

# Early Years Foundation Stage

---

Shilbottle Primary

Fun, Respect & Friendship



## Early Years Foundation Stage Play Policy

2017

*"Play is the work of the child"*  
(Montessori)

## **Rationale**

*Play is the way children make sense of their world. "Playing allows children to invent their own rules, to integrate the past with the present, to recreate the present and rehearse the future" it is naturally motivating for children and therefore helps children to stay positive about their learning – it helps them express their feelings. Some play is actually more accurately described as exploration, where they are asking themselves questions (Ouvry, M. 2000)*

*Children at play are able to stay flexible, respond to events and changing situations, be sensitive to people, to adapt, think on their feet, and keep altering what they do in a fast-moving scene. When the process of play is rich, it can lead children into creating rich products in their stories, paintings, dances, music making, drawings, sculptures and constructions, or in the solving of scientific and mathematical problems.'(Bruce, 2001, p.46)*

*The importance of play and exploration such as making choices and decisions and making up rules and changing them. In play and exploration, children are able to choose playing activities with other children or adults or play alone activities. It includes learning through experience, adult involvement and contexts and dispositions for learning. (EYFS 2007)*

*The most important role that play can have is to help children to be active, make choices and practice actions to mastery. They should have experience with a wide variety of content (art, music, language, science, math, social relations) because each is important for the development of a complex and integrated brain. Play that links sensori-motor, cognitive, and social-emotional experiences provides an ideal setting for brain development.*

## **Aims & objectives**

- Play will provide a secure, stimulating environment which will allow for the development of the whole child offering them a wide variety of opportunities to explore the 3 prime areas and 4 specific areas of learning in the EYFS
- Play should be fun, engaging and enjoyable
- Play will occur both indoors and out
- Children are able to choose activities where they can engage with other children or adults or sometimes play alone
- Children learn by first-hand experience – by actively 'doing'
- There should be sufficient space, time and choice with a range of activities, some of which have been planned and prepared by the practitioners on the basis of their observations of individual children's current interests, learning styles and stages of development
- Children's cognitive and creative development is enhanced. This development is often enhanced with adult help and participation
- There should be structured play as well as free play
- Messy play involves children using all their senses in the process of exploration, especially the sense of touch, offers the opportunity to mould and manipulate materials and not having a focus on making/producing something
- There should be equal opportunities for all pupils
- Children who do not know how to play should be encouraged to participate
- Relationships may be established with insecure children
- Provide opportunities for children to develop at their own rate through challenging progressive play

## **Learning Outcomes**

- Children will develop an awareness of and appreciation for the environment
- Provide opportunities for the children, through a controlled situation, to express the emotions of pleasure, frustration, anxiety, aggression, etc.
- Help the children to relate to each other and to encourage tolerance and respect for others and their property, for example, co-operation, sharing, taking turns, teamwork
- Develop manipulative skills and good co-ordination
- Children will discover the properties of materials which lead to the formation of mathematical and scientific concepts
- Children's language skills will be developed through interaction with peer groups and adults, for example, talking, listening, explaining, describing
- Stimulate creativity and self-expression through the introduction of a wide variety of materials and experiences
- Children use the experiences they have and extend them to build up ideas, concepts and skills.
- Children can express fears and re-live anxious experiences. They can try things out, solve problems and be creative and can take risks and use trial and error to find things out

## **Play and Exploration is important because it offers opportunities for:**

- making choices and decisions
- using one's own ideas and imagination
- experimenting
- trying out new behaviours and practising old ones;
- practising skills and learning new ones;
- exercising, developing and coordinating body, mind and brain;
- adapting or transforming knowledge, attitudes and skills;
- negotiating;
- following an interest or line of enquiry;
- engaging in 'What if?' activity;
- making up rules and changing them;
- making mistakes;
- demonstrating one's competence in many areas of development;
- setting one's own goals;
- trying to emulate someone else;
- using symbols;
- making sense of puzzling situations, events or equipment;
- extending childrens' thinking, scientifically, mathematically and logically
- becoming and being confident and enjoying challenges;
- children should be challenged to think, negotiate, experiment and turn take
- having fun with friends and/or familiar adults;
- learning how to be a 'player' fit for life in a high-tech, post-industrial society
- resolving conflicts
- ensuring progression
- extending language
- playing alone or with others

## **Organisation and resources**

- Children need plenty of space and time to play, both outdoors and indoors.
- Children who are allowed to play with resources and equipment before using them to solve a problem are more likely to solve the problem successfully.
- Provide flexible resources that can be used in many different ways to facilitate children's play and exploration.
- Valuing the play of all the children, even those who tend to play noisily or often base their play on themes with which you are unfamiliar
- Role of the Adult - Knowing when to get involved and when to allow children to carry on playing
- Provide materials which are accessible to all children and include equipment from other cultures
- Provide follow up activities
- Provide space and time for play
- Play comes naturally and spontaneously to most children, though some need adult support

## **Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing**

Will include

- staff observations, discussions and feedback from children and parents
- discussions about and reviewing of the policy to ensure it is meeting the needs of the children
- The EYFS staff are continually looking at ways to improve and develop play areas in order to provide the best opportunities and experiences for the children in our EYFS. Staff regularly discuss how, and if, the equipment outside is being used. Changes are made accordingly.

