

# PW22 Research, design and facilitate possibilities for self-directed play

## Introduction

### Summary

This unit 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 unit is appropriate for all settings whose main purpose is providing children and young people with opportunities for freely chosen, self-directed play.

The unit is divided into three parts. The first part gives some examples and explanations of some words we use in this unit (pages 2-5). The second part (pages 6-9) describes the four things you have to do. These are:

- PW22.1 Research and evaluate play behaviour and play theories**
- PW22.2 Design spaces and possibilities for self-directed play**
- PW22.3 Interact with children and young people during self-directed play**
- PW22.4 Help children and young people to manage risk during play**

The third part (pages 10-12) describes the knowledge and understanding you must have.

### Target Group

The unit is for you if you work directly with children on a day-to-day basis and have a responsibility for developing and maintaining play spaces in a setting whose main purpose is to provide children and young people with opportunities for freely chosen, self-directed play.

This unit is underpinned by the Playwork Principles and staff must be familiar with them and committed to them in their practice.

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## What We Mean By Some of the Words Used in this unit

### Affective play space

Spaces that: a) pay attention to and support the variety of feelings and moods that children and young people bring with them or have during play; b) have particular areas, materials and/or props that at different times stimulate or encourage the expression, experience or experimentation with a range of emotions; and c) have playworkers who seek to develop via diverse means, an overall ambience of welcome, acceptance, freedom and playfulness.

### Behavioural hazard

Some behaviours during play are potentially hazardous eg. egging on, showing off, excluding, hyperactivity, dominating, etc. and playworkers need to be aware of these in case their support is needed

### Children and young people

**All** children and young people of school age with respect for any impairment, their gender, race, culture, language, sexuality, health, economic or social status and any other individual characteristics..

### \*Communication play

Play using words, nuances or gestures for example mime, jokes, play acting, mickey taking, singing, debate, poetry.

### \*Creative play

Play which allows a new response, the transformation of information, awareness of new connections, with an element of surprise. For example enjoying creation with a range of materials and tools for its own sake.

### \*Deep play

Play which allows the child to encounter risky or even potentially life threatening experiences, to develop survival skills and conquer fear. For example leaping onto an aerial runway, riding a bike on a parapet, balancing on a high beam.

### \*Dramatic play

Play which dramatizes events in which the child is not a direct participator. For example presentation of a TV show, an event on the street, a religious or festive event, even a funeral.

### Emotional hazard

Children will bring their moods and feelings from their day with them to a play setting and this often affects the way they behave and interact with others. They will also experience all kinds of feelings when playing – sometimes by choice and sometimes unexpectedly. Some feelings eg. fear, anger, excitement, boredom, could be potentially hazardous and Playworkers need to be aware of such feelings in case their support is needed.

### Environmental hazard

Aspects or things in the environment that could be potentially harmful; for example extreme or freak weather, animals, changing light.

### \*Exploratory play

Play to access factual information consisting of manipulative behaviours such as handling, throwing, banging or mouthing objects. For example engaging with an

	<p>object or area and, either by manipulation or movement, assessing its properties, possibilities and content, such as stacking bricks.</p>
<b>*Fantasy play</b>	<p>Play, which rearranges the world in the child's way, a way which is unlikely to occur. For example playing at being a pilot flying around the world or the owner of an expensive car.</p>
<b>Hazard</b>	<p>Something that may cause harm to the health, safety and welfare of users of the play setting</p>
<b>*Imaginative play</b>	<p>Play where the conventional rules, which govern the physical world, do not apply. For example imagining you are, or pretending to be, a tree or ship, or patting a dog which isn't there.</p>
<b>*Locomotor play</b>	<p>Movement in any and every direction for its own sake. For example chase, tag, hide and seek, tree climbing.</p>
<b>*Mastery play</b>	<p>Control of the physical and affective ingredients of the environments. For example digging holes, changing the course of streams, constructing shelters, building fires.</p>
<b>*Object play</b>	<p>Play which uses infinite and interesting sequences of hand-eye manipulations and movements. For example examination and novel use of any object e.g. cloth, paintbrush, cup.</p>
<b>Observing play</b>	<p>The purpose of observation within a play environment is to observe and sometimes record children and young people's play behaviours, in order to ensure that the environment is providing effective play spaces. These observations may therefore include play types, play cues and returns seen. These observations are <u>not</u> for the purpose of monitoring children and young people's development, or planning a curriculum of activities. Observations may or may not be recorded.</p>
<b>Permanent play space</b>	<p>Spaces that are fixed and cannot move; eg. certain structures, kitchen, etc., but these spaces may still also incorporate transient play spaces at different times.</p>
<b>Physical hazard</b>	<p>Something physical that may cause harm and may or may not be removable; for example, broken glass, faulty equipment, traffic.</p>
<b>Physical play space</b>	<p>Spaces that support children and young people in physically playing in any way they wish ie. running, jumping, climbing, swinging, dancing, wrestling, sliding, chasing as well as all the fine motor skills too.</p>
<b>Play</b>	<p>Play is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated.</p>
<b>Play cycle</b>	<p>The full flow of play from the first play cue from the child, its return from the outside world, the child's response to the return and the further development of play to the point where play is complete. The cycle includes the metalude, the</p>

