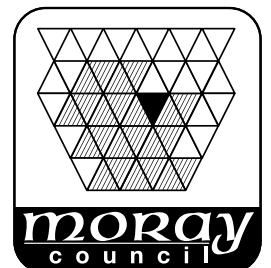


A PLAY STRATEGY FOR MORAY





Acknowledgements

The creation of a play strategy for Moray would not have been possible without the time, commitment and passion of various ELC practitioners and primary school staff. Thank you to those colleagues for making this possible and for sharing your practice and passion for play in Moray.

Thank you to authors Anna Ephgrave and Greg Bottrill and Michele Doull from Early Years Scotland for providing a foreword to our Play Strategy for Moray.

Thank you to our critical friends near and far for proof reading this document and offering your comments and suggestions on how to further improve the content.

Cullen nursery and primary school kindly gave permission to use photos of play and learning which you will find throughout this document. Case study photos are from each of the settings featured and have appropriate permissions. All other photos are stock photos or from Realising the Ambition, 2020.

We hope you enjoy this play strategy for Moray and use it to inform and improve a consistent play pedagogy in Moray across the early level of the curriculum and beyond.

Foreword

I have been captivated by babies and young children all my life. As I approach retirement this fascination continues, as does the campaign for excellent early years' provision for all children. I have visited Moray on several occasions and have witnessed, in the people there, a passionate determination to ensure the best possible start in life for the babies and children in their care.

The Strategy gives a clear and powerful message that play, and in particular learner-led play, improves long-term outcomes for children, enabling them to become true lifelong learners and laying the strongest foundations from which they can thrive and grow. It is refreshing to see a local authority being explicit in its advice and pedagogy, recognising play as 'the main vehicle for learning across the early level', as well as supporting the use of play through later stages of education. Alongside a powerful rationale and theory, the Play Strategy for Moray provides practical advice about all aspects of early childhood education. I hope that practitioners in Moray will make use of this document to develop their practice, knowing that they have support from their local authority, should they need it. The Strategy also acknowledges practitioners' autonomy, with emphasis on self-evaluation to drive improvement, and this is another of its strengths. The document is highly accessible and will be valuable to new professionals as well as those with decades of experience.

The ideas for further reading are helpful, directing readers to influential educators such as: Lev Vygotsky; Friedrich Froebel; Tina Bruce; and, Julie Fisher. The commitment to the United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child is momentous and I was moved and optimistic reading these sections.

For me though, most powerful of all are the case studies, which bring the Strategy's messages alive, through the experiences of the children. The inclusion of studies up to P7 is also remarkable and hope-giving. I was inspired to read about the following settings and many others: East End School where children are showing 'greater resilience'; Keith Childcare where 'thoughtful interactions between practitioners and children support them in thinking on a deeper level'; Greenwards Primary where they have witnessed how children engaging with blocks can lead to 'fifty experiences and outcomes'; Dyke Primary where 'all staff have mentioned increased levels of motivation'; and, Kinloss Primary where 'seeing children excited to write because it is relevant to them, has been a wonder to watch'.

When delivering training sessions, I often mention the Stramash Outdoor Nursery near Elgin. When settings in the milder climates are concerned about the weather and the short winter days, I tell them of the Stramash field in Northern Scotland, forest and mountains in the background, the children wearing head-torches when the field gets dark! One case study in the strategy describes a child at Stramash, constructing a ladder in the woodwork area, and how 'she carried her ladder back into the woods and laid it against the tree trunk, making sure it was stable before she used it to climb up onto the branch'. The Play Strategy for Moray is a bit like this ladder – a potential challenge to build, to put into place and to make stable, but offering a sure way to a higher level of early years practice.

It has been a joy and a privilege to be involved in the development of child-initiated play in Moray in recent years; it was an honour to be asked to write this foreword.

Anna Ephgrave

Who is this Play Strategy document for?

This is Moray's Play Strategy written and created by ELC practitioners, early stages primary teachers and school management. It is for all practitioners and teachers delivering the early level of the Curriculum for Excellence and beyond. It will support a consistent play pedagogy and a quality experience for all of Moray's families.

Childhood is precious. Children deserve to be listened to, understood and respected.

"Every child deserves a champion: an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can possibly be"

— Rita Pierson

Be that champion.





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Section One

This section covers Moray's values, vision and aims, learning and teaching standards, strategic priorities and Moray's Skills Framework. It highlights national practice guidance and the importance of being open to a playful approach to learning and teaching.

Moray's Values

We are Ambitious, Fair, Responsive and Committed to Improving the experiences and life chances for Our People, Our Place and Our Future.

For Moray's Children our strategic priorities are:

- supporting all learners
- learning, teaching & assessment
- curriculum
- leadership

These are interwoven by Self-evaluation for Self-improvement and Improving Outcomes and link with the National strategic priorities:

- improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy
- closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children
- improvement in children and young people's health & wellbeing
- improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people

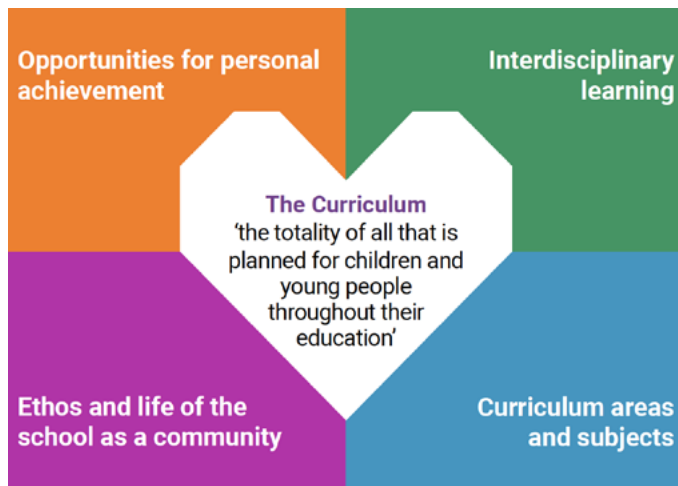




In Moray ELC we have created specific priorities to link with the above strategic areas. These are currently

- outdoor learning
- partnerships
- quality

Developing the Moray Skills Framework through Play

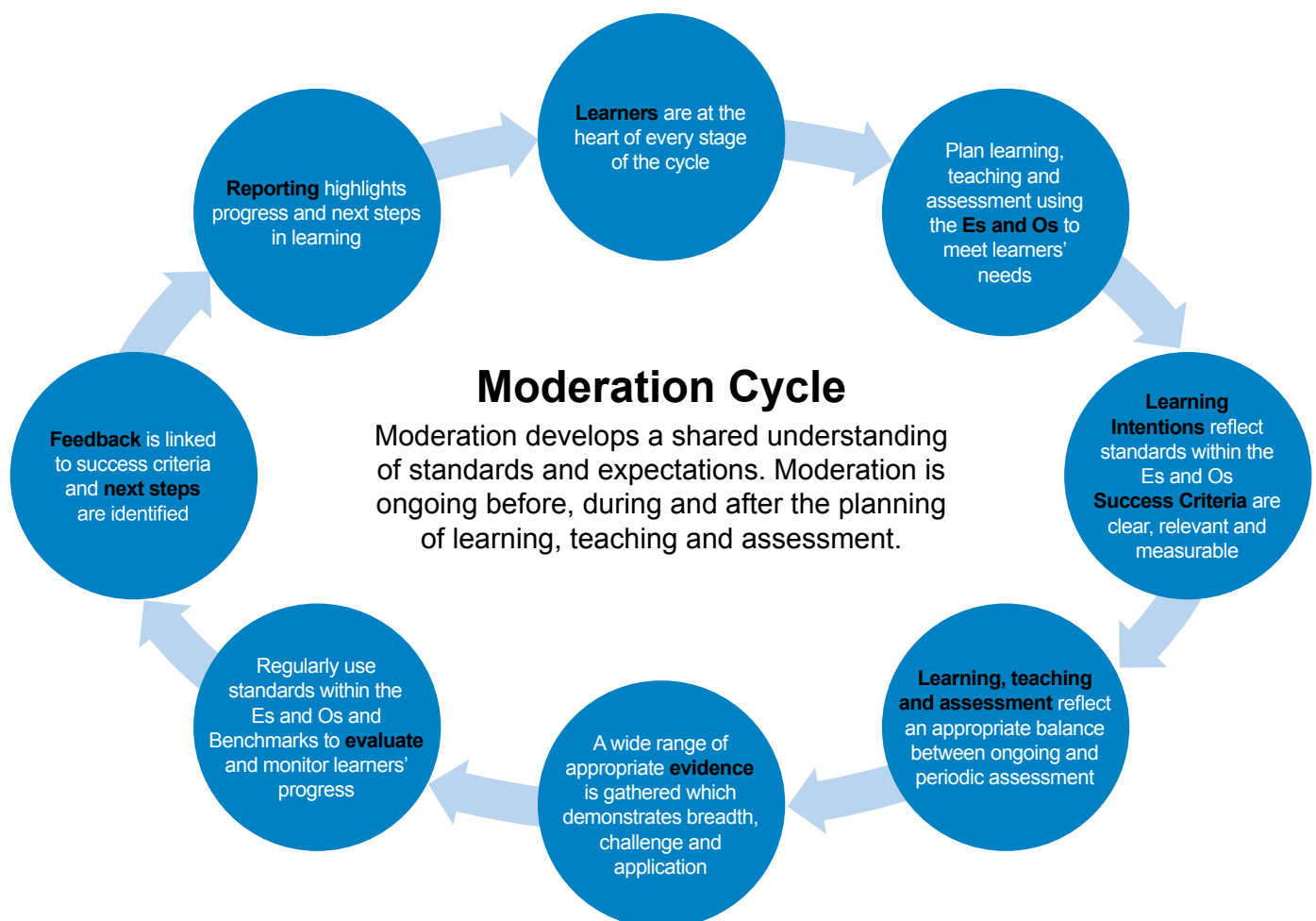


Opportunities for developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work form part of the entitlements of Scottish Education. People use different terminology to refer to skills or attributes. Skills for Scotland set out a wide range of skills that might be included in any definition.

It focused on several overlapping clusters of skills:

- personal and learning skills that enable individuals to become effective lifelong learners
- literacy and numeracy
- the five core skills of communication, numeracy, problem solving, information technology and working with others
- essential skills that include all of the above
- vocational skills that are specific to a particular occupation or sector

Skills must be identified at the planning stage through the key learning highlighted in the experiences and outcomes. Skills should be embedded in learning, teaching and assessment and form part of the child centred pedagogy in practise.



Skills should be integral within Learning and Teaching through the delivery of all aspects of the Moray Standard. Curriculum, learning & teaching and assessment are interdependent so assessment of skills should be part of, rather than separate from the [moderation cycle](#).

Through the development of the Moray skills framework all young people will develop a range of skills. Practitioners will develop learning experiences and opportunities for children that actively challenge stereotypes and advance equality of opportunity. Settings should work with partners to share a common understanding and language around skills development. Skills should form an integral part of a pupil's profile.

The 8 Core Skills of the Moray Framework are:



https://education.gov.scot/media/lc4grxid/cferefresh_a3poster.pdf

The Moderation Cycle | Learning resources | National Improvement Hub (education.gov.scot)

Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work (education.gov.scot)

Curriculum For Excellence and Play

The Curriculum for Excellence aims to achieve a transformation in education in Scotland by providing a coherent, more flexible and enriched curriculum from ages 3 to 18. Play has the potential to contribute powerfully and positively to some of the most significant areas of life in schools, nurseries, early years and childcare. The Curriculum for Excellence promotes playful learner-led approaches in the classroom and outdoors.

– Play Strategy for Scotland: Our Action Plan, (2013), Scottish Government

In Scotland, we have the benefit of curriculum guidance which spans both the ELC sector and the early stages of primary school. Curriculum for Excellence ‘early level’ is intended to support the implementation of a responsive, continuous play-based curriculum for children aged three to six. It is important then that practitioners and teachers provide, through responsive and intentional planning, a blend of child-initiated and adult-initiated learning experiences. The emphasis should be on child-centred play pedagogy to ensure continuity in children’s curriculum experiences

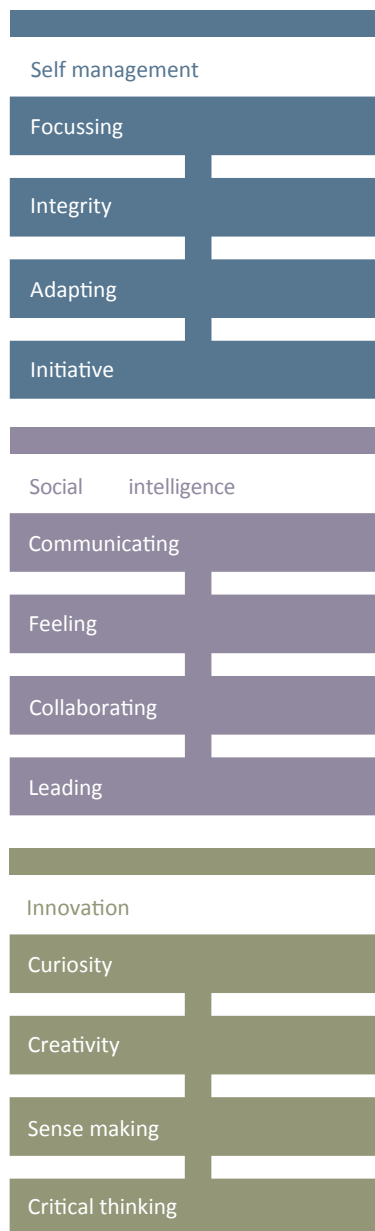
Curriculum for Excellence Refresh

In 2020 a group of practitioners and teachers were led by Education Scotland to refresh the curriculum design of the Curriculum for Excellence and consider the ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘how’. It is important to remember the four capacities; Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens and Effective Contributors. The four contexts are shown above in the coloured box. We need to support children and young people to develop meta skills, known as Skills 4.0, which include self-management, social intelligence and innovation. These will support children and young people to have the skills and qualities required in our modern world and prepare them for life, learning and work. These should be offered within the context of your setting and the individual children and young people you care for.

