dramatic play, Imaginative play, Fantasy
play, Role play and Recapitulative play**

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