



# Play Policy

## **Arrangements for Review:**

**Marian Horton** is responsible for the implementation of this policy and conducting regular reviews. This policy was adopted in July 2010 and will be reviewed **February 2011**.

### **Policy Context:**

From birth, babies and young children learn through play and it is a vital part of their early years, enabling them to form positive relationships with parents, other adults and children, to express their own ideas and personalities and to learn more about the world around them.

This policy sets out some of the ways in which we can support children to develop early skills, in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Sheerness Neighbourhood is required to work in line with EYFS requirements.

Children's Centres are not responsible for delivering a formal curriculum as such, but there are many ways in which we can encourage children's early development and learning through play, and support parents/carers to build on these activities at home.

This policy is linked to Seashells policies on Behaviour, Partnership with Parents, Health and Safety, Risk Management, Outings, Equalities and Diversity, and SEN Inclusion.

### **References/Legislation that inform this policy**

The Children Act 1989

The Children Act 2006

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995/2004/2006

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001

UN Convention on the rights of the child (1989)

Health and Safety at work Act 1974

Provision and use of Work Equipment Regulations 1988(PUWER)

Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1988(LOLER)

Care Standards Act 2000

Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (replacing 'Birth to Three Matters')

Race Relations Amendment Act 2000

### **Definition:**

*"Play can be fun or serious. Through play children explore social, material and imaginary worlds and their relationship with them, elaborating all the while a flexible range of responses to the challenges they encounter. By playing, children learn and develop as individuals and as members of the community".*

**('Best Play' – Children's Play Council)**

### **Aims:**

- To promote the value of play to parents/carers and external partners through providing family-centred, safe and fun activities; the nursery promotes this value through sharing examples of good practice with parents.
- To help parents support their child's development through play in the nursery, the centre and at home;
- To offer children and parents/carers positive adult role models in the nursery and the centre with staff modelling parenting behaviours;

- To stimulate children’s natural curiosity and encourage them to question how things work and why;
- To encourage children to learn how to develop positive relationships and behaviours through playing games;
- To encourage children to express themselves, develop their own ideas and grow in confidence;
- To teach children to learn how to be part of a community, recognising the needs of other people and playing co-operatively;
- To challenge stereotypes and encourage children and families to value and respect different cultures, beliefs, and backgrounds. To provide wherever possible, activities and resources which reflect the range of cultures and backgrounds in the local community;
- To enable all children to have the opportunity to participate in positive, stimulating and challenging activities, appropriate to their age, and to provide any additional help we can to children experiencing barriers to participation (e.g. language, disability etc).
  
- To ensure that all staff members have an appropriate understanding of EYFS and play and the opportunities it offers for children’s early learning and development, and have appropriate skills and experience to support children’s play.
- To ensure that supervision of play activities is always put in place by the centre, appropriate to the age, abilities and number of the children taking part and the kind of activity involved.

## **1. Play and the Early Years Foundation Stage**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provides a framework for children’s early learning and development up to the age of five. There are four key themes of the framework: **A Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments and Learning and Development.**

Play activities within the children’s centre can contribute to and underpin all of these themes. This policy focuses on the ways in which play activities may specifically support children’s early learning and development, within the nursery, the centre itself and through encouraging parents/carers to support their child’s development at home.

The six early learning goals with the ‘Learning and Development’ theme of the EYFS include:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional development**
- **Communication, Language and Literacy**
- **Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy**
- **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**
- **Physical development**
- **Creative development**

**Please note:** All of our play activities will be offered in an age-appropriate way, recognising that children are individuals with their own interests and that they will develop at their own pace. The aims below are suggested outcomes for children to achieve

through play as they approach the age of five, both at home and in the community; children's centre activities will be just one way of supporting these early learning goals.

#### **A. Personal, Social and Emotional development:**

Children learn best when they feel happy, secure, confident and valued in a safe environment. Our staff will model positive parenting behaviours and encourage and support parents/carers to be positive role models for their children.

Through play activities, we will aim to support children to:

- Learn boundaries of acceptable behaviour and be encouraged to consider how other people are feeling, and how their actions can make other people happy/sad (*for more information see our Behaviour policy*)
- Develop strong self-esteem and confidence through receiving appropriate praise (while being sensitive to other children) and to recognise their budding strengths and abilities;
- Begin to understand how to keep themselves and other people safe;
- Be encouraged to develop positive relationships with other children and adults;
- Learn how to be part of a community and play co-operatively with other children;
- Encourage them to try new things for themselves and develop independent skills (in an age-appropriate way);
- Provide positive images that encourage children to value and respect those who are different to themselves in terms of ethnic background, culture, religion etc;
- Provide activities and opportunities that acknowledge children's different cultures and family traditions and celebrate diversity.

