

Castleton&Glaisdale Federation

Play Policy March 2015

Aim of Play

Play allows children to explore the world around them without the risk of seeming to get it wrong. We want our children to develop positive, active learning skills and we agree with the statement made by Manning and Sharp in 1977:

'There are no failures in play'.

What is Play?

Play is when children are involved in an activity, and they are actively making choices, deciding what they want to do and doing it. There are three types of play that children can be involved in:

- Solitary play – where the child is absorbed in the activity but does not share or interact with other children.
- Parallel play – where the child will work alongside another child, sharing equipment, but working individually.
- Co-operative play – where two or more children work together, taking different or complementary roles and planning the activity together.

Whilst playing children will behave in different ways, sometimes their play will be boisterous, sometimes they will describe and discuss what they are doing and sometimes they will be quiet and reflective. Children do not make a distinction between 'play' and 'work' and neither should practitioners. Children need time to be engrossed, work in depth and complete activities.

Why Play is Important

At Castleton&Glaisdale Federation, we believe that well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge, during the Foundation Stage and continuing into Key Stage One. Through play, in a safe and secure environment with effective adult support, children can start to make sense of the world around them and through their experiences they can develop new skills and understanding.

The Role of Play

Through play, in a secure environment with effective adult support, children can:

- Explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world.
- Practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills.

- Learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules.
- Be alone, be alongside others or co-operate as they talk or rehearse their feelings.
- Take risks and make mistakes.
- Think creatively and imaginatively.
- Communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems.
- Express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.
- Develop and extend play.
- Develop concentration.

Types of Play

Adult Directed Play

An adult can 'direct' children's play in several different ways:

- By carefully selecting /limiting the resources available for the children to access in different areas. This is done to focus the children's learning and opportunities for discovery in a particular direction. Adults should be on hand to ask appropriate questions to focus the children's attention and introduce / extend relevant language opportunities.
e.g., limiting the colours of powder paint to yellow / red will ensure that children can only create orange when mixed.
- By initiating an activity in a particular area and encouraging the children to join in.
e.g., filling and emptying containers in the sand / water, whilst discussing their weight and asking open-ended questions will encourage the children to think about and offer explanations for the things they observe.

Child Initiated Play

'Child initiated play' is when children are involved in an activity that they have planned and have decided what they want to do and how to do it. The child is in control of the resources chosen to complete the task, how these resources are used and the time involved in completing the chosen task.

The Foundation Stage Practitioner

The role of the Foundation Stage practitioner is crucial in:

- Planning for and providing a safe, challenging learning environment.
- Supporting children's learning through well-planned play activities.
- Providing a positive learning environment where children feel confident to explore new experiences.
- Extending and supporting children's spontaneous play.

- Extending and developing children’s language and communication skills in play

Teaching Strategies

Appropriate adult participation and interest in a child’s activity can encourage that child to stay focused and concentrate for longer periods. Adults can use these times to introduce relevant language, encourage discussion by asking open-ended questions, model different behaviours and skills as well as praise effort and achievements. Care must be taken to ensure that adult intervention and participation is appropriate and well timed, and not invasive and prohibitive.

Planning for play in the foundation stage curriculum

- Long term planning encompasses the stationary areas of learning and a rolling programme of topics.
- Medium term planning specifies learning objectives, which will be achieved within a term.
- Short term planning ensures differentiation, a balance of different activities throughout the week, both indoors and out, the development of staff and resources, assessment opportunities and monitoring and evaluation.

The Learning Environment

At Castleton&Glaisdale Federation the Foundation/Key Stage One classroom is located in a prefabricated building and has a small outside play area accessible from the classroom and a much larger play area situated a short distance from the classroom. We aim to provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment.

Our Provision

At Castleton&Glaisdale Federation we provide:

- Space

The Foundation/Key Stage One children work and play in one classroom which has access to a secure outdoor play area accessible from the classroom and also a larger play area situated away from the classroom which has large play equipment, a soft surface and benches. It is surrounded by open fields and moorland.

The room is well-equipped and has been divided into a number of working bays where both adult and child initiated activities take place. Care has been taken to provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment for the children to play in both inside and outside

- Time

The children are allowed the time to explore different concepts, in depth, at their own pace, and practitioners are on hand to extend their activities when appropriate. As the children mature they will be involved in more structured, adult directed activities if particular skills or concepts are being targeted.

- Materials and stimulus

We aim to provide an environment that will encourage the children to make choices and develop independence by having appropriate resources and equipment readily available for the children to access independently, as required, so they can complete their chosen tasks. From time to time different resources and materials may be removed or added to provide different challenges and opportunities.

- Adult interest and encouragement

Appropriate adult participation and interest in a child's activity can encourage a child to stay focused and concentrate for longer periods. Adults can use these times to introduce relevant language, encourage discussion by asking open ended questions, model different behaviours and skills as well as praise efforts and achievements. However care must be taken not to be intrusive and prohibitive. Ill-timed intervention will distract the child from their activity.

- Equal opportunities

All children, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, background or ability, will be given the opportunity to participate in all aspects of the Foundation Stage provision. All staff are aware of equal opportunity issues within the Foundation Stage and will strive to ensure that all children will have access to all learning opportunities, with support as necessary, where possible.

Monitoring and Assessment

Assessment takes place as outlined in the Foundation Stage Policy.

Review March 2018