You can find out more from the links below.

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/resources-to-support-the-refreshed-curriculum-for-excellence-narrative/>

https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/44684/skills-40_a-skills-model.pdf



– Skills 4.0 – Meta Skills (Education Scotland, 2020)

Vision statement

By using play as the main vehicle for learning across the early level of the Curriculum for Excellence, our youngest learners in Moray will:

- be resilient, independent and successful learners
- be effective contributors in their learning and wider community
- be confident individuals who grow to be the best version of themselves
- be responsible citizens who have knowledge of the wider world

Purpose of a play strategy

- To ensure continuity of learning and development for children when they move from ELC to primary.
- Giving children the opportunity to build on and develop skills, enthusiasm and interests.
- We know “Play is key to raising attainment” – Scottish Government.
- To share a consistent play pedagogy across Moray.
- To ensure we are supporting a child’s right to play (Article 31, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989)

UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989)

We should all be aware of the rights of every child and the Articles within the Act. Article 31 states, ‘I have the right to relax and play’. Scotland is the first country in the UK to incorporate the UNCRC into domestic law. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill was agreed early this year (2021). As a public authority we have a responsibility to ensure we comply with this Act and support all children in understanding their rights. Any Act is a legal requirement. It will be good practice to offer creative ways of ensuring the children in your care understand their rights in an age and stage appropriate way.

What do we mean by ‘playful’ in Moray?

The term ‘playful’ is used in various national practice documents including Realising the Ambition. It will be good practice to discuss this in your team to agree a shared meaning around this term. In Moray, play within the classroom is meaningful, with intention and with purpose. Adults and children can learn and progress by sharing a ‘playful’ but meaningful approach to play and life in general. Greg Bottrill, author of Can I go and play now, describes the importance of ‘co-playing’ with children.

“I learn a lot when I play you know. And I play a lot... like a real lot so I must learn a lot too!”

– Moray P1 pupil

Realising the Ambition: Being Me



This is the latest national practice guidance document for early level staff which promotes a quality early level experience as we strive for Scotland to be the place to grow up. It supports staff to deliver a rich and stimulating curriculum whilst adapting to the changes of the expansion of 1140 hours. Realising the Ambition replaces both Birth to Three and Building the Ambition.

Responsive relationships and routines will offer quality interactions, experiences and spaces. Play and pedagogical leadership shape this document in leading the practitioner to understand how children learn best.

– Realising the Ambition, Education Scotland, 2020



To a child play is about having fun. To society it is so much more. Children's play is crucial to Scotland's wellbeing, socially, economically and environmentally.

Creating an environment that provides rich play experiences is critical in meeting the needs of our children and young people. Offering them choices to develop the skills of expression, thought, curiosity, movement, problem solving and achievement provides a sound basis for fostering the development of useful skills and attributes which will serve them well throughout life.

Numerous studies, including Growing Up In Scotland show play to be a crucial factor in a child's educational achievement. The benefits from playing and having fun cannot be underestimated.

All learning environments, including nurseries and schools need 'free play'. This is commonly defined as 'behaviour that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated'.

– Play Strategy for Scotland: Our Action Plan, (2013), Scottish Government

'The experiences children have in early life – and the environments in which they have them – shape their developing brain architecture and strongly affect whether they grow up to be healthy, productive members of society'

– Harvard University, 2007

Play is an essential part of a happy, healthy childhood and 'when children play their brains do two things: they grow and they become organised and usable'

– Hughes, 2013

Play is fundamental to children and young people's quality of life but first and foremost it is a child's right and one which the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) cited in Play Strategy Scotland

We want Scotland to be the best place to grow up. A nation which values play as a life-enhancing daily experience for all our children and young people; in their homes, nurseries, schools and communities.

"Play is the highest expression of human development in childhood, for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child's soul."

– Froebel

Early Years Framework

We need to recognise children's own aspirations for play, not what adults think they should be doing and to recognise that play takes many forms. It is not just about play parks.

We also have to recognise that play and developing the right attitudes to play are not the sole responsibility of national or local government. Parents have a key role here, particularly with regard to the issue of concerns about their children's safety and exposure to risk.

Play is essential for our children if they are to have the best start in life and be ready to succeed as adults. Through play children thrive as they develop self-confidence, social skills and an awareness of their impact on others and the world around them. (Broxburn Family Centre Vision, Values and Aims (cited in the Early Years Framework (2009) Scottish Government)

<Insert photo Cullen children with diggers>
<<Don't have this picture>>

Section Two

This section explores the concept and definition of play using key texts to support child-centred and developmentally appropriate practice. The interactions, experiences and spaces that you share with children will promote quality observations which are so important in understanding their needs and interests. The content will also encourage you to think of everything you do being meaningful for the child.

What is Play?

Defining play is a complex and extremely difficult task as it is hard to narrow down a definition of what is play and what is not play. Play can also mean different things to different people as a child might not see something as 'play' whereas the adult perceives that they have planned a 'play activity'. Play simultaneously can be a tricky word and concept to describe (Education Scotland, 2020). There are however many examples of theories of play from Early Childhood Education.

"Most children enter primary school as enthusiastic, independent learners who are used to making decisions, solving problems and initiating their own learning."

– Scottish Government, 2007:9



Research shows that young children learn best through play and first hand experiences (Bruce, 2015) and when they have regular opportunities to:

- make their own choices and decisions
- return to experiences over time to deepen learning and practice skills
- discuss thoughts, ask questions and extend their ideas

“One of the many challenges we face when considering play pedagogy in early stages of school is the pressure we can face from external forces or our own beliefs and values to evidence the child’s progress in key aspects of their learning. While important, this should not deter us from adopting pedagogical approaches which embrace play as the medium through which young children learn best.”

– Education Scotland, 2020:46

A Model for Play

The importance of play is highlighted through Scottish National guidance regarding the early years as an essential feature of children’s active learning and development of vital skills, knowledge and positive attitudes to learning (Scottish Government, 2007). Learning through play supports the aims of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) to develop successful learners, responsible citizens, confident individuals and effective contributors (Scottish Government, 2006). The principles of this holistic curriculum include the importance of play, active learning, observation methods, following the child’s interests and cross-curricular learning (McCormick, 2012).

Realising the Ambition states, it is important for:

“Children to be given time to play throughout the day to follow their own line of enquiry or individual interest.”

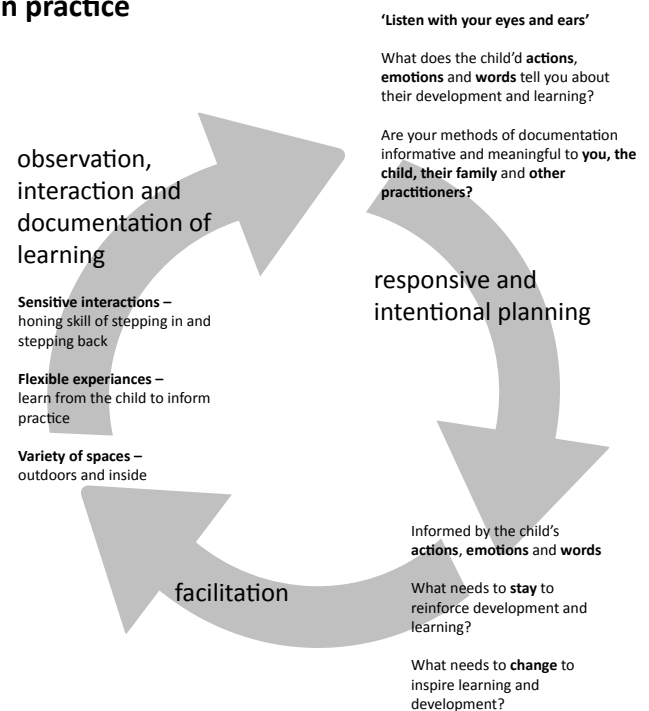
– Education Scotland, 2020:44

The transition from Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) to primary education will be smoother if:

“Play remains and continues as the main vehicle for their early learning in P1 and beyond. As practitioners across ELC settings and schools we need to work together to plan for progression in learning and for continuity across a child-centred play pedagogy and curriculum.”

– Education Scotland, 2020:45

child-centred pedagogy in practice



– Education Scotland, 2020:48

Building the Curriculum 2 (Scottish Government, 2007) describes active learning as learning that engages and challenges the thinking of children using imaginary and real-life situations. It emphasises the different opportunities for active learning, which underpins play pedagogy, through:

- spontaneous play
- planned, purposeful play
- investigating and exploring
- events and life experiences
- focused learning and teaching

All areas of the curriculum can be enriched and developed through play.

– Scottish Government, 2007

A balance of the different opportunities for active learning should be developed by the practitioner in response the children’s developmental stage to evidence high quality play pedagogy. The table (appendix 1) provides further exemplification of the key roles of adults and children for each type of active learning.

– Play is the Way, 2020

To enable children to have a smooth transition from ELC to P1 a play pedagogy approach can be implemented. This consists of three types of play and playful experiences used by practitioners known as: child initiated, adult initiated and adult led.

<Insert Julie Fisher model>

<<>Way to big to go here, perhap an appendix or an external link?>

– Play is the Way, 2020

Child Initiated Experiences

Tina Bruce’s twelve features of play are known as ‘free flow play’ as when the play features co-ordinate together the play becomes free-flowing (Bruce, 2012). Susan Isaacs stated that free flow play developed children’s social and problem solving skills along with their thinking skills from experiencing a play based curriculum (Giardiello, 2014). The twelve features of play can be used by practitioners to develop an understanding what play looks like, swounds like and feels like for children.

<insert Bruce features of play image>

<<Picture of text, needs to be retyped, or external link>>

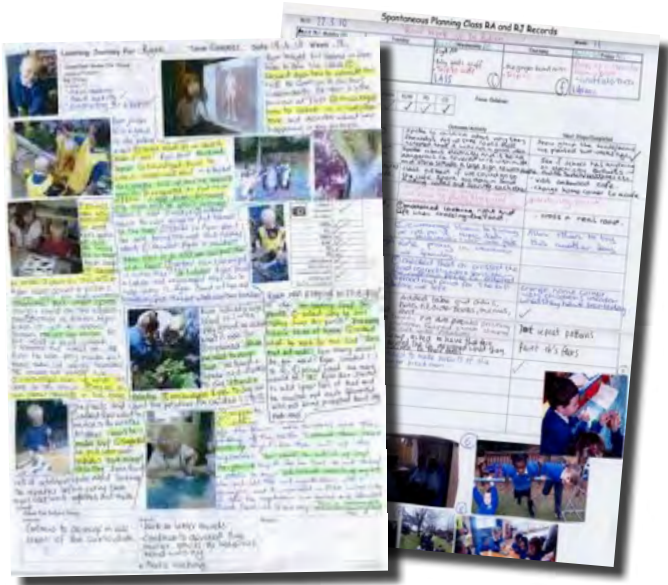
Intentional Planning for Child-Initiated Learning – An Environment for Play

It is important to consider the interactions, experiences and spaces when planning your environment for children. Your resources should be easily accessible and have a variety of stimulating and engaging choices which will provoke their imagination and creativity. Be mindful of the types of play that you should plan for a balance of adult-initiated, child-initiated and adult-directed learning opportunities. All are important and have a place in a child’s day of play and learning.

