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## Overview

This standard is about identifying the play needs and preferences of children and young people, developing play spaces that will meet these needs, and supporting children and young people during play. The standard is appropriate for all playwork settings whose main purpose is providing children and young people with opportunities for freely chosen, self-directed play.

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

1. research and evaluate play behaviours and playwork theories
2. design and facilitate possibilities for self-directed play
3. facilitate self-directed play with children and young people

This standard is for an individual working within playwork, operating at management levels in a variety of cross-sector positions; working in a role that includes managing a number of playwork settings whose main purpose is to provide children and young people with opportunities for freely chosen, self-directed play. They will be responsible for the operational running of these playwork settings, and for numerous staff and their welfare.

**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.**

## Performance criteria

You must be able to:

### Research and evaluate play behaviours and playwork theories

1. research theories of play
2. research theories of playwork
3. apply **methods** to gather information on children and young people's play
4. critically evaluate playwork theories in relation to the information collected
5. evaluate information to identify needs and preferences for play of children and young people you work with
6. apply information gathered from the **methods** used, to meet needs and preferences for play of children and young people you work with
7. research and identify a range of playwork settings, approaches, materials and **resources** for play that will meet the needs and preferences of children and young people
8. share the outcome of your research and evaluation with **others** through reflective practice

### Design and facilitate possibilities for self-directed play

9. adapt playwork settings, approaches, materials and **resources** in order to identify appropriate **play spaces** and possibilities for self-directed play
10. design and produce possibilities for self-directed play that reflects your research and interactions with children and young people
11. design and produce playwork settings to provide a varied and rich play diet
12. obtain sustainable **resources**
13. create **play spaces** alongside children and young people
14. monitor risk management of **play spaces**, in accordance with legal and organisational policies and procedures

### Facilitate self-directed play with children and young people

15. provide support to **others** and model how to facilitate the creation and or adaptation of **play spaces** to meet the needs and preferences of children and young people
16. facilitate children and young people's play to enable them to choose, explore, interact and respond with a range of **play spaces** for themselves
17. monitor compliance of legal and organisational policies and procedures for the **play spaces**
18. use and model a range of intervention styles to support self-directed play

Research, design and facilitate possibilities for self-directed play

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19. model a repertoire of responses to children's play cues
20. modify the playwork setting and introduce new elements in a way that meets the needs and preferences of the children and young people

## Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

### Research and evaluate play behaviours and playwork theories

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. theories of play
3. playwork theories and models
4. **behavioural modes** associated with play
5. the short and long term benefits of play
6. theories from other disciplines such as psychology, biology and sociology which are relevant to an understanding of play
7. conflicting concepts of play such as socialisation, education, protection and compensation
8. how to critically evaluate information gathered from research
9. how to apply the information gathered from the **methods** used to meet needs and preferences for play
10. a range of playwork settings, approaches, materials and **resources** that will meet the needs and preferences for play
11. the importance of reflective practice in sharing the outcome of research and evaluation

### Design and facilitate possibilities for self-directed play

12. how playwork settings, approaches, materials and **resources** can be used to identify appropriate **play spaces** and possibilities for self-directed play
13. that play is at the centre of the process
14. how to maintain compliance with legal and organisational policies and procedures for the **play spaces**
15. how to identify potential barriers to play and how to address these
16. what is meant by a varied and rich play diet
17. how to use your research and interactions with children and young people in the design and facilitation of a playwork setting to provide a varied and rich play diet
18. how to plan to secure a supply of sustainable **resources**
19. how to involve children and young people in the creation of **play spaces**
20. how to collect and evaluate information on children and young people's experiences of play and the importance of using a range of **methods**

### Facilitate self-directed play with children and young people

21. why it is important to model playwork practice
22. why it is important to support **others** in facilitating the creation and or adaptation of **play spaces** to meet the needs and preferences of children and young people
23. ways of enabling children and young people to choose, explore, interact and respond with a range of **play spaces**
24. how to address non-compliance of legal and organisational policies and procedures for the playwork setting
25. all aspects of psycholudics
26. what is environmental modification
27. what is neophilia
28. what is compound flexibility
29. how to model an approach that supports children and young people to experience **challenges and uncertainty**
30. the types of support you may need to provide and how to decide when it is appropriate to provide support

Research, design and facilitate possibilities for self-directed play

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**Scope/range related  
to performance  
criteria**

**Methods**

*Observation and analysis*

1. of the play space and play
2. of children and young people

*Consultation*

1. formal and informal

**Resources**

1. human
2. physical environment
3. equipment and materials
4. financial

**Others** (*minimum of 3 out of 5*)

1. staff
2. visitors
3. parents and or carers
4. governors
5. senior management

**Play spaces**

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

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

**Behavioural modes**

1. personally directed
2. intrinsically motivated
3. in a secure context
4. spontaneous
5. goalless
6. where the content and intent is under the control of the children and young people

**Methods**

*Observation and analysis*

1. of the play space and play
2. of children and young people

*Consultation*

1. formal and informal

**Resources**

1. human
2. physical environment
3. equipment and materials
4. financial

**Play spaces**

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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## 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 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

**Psycholudics**

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

**Staff**

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

Research, design and facilitate possibilities for self-directed play

<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>	SKAPW22
<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>	research; design; facilitate; self-directed play; playwork setting