## **Assessment**

- Play is monitored in terms of the children's learning. Assessment procedures for play are the same as those used during child initiated and teacher led activities. Any observations and assessments undertaken feed into individual Foundation Stage Profiles and Learning Records. Assessment is by systematic observations of each child's achievements and interests and by interaction with the children during their play. Many assessments are captured on the digital camera (see school server). All assessments inform current and future planning. Characteristics of learning will also be observed, recorded and followed up.

## **Equal opportunities and inclusion**

- We understand that it is crucial to treat all children with equal respect as individuals regardless of age, gender, ability, religion, race and ability. We understand that it is vital to prevent any obstacles that stop children from playing together. We are aware that each, individual child has his/her own needs and we aim to meet them in an inclusive way.

## **Risk assessment**

- We encourage all members of staff to have a part in development of the play. We share responsibility for the monitoring of equipment, the provision of play equipment and the supervision of children at play. We understand that the outdoor area is an extension of the classroom and that any adult outside is involved in the children's play and development as they would be inside.

### **Development**

Our aim is constant improvement through continually reviewing our resources and facilities. Although we enjoy access to a range of play areas, we feel there is even greater potential for their use as positive learning environments.

Our objectives are, subject to available funding:

- Increase fantasy and role play within Reception
- Offer a wider variety of construction toys throughout the EYFS
- Monitor the use of areas during free choice play
- Increase the use of the outdoor environment and space

### **Related policies**

- EYFS policy
- Outdoor policy

## **Types of play**

### **Motor/Physical Play**

Motor play provides critical opportunities for children to develop both individual gross and fine muscle strength and overall integration of muscles, nerves, and brain functions. Recent research has confirmed the critical link between stimulating activity and brain development. Young children must have ample opportunities to develop physically, and motor play instils this disposition toward physical activity in young children

### **Social Play**

A variety of opportunities for children to engage in social play are the best mechanisms for progressing through the different social stages. By interacting with others in play settings, children learn social rules such as, give and take, reciprocity, cooperation, and sharing. Through a range of interactions with children at different social stages, children also learn to use moral reasoning to develop a mature sense of values. To be prepared to function effectively in the adult world, children need to participate in lots of social situations.

### **Constructive Play**

Constructive play is when children manipulate their environment to create things. This type of play occurs when children build towers and cities with blocks, play in the sand, construct contraptions on the woodworking bench, and draw murals with chalk on the sidewalk. Constructive play allows children to experiment with objects; find out combinations that work and don't work; and learn basic knowledge about stacking, building, drawing, making music and constructing. It also gives children a sense of accomplishment and empowers them with control of their environment. Children who are comfortable manipulating objects and materials also become good at manipulating words, ideas and concepts.

### **Fantasy Play**

Children learn to abstract, to try out new roles and possible situations, and to experiment with language and emotions with fantasy play. In addition, children develop flexible thinking; learn to create beyond the here and now; stretch their imaginations, use new words and word combinations in a risk-free environment, and use numbers and words to express ideas, concepts, dreams, and histories. In an ever-more technological society, lots of practice with all forms of abstraction - time, place, amount, symbols, words, and ideas - is essential.

### **Games with Rules**

Developmentally, most children progress from an egocentric view of the world to an understanding of the importance of social contracts and rules. Part of this development occurs as they learn that games like Follow the Leader, Simon Says, rugby and football cannot function without everyone adhering to the same set of rules. The "games with rules" concept teaches children a critically important concept - the game of life has rules (laws) that we all must follow to function productively.

As children develop they will move from individual play to group play. How an older child chooses to play may depend on how they feel at the moment or a personal preference. The way most children play usually varies from day to day and situation to situation.

## **Basic forms of play**

### **Solitary Play**

Older children at times will also prefer to play on their own. They may spend hours making up stories with their GI Joes or Barbie Dolls. They like to build, draw, paint, invent and explore by themselves. They hopefully will also like to read and even write on their own.

### **Parallel Play**

From the age of two to about three, children move to playing alongside other children without much interaction with each other. They may be engaged in similar activities or totally different activities but they like being around others their own age. Even though it may appear that they don't care about the presence of the other children, just try separating them and you will see this contact from a far is very important to them.

### **Group Play**

By the age of three, children are ready for preschool. Most are potty trained, able to communicate and socialize with others. They are able to share ideas and toys. Through interactive play they begin to learn social skills such as sharing and taking turns. They also develop the ability to collaborate on the "theme" of the play activity. The children not adults should institute play themes and structure. Adults should only intervene when children exhibit the need for coaching on social and problem solving skills.

Finally, children also like to play with adults. This can be one to one or in a group. It is important that parents spend time playing with their children. It is fun. Let the kids set the pace and become a part of their world. No need to teach or preach, just enjoy the experience.

**Note:** It is alright for children to frequently engage in solitary play. However, the need to develop social and communication skills requires a balance. If a child ONLY plays by himself, it may indicate a problem.