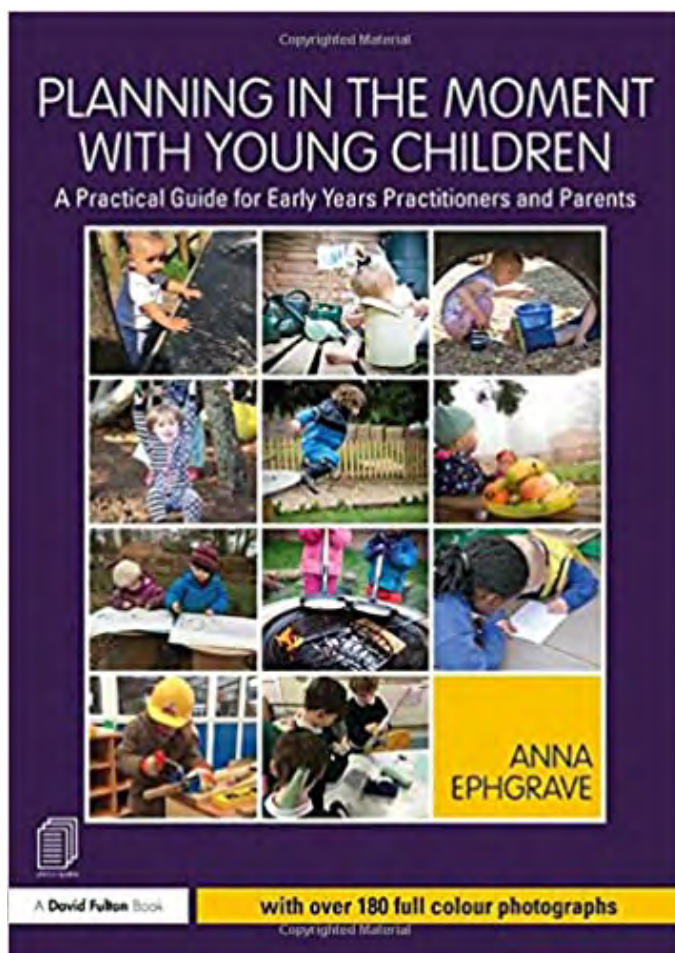
Moray’s approach to planning is to follow a responsive planning model. In most ELC settings, Anna Ephgrave’s (2018), ‘Planning in the moment’ is used to document a child’s learning. Using this approach the adult and the child learn as things emerge in the world around them, giving them a ‘real time’ sense of discovering new things. These discoveries are a shared experience which gives meaning to the learning and adds to the relationship between adult and child. We do not need to plan in advance in order to fit the experiences to the curriculum. If the interactions , experiences and spaces you offer are rich and interesting, the curriculum will naturally be met by the children discovering new vocabulary, experiencing science, ICT, art, craft and design, counting, shape, number and pattern through their play and discovery.

We can document this learning on a learning wall, floor book or individual records. In the planning in the moment approach, children all have the opportunity to be the ‘focus child’ where the adult deeply observes and shares in the child’s learning. This is shared with other adults including parents who are encouraged to contribute.

The focus child documentation may look like the example below although there is no set way you have to record their learning. The important thing is that is must be meaningful and cater for the child’s individual interests and stage of development. Knowledge of the child and the ability to make quality observations are key. There are more examples of how this can work well in a primary class in Appendix 4.



Planning sheets which document a child’s learning in ELC or early stages of primary



You can find out more from this book

– Anna Ephgrave, 2018

Planning – Skills Development

You can create zones to develop children’s skills and interests eg. block play, art and craft, planting and growing, tinkering and investigation, storytelling and reading, role play, sand, water and malleable materials, music and dance, risky and physical play.

- Responsive Planning – Observing and Interacting

Successful implementation of play pedagogy in practice requires practitioners to carefully balance the amount of time they spend engaging and observing in child-initiated play, adult-led and adult-initiated experiences as all three are important when supporting and extending children’s learning. The practitioner should plan time for adult interaction when children play and not be solely tied up with adult-led learning as play should never be seen as abandoned learning. Children need to be aware of the value the practitioner places on the learning that is taking place in the setting.

“There is no contest between child-led and

adult-led learning. It is one without the other that gives young children an impoverished educational experience.”

– Fisher (2016:86)

Spending time observing children during their free play enables practitioners to identify significant and teachable moments. These can be responded to, in the moment, by supporting and extending children’s thinking through high quality interactions and sustained shared thinking. It also provides information on children’s learning and progress within the Curriculum for Excellence (Play is the Way, 2020). Practitioners can then use the observation information to plan meaningful next steps in learning.

When making observations Fisher (2016:92) suggests using three stages to support a sensitive approach to children’s play:

“Wait, Watch and Wonder.”

– Fisher (2016:92)

Before a practitioner decides to intervene, they should wait and watch first.

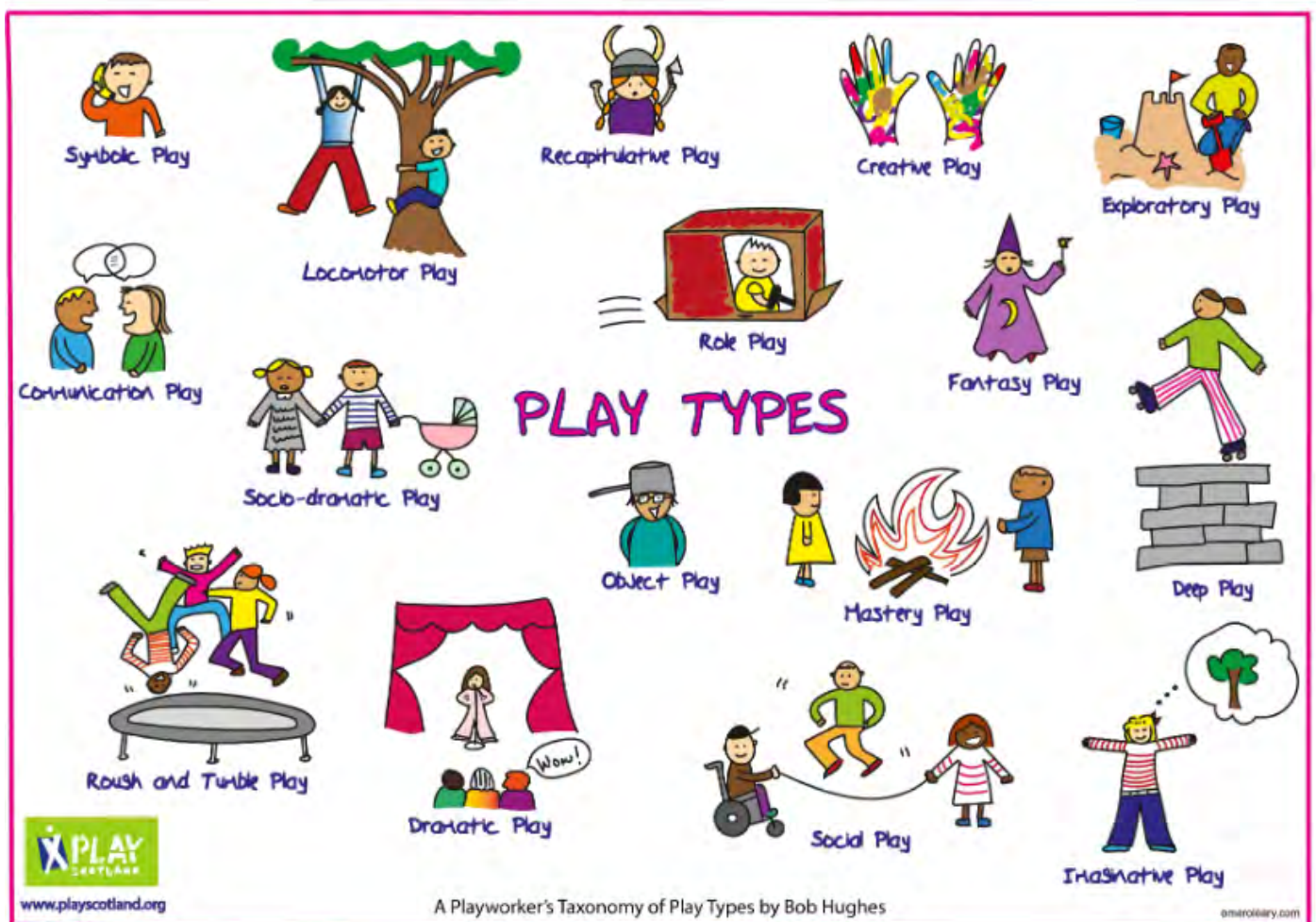
Wait – Is the child getting on alright on their own? Are they getting stuck and frustrated?

Can I be of help?

Watch – What is the child doing? What are they trying to achieve?

Wonder – I wonder what they are thinking right now. I wonder how they arrived at this line of enquiry. I wonder if I can support the learning now or if they are better left alone? I wonder if there is something I can provide tomorrow that will extend the play further? (Play is the Way, 2020)

Spending time reflecting on the information obtained through observations is important when planning future learning experiences to meet the needs and interests of children. This might also involve making changes to enhance the environment using provocations (Bryce-Clegg, 2017). This process of reflection and planning should involve children reflecting on their learning along with the practitioners in the setting. This is an important feature of a child-centred curriculum where the child-led learning informs adult-led and adult-initiated learning providing depth and coherence of learning.



– Play Scotland, 1996

Explanation of adult-led and adult-initiated experiences

- Adult-Led Experiences
- Benefits of small group teaching
- Adult-Initiated Experiences
- Open ended opportunities planned by the practitioner with a potential outcome but undertaken independently by the child.
- Playful in nature and combine what children love with what you would like them to learn!
- Use of target tasks

How can you document children's learning and make progress visible?

- Floor books
- Learning walls/Maps
- Learning journey
- Online profiles



Section Three

Section three looks at the role of the adult and the planning cycle in your interactions, experiences and spaces. It offers resource ideas and investigates the importance of self-evaluation at a deeper level.



Observation

Observation and assessment provide evidence of what is working for children and what is not and enables us to develop a rationale for what is happening in our setting (Fisher, 2013).

Observations can show trends and patterns of engagement. This guides the practitioner to see over time the kind of learner each child is. Practitioners may carry out observations to:

- Identify a child's strengths.
- Find out why a child is finding something tricky.
- Find out why a child is behaving in a certain way.
- Identify a child's stage of development.
- Ensure the environment is of high quality and find out where the child likes to learn best.
- Help the adult extend the child's learning.

child-centred pedagogy in practice

observation,
interaction and
documentation of
learning

Sensitive interactions –
honing skill of stepping in and
stepping back

Flexible experiences –
learn from the child to inform
practice

Variety of spaces –
outdoors and inside

facilitation

'Listen with your eyes and ears'

What does the child's **actions**,
emotions and **words** tell you about
their development and learning?

Are your methods of documentation
informative and meaningful to **you**, the
child, **their family** and **other**
practitioners?

responsive and
intentional planning

Informed by the child's
actions, **emotions** and **words**

What needs to **stay** to
reinforce development and
learning?

What needs to **change** to
inspire learning and
development?

As we observe and interact with children we are looking out for the "teachable moments" (usually highlighted in a colour) in which we can make a difference. It may be that the focus is on one child or area of provision. It can also be beneficial to observe for learning and development which hasn't been planned for. Children can often surprise us and show us how to move learning in a new direction. It is not possible to document every observation as that would take away too much time from teaching.

Sarah wanted to know how much money she had. She counted her 2ps and I (teacher) encouraged her to match them to Numicon. Teacher modelled matching 2p to Numicon and encouraged Sarah to count how much she had. Teacher supported Sarah in matching other coins to Numicon. Teacher modelled writing number sentences and Sarah practiced writing some on her own.

Observations and interactions enable the stories of children's learning to be recorded. These may be recorded on a learning wall, a floor book, digitally or in written form. We need to document the learning to make it visible and to provide the rationale for our pedagogy.

Adam was with a group of children making a farm. He helped to put the animals into their habitats, and then into their correct homes. Teacher suggested that he write the animal names to help visitors know which animals go in which areas. Adam used his phonic knowledge to sound out pig, horse and sheep.

It is important that the processes in the Planning for Learning cycle are shared with parents and children. By sharing observations parents and practitioners work in partnership for the benefit of the child. Involving children in the assessment and planning of their learning will enable them to talk about their learning with understanding.

Role of the Adult

Adults have a huge influence on children's opportunities for play. Adults generally dictate the time, space and resources available for play but can also impact on learning through play by their approach and interactions. In order to maximize the benefits derived from play, adults must ensure that their influence is a positive one providing an experience rich in communication and appropriate interactions. (For a useful checklist see Appendix 2– Role of Adult)

“The role of the adult is a delicate balance of supporting, enriching and proposing on the one hand, and keeping back to give the children space and time to build their own ideas on the other”

– Realising the Ambition (2020)

Facilitating Play Opportunities – “Interacting or interfering?”

– Julie Fisher (2016)

Most important in facilitating play is to allow plenty of time and freedom for it to be a child-led experience and therefore avoid providing suggestions for activity. In order to extend learning or interests shown during play, adult initiated and adult-directed experiences are valuable.

Be prepared to slow down and observe what is happening. By being conscious of your body language and remaining alert and open to an approach or question, children will feel safe and secure in order to explore and play freely. Remain alert to cues (which may be subtle) inviting you to join in with play but wait until this invitation is given.

