

### Play, curriculum and early learning

The chosen age range is 3- 4 year olds, this is linked with the early learning goals. 'In play, a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behaviour, in play it is as though he were a head taller than his normal self.' (Lev Vygotsky, 1978)

The three different types of play that help to develop a variety of skills are creative play this involves and the way it promotes children's learning is by giving children the opportunity to as Tassoni states '**to experiment and explore the world around them.**' (Pg. 374, 2002) Creative play promotes children learning in many different ways such as 3-4 year olds are now in the co-operative stage of play they are able to talk to one another and play in a group. Children's social and emotional development is promoted as it helps children to learn to share and take turns with equipment, in groups and understanding rules of working in groups. Emotional C Hobart says, "**It provides enjoyment, a sense of achievement, and self esteem.**" (Pg. 44, 1999)

A creative play opportunity for children aged between 3-4 years old I think as an early years practitioner using the early learning goals to create a piece of a uniform for a job role this could be so simple such as a helmet, the early learning goal is to 'use their imagination in art and design, music, dance, imaginative and role play and stories.' Making sure the area is safe and having enough resource for all children to participate.

The intended learning outcomes for children when doing creative play are ones such as they are able to learn through their senses and movement. By children creating a piece of uniform will also create awareness of the world which promotes knowledge and understanding of the world.

**'In imaginative play, children pretend they are other people or that are in situations.'** (Pg.392, 2002)

Imaginative play can take on loads of different characters and as children grow older gets extended to other people and books, for example princesses and doctors. By having a dressing up corner the setting can promote diversity and equal opportunities. Imaginative play provides children with a great deal of comfort and reassurance specially when starting school as children are able to relate the home corner with their home.

Imaginative play helps to develop the whole child I think as their physical development is being used when acting and moving around, children are able to show their emotions while playing C Hobart says emotionally when children "**imaginative play this allows them to express and release positive and negative emotions. It gives confidence and allows self- esteem to develop.**" (Pg.33, 1999)

Children are able to have their own identity while dressing up. Also mathematical development is promoted as children could be making tea or dinner for their guest

and count how many plates and cups are needed this is done without recognition from the children.

A play opportunity for imaginative learning could be to children playing with small world play such a Lego or animals. Children's plays needs at the age of 3-4 years is still pretend and are beginning to represent the world in picture form. This type of activity is linked to the early learning goals by mathematics - number, calculating, shape, space and measures. Other early learning goals are able to be met while children use their creative development to explore media and materials, music, imagination, responding to experiences, and expressing and communicating ideas. C lee states, **"The urge to learn about life through imaginative play is very strong in most children."** (Pg. 63, 1990)

As an early years practitioner when children play in a home corner it should reflect other cultures and religions. This can be done by having clothes, different looking dollies and foods can be from other countries. As children will learn from their experiences and their attitudes will depend on this toward other people and children.

Children with special needs should be given the opportunity to play for example, if a child is in a wheel chair they will need more space or if they have hearing or sight problems make it so they feel comfortable.

**"The term 'physical play' is a term that can be used to describe the type of play in which children use their large muscle and exercise their whole body. They learn to control large and small muscles and develop co-oration, and surplus energy is expended."** (Pg. 382, 2002)

Physical play can promote the learning of 3-4 year olds in many different ways as children use physical play in every aspect of daily play. Associative and co-operative plays are being used at this stage in the children's play they are watching other but also able to participate in group games such as throwing balls to one another and playing a chasing game. By playing games ones as these there social skills are being promoted as they are interacting with one another, also developing their language skill as they need to communicate with this type of play.

The type of activities that promote physical play could be to bikes and tricycles or pushing prams. And children are able to move around as part of the game while using co-operative play together. Children are able to learn to share, take turns and learn understanding for space. Manipulative play has loads of different types of play for children to develop skills, according to Tassoni **"manipulative play will also support the curriculum plans for a playgroup, nursery or school."** (Pg. 390, 2002) One of the early years goals links to manipulative play as children use their hand and pincer grasp, this is to handle tools, objects, construction and malleable material safely and with increase control. When doing physical activities or any activities for that matter the child needs to find it interesting the way this can be done is presenting the equipment attractively, letting children make their own choices and desertions.

I believe as an early year's practitioner children should learn from their experiences and the only way this can be done is by letting children experiment. Health and safety is the top priority this include space for children to move, making sure all children can participate, along with age and stage appropriate.

Ways in which early year's practitioners should meet children's individual needs is to promote their learning according to each individual child. Adult's roles I believe are to support the children I agree with P Tassoni **"Children determine their own play and the adult's role is to give opportunity and guidance where necessary. A child's period of play can be as demanding as an adult's time at work."** (Pg. 366, 2002) Doing observations and assessments on children to see they abilities as children when playing learn to control they bodies, co-oration, through play children are able sort though their emotions and become sociable.

