

## Carry out playwork in prisons

### Overview

This standard is about planning and implementing opportunities to play for children and young people visiting a parent or relative in prison. The playworker may be part of a team, a lone worker or a volunteer. The children, young people and imprisoned parents or relatives may be involved in the planning of the opportunities. This standard is appropriate for all secure settings where children and young people visit a parent or relative in prison.

This standard includes the understanding of working in a restricted and stressful setting, while ensuring the prison rules and regulations are followed. This standard covers the need to be an advocate for the benefit of play to parents, carers and prison staff.

#### **The main outcomes of this standard are:**

1. plan and prepare for children and young people's play in prisons
2. support children and young people's play in prisons
3. build relationships relevant to playwork in prisons

**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.**

## Carry out playwork in prisons

---

**Performance criteria**

You must be able to:

**Plan and prepare for children and young people's play in prisons**

1. prepare resources according to the prison population, prison restrictions and **security procedures**
2. implement **security procedures** for the playwork setting
3. challenge unreasonable restrictions which limit play opportunities
4. plan a welcoming playwork setting for children and young people

**Support children and young people's play in prisons**

5. respond to the play cues and needs of the children and young people
6. be aware of the significance of the transition of entering a prison setting and respond according to the needs of the children and young people
7. guide staff to ensure correct practice
8. guide staff to adhere to prison regulations
9. provide support to staff to facilitate play
10. provide support to children and young people to engage in play with parents and relatives together when possible
11. encourage the parent or relatives to value the product of play or shared experience
12. respond to security concerns by following reporting and recording procedures

**Build relationships relevant to playwork in prisons**

13. offer play opportunities to children and young people that are appropriate to the cultural expectations of parents
14. establish effective working relationships with prison staff
15. encourage prison staff to interact with children and young people
16. advocate to **individuals** the **benefit** of play
17. support staff who have experienced disruption or trauma within the playwork setting
18. signpost parents and carers to relevant help and support

## Carry out playwork in prisons

**Knowledge and understanding**

You need to know and understand:

**Plan and prepare for children and young people's play in prisons**

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. when it is acceptable to be in conflict with the Playwork Principles and why
3. the importance of play in the prison setting
4. the impact on children and young people of the offending, criminal justice and imprisonment process
5. the positive impact of promoting family ties on reducing reoffending
6. requirements of confidentiality and handing of information relevant to the playworker's role in a prison
7. why it is important to have high quality resources which take account of the play deprivation experienced by children and young people
8. the resources you can use to take account of the specific nature of the prison population
9. the reporting mechanisms for safeguarding issues specific to a prison environment
10. detailed procedures for the security regime specific to the institution
11. key signs and symptoms of substance abuse
12. strategies employed by visitors for the transport of illegal and or banned substances and items
13. procedures required if illegal and or banned substances and items are discovered

**Support children and young people's play in prisons**

14. the potential emotional impact on a child or young person visiting a parent or relative in prison
15. the need to respect parental decisions about disclosure of imprisonment details
16. the principles of therapeutic playwork and how this can apply in a prison setting

**Build relationships relevant to playwork in prisons**

17. key facts about the socio-economic and cultural background of the prison population with whom you are working

## Carry out playwork in prisons

---

18. sources of local and national support for prisoners and their families and how to make this information accessible to prisoners' families
19. the national and regional legislation upholding children and young people's right to play specific to offenders' families
20. the potential impact of working in a prison setting on the playworker
21. why it is important for playworkers in a prison setting to have access to support mechanisms
22. where to access support when dealing with traumatic situations

Carry out playwork in prisons

---

**Scope/range related to performance criteria**   **Security procedures**

1. ensure volunteers comply with security procedures
2. ensure all resources are in line with security requirements
3. plan according to physical restrictions

**Individuals**

1. prison staff
2. parents or relatives
3. external agency staff

**Benefits**

1. play and social activities
2. care and safety
3. emotional wellbeing
4. inclusion
5. acknowledgement of their identity

---

## 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

### **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 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 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

## Carry out playwork in prisons

<b>Developed by</b>	SkillsActive
<b>Version Number</b>	2
<b>Date Approved</b>	February 2016
<b>Indicative Review Date</b>	April 2021
<b>Validity</b>	Current
<b>Status</b>	Original
<b>Originating Organisation</b>	SkillsActive
<b>Original URN</b>	SKAPW45
<b>Relevant Occupations</b>	Health, Public Services and Care; Child Development and Well Being; Associate Professionals and Technical Occupations; Sports and Fitness Occupations
<b>Suite</b>	Playwork
<b>Keywords</b>	playwork; prison setting