Limit adult interruptions and interference in child-led play as these will distract focus from play, can give the impression of a ‘right or wrong’ response and can impact negatively on the learning and development potential. It is possible to remain available through establishing eye contact and being physically down at a child's level. Communicating effectively is important to ensure everyone is clear about expectations and so use vocabulary that is appropriate to the age and stage of the children. When engrossed in play, a child may not hear you, so if an interruption is necessary, the adult should go to the child and avoid calling over and expecting a response.

When to Step In

The play space and how it is used should be risk assessed, control measures agreed between adults and children and adhered to by everyone. An adult should interrupt play if a situation becomes unsafe or emotionally intolerable for an individual. It is worth considering at the risk assessment stage that we all have different perceptions of risk and it is therefore important that the response is consistent among all adults.

When intervening, it is helpful to remain calm and avoid vague and subjective language like ‘be careful’. This way the children can learn from the experience and develop skills in risk management for themselves. Possible alternatives to ‘be careful’ may be ‘do you feel safe’, ‘I’m here if you need me’, ‘does that branch feel strong and stable?’

Often, as adults, we want to assist in conflict resolution. However, this is an important skill for children to develop and much can be learnt in play. Allow disputes to be resolved by those involved, in a child-led way, as much as possible and avoid making judgements on causes and responsibility.



Gender Equal Play & Unbiased Observation

In order to support children to follow their own wishes and expressions of identity as they grow up, adults should take care to avoid influencing play or introducing bias towards gender 'norms' through the environment or the adult interactions.

Neutral responses to the resources chosen by children or the way in which they are played with will help to eliminate messages about gender specific roles or expectations being given.

"It is crucial that children are given the opportunity and encouragement to access all areas of the curriculum from an early stage so they have equality of opportunity in the future."

– Realising the Ambition (2020)

In order to make reliable assessments of children's needs the observations taken should be free from personal bias, factual and non-judgemental. For example, two observations of the same scenario could be:

- Julie reacted when Colin came over to play. She gathered the dolls and went to other side of home corner. Colin asked Julie to play. Julie did not respond or look at Colin. Factual
- Julie finds it difficult to play and share with other children. Biased

Including children's voices & involving parents

As adults are critical in providing space and time for play it is important that the views of the children form the basis of this to provide the most positive experience possible.

"Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously."

– UNCRC

While observing play, take the opportunity to include how resources and spaces are used in order to maximise play opportunities. Listen to the discussions between children in play for information on what improvements or resources could extend the opportunities. Photographs taken during play can be used in discussions with children when re-visiting experiences.

In communication, use open-ended questions with children to prompt discussion on further possible developments and give all ideas consideration. Inviting feedback from parents provides a link to home and can be used to gain information on play at home (see example feedback sheet below). Remember that parents and carers are the child's first educator and are your partners in supporting learning with the children in your setting.

Parent Consultation Sheet

Planning for your child's learning journey

Next week we will be focussing on _____. We will be observing them while they play to find out more about their interests and how they are progressing. Please take some pictures (no more than 10) of your child/family enjoying activities out of our setting.

We value the knowledge and understanding you have of your child and would really appreciate it if you would share this with us so that together we can plan activities to meet your child's needs. This will help us to plan for their future learning and development.

Is there anything significant happening in your child's life at the moment e.g. visits, holidays, new pets, family celebrations? Is there anything you would like to tell us about your child?

Do you have anything you would like to ask us about your child's progress and development?

For our children to learn through their play, it is important that we get the spaces and environment right. The UNCR states that "The key characteristics of play are fun, uncertainty, challenge, flexibility and non-productivity." An environment where the spaces allow for all of these factors must be carefully considered. Firstly, the children must feel safe and secure within their spaces. This will occur when positive relationships are at the heart of the environment. Once these are established, then the opportunities for effective play and learning are endless. This 'positive relationship' environment will then be enhanced by the physical environment. If 'fun' is to be achieved, then the spaces and the resources must excite and entice children. The children must be drawn in, intrigued by what is available. An element of 'uncertainty' can be supported through a range of resources and provocations that allow the children to wonder, enable them to take risks and problem solve solutions. Children all develop at their own pace and naturally want to learn. They will seek out 'challenge' as they play.

An effective environment will naturally support this through a wide range of quality spaces and a selection of resources that can be manipulated to provide an element of challenge, whatever the child is doing at any given time. For play to have true 'flexibility', a wide range of open-ended loose parts should be made freely available for the children to utilise in a variety of different ways, ways that they choose independently, free from adult intervention of the 'how' and 'where' they could and should be used. Understanding the importance of 'non-productivity' is also key to a successful environment where children will thrive. Spaces that allow for quiet time, stepping back and relaxing, allow children to develop an abundance of skills including self-regulation and reflection on their own play and learning experiences. Focus must also be placed on the 'process' and not the 'product' as this is where the skills development and learning takes place.

Having considered what is outlined above, planning and developing a play-based environment can be challenging. In an ELC setting staff should be relatively experienced and confident in working together to create a successful learning environment. Teacher's and ELC practitioners should aim to support each other when setting up their spaces. The knowledge that the ELC practitioners have of the children, their interests and their developmental level should be considered when setting up a primary classroom. Furthermore, as outlined in the Realising the Ambition document, 'the learning environment in the early stages of primary school, should not look or feel starkly different from a motivating ELC environment.' Once set up, the spaces (both class and ELC based) must also be continuously reviewed and reflected upon to see productivity and then altered as and when required. As considered by Greg Botrill, if we want them to feel safe and truly learn, then the classroom must be somewhere they can call home. Involving the children is also therefore key. As Anna Epgrave emphasises, observing and reflecting upon (with colleagues and also the children themselves) what they are enjoying using and things they are interested in, will allow us to deliver an engaging range of spaces stocked with resources that will allow the children to challenge and push themselves further, than if we dictate the content.

When considering the types of spaces that should be developed, it is important to consider both indoors and outdoors. Both are important and should have a variety of different spaces that allow for social and emotional, physical and cognitive development. They should not have defined 'literacy' and 'numeracy' areas but instead, opportunities for these should be evident across the

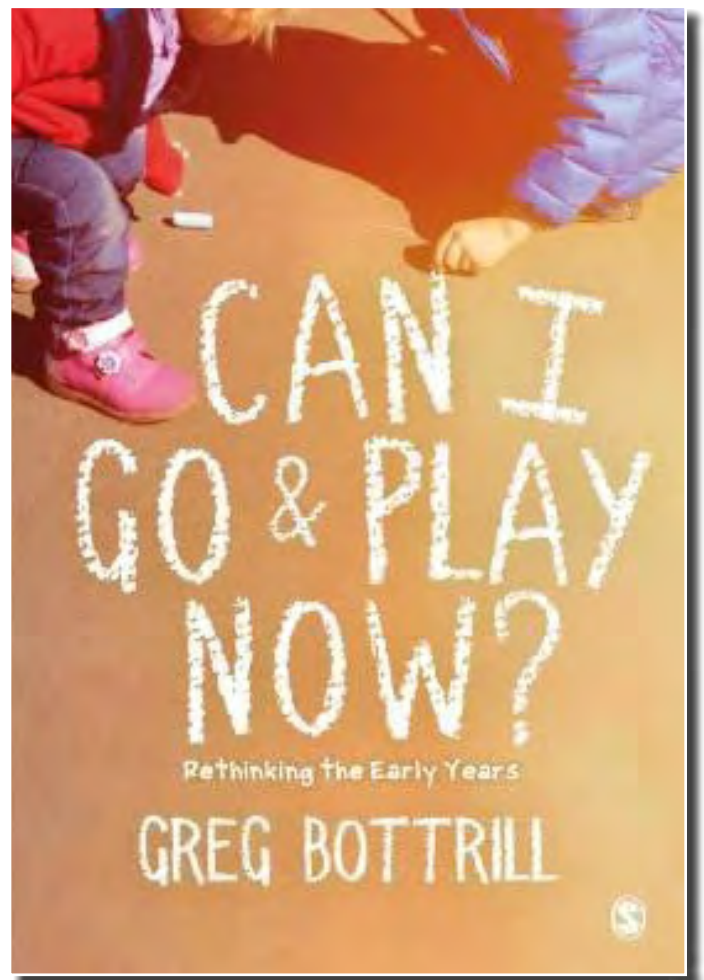
provision. As with development of fine and gross motor skills, opportunities should be varied and spread out throughout the spaces provided. Displays should be as interactive as possible meeting the needs and next steps of the children. Be careful that they do not become a 'display' of work chosen by the adults or overly full which can be a sensory overload for some children. Questions to be considered when making displays are 'Is it useful?' 'Is it engaging?' When considering furniture in a classroom setting, do you need a table and chair for each child? Or could you perhaps have a more flexible seating arrangement with a few tables only? Children learn best when they are active and learning and teaching can take place individually or in groups on the carpet, at a table, sitting, standing, kneeling and so on. The more movement and flexibility, the better.

Below are some ideas for your indoor spaces. (Many more resources can be added-these are just aimed as a starting point/guide).

- Blocks, big and small, along with a variety of other construction materials like Lego for example.
- A wide selection of loose parts, preferably natural rather than man-made. Stones, sticks, shells, glass beads etc.
- A selection of resources to support fine motor skills such as tweezers, pipettes, needles and other threading materials, small craft items and so on.
- Sand and water trays, with a variety of tools, containers etc. to use in them, containers, sieves, spades etc.
- A variety of different paper, card, envelopes and mark making and writing materials that will include pens, pencils, chalk, paintbrushes.
- Clipboards, chalkboards for resistance, whiteboards-portable and fixed.
- Picture books, short novels, magazines, leaflets, cookbooks.
- Digital resources, I-Pads, cameras, interactive whiteboards.
- Mirrors, magnifying glasses, magnets, torches.
- Junk for modelling. (recycling materials)
- Sellotape, scissors, staplers, hole punches, stamps, glue.

- Paint, playdough, clay.
- A kitchen, or home corner, dolls, buggy, beds.
- Cushions, puppets, blankets, beanbags, soft toys (Covid-19), dressing up items.
- Numeral cards, Numicon, Tensframes, counters, dice.
- Board games and jigsaws
- Sound cards, alphabet strips.
- Small world toys, animals, dinosaurs etc.
- A tinker table with real tools and appliances.
- A potable kitchen unit or access to an actual kitchen for cooking and baking.
- Musical instruments.

It is important for children to have access to an outdoor environment, and this should be used wherever possible, on a daily basis. For established ELC settings, quality outdoor spaces are commonplace. In early primary settings some schools also provide excellent outdoor learning spaces. All schools should be supported to develop their own outdoor space to enable quality learning and play to take place. Outdoor spaces are important as 'playing outdoors supports wide learning by helping to boost creativity, imagination and understanding.' (Play Scotland, Outdoor Play and Learning Coalition Statement.) Furthermore, 'with every block that is lifted, tyre that is rolled and bucket that is lifted, children are unknowingly developing their gross motor movement.' An effective outdoor space is conducive to the development of the whole-child. It 'should offer the opportunity to take risks, to collaborate, to explore, to interpret (and problem solve) for themselves.' (Greg Bottrill – Can I Go Play Now, 2018)



Below are some ideas for your outdoor spaces (as with indoors this list is not exhaustive and can be adapted to suit your setting and your children).

- Sand and water pits/trays (with resources to use in these)
- A water wall, buckets, containers, funnels.
- Larger loose parts that may include-pipes, tyres, planks of wood, crates, cable reels, pallets, logs.
- Smaller loose parts that may include-stones, sticks, bricks, shells, pinecones.
- Shovels, brushes, gardening equipment, planters.
- A mud kitchen with pots, pans, utensils (natural or man-made)
- Den building materials-tarpaulins, pegs, clips, canes, rope.
- Chalkboards, chalk, paper, pens, clipboards, whiteboards and pens, paint, paintbrushes.
- Balls, bats, skipping ropes, cones.

- Trees for climbing, grassy hill, pond, nets, magnifying pots/glasses.
- Access to numbers and sounds (preferably made with natural resources)
- Firepit, logs for seating.
- Workbench with real tools, saws, hammers, nails etc.

In addition to these resources, provocations can be set up both indoors and outdoors, ideas developed through stories read or listened to, or from the interest, knowledge and skills of the children. 'Children need an inspirational environment that includes quirky objects and things that lie out of the ordinary. Resources that lead themselves to enquiry and wonder.' (Greg Botrill: Can I go Play Now) They also need you. You are an important resource too and the role that you play. 'The environment is only one piece of the jigsaw-a perfect environment without all the other components will not support outstanding play and learning.' (Anna Ephgrave: Year 1 in Action)

Self-Evaluation

"Self-evaluation is at the heart of everything we do in our settings"

– HGIOELC 2016

We all strive to improve outcomes for the children in our ELC settings and our schools. In order to do this we must engage with and enable a continual process of self-evaluation for self-improvement. This is a process. It not a 'one off' activity or an activity only undertaken by leadership. It occurs little and often and should continually be reviewed to take into account recent developments in our settings and schools. It is about evidencing the deeper reflections and discussions we are already having with other staff, children and parents and noting these down in a manageable way.

