Unit 21: Support Children and Young People’s Play and Leisure

Unit code: T/601/6564
QCF Level 2 Specialist
Credit value: 3
Guided learning hours: 16

Unit aim

This unit provides the understanding and skills required to support children and young people’s play and leisure. It requires demonstration of competence in supporting play and leisure activities, helping children and young people to manage risk and challenge, and reflecting on and improving own practice.

Unit introduction

Play was described by Lloyd George in 1925 as ‘nature’s training for life’ and the right to play for children and young people is enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Play is what children and young people do when they follow their own ideas and interests, in their own way and for their own reasons. Research suggests that, given the opportunity and chance, children and young people gain huge benefits from play which impact positively on their development and outcomes. In particular, the opportunity to be challenged and learn how to manage risk enables children and young people to develop, self-esteem, self-confidence and independence. This supports development of a ‘can do’ attitude, which benefits learning and achievement.

The understanding and skills to support freely chosen play to provide challenge and encourage children and young people to learn to manage risk are the focus of this unit.

Learners will study the nature and importance of play and consider the contribution of play to development.

Learners will show they can support children and young people’s play and leisure and help them to balance risk and challenge. They will also reflect on their own practice in supporting children and young people’s play and leisure.
Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

On completion of this unit a learner should:

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<td>1.1 Describe the importance of play and leisure for children and young people</td>
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<td>1.2 Describe how play and leisure contribute to children and young people’s development</td>
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<td>2 Be able to support children and young people’s play and leisure</td>
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<td>2.2 Give attention to children and young people’s play and leisure activities while being sensitive to own impact on activities</td>
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<td>2.3 Undertake routine safety checks on areas used for children and young people’s play and leisure before, during and after play and leisure activities</td>
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<td>3 Be able to support children and young people in balancing risk and challenge</td>
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<td>3.2 Describe with examples what is meant by unacceptable risk and challenge in children and young people’s play and leisure</td>
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<td>3.3 Describe why it is important for children and young people to manage risk and challenge for themselves</td>
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<td>3.4 Demonstrate ways of encouraging children and young people to manage risk and challenge in play and leisure activities for themselves</td>
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| 4 Be able to reflect on and improve own practice | 4.1 Reflect on all aspects of own practice in supporting children and young people’s play and leisure  
4.2 Identify own strengths and areas where practice could improve  
4.3 Describe how own practice has been improved following reflection |
Unit content

1 Understand the nature and importance of play and leisure

Importance of play and leisure: factors eg children and young children have an entitlement to play eg pleasurable, releases physical and emotional energy, improved sense of wellbeing, improved physical health, provides challenge and opportunity to learn about risk, feeling of being in control, sense of freedom, opportunity to explore own interests, effects of play deprivation eg affecting emotional intelligence, independence, self-esteem and self-confidence, self-management skills, impaired concentration in the classroom, behaviour, particular play needs of children with disabilities

How play and leisure contribute to development: types eg social, cognitive, emotional, language development

Requirements of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in relation to relaxation and play: range eg Article 1 of The Convention applies to everyone aged 17 or under, Article 2 All the rights in the Convention apply to all children and young people without any discrimination, Article 3 Adults should always try to do what is best for children and young people, Article 31 Every child and young person has the right to rest, play and leisure, Article 12 Every child and young person has the right to express their views freely about everything that affects them

Freely chosen, self-directed play and leisure: aspects eg children choose what they do, children and young people choose how they play, no external goal eg pre-determined outcome or product, adult intervention is kept to a minimum, adults have no role in structuring, directing or managing the play

2 Be able to support children and young people’s play and leisure

Support play and leisure activities: ways eg provide range of materials for children and young people to move around, manipulate, use as props, use to change the environment, provide play environments that offer challenge and stimulation and opportunities to take acceptable levels of risk, ensure choice, enable children and young people to determine and control the content and intent of their play eg by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, enable children and young people to extend their play

Giving attention while being sensitive to own impact on activities: impact of interventions on play eg on freedom, choice, creativity, imagination, awareness of individual needs of children and young people, involvement when invited

Routine safety checks: range eg hazard awareness, risk assessment, resources, indoor and outdoor environment, visitors

Ensuring safety: ways eg follow health and safety policies and procedures of school, risk assessment eg hazard awareness, risk management, involve children and young people in risk assessment, awareness of individual needs of children and young people, understand stage of development, support children and young people to recognise hazards and minimise risks

Interactions: ways eg respectful relationships, active listening, offer choices, support choices, encourage challenge, enable children and young people to
reach consensus, discuss options, appropriate interventions eg if safety is at risk, if requested, provide constructive feedback

3 **Be able to support children and young people in balancing risk and challenge**

*Risk and challenge*: values eg achieving challenging goals promotes self-esteem and self-confidence, enables testing and development of abilities, supports development of a ‘can do’ attitude, children and young people may seek out risk elsewhere if challenge is not provided in play provision