#### **B. Communication, Language and Literacy**

This includes speaking and listening, reading and writing, singing, and other forms of communication such as signing.

Being part of a nursery and children's centre environment can help young children to develop communication and social skills, and encourage them to express themselves through speech, drawing, singing, and as they get older, through reading and writing. We will recognise and be sensitive to the range of languages that children may have experience of within their families and cultures, and will do all we can to support parents/carers in encouraging their child(ren) to become skilful communicators.

Through play activities, we will aim to:

- Encourage children to talk and extend their vocabulary and as they get older, to learn to listen to others and take turns in conversation;
- Encourage children's interest in stories, rhymes and songs and books and encourage them to make up their own stories and songs;
- Encourage children to look at books in the centre and support parents/carers in selecting appropriate books. Where available, we will offer books in alternative languages and formats to support children with English as an additional language or children with disabilities / special educational needs.

- Encourage children to draw to express themselves and to attempt writing their names and simple words;
- Encourage children to link sounds to letters and recognise the alphabet, understanding that words can be written down and read;
- Understand that there are different languages and different ways of communicating – e.g. sign language.

### **C. Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy**

Young children can develop many early numeracy and problem-solving skills through play, including counting games, songs and rhymes, and investigating new materials and objects.

Through play activities, we will aim to support children to:

- Begin to use numbers in conversation;
- Count up to ten;
- Recognise written numbers up to ten;
- Recognise and talk about different shapes and patterns;
- Develop an understanding of size and shape, using appropriate language;
- Develop sorting and matching skills.

### **D. Knowledge and understanding of the world**

We will encourage children to learn more about the world around them by asking questions, thinking about how and why things work, and by introducing them to new materials, ideas, and experiences.

Through play activities, we will aim to support children to:

- Discover new materials, living and non-living, and think about why and how things work;
- Use different resources and materials, exploring them with their senses and thinking about how they can be used;
- Learn to care about their environment, both indoors and outdoors, and to develop an understanding of the natural world;
- Learn about different festivals and events (past and present) in the life of the local community;
- Recognise and respect different cultures, families, backgrounds and religions.

### **E. Physical development**

Babies and children increase their physical abilities from birth, becoming more mobile and increasingly learning to control their body movements. Physical activities are an important part of health, and we will encourage children and parents/carers to be physically active.

Children develop at their own pace, but for some children there may be particular difficulties or disabilities that mean physical activity is less easy. We will always be sensitive to the needs of individual children, and where this is the case we will do our best

to help children and families overcome any barriers to participation that they may face and to enjoy the activities offered by the centre.

Through play activities, we will aim to support children to:

- Develop skills in co-ordination, movement, balance, agility;
- Develop healthy active lifestyles;
- Develop a positive self-image;
- Learn how to use new equipment safely;
- Learn about risk and safety in a managed way;
- Outdoor play – learn about the outside world, seasons, dressing appropriately for the time of year etc;
- Be sensitive to other people’s physical abilities.

## **F. Creative development**

Creative development is an important part of children learning to express themselves and communicate new ideas. It is also a positive way of bringing children and parents/carers together to take part in fun activities, and can help to build positive relationships between children and adults in the community.

Through play activities, we will aim to support children to:

- Explore their own ideas and express their feelings, both verbally and through a range of creative and artistic activities;
- Offer children the opportunity to experiment with new resources and activities, including messy play, and encourage them to test new ideas (allowing children opportunity for positive risk-taking but with a view to health and safety);
- Provide a balance between structured, adult-led activities and more spontaneous play arising from the children;
- Provide a range of activities that will meet the interests and needs of individual children;
- Provide challenging but achievable opportunities for children to learn new skills;
- Support children with special educational needs, disabilities or English as an additional language to take part in creative play as fully as possible, for example by use of sensory resources, materials in different languages, physical contact with materials etc.

## **2. Play and Children with Special Educational Needs**

We will do our best to help children with special educational needs to take part as fully as possible in all of our activities, overcoming any additional barriers to participation that they may face. *For further details, please see our policy on SEN Inclusion.*

## **3. Outings**

Outings and activities provide new opportunities for play and are valuable in offering children the chance to learn more about the world around them. All outings will be appropriately planned and risk assessed according to the age and abilities of the children taking part. *Please see our separate Outings policy for full details.*

#### **4. Play and Health and Safety / Risk Management**

All of our play activities will be designed to stimulate and challenge children, allowing them to take managed risks when appropriate, but always with a view to health and safety and minimising any real risks to the well-being of any centre user. Policies are in place for the cleaning and maintenance of the centre environment, and all toys and equipment. *For further information, see our policies on Risk Management, Health and Safety, and Outings.*

#### **Policy Implementation**

- All staff are made aware of this policy as part of their induction, reviews, and on-going training.