
Overview

Overview

This standard is about identifying the play needs and preferences of children and young people, encouraging and supporting development of play spaces within the playwork setting that will meet these needs and preferences of children and young people during play.

The main outcomes of this standard are:

1. analyse information on play needs and preferences
2. support self-directed play

This standard is for a playworker working directly with children and young people in a playwork setting whose main purpose is to provide children and young people with opportunities for freely chosen, self-directed play. This standard is for staff who have some responsibility for the playwork setting and others, making a significant contribution to supporting play.

This standard is underpinned by The Playwork Principles and playworkers must be familiar with these and, where possible, demonstrate them through their practice and reflection.

Analyse and support self-directed play in line with current playwork theories

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

Analyse information on play needs and preferences

1. collect information on children and young peoples' play using a range of **methods**
2. analyse information to identify play needs and preferences of children and young people
3. consult with children and young people and take account of their ideas on play needs and preferences
4. research and identify a range of **play spaces**, materials and resources that will meet the play needs of children and young people

Support self-directed play

5. support the creation of **play spaces** to meet the needs of children and young people, that can be adapted by them to meet their own needs and preferences
6. provide support to children and young people to choose and explore the range of **play spaces** for themselves
7. meet legal and organisational policies and procedures during the creation of **play spaces**
8. leave the content and intent of play to the children and young people
9. use a range of intervention styles to support self-directed play
10. hold children and young people's play frames when necessary
11. observe play and respond to play cues according to the stage in the play cycle
12. support children and young people to experience **challenges and uncertainty** and only intervene when necessary

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

Analyse information on play needs and preferences

1. the Playwork Principles within the professional and ethical framework for playwork and how each of the principles can be applied within your own role
2. research from other disciplines that inform our understanding of the short and long term benefits of play
3. the tools and frameworks that can be used to collect and evaluate information on children and young people's play experiences
4. that the playwork setting can help children and young people to understand themselves and the world around them
5. the **play types** that provide a broad range of play experiences that are commonly accepted in playwork
6. the **play types** and **mood descriptors** associated with play and how to recognise these
7. how to identify children and young people's moods
8. the main stages of child development and how these affect children's play needs and behaviours
9. the importance of using a range of **methods** to analyse children and young people's play needs and preferences
10. the barriers to access, including disability amongst others, that some children and young people may experience and how to address these
11. how different types of **play spaces**, materials and resources can meet children and young people's needs and preferences

Support self-directed play

12. why it is important to support the creation of **play spaces** that children and young people can adapt to their needs and preferences
13. ways of supporting children and young people to choose and explore the range of **play spaces** for themselves and the importance of doing so
14. identify ways of planning and obtaining materials and resources needed for a range of **play spaces**
15. the current legal, regulatory and organisational policies and procedures for health and safety in the **play space** and how you take account of these
16. why it is important to leave the content and intent of play to the children and young people themselves
17. the types of support you may need to provide, and how to decide when it is

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appropriate to do so, when children and young people are experiencing

challenge and uncertainty

18. a range of intervention styles to support self-directed play

19. how to identify and define a play frame

20. the main stages of the play cycle

21. how to identify and respond to play cues

22. why children and young people should have the opportunity to experience **challenges and uncertainty**, and the importance of acceptable risk-taking being supported in play

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Scope/range related Methods

**to performance
criteria**

1. observation of the play space and playwork setting
2. observation of and interaction with children and young people
3. discussion with parents and or carers
4. reflection with other staff
5. consultation; formal and informal

Play space(s)

1. physical
2. affective
3. transient
4. permanent
5. cyber

Challenges and uncertainty

1. physical
2. emotional
3. behavioural
4. environmental

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**Scope/range related
to knowledge and
understanding**

Play types

1. communication play
2. creative play
3. deep play
4. dramatic play
5. exploratory play
6. fantasy play
7. imaginative play
8. locomotor play
9. mastery play
10. object play
11. role play
12. rough and tumble play
13. social play
14. socio-dramatic play
15. symbolic play
16. recapitulative play

Mood descriptors

1. happy
2. independent
3. confident
4. altruistic
5. trusting
6. balanced
7. active or immersed
8. at ease

Methods

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Values

The Playwork practitioners involved in writing this standard, in conjunction with SkillsActive, have agreed to adopt the following as the set of values prescribed for all of those working within the playwork sector:

Playwork Principles

These Principles establish the professional and ethical framework for playwork and as such must be regarded as a whole. They describe what is unique about play and playwork, and provide the playwork perspective for working with children and young people. They are based on the recognition that children and young people's capacity for positive development will be enhanced if given access to the broadest range of environments and play opportunities.

1. All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and wellbeing of individuals and communities.
2. Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.
3. The prime focus and essence of playwork is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.
4. For playworkers, the play process takes precedence and playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult led agendas.
5. The role of the playworker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.
6. The playworker's response to children and young people playing is based on a sound up to date knowledge of the play process, and reflective practice.
7. Playworkers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young people's play on the playworker.

8. Playworkers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All playworker intervention must balance risk with the developmental benefit and wellbeing of children.

The Playwork Principles are held in trust for the UK playwork profession by the Scrutiny Group that acted as an honest broker overseeing the consultations through which they were developed.

Glossary

Intervention styles

A range of methods the playworker can use in the playwork setting. These may range from complete non-involvement through to specific intervention and may include: waiting to be invited to play; enabling uninterrupted play; enabling children and young people to explore their own values; leaving children and young people to improve their own performance; leaving the content and or intent of play to the children and young people; letting the children and young people decide why they play; enabling the children and young people to decide what is appropriate behaviour; and only organising when children and young people want you to

Play cues

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

Play cycle

The full flow of play from the first play cue from the child, its return from the outside world, the child's response to the return and the further development of play to the point where play is complete. The cycle includes the metalude, the cue, the return, the frame, adulteration, annihilation and display

Play frames

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

Play needs

What individual children and young people have to have in order to be able to play, but are not always able to have for a variety of reasons; for example, lack of access, overprotective adults, lack of outdoor

environments, etc.

Play preferences

What individual children and young people are interested in and choose to play; based on their prior experience

Play space

A place formed by children and young people playing. It can be physical, affective, permanent, transient or cyber

Playwork setting

Somewhere children and young people have the opportunity to play that is staffed by playworkers

Staff

This covers those with whom you work, for whom you are responsible, paid and or unpaid, or students and or trainees

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