Adults help children learn through play by either supporting children through spontaneous or structured play I believe children should be able to have spontaneous play at the age of 3-4 years this is when children are playing on their own with no intervene with adults, they experiment and the adult is there to provide the resources and the safety of the children. By doing this adults are following Margaret McMillan's (1860-1931) theory of first- hand experiences and active learning, Froebel (1782-1852) believed along the same lines that children need to play and that children can make one thing stand for another this is called symbolic behaviour. Tassoni says when trying to assess children and how their learning is then the **"Activity needs to be assessed in more then one way to ensure the child has understood the concept - for example, when counting objects, do not always put them in a straight line, in a circle and in haphazard layout. Some children need to remove each object, as it is counted, to ensure they do not count it twice."** (Pg. 401, 2002)

Having a positive environment for children to play in which provides security and structure to a certain degree. This enables children to express themselves with bright colours and displays that children have helped in so they feel proud of the setting. Having positive images and activities for all children with different abilities of learning within the setting there should be access for wheelchairs using tables and sand trays, etc. areas for children who are hearing and visual impaired also children are not all the same so left- handed scissors should be available. Children should be offered choices within the setting because all children like learning in different ways, for example some children may like to do needle and threading which develops their fine motor skills but others may enjoy colouring which also promotes their fine motor skills along with the pincer grasp.

I agree with this statement that C Hobart has written **"The activities that you provide should promote the children's all-around development and learning, and be both well planned and well prepared."** (Pg.3, 1999)

introducing the early learning goals in 2000 I think by having this curriculum has advantages is ways in which it is intended to help practitioners plan to meet the diverse needs of all children so that most will achieve and some, where appropriate, will go beyond the early learning goals by the end of the foundation stage. It prepares children for when they go up to primary school. The six early learning goals I believe do promote children's development as the goals cover the child in a whole. The curriculum does provide a sense of structure and time keeping for children.

The QCA describe them the following: "the early learning goals set high expectations for the end of the foundation stage, but expectations that are achievable for most children who follow the relevant curriculum."

The disadvantages to have these early learning goals set at such a young age is that children go up before their time and these goals are based on an average child without special educational needs which means not all children are coming up to the standards that have been set by the QCA. Children have limited choices while following the early learning goals but I think it gives children independence and preparation.

Froebel (1782-1852) insisted that the education of young children was vital to their development as individuals and to social reform.

The way in which early years practitioners and other childcare workers can extend children's play is by encouragement and providing children with enough resources to use their own imagination which is one of the three types of play used. Childcare workers need to be aware of children's individual needs as they may not be able to say they can not hear see the white board. Adult-led activities can help children not to become frustrated with the activity and give up, when adults intervene in the right manor children do not feel they are being told what to but the adult is helping and encouraging.

During play children learn many different skills:

- ♥ Developing language
- ♥ Science
- ♥ Exercising their bodies
- ♥ Co-ordination
- ♥ Their own personalities
- ♥ Forming friendships and being socialable
- ♥ Fun
- ♥ Letting their emotions out through the activities
- ♥ Taking turns and sharing
- ♥ Developing imagination

Susan Isaacs (1885-1948) placed high value on play and is thought to believe that children through play would have a balanced view of life and play encouraged children to show their true feelings. I agree that children show their emotions through play and are able to learn from it by becoming a whole child.

Bibliography:

- ♥ Hobart C, *A Practical Guide to Activities for Young Children*. 1999
- ♥ Lee C, *The Growth and Development*. Longman Group Limited 1990 published USA
- ♥ Tassoni P, *Diploma Child Care and Education*. Heinemann Educational/Publishers 2002
- ♥ [www.westfield-nursery.co.uk](http://www.westfield-nursery.co.uk)

Unit 6- upgradeAppendix:

E5- Already completed it within the work.

C1- there is many different strategies in which children are able to learn through play. As an early year's practitioner the way I would promote children's learning through play would be to make sure all children are able to participate and are given the opportunity to repeat activities as some children need to experience play over and over to be able to learn from it. Children can learn from experimental learning this is when children learn from doing activities hands on and finding out their own mistakes and learn from doing this.

Bandura's social learning theory is about children copying their role models which would be the childcare worker while at nursery and how children learn from this, for example I as an early year's practitioner could set up a shop in the home corner and show children how to play with the tills and talk to the other children as if they were a customer. This is because some children do not understand how to play as they have never been shown or do not have the confidence as they have never been given encouragement. I feel children should be praised when playing nicely, by doing this I am using positive reinforcement used by Skinner so children want to play and in that sense learn from it.

Overall as a trainee early year's practitioner I believe children should make fun and be able to enjoy play.

A1- Froebel (1782-1852) believed that indoors and outdoor play was part of the way children learn through play. Indoor and outdoor play is used today in current practice within nurseries I have gained experience in. Indoor play activities consist of the home corner, puzzles, cars and trucks on a road map and musical instruments. When I am outside the children play with equipment such as bikes, tykes, prams and climbing frames when outside the children play using their imagination in many different ways such as pretending the climbing frame is a boat and children not on it are sharks, etc.

Froebel valued symbolic behaviour, while training I have had many different opportunities to work with children and I have found that the Froebel way of learning through play is still being used. I have seen children use symbolic behaviour by using blocks of wood as a telephone, using plastic plates as hats, children are

able to make any objects into something they want because they use their imagination. He even felt that children were able to learn at their highest level through imaginative play. Mathematical concepts and relationships were encouraged through play. I have found that all children within the nursery setting I have been to always use their imagination to play.