Getting started

In reference to self-evaluation, Realising the Ambition (2020) suggests starting with a shared vision, co-created with children and families.

We can then start using quality indicators from 'How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare' (HGIOELC) or 'How Good is Our School 4' (HGIOS4) to form the basis of our Strategic Improvement Plans (SIP).

Key themes

Below are 10 key themes found in both education Scotland and Care Inspectorate inspections. Therefore, it may be helpful to use them as a template for self-evaluation focuses in your setting or school.

- Outdoor Experiences
- Child Responsive Planning
- Engaging Families
- Environment
- Staff Development
- Transitions
- Curriculum
- GIRFEC
- Tracking and Monitoring
- Play Pedagogy

Challenge Questions

To start the process, it can be helpful to decide on a 'challenge question', linked to the Quality Indicators, to guide reflection. Realising the Ambition gives the example 'How well are we developing children's language and literacy?' (QI 2.2) but this could be more specific to include story time or phonics, for example. Other examples include:

- Have we successfully established an inclusive learning environment for play for all children? (QI 3.1)
- How welcome and included in learning through play do all children, parents/carers and partners feel? (QI 2.5)
- How much time and opportunity do our children have for vigorous physical activity? (QI 3.3)

A list of further examples of challenge questions can be found at the end of this chapter.

3 key questions

To focus the self-evaluation process, How Good Is Our ELC and How Good Is Our School 4 both promote these 3 reflective questions:

- How are we doing?
- How do we know?
- What are we going to do now?

Structuring our self-evaluation journeys using these questions can really help maintain focus and most importantly, ensure the process is ongoing.

Ensuring everyone has a voice

“Reflective practice is best done with others, so that ideas can be debated and different viewpoints considered.”

– Realising the Ambition 2020

For the process to be easily accessible for all then our approaches need to be simple. By endeavouring to include all stakeholders, we provide opportunities for individuals to feel empowered to lead change and work collaboratively towards improvement.

Practitioners and teachers

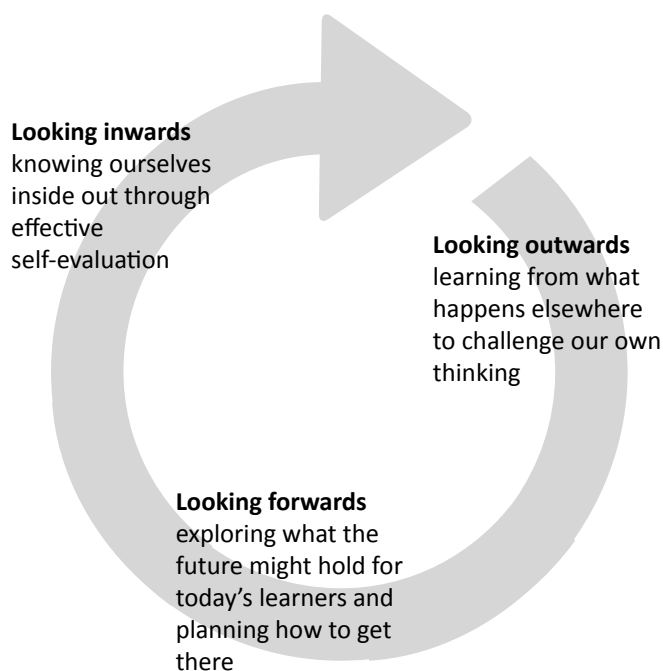
We are the ones continually observing what happens in our settings and schools. We know how our children are playing and engaging with our environments. Alongside observations of children, peer observations are one way of gaining a true insight into areas that we might like to develop.

Parents and children

Using a criteria for these observations developed together with all staff to include ideas from parents, eg. my child has a wide range of play experiences and children eg. I want school to be fun, is best practice. Realising the Ambition (2020) continually reminds us to listen to children’s actions, emotions and words and doing this through observing children’s play really is the only true way we can evaluate our practice effectively.

Looking inwards, outwards and forwards

HGIOELC and HGIO4 share this diagram with us to remind us to do all three of these when evaluating our practice.



What self-evaluation might look like

How this self-evaluation process is recorded or documented is up to the individual setting or school. The record simply needs to be easily accessible for all to contribute to the development journey of both the setting or school and its children. Some settings and schools find having a floor book linked to their SIP and/or challenge questions is a good visual way of seeing where your setting started and how far you have moved on and making it easy to share with parents, children and visitors alike.

Self-evaluation Check List

- Do all staff, children and parents in the setting or school know and share the Visions, Values and Aims? Do these include a strong ethos for continuous improvement?
- Do all stakeholders (staff, children, parents) have their views included and considered in the self-evaluation journey?
- Do all staff know the strengths and improvement needs of the setting reflected in the Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP)? Are there opportunities for them to link their professional development to this? Eg. training, peer observations.
- Do staff/parents/children have regular opportunities to be involved in leading and supporting improvement through a range of formal and informal activities?
- Is self-evaluation structured using the HGIOELC/HGIOS4 questions; How are we doing? How do we know? What are we going to do now?
- In our setting or school, do we look inwards, outwards and forwards? Do we use national guidance (eg. HGIOELC/HGIOS4, Realising the Ambition, Care Standards, National Standard) as well as knowledge of the local community when it comes to evaluation and improvement activities? Do we use research to inform thinking and support new developments?

Section Four

Various ELC and school settings share their experiences as case studies in section four. Thank you to Dyke, East End, Greenwards and Kinloss primary schools, Flexible Child Care Services and Stramash for sharing these case studies investigating loose parts, block play and play pedagogy.

<insert Cullen child with loose parts inside>
<<don't have this image>>

Loose Parts Play at East End School, Elgin

“Education done with children, not to them.”

– Greg Bottrill

East End School is in the centre of Elgin. Outside, there is a large tarred area and grassy field. The area is used by the primary stages and the Early Learning Centre. Embedding loose parts play has been a focus for several years to improve Health and Wellbeing.

The resources have been built up over time and include tarpaulins, crates, various sizes of tyres, cable reels, bricks, gutters, wooden planks, piping, pallets (see notes for safety advice), pots and pans as well as natural found objects including sticks, pinecones, conkers, and other seasonal materials such as ice. This is not an exhaustive list as resources are reviewed regularly.



Fig 1: Loose parts are stored outside all year round.

“Playing and learning outdoors is life-enhancing. It promotes mental, social and emotional wellbeing by helping to reduce stress, increase self-esteem and confidence, develop emotional resilience, and build children and young people’s confidence in their own capabilities and ability to manage risks and deal with uncertainty.”

– Scotland’s Outdoor Play & Learning Coalition
Position Statement

The principles of outdoor learning at East End are based on a child-centered, constructivist model of learning, encouraging respect, responsibility, and autonomy, facilitated by exploration and discovery through a self-guided curriculum, with sensitive interactions from adults. In this setting, learner participation is core to the educational ethos and culture and centrally contributed to how learning processes and outcomes are supported and developed at the earliest stages.

Loose parts play at Flexible Child Care Services, Keith

Children at the early stages of primary school are outside every day. Situated numeracy and literacy are embedded in play-based exploration and discovery which the children can lead and shape. With light-touch adult supervision, children move freely through different areas, including the music area, sensory garden, mud kitchen, tepee, willow house, and outdoor play areas with digging areas and water. The loose parts are a well-used resource with the children and the focus here.

Staff have an over-arching year plan for the pupils, identifying key learning benchmarks and performance criteria. However, there are no set topics. Rather, staff use group floor books to purposefully harness ideas coming from the children and use them as catalysts for learning.

They have also introduced Greg Bottrill's Adventure Island. This engages young children in a world of story and books through the concept of joy and co-playing. The scope for Adventure Island is unlimited in terms of promoting imagination and creativity. It encompasses aspects of literacy, mathematics and health and wellbeing alongside delivery of other curriculum areas with all the emotional engagement of play and discovery.

<Insert East End child in red photo on left and East End child at spool table on right>

Loose parts play has allowed staff to understand how learning and participation are linked and how activities give the learners a right to have a say in their play choices.

One of the reasons for the fascination loose parts offer is that they are not prescriptive; they offer limitless possibilities and are inclusive of all learners. The Loose parts Play Toolkit (2019) states the benefits include cognitive development, social development, physical activity, fun and enjoyment and mental health and emotional wellbeing. At East End these benefits are noted by the adults when they see how engaged the children are, that they are curious, creative and imaginative, interact and cooperate well with each other and develop their problem-solving skills often showing a greater resilience than at other times in the school environment. Children have been observed to be more settled with the rest of the routines of the school day because of doing outdoor learning first thing in the day.



Flexible Childcare Services Keith is a charity-based company with twenty-one settings across Scotland serving early years, ASN, out of school among other sectors. Our Keith setting is currently in temporary accommodation until our new setting is completed in July 2021.

Here at our Keith setting, large and small loose parts are the core of our resources, with natural materials, block play and items that offer opportunities to discover, create and imagine included. Our age range is age two to five years, and we play and learn together in the main hall.

We believe that children benefit from a rich environment, where they can create play from open-ended resources that give no limits in allowing their ideas to come to life. Children collaborate, learning how to listen to each other's ideas, problem solve and become confident in their own creative abilities. Pallets, chairs, and cardboard began as a car, where discussions surrounded safety, distance and fantastic stories of family days out. Discussions about holiday destinations and how covid-19 would not allow for travel in a plane led to building their own FCSS Aeroplane; from here, they could go anywhere their imagination took them. We currently have a pirate ship, which led from one child's interest; he encouraged others to become excited about building the boat and the adventures they would have.

Simon Nicholson quoted, "children need all the things that satisfy one's curiosity and give us the pleasure that results from discovery and invention." When we observe children in imaginary and creative play, we can quickly identify how children progress in their development and how areas of the curriculum are within the play processes. We are also able to identify schemas and how

to support these. During this unprecedented time, social and emotional development is a priority and watching children's excitement as their vision becomes real brings a sense of achievement and joy across the setting.

Thoughtful interactions between practitioners and children support them in thinking on a deeper level to make sense of their thoughts and play. Barbara Rogoff (2003) describes learning as a 'co-operative process between children and adults, where children 'borrow' adult knowledge and skills. At any given moment, the lead and responsibility passes back and forth.

Block Play at Greenwards Primary School

Block play can be viewed as:

"Simple playthings that allow children to feel and experience, to act and represent, and to think and recognise."

– Froebel, cited in Brosterman 1997:51

This case study will illustrate the rich learning that block play facilitates and our exciting learning journey. Greenwards is a non-denominational school with three hundred and forty-one children located in the south west corner of Elgin. The school also has specialised accommodation for children with special needs. Greenwards is an open plan school with no classrooms or doors. Instead, there are teaching areas typically grouped in clusters of four class areas. The teaching areas are open, bright and attractively decorated with the children's work. Currently two primary one classes share one of the teaching areas which is split up into zones creating a workshop for children through a play pedagogy approach (Play is the Way, 2020). These zones are the discovery/investigation zone, the creative zone, the social zone and an outdoor zone.

Our school invested in a set of unit blocks and hollow blocks to enhance learning in the discovery and investigation zone. The 'Community Playthings' blocks were purchased to maintain the 1:2:4 ratio so that children could start to understand the mathematical relationships from an early age. The delivery of blocks arrived in August 2020 and this was when our exciting journey with block play began. We will share our story so far with block play focusing on the interactions, experiences and spaces when implementing a child-centred pedagogy in practice (Education Scotland, 2020a).



Experiences

Research shows that young children learn best through play and first-hand experiences (Bruce, 2015) and when they have regular opportunities to:

- make their own choices and decisions
- return to experiences over time to deepen learning and practice skills
- discuss thoughts, ask questions and extend their ideas

In addition, block play supports STEM and meets the eight curriculum areas of the 'Curriculum for Excellence' (Scottish Government, 2006) in a holistic and open-ended way for all learners. When children are engaging with the blocks approximately fifty experiences and outcomes are at play. (See the experiences and outcomes in Appendix 3)

Due to more than half of the curriculum being covered we ensure that block play is available daily for children to engage with. Data from a sample of observations, for a one-week period during May 2021, showed that seventy-two percent of Primary One children engaged in learning experiences at the block play area with their peers. Some children visited the area daily to deepen their learning and practice skills repeatedly. Analysing data from timed observations has shown that some children had sustained play in the area for periods longer than forty minutes. This demonstrates that their play was uninterrupted, engaging and as Bruce (2015) describes, it gave the children opportunities to wallow when learning.

Furthermore, our observations have shown that the hollow blocks create so much drama, imagination and role play whereas the unit blocks create endless possibilities within the curriculum areas, particularly mathematical learning and development. However, both types of blocks together can provide so much more rich learning.



