

Carry out playwork in a specialist services environment

Overview

This standard is about working with children, young people and adults in specialist services environments, such as a women's refuge, a homeless project or a detention centre. It involves identifying emotional needs of children and young people and developing play spaces that will meet these needs and support children and young people during play. It also can involve working with parents and or carers to understand the importance and value of play in their children's lives and their relationships with them.

The main outcomes of this standard are:

1. create play spaces where children and young people can be emotionally supported
2. work with others in the specialist services environment to recognise and support the needs of children and young people

This standard is for a playworker working directly with children and young people in a specialist services environment setting whose main purpose is to provide children and young people with opportunities for freely chosen, self-directed 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.

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Performance criteria

You must be able to: **Create play spaces where children and young people can be emotionally supported**

1. provide support to **children and young people** to settle in the playwork setting
2. create and resource play spaces that are playful and specific to **children and young people's** individual interests and emotions
3. adopt a hands-on playful approach that is sensitive to **children and young people's** play cues
4. record observations of **children and young people** playing
5. provide support to individual **children and young people** as they experience feelings and behaviours that are hard for them
6. demonstrate a listening and responsive attitude to **children and young people**

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7. advocate for **children and young peoples'** rights to play in their own way
8. encourage **others** in the **specialist services environment** to observe and value play
9. encourage parents and or carers to take time to be playfully responsive to their children
10. provide support to parents and or carers to build networks and relationships with other families in the **specialist services environment**
11. promote a sense of shared community that has **children and young people** at its heart
12. promote playwork to parents and or carers through planning and delivering a diverse range of playful family activities
13. practice regular self and peer reflection

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

Create play spaces where children and young people can be emotionally supported

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. how to create a warm, welcoming environment that encourages children and young people to feel that they are free to play, within a **specialist services environment**
3. policies and procedures that are relevant to the role of a playworker in a **specialist services environment**
4. key issues relating to contact with children and young people
5. the importance of understanding and respecting cultural and family diversity
6. how to gain an awareness and understanding of domestic abuse, homelessness and displacement
7. the impact of domestic abuse, homelessness and displacement
8. why it is important to have high quality resources which take account of the play deprivation experienced by such children and young people
9. the likely **feelings** that children, young people and their families may have on arrival
10. the settling in policies, procedures and logistics for children and young people
11. the possible impact of domestic abuse, homelessness and displacement on the overall development of children and young people
12. how children and young people's experiences of domestic abuse, homelessness and displacement may be shown in their play
13. the effect of domestic abuse on the relationship between the parent and child
14. the relationship between domestic abuse in relation to emotional abuse
15. the possible gender differences and the impact of own gender on the practice with and understanding of children and young people
16. the principles of therapeutic playwork
17. the play space used as a therapeutic environment

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18. the 'settling in' policies, procedures and logistics for the adult
19. the need to restore attachment between parents and or carers and children

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and young people

20. how to encourage and engage parents and or carers in their child's play
21. why it is important to encourage parents and or carers to build networks and relationships with other families and strategies to facilitate this
22. principles of reflective practice

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Scope/range related to performance criteria **Children and young people**

- 1. individuals
- 2. groups

Others

- 1. parents and or carers
- 2. colleagues
- 3. visitors

Specialist services environment (minimum 1 out of 3)

- 1. women's refuge
- 2. detention centres
- 3. homeless projects

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Scope/range related Specialist services environment

**to knowledge and
understanding**

- 1. women's refuge
- 2. detention centres
- 3. homeless projects

Feelings

- 1. traumatisation
- 2. separation
- 3. loss
- 4. anxiety
- 5. guilt
- 6. fear
- 7. isolation
- 8. desolation

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.

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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 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

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