*Unacceptable risk and challenge*: aspects eg risk must be managed to ensure children and young people are not exposed to risks of life threatening or serious injury, risk assessment to make judgements on acceptability of risk

*Importance for children and young people to manage risk and challenge for themselves*: benefits eg life skill, encourages independence, helps children and young people to learn about the consequences of risk taking, enables children and young people to manage risk for themselves, enables risk management to be learned in a controlled environment

*Encouraging children and young people to manage risk and challenge in play and leisure activities for themselves*: ways eg adult role model, consider the stage of development of the children and young people, awareness of individual needs of children and young people, involve children and young people in risk assessment, praise hazard awareness and risk management

4 **Be able to reflect on and improve own practice**

Reflecting on all aspects of own practice in supporting children and young people’s play and leisure: stages in reflection eg description, analysis, clarification, action

Identifying strengths and areas where practice could improve: ways eg awareness of own strengths and weaknesses, build on strengths, seek opportunities to develop identified weaknesses, seek feedback, use a mentor

How practice has been improved following reflection: ways eg further reflection on practice, continuous reflective cycle
Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery
This unit should be delivered using a combination of tutor input and active learning experiences. Discussions and debates provide opportunity to explore the nature of play. Guided research and group investigation enable consolidation of knowledge. Guest speakers, DVDs and observations of children and young people playing and pursuing leisure activities provide an opportunity for learners to link theory to practice.

To introduce the unit, learners could be asked to reflect on their own memorable play experiences followed by discussion to identify the common features, highlighting the value of freely chosen play with challenge and without adult intervention. Learners could research the contribution of play to development and present their findings to the class. The particular needs of children with disabilities and the effects of play deprivation could be explored through tutor-led discussion.

The role of the adult in supporting play could be investigated following visits to different settings, for example schools and playgrounds, to observe provision and adult interactions and interventions. DVDs and case studies could be used to consider the adult role in a range of play settings and leisure opportunities for children and young people.

Learners could prepare to debate ‘It is the responsibility of adults to protect children and young people from risk of harm’. The concept of acceptable risk could be explored through tutor-led discussion.

A guest speaker, such as a play worker from an out of school club, could be invited, to speak about how they balance challenge and risk in the setting. Learners could prepare questions to ask about risk assessment procedures and how they involve children and young people in the process.

Learners should be encouraged to share their experience of working in schools as employees, as a parent-helper or through work experience.

Assessment
Assessment criteria 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and 3.4 must be assessed in the workplace.

Suggested assessment activities
Learning outcome 1 and assessment criteria 2.1 and 3.1 could be assessed through the production of guidance for a new support worker involved in children and young people’s play and leisure. The guidance will need to include:

- a description of the importance of play and leisure for children and young people
- how play and leisure contribute to children and young people’s development
- an outline of the requirements of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in relation to relaxation and play
- a description of the characteristics of freely chosen, self-directed play and leisure
- a description of the role of the support worker in supporting children and young people’s play and leisure activities
• an outline of the value of risk and challenge in children and young people’s play and leisure
• a description, with examples, of what is meant by unacceptable risk and challenge in children and young people’s play and leisure
• why it is important for children and young people to manage risk and challenge for themselves.

Learning outcome 2 and assessment criterion 3.4 require learners to demonstrate competence in supporting children and young people’s play and leisure and must be assessed in the workplace. Evidence will need to be provided of learners:
• giving attention to children and young people’s play and leisure activities while being sensitive to their own impact on activities
• undertaking routine safety checks on areas used for children and young people’s play and leisure before, during and after play and leisure activities
• supervising children and young people’s play and leisure ensuring their safety
• interacting with children and young people in a way that demonstrates: a) interest in what they say, experience and feel, b) respect for their privacy and freedom to make choices for themselves, c) encouragement and praise for play and leisure activities
• encouraging children and young people to manage risk and challenge in play and leisure activities for themselves.

Learners could provide evidence for learning outcome 4 using a reflective diary or journal which needs to include:
• a reflection on all aspects of their practice in supporting children and young people’s play and leisure, including provision, safety checks, supervision, interactions and risk management
• own strengths and areas where practice could improve
• a description of how their practice has been improved following reflection.
Essential resources

Learners will have access to a work placement or be employed in work with children and young people to provide the evidence required for this unit

Indicative resource materials

Textbooks

ISBN 13 978-0335222919

Burnham L – *Supporting Teaching & Learning in Schools* (Heinemann, 2010)
ISBN 978-0-435032-03-6

Lindon J - *Too Safe for Their Own Good?* (National Children's Bureau, 2003)
ISBN 978-1900990974

Journals

*Play Today*

*Play Words*

Websites


[www.education.gov.uk/](http://www.education.gov.uk/) Department for Education

[www.freeplaynetwork.org.uk/schools/index.htm](http://www.freeplaynetwork.org.uk/schools/index.htm) Free Play Network

[www.playengland.org.uk](http://www.playengland.org.uk) Play England

[www.skillsactive.com/playwork/principles](http://www.skillsactive.com/playwork/principles) Skills Active