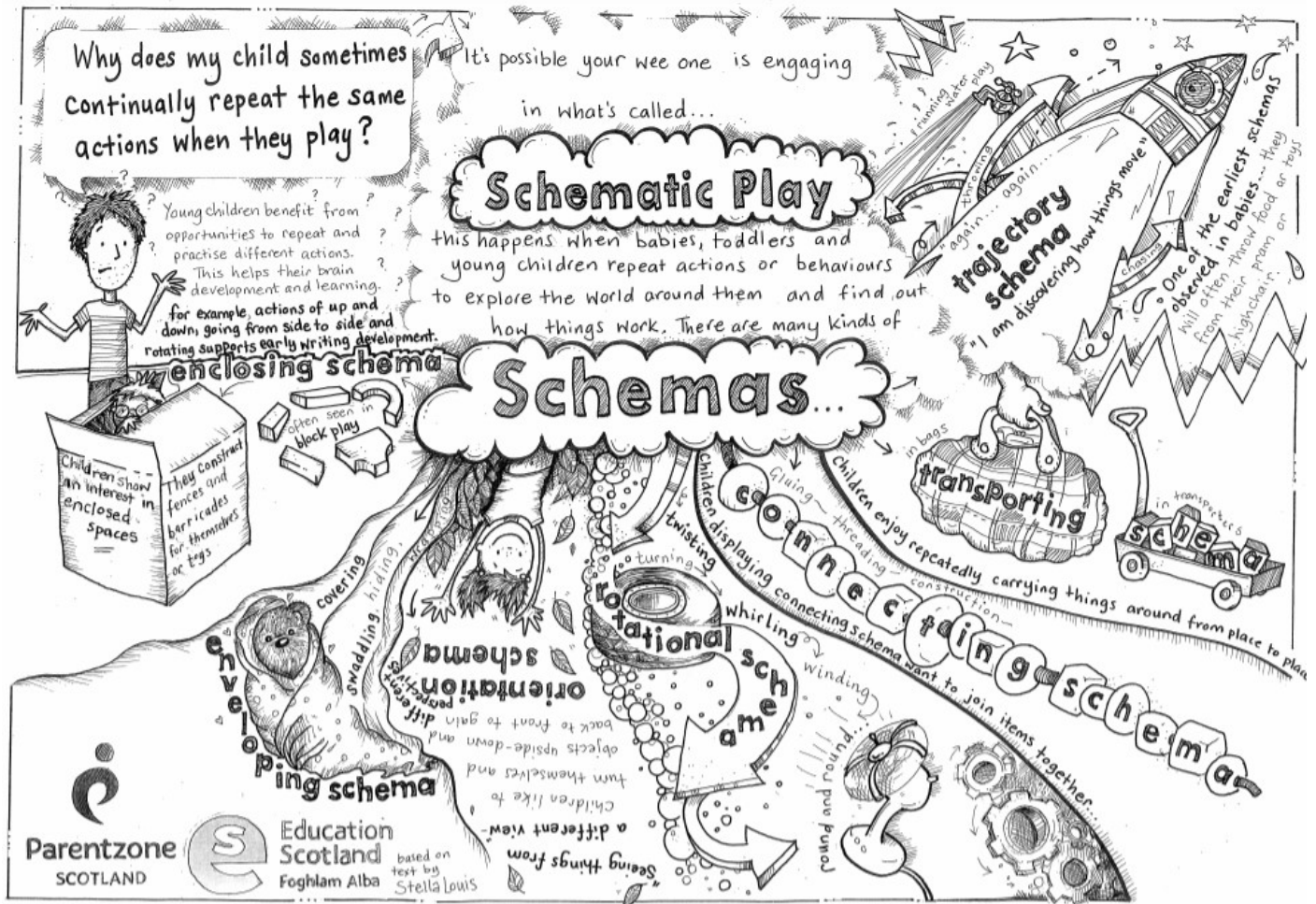
While observing the children interacting with the blocks, we have noticed a range of schematic play. For example, these photos show the children demonstrating the enveloping and enclosing schema when making structures with the blocks.

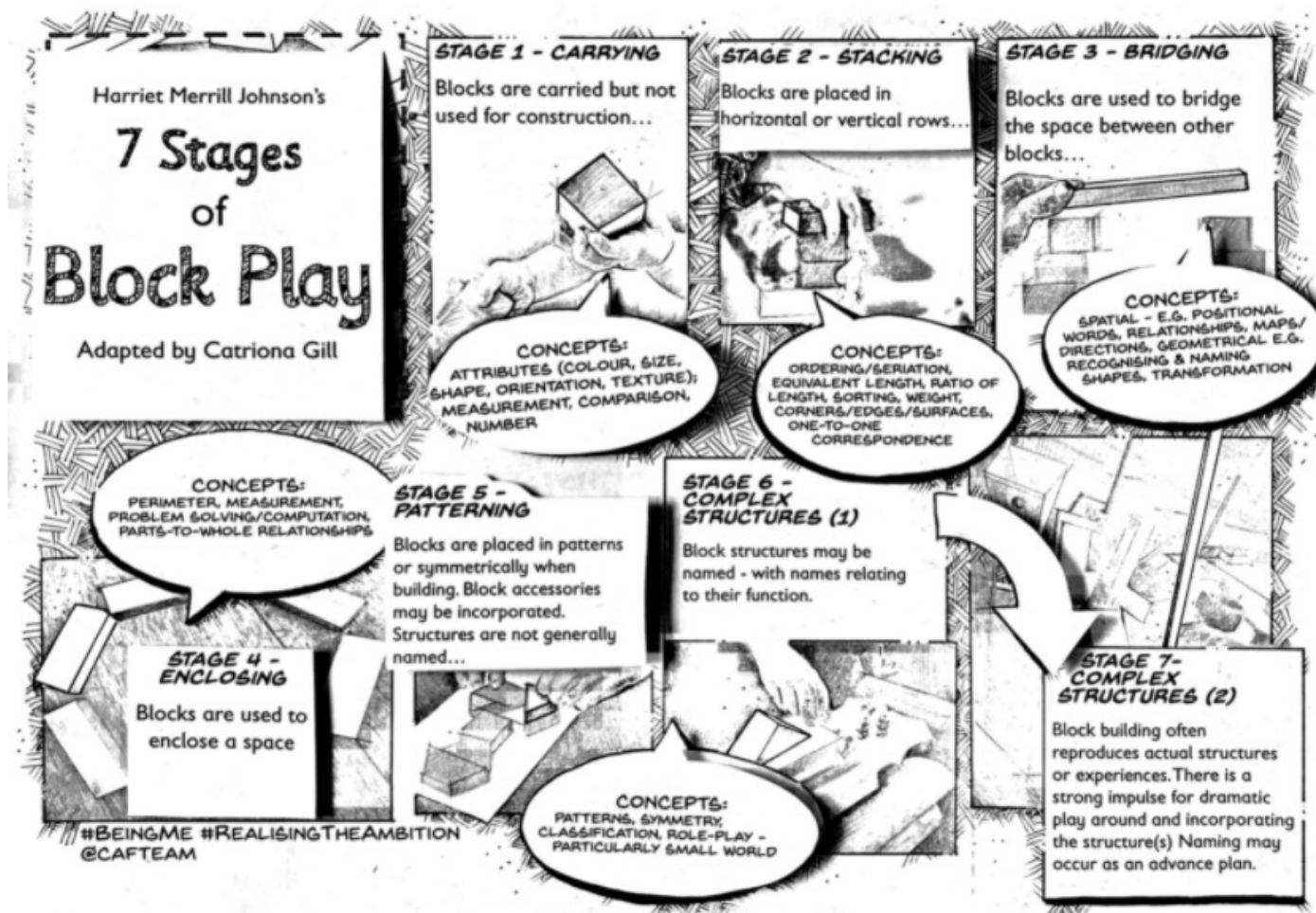


Similarly, we have found the following sketchnote invaluable in supporting our understanding of the schemas observed in the children's play. This has then enhanced discussions of how we can extend and support thinking as children need opportunities to practise and rehearse through schemas of first-hand experiences. As Louis (2021) states,

“If you feed a child’s schema you have the potential to lead the child to its destiny.”

– Education Scotland, 2020a:36





– Education Scotland, 2020b

The seven stages of block play sketchnote has also enhanced practitioners' understanding of the developmental aspects of block play. Observations have shown that children have moved back and forwards between these stages which demonstrates the non-linear nature of learning. At the beginning when the blocks were introduced, we predominately observed stages 1 (carrying), 2 (stacking) and 3 (bridging). We questioned if this could be due to some children having never experienced block play using these types of blocks in their nursery setting.

Over time we have observed children progressing to become competent block players who demonstrate stage 7 (complex structures) used for socio dramatic play. This photo shows the structure the children created to represent a submarine which then led to a period of dramatic play.



Spaces

We have created a distinct block play area which is self-contained. This means that children are not disturbed when building or that structures are not knocked down accidentally when children are moving past the area to get to other zones in the provision. The blocks are located in open-access storage with a designated storage spaces identified by labels. This has supported practitioners and children to learn the names of the blocks. The blocks are displayed so that children can see the modular structure and understand the mathematical relationships. Over time we would like to build upon the number of blocks we currently have as we feel the more blocks the better!



Furthermore, when we first introduced the blocks the children who had engaged with them tended to move to another zone and leave the blocks they were using out. This then resulted with all the blocks being on the floor and the area looking very messy. We spoke with the children about this and agreed that when the children had finished working with the blocks they should return them to the shelves. Adults have supported the process of returning blocks to the shelves and seized upon the learning opportunity of developing pupils knowledge of the block names and how the parts link to the whole. This also enabled pupils to demonstrate our school value of respect and meant that the area was attractive to other children during the day.



Data from timed observations has shown that the children who are in the area often observe others building which then has a positive impact upon their own block play by supporting them moving between the stages and within other curriculum areas eg., literacy, drama or numeracy. This photo shows that the children have been able to demonstrate their understanding of symmetry from the structures created.

From being an open-ended resource, we have observed first-hand that it facilitates symbolic thinking. Children regularly create structures that represent something else. This photo shows the units blocks being used as snacks for the knights who live in the castle that the children had created. On the wooden board, which represented a plate, they have a drink, sandwich and a cake. The individual wooden blocks therefore took on a new meaning as part of the 'whole' (Tovey, 2017).





To develop progression in literacy and numeracy we have added pencils, paper, clipboards, rulers and tape measures into the area. The children tend to use these in a variety of ways, this picture shows a flag being added to a castle. The children are also frequently heard using mathematical language eg. 'It is taller/shorter/ longer....'

Interactions

"Rich block play does not just occur. It develops when the adult acts as a powerful catalyst working hard to enable it."

— Bruce, 1992a: 26

Evaluations from practitioners who engaged in the 'Being me through Block Play' (Education Scotland, 2020b) training showed that eighty percent strongly agreed and twenty percent agreed that it had developed their skills and confidence with block play. They also stated that they would be able to implement the learning into their practice.

Engaging with the reflective questions from the 'Being Me through Block Play' (Education Scotland, 2020b) and analysing data from timed observations we have evaluated the role of the adult and identified the following areas for improvement.

When the blocks were first introduced, we provided different open-ended resources in the area. At times, these resources often became the key focus with the blocks being forgotten. We removed the accessories for a period of time to enable pupils to engage fully with the blocks and we now focus on the information from our observations to identify provocations that will move the play to a deeper level. We will now locate open-ended resources in the provision rather than being directly placed in the block play area.

In addition, the 'Being Me through Block Play' (Education Scotland, 2020b) training gave in-depth information about effective comments and questions that adults can use to help children make connections in their learning. We have reflected on why we are asking questions and are using the question and statement prompts provided to ensure they are helping to enhance thinking and create learning moments for children. We have found that the block area provides natural opportunities for adults to model mathematical language.

"I found the four short videos as an effective training method. It meant that they could be watched in my own time and in different parts. I was also able to come back to the videos to revisit ideas. We watched videos one and two and then had a stage group discussion which I found very helpful. We did the same after videos three and four.

I learned so much about the different stages of block play and I would now be far more confident in recognising this when I see it. The training also made me focus how I respond to things children have created and how I can give responses which extend learning.” (Practitioner Reflection)

To model the importance of block play we are going to increase the presence of an adult in the block play area. This will also provide more opportunities to observe and support children to assess and explore risk in their play. When observing we ‘listen with our eyes and ears’ (Education Scotland, 2020a) to enable us to develop and extend children’s thinking.

Similarly, from developing our pedagogical knowledge of the stages of block play and schemas we are far more confident in using our observations to scaffold children’s learning in their play and extend their zone of proximal development:

“Play creates a zone of proximal development of the child. In play a child always behaves beyond his average age...as though he were a head taller than himself...play contains all developmental tendencies in a condensed form and is itself a major source of development.”

– Vygotsky, (1978:102)

Practitioners commented that after exploring the theory from the training we discussed it in relation to real examples from our school context, enhancing the importance of block play.

“I liked the way that after exploring the theory we discussed it in relation to real examples from our school. The discussions we had as a team were really valuable in helping me reflect upon how I could support and extend learning through block play.”

– Practitioner Reflection

Therefore, we will continue to observe the impact of the aforementioned areas for improvement and follow this cohort of children’s learning journey as they progress through school. We would be keen to track their maths achievement over the longer term, particularly in middle high school, as Wolfgang et al., (2001) found from research that there was a positive correlation between the sophistication of pre-school block performance and achievement in maths. Looking into the longer term it would also be interesting to track the career pathways these children follow as the architect Frank Lloyd Wright claims that his passion for design stemmed from playing with Froebel blocks as a child (Tovey, 2017).

The role of the adult is central to block play and it is important to have knowledgeable educators, which is also a key Froebelian principle (Tovey, 2017), who have a deep understanding of Froebel’s values. Bruce (1992b) states the importance of understanding what the word educator means.

“An educator is a researcher and practitioner combined”.

– Bruce, 1992b

Consequently, we have taken an active role to reflect upon how theory informs our practice with a particular focus on block play. This is like the early years pioneers who were known as educators as they intertwined theory with practice. For impact to be observed within our early years curriculum and sustained in the longer-term reflection based on the twelve features of free flow play (Bruce, 2012) is essential. The success is underpinned by the relationships of colleagues where we strive to be the best we can be while acknowledging our mistakes and flaws on our learning journey.

Play Across the Primary School at Dyke Primary

“In the UK and many other countries around the world there are a growing number of primary schools developing their pedagogical approach to the curriculum so that the children receive a broad, balanced curriculum that encourages high achievement and engagement. The development includes the use of ‘creative’ and ‘innovative’ approaches to learning and teaching that put children and their needs at the centre.”

– Introduction page in ‘Play-based Learning in the Primary School’

Dyke Primary School is a rural school in the village of Dyke, made up of four classes, in a traditional building. Outside there is a large tarred area at the front of the school and a very big grassy field at the rear, which incorporates a small wooded area. There is also an area to the side of the school building which has been developed for Outdoor Learning through play – this includes a large mud kitchen, a workbench area with real tools, den building materials, big wooden blocks, tyres, crates, planks, water play, a sandpit and three large raised beds which allow for garden play. In addition to this there is a Nurture Garden with a Hobbit House which is used for a variety of activities across the curriculum.



Initially this area was used mainly by children in the P1/2 class who spent freeflow play sessions outside three times a week – the nature of access from the building to the outdoor area means that children either have to be all outside or all inside for play sessions. There arose many staffroom conversations about the benefits of outdoor learning through play and exploration and it was evident that staff across the whole school were keen to find out more about play and how it can be extended across the school, providing a progression of skills across all areas of the curriculum. Developing a play-based approach across the primary school thus became a focus for staff development in the session 2020-2021.

This year's school improvement priorities all sit under the umbrella of play and will help to develop the school's work in three areas:

- developing resilience
- developing leadership opportunities and skills for life and work
- developing the curriculum in science and technology

The Early Years members of staff had attended the training sessions on Play Pedagogy led by James Cook and subsequently the book groups also led by him over the summer holidays in 2020. A book recommended at these sessions has helped greatly with staff development – “Play-based Learning in the Primary School” by Mary Briggs and Alice Hansen. Following discussions with the Head Teacher it was decided to offer the opportunity to all teaching staff in the school to become part of an online book group based on this book. All staff eagerly accepted the invitation, as they were keen to develop play-based learning but were unsure where to start or what this would look like in middle and upper stages classes. A major point to consider in all of this was progression – play would look very different in P7 than further down the school.

The book group met weekly online to explore the first six chapters. Staff were issued with usually three questions to consider as they read each chapter. They then shared any thoughts, feelings and ideas when they met online and made decisions about the way forward for the whole school. Staff and children alike were enthusiastic about learning in a more playful way and all staff have mentioned increased levels of motivation and observations of the application of skills being learned across the curriculum. Time was built into each class's timetable for exploration and investigation through play and early successes were shared at book group meetings. There were also opportunities to talk about any problems which had been encountered and staff were able to support each other to solve them.

Progress of the implementation of play-based learning was of course slowed down due to Covid-19 closures, but it was clear that this approach was still uppermost in staff's minds as they considered ways of keeping the ethos of learning in a playful way alive while home-learning was ongoing. Since returning to school, teachers across the school have continued to develop play pedagogy in their classrooms and one of the most popular activities has been reverse engineering. This approach to learning has played an important part in the children's wellbeing as they returned to school after a long period of time at home. It has been instrumental in engaging the children's interest and enthusiasm for learning as well as developing their engineering and communication skills.

During a conversation with the older children about play these were a few things that were heard:

“I just love reverse engineering! I’ve learned so much about machines and how they work!”

“It makes me feel happy and playing makes me feel free. It helps me understand the importance of play.” (this is a quote from a child who has struggled socially and emotionally)

“It helps me learn skills to communicate.”

“It’s enjoyable and helps to calm you if you are stressed.”

“It’s fun and you learn how to be playful and socialise.”

However one exciting project was completed before school closures happened – the children in P5 and P6/7 designed and made a reading den for the outdoor learning area. This arose from a request made by the children in P1/2, some of whom loved to sit and read while outside and they expressed a desire to have somewhere special to do this. After talking with the children about this and looking at some pictures of reading dens they decided to write to the older children to ask for their help. The children in P5/6/7 were delighted to be invited to help and quickly got started with the planning process. They drew plans which were presented to the younger children for their approval. It was decided to use pallets to make the den and the older pupils approached a local solar panel company to ask if they could supply them. They also felt they might need some guidance on fixing the roof securely and this resulted in two employees of the company coming out to school and working with the children, thus making relevant connections with DYW. The children painted the pallets, applied their measuring skills and used real tools during the construction, which allowed them to cover many areas of the curriculum in a meaningful and purposeful way. The older children were so motivated and loved their outdoor learning sessions, playing with a real purpose.

The younger children were delighted with the end result and often use it, whether to sit in and read with some friends, or to do some quiet weaving activity, thus enhancing the opportunities for developing early literacy skills in reading, listening and talking, while learning outdoors.



Play at Kinloss Primary School

This is what the children in P1/2 think about spending time in their special space:

“It’s comfy and cosy in our reading den!”

“It’s a nice, quiet space to read a book when we are learning outside.”

“I love looking at books with my friends in there.”

“We can take the weaving basket there too or do some writing.”

Using this approach to teaching and learning allows the children to develop as responsible citizens, successful learners, effective contributors and confident individuals which is what is needed in the ever-changing world in which they are growing up. It has also encouraged inclusion as all children are able to access the learning opportunities provided in a playful pedagogy.

“A love of the outdoors and of being outdoors is the bedrock for attitudes for sustainable living. We need a generation that feels at home in nature, cares deeply about their world, and has the agency and creative capacities to tackle the environmental, human and economic issues ahead of them.”

– ‘Playing and Learning Outdoors’ by Jan White

Kinloss Primary School is a unique school within Moray. We have a high proportion of military children due to being situated next to Kinloss Barracks, who experience exceptional mobility and deployment, as well as many local families.

Over the last few years, Early Years staff have made the development of play a priority. A change of mind-set and training has led to more child initiated and child led play. Due to this shift in thinking we have adapted the resources available to ensure most are now open-ended,

“Play creates the conditions for children to test the world, to make sense of it, to grow the skills needed to communicate, to negotiate and express their inner selves.”

– Greg Botrill, 2018

We have stopped ‘setting out’ and instead the children have access to the resources at all times. In ‘Realising the Ambition: Being Me’ (2020) it is stated that “Materials should be open ended to develop children’s creativity”. From making these changes, we have definitely seen the children’s imaginations shine through and they now own their play.



We have worked hard to develop an outdoor area for the children to play and learn in together. Over time, we have built up our open ended materials outdoors. These include: tyres, pallets, planks, guttering, plastic tubes, buckets, pans and natural materials. As well as providing a mud kitchen, digging area, music area and a sand pit. Children freely move around and use the resources in all areas. The children's imaginations come alive and the ways in which they use the resources are endless. Staff have also observed a marked difference in the children's confidence and ability to work together, communicate with each other, make compromises, and solve problems.



A focus of developing the play environment has been to provide mark making tools in both our indoor and outdoor play areas. Every day, children are writing and making marks relating to their play. For example, making signs for the role play area, drawing a plan of the model they want to build, writing messages for each other, creating recipes in the mud kitchen and so much more. Standing back and seeing children excited to write because it is relevant to them, has been a wonder to watch.



**Play allows children to develop holistically.
“Through play a child develops their cognitive,
social, emotional and physical capabilities”.**

– Education Scotland, 2020

We recently had a conversation about play and what it means to the children in Primary 1. One child responded saying “When I play, I can be anything I want to be”. This highlighted the fact that play allows children to freely express themselves in a safe and nurturing environment.

Stepping back, watching, listening, observing and interacting when appropriate are essential strategies when working with young children. The places you end up when you follow the children's lead is truly magical!

Stramash

Rough and tumble play

Children were involved in imaginative/fantasy play that involved capturing and 'putting people into jail'; often play types will overlap in this way. The play involved a lot of chasing and 'capturing' the 'bad guys' which could involve the use of physical grabbing, using ropes to lasso their target or pipes around the body and then dragging them back to jail. At times it also involved some pushing or wrestling as they captured and imprisoned their targets & running and chasing as children tried to or succeed in 'escaping from 'jail'.

Practitioners supported children to notice whether their peers were happy and consenting to the game throughout as the play evolved - talking about ways you could tell if someone was still ok (are they smiling? Have they said no? Why it's important to listen to your friends) They also monitored the play closely and intervened with practical advice to keep people safe - only using ropes around peoples bodies and never around a neck or head and explaining why, observing the dynamic and ensuring that if a child seemed to be not enjoying the play but unsure how to speak up they were able to model asking if they were okay and happy to keep playing the game, advising any children who were not happy to ask their friends for what they needed to keep playing and if this was not observed suggesting that they maybe took some time out from the game and played with other children/did something else.

The principle is not to shame the type of play or those engaging in it (sometimes enthusiastically) but to model boundaries of intensity and behaviour involved so that children don't get hurt and are respectful of their friends consent to keep playing and also children are able to advocate for themselves if they're not happy with the play, so that the play can continue.



Science

Children were playing in the mud kitchen involved in imaginative play using a range of different tools and 'ingredients' to make dinner. Play involved stirring, mixing, combining various materials including water, mud & plant matter. Children were experimenting to see how much water added to a mix created a 'cake batter' and how dryer mud worked better to roll into 'meatballs'.

Experiential learning of matter and the effects of combining various matter in various quantities to create change (solid + liquid - in various amounts) provides a foundational understanding of scientific theory in a developmentally appropriate way. The experience of physically adulterating by process and therefore further influencing matter (mixing, stirring, shaking, adding (imaginary) heat via baking or cooking etc) are also scientific practices.

Practitioners added to the children's learning by the addition of language to deepen this foundational scientific learning talking about what the children were doing and the changes they observed, while being 'part of the game'. Practitioners also asked 'I wonder...' questions eg, 'I wonder if you put more water in what would happen?' to further the children's experimentation.



Woodwork

Children were in the woods and a child wanted to climb up onto a tree branch but it was too high to reach so she decided he needed a ladder and asked a practitioner for one. As we didn't have a ladder the practitioner suggested she build one in the woodwork area. The practitioner asked the child how big the ladder needed to be to reach the branch and together they used a tape measure to measure the height the ladder would need to be to reach the branch.

Once in the woodwork area the child located some 'strong' pieces of wood - it was determined 'they need to be strong so I can stand on them'. 2 for the sides and 4 for the 'steps'. She then checked the measurements to ensure they matched or were 'more than' the measurement she had taken in the woods (is the number the same or bigger).

The child then used a hammer and nails to attach the pieces together, ensuring that the rungs were straight (ish) across. This particular child had played in the woodwork area before and had a good competency of tool use. Supported by the practitioner she selected nails that would go through both pieces of wood but not come out the other side by using her finger to see the length of the nails and the depth of the wood pieces.

When complete she carried his ladder back into the woods and laid it against the tree trunk, making sure it was stable before she used it to climb up onto the branch.

This type of play involved problem solving, maths & measurement, practical skills, gross and fine motor skills. Whilst it was heavily practitioner supported it was fully child led and enabled the child to have experience of achievement in being faced with a problem and using the skills she has developed in the tool area previously to create a solution.



Small world play

Children had been enjoying using the torches and magnifying glasses to investigate 'hidden' and 'secret' areas of the woodland (inside fallen logs / under branches / in bushes) and were beginning to create narratives for the creatures who may live there, what they get up to and why.

Staff observed this play and, during the next session, put out some small world toys such as animals, fairies, dinosaurs, etc. The children used the small world figures in the natural environment to expand their play narratives. From this play, the children sought out natural loose parts such as sticks, stones, moss and leaves to create more small world spaces (shops, post offices and schools).

One child in particular spent a great deal of time gathering sticks, shells and stones to create a pathway to the area he had declared a RAF base for the fairy toys. He lined the sticks up to create a runway, and explained the shells were floodlights and the stones were the markers “so the planes know where to go”. He was immersed in this play for most of the session, and came back to it day after day continuing his RAF base narrative.

Over time, staff worked with all the children to create more permanent fairy garden play spaces by filling tyres with soil and then decorating these with moss and natural loose parts gathered from the woodland. The small world animals, fairies and dinosaurs are always available at the fairy gardens, and have become a staple part of our nursery provision. It is fantastic to hear the children’s narrative and stories that come from their play with the fairy gardens.



One child in particular spent several sessions gathering sticks from around the nursery site into one big pile in the middle of the nursery. She dragged large branches, groups of smaller branches and even small twigs into this big pile of wood and sticks, building it higher and higher, wider and wider, until it took up a massive portion of the play space. She explained to her peers and staff alike that she was building a bonfire so we could see in the dark. Her peers dipped in and out of this play, offering help with bigger branches, and helping to tuck smaller twigs into the gaps. Once satisfied with her big pile of branches, sticks and twigs, the child then spent some time rubbing sticks together over the pile. She explained, to some of her interested peers, that she had to make sparks, and sparks make a fire. Some time later she was observed, with her peers, imitating keeping cosy by the fire (rubbing hands) and cooking (pots from the mud kitchen on top).

The staff that observed this play offered opportunities within the nursery to have an authentic experience of fire lighting too. Into small metal containers, children prepared cotton wool and vaseline. The staff member then demonstrated how to use a fire striker, and offered the children a chance to explore the strikers too. The children were delighted as their cotton wool sparked into life and was quickly eaten up by flame. This is a consistent part of our provision at Stramash, with children building their fire lighting skills over time and becoming more risk aware as they do so.

Recapulative play

Children at Stramash regularly have the opportunity to help build and set fires for use in cooking or for keeping warm in colder weather. This has inspired lots of play with loose parts to build fires, cook on fires and chop wood.



is being held by the adult, what does he need to worry about? Now he jumps down, runs back to the beginning and immediately puts his hand out for the adult again.

Do you see the 'oh no' moment? Now the child is seeking the help that really he didn't need. His first time, although wobbly, meant he was practicing and developing his core strength and balancing skills. He was determined and intrinsically motivated to manage his own risk and to meet the challenge of balancing along the wall. But the adult offered help without first observing his capability. The child took the adult's hand, which then undermined the progress he had made, and we see it time and time again: the adult can do this better than I can.

We, as adults, are always well-meaning; we just want to help. As adults, our nurturing side is completely averse to children struggling or finding things difficult. We want to interject with our well-meaning questions that we think help to expand their world, but may just be unnecessary. We need to observe first; to really look and see if what we think we are bringing to the situation really is helpful, or if it is hindering possible progress.

Adult role (interacting / interfering)

At Stramash, we have explored the principles of Anji play and the works of Julie Fisher's *Interacting or Interfering* in the role of the adult in play. Adults have such an impact on play and the learning that children can experience within their play; adults can very easily scaffold a child's experience, just as easily as they can hinder it. The adult in play is a balance to be explored and reflected upon by practitioners and support workers alike by first observing the child before interacting, and asking themselves – am I needed? Can I really see what is going on here? Often, we are better to continue to observe and wait to be invited in to help or play, or as sometimes happens, not be involved whatsoever.

An example of the adult role hindering a child's development and learning was showcased by Kathryn Solley at a training course in Aberdeen. In the clip, a child is balancing on a low stone wall. The child is wobbling, but looking straight forward, tongue out and concentrating on keeping his balance and making it to the other side of the wall. He makes it there and back, wobbly but safely. He smiles as he returns his starting point, ready to have another go. As he steps forward, a well-meaning but intrusive adult holds her hand out to him to steady him. The child takes the adult's hand and walks the rest of the wall with no problems; after all, he

Section Six

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Appendix 1

Mode	Children	Adult
Spontaneous play (free play)	Initiate the learning experience. Engage as an individual or in a self chosen groups. Control decisions and make choices about time spent, resources used and outcomes.	<p>Observe children's play, assessing the level of engagement and learning taking place. Interact as a co-constructor/play partner, extending learning when appropriate, through quality interactions and sustained shared thinking.</p> <p>Facilitate through providing the space, time and resources required.</p> <p>Support children to reflect on learning and make their learning visible.</p>
Planned, purposeful play	Engage with resources and learning experiences set up by others. Revisit play experiences to further develop knowledge or practice skills.	<p>Plan open-ended play experiences designed to support and extend children's learning about specific knowledge or skills.</p> <p>Observe children's play, assessing the level of engagement and learning taking place.</p> <p>Support children to reflect on learning and make their learning visible.</p>
Investigation and exploration	Choose which resources to explore and how. Engage as an individual or in self chosen groups. Test out and persevere to learn new skills and solve problems.	<p>Facilitate through providing exciting learning spaces and provocations.</p> <p>Observe and access levels of engagement and learning taking place.</p> <p>Interact to extend learning, when appropriate, through quality interactions and sustained shared thinking.</p> <p>Support children to reflect on learning and make their learning visible.</p>

Mode	Children	Adult
Events and life experiences	Try new things and engage in experiences – both freely chosen and those organised by others. Share ideas, thoughts and feelings with others.	<p>Make use of local community both, spaces and people, when planning for children’s learning.</p> <p>Plan real experiences such as visiting local shops and baking, regularly.</p> <p>Work with families to help them understand the learning benefits that real life experiences can offer.</p> <p>Make time for children to share and celebrate their experiences and learn from home and the community.</p>
Focused learning and teaching	Engage in learning experiences led by an adult.	<p>Plan and deliver short, snappy episodes of direct teaching to introduce children to a new concept or extend their thinking around a specific topic.</p> <p>Take account of and make links with what children already know and have done to provide cohesion in learning.</p> <p>Ensure learning remains engaging by taking a playful approach to teaching, reflecting on what you know children love to do and are interested in.</p>

Appendix 2

Adult Role: During Free-flow Sessions

Maintaining Enabling Environment

- Ensure environment is prepared – indoors and outdoors
- Prepare and restock resources
- Scan area and address issues during sessions (eg. resource accessibility, dangers etc.)
- Help children use resources appropriately
- Ensure children maintain environment – encourage children to tidy areas when play complete

Quality Interactions

- Move around setting to where individuals/groups are playing
- Allow children to set the agenda – follow their lead
- Ponder – use “I wonder...”

Commentate

- Use simple language, Makaton and visual prompts when necessary
- Give time for children to respond
- Support activity to ensure success without taking over
- Model/extend language – eg. model correct sentence structure
- Focus on process, rather than product
- Be relaxed
- Show genuine fascination about children’s pursuits
- Demonstrate understanding of child development (challenges/suggestions are appropriate)

Behaviour

- Position so that can scan largest possible area

- Scan area regularly and address inappropriate behaviour
- Respond with consistency – fair but firm
- Model language and actions to children to resolve disputes (rather than stepping in)
- Approach children showing low-level involvement – promote engagement
- Indoors – ensure quiet and calm behaviour

Observations and Record Keeping

- Contribute to observations of “Wow” moments to individual records
- Contribute to learning journeys of focus children
- Contribute to record sheet for group activities that develop
- Support children to add to their special books/folders
- Share information with each other as necessary

Appendix 3

Numeracy and Mathematics

I am developing a sense of size and amount by observing, exploring, using and communicating with others about things in the world around me. MNU 0-01a

I have explored numbers, understanding that they represent quantities, and I can use them to count, create sequences and describe order. MNU 0-02a

I use practical materials and can 'count on and back' to help me to understand addition and subtraction, recording my ideas and solutions in different ways. MNU 0-03a

I can share out a group of items by making smaller groups and can split a whole object into smaller parts. MNU 0-07a

I have experimented with everyday items as units of measure to investigate and compare sizes and amounts in my environment, sharing my findings with others. MNU 0-11a

I have spotted and explored patterns in my own and the wider environment and can copy and continue these and create my own patterns. MTH 0-13

I enjoy investigating objects and shapes and can sort, describe and be creative with them. MTH 0-16a

In movement, games, and using technology I can use simple directions and describe positions. MTH 0-17a

I have had fun creating a range of symmetrical pictures and patterns using a range of media. MTH 0-19a

I can match objects, and sort using my own and others' criteria, sharing my ideas with others. MNU 0-20b

I can use the signs and charts around me for information, helping me plan and make choices and decisions in my daily life. MNU 0-20c

Literacy and English

I enjoy exploring events and characters in stories and other texts, sharing my thoughts in different ways. LIT 0-01c

As I listen and talk in different situations, I am learning to take turns and am developing my awareness of when to talk and when to listen. LIT 0-02a / ENG 0-03a

I listen or watch for useful or interesting information and I use this to make choices or learn new things. LIT 0-04a

Within real and imaginary situations, I share experiences and feelings, ideas and information in a way that communicates my message. LIT 0-09a/ LIT 0-26a

I enjoy exploring events and characters in stories and other texts and I use what I learn to invent my own, sharing these with others in imaginative ways. LIT 0-09b / LIT 0-31a

As I listen and take part in conversations and discussions, I discover new words and phrases which I use to help me express my ideas, thoughts and feelings. LIT 0-10a

I use signs, books or other texts to find useful or interesting information and I use this to plan, make choices or learn new things. LIT 0-14a

I explore sounds, letters and words, discovering how they work together, and I can use what I learn to help me as I read and write ENG 0-12a / LIT 0-13a / LIT 0-21a

As I play and learn, I enjoy exploring interesting materials for writing and different ways of recording my experiences and feelings, ideas and information. LIT 0-21b

Health and wellbeing

I am learning to assess and manage risk, to protect myself and others, and to reduce the potential for harm when possible. HWB 0-16a

In everyday activity and play, I explore and make choices to develop my learning and interests. I am encouraged to use and share my experiences. HWB 0-19a

I am aware of my own and others' needs and feelings especially when taking turns and sharing resources. I recognise the need to follow rules. HWB 0-23a

I can show ways of getting help in unsafe situations and emergencies. HWB 0-42a

I understand positive things about friendships and relationships but when something worries or upsets me I know who I should talk to. HWB 0-44b

I am aware of the need to respect personal space and boundaries and can recognise and respond appropriately to verbal and non-verbal communication. HWB 0-45

Sciences

Through play, I have explored a variety of ways of making sounds. SCN 0-11a

Through everyday experiences and play with a variety of toys and other objects, I can recognise simple types of forces and describe their effects. SCN 0-07a

Through creative play, I explore different materials and can share my reasoning for selecting materials for different purposes. SCN 0-15a

Technologies

I can explore digital technologies and use what I learn to solve problems and share ideas and thoughts. TCH 0-01a

I can explore, play and communicate using digital technologies safely and securely. TCH 0-03a

To help care for the environment, I reduce, re-use and recycle the resources I use. TCH 0-06a

I explore ways to design and construct models. TCH 0-09a

I explore everyday materials in the creation of pictures/models/concepts. TCH 0-10a

I explore and discover different ways of representing ideas in imaginative ways. TCH 0-11a

I explore a variety of products covering a range of engineering disciplines. TCH 0-12a

Social studies

I have experimented with imaginative ways such as modelling and drawing, to represent the world around me, the journeys I make and the different ways I can travel. SOC 0-09a

I make decisions and take responsibility in my everyday experiences and play, showing consideration for others. SOC 0-17a

Within my everyday experiences and play, I make choices about where I work, how I work and who I work with. SOC 0-18a

Religious and Moral Education

As I play and learn, I am developing my understanding of what is fair and unfair and the importance of caring for, sharing and cooperating with others. RME 0-02a/ RME 0-05a /RME 0-09a

I am developing respect for others and my understanding of their beliefs and values. RME 0-07a

Expressive Arts

I have the freedom to discover and choose ways to create images and objects using a variety of materials. EXA 0-02a

I can create a range of visual information through observing and recording from my experiences across the curriculum. EXA 0-04a

Inspired by a range of stimuli, I can express and communicate my ideas, thoughts and feelings through activities within art and design. EXA 0-05a

Working on my own and with others, I use my curiosity and imagination to solve design problems. EXA 0-06a

I can respond to the work of artists and designers by discussing my thoughts and feelings. I can give and accept constructive comment on my own and others' work. EXA 0-07a

I have the freedom to choose and explore how I can use my voice, movement, and expression in role play and drama. EXA 0-12a

Inspired by a range of stimuli, I can express and communicate my ideas, thoughts and feelings through drama. EXA 0-13a

I use drama to explore real and imaginary situations, helping me to understand my world. EXA 0- 14a

I can respond to the experience of drama by discussing my thoughts and feelings. I can give and accept constructive comment on my own and others work. EXA 0-15a