	<i>cue, the return, the frame, adulteration, annihilation and display.</i>
<b>Play cues**</b>	<i>Facial expressions, language or body language that communicate the child or young person's wish to play or invite others to play.</i>
<b>Play frame**</b>	<i>A material or non-material boundary that keeps the play intact.</i>
<b>Play needs</b>	<i>What individual children and young people have to have in order 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.</i>
<b>Play space</b>	<i>Any area – physical, affective, permanent or transient – that supports and enriches the potential for children and young people's self-directed play. A play environment may consist of one or any number of play spaces.</i>
<b>*Role play</b>	<i>Play exploring ways of being, although not normally of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature. For example brushing with a broom, dialing with a telephone, driving a car.</i>
<b>*Rough and tumble play</b>	<i>Close encounter play which is less to do with fighting and more to do with touching, tickling, gauging relative strength, discovering physical flexibility and the exhilaration of display. For example playful fighting, wrestling and chasing where the children involved are obviously unhurt and giving every indication that they are enjoying themselves.</i>
<b>*Social play</b>	<i>Play during which the rules and criteria for social engagement and interaction can be revealed, explored and amended. For example any social or interactive situation which contains an expectation on all parties that they will abide by the rules or protocols, i.e. games, conversations, making something together.</i>
<b>*Socio-dramatic play</b>	<i>The enactment of real and potential experiences of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature. For example playing at house, going to the shops, being mothers and fathers, organising a meal or even having a row.</i>
<b>*Symbolic play</b>	<i>Play which allows control, gradual exploration and increased understanding, without the risk of being out of one's depth. For example using a piece of wood to symbolise a person, or a piece of string to symbolise a wedding ring.</i>

\* Examples of play types taken from Hughes, B. (2002) A taxonomy of play types, available from [www.playeducation.com](http://www.playeducation.com)

\*\* Gordon Sturrock and Perry Else, 1998, The playground as therapeutic space: playwork as healing (known as "The Colorado Paper"), published in Play in a Changing Society: Research, Design, Application, IPA/USA, Little Rock, USA. Available as a PDF free of charge from [www.ludemos.co.uk](http://www.ludemos.co.uk) or [info.ludemos@virgin.net](mailto:info.ludemos@virgin.net).

**Transient play space**

*Spaces that change, get modified, adapted or deconstructed via a wide range of movable resources, props, materials and structures – breaking up the wider physical space into different smaller spaces for different kinds of play at different times. For example, creating dens and hideyholes; using fabrics and loose parts to create imaginative places like a hospital or a forest; shifting furniture back or around to accommodate particular games. A transient play space could be the couple of cubic feet behind a piece of furniture, a whole room or field; it could be created spontaneously or planned beforehand.*

# PW22 Research, design and facilitate possibilities for self-directed play

## PW22.1

### Research and evaluate play behaviour and play theories

#### The National Standard

##### What you must do

*To meet the national standard, you must:*

- 1 research children and young people's play and their interactions with the play environment using a range of **methods**
- 2 critically evaluate playwork theories in relation to the information collected
- 3 identify and adapt playwork models in order to identify appropriate spaces and possibilities for self directed play
- 4 ensure you take account of children and young people who may experience barriers to access
- 5 test your ideas for spaces and opportunities through interactions with children and young people
- 6 research and identify a range of play spaces and resources that will meet the play needs of children and young people.

##### What you must cover

*From your work you must show that you have collected information using the following:*

##### **a methods**

- 1 researching playwork theory and practice
- 2 observing children and young people at play
- 3 interacting with children and young people
- 4 evaluating own experience of play.

# PW22 Research, design and facilitate possibilities for self-directed play

## PW22.2

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

#### The National Standard

##### What you must do

To meet the national standard, you must:

- 1 design **play spaces** that reflect your research and interactions with children and young people
- 2 make sure **play spaces** provide a rich variety of play possibilities
- 3 obtain the resources needed for these **play spaces**
- 4 work within the available budget or find other creative ways of obtaining or making resources
- 5 create the planned **play spaces** involving children and young people wherever possible
- 6 make sure that the range of **play environments** will be accessible for all children and young people
- 7 make sure the **play spaces** take account of health and safety requirements.

##### What you must cover

From your work you must show that you have planned and created the following types of:

##### a **play spaces**

- 1 physical
- 2 affective
- 3 transient
- 4 permanent.

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## PW22.3

### Interact with children and young people during self-directed play

#### The National Standard

##### What you must do

*To meet the national standard, you must:*

- 1 encourage children and young people to interact with the range of **play spaces** themselves and develop their own responses
- 2 leave the content and intent of play to the children and young people
- 3 enable play to occur uninterrupted
- 4 enable children and young people to explore their own values
- 5 enable children and young people to develop in their own ways
- 6 hold children and young people's play frames when necessary
- 7 provide a repertoire of responses to children's play cues, modifying the environment and introducing new elements in a way that is sensitive to the needs of the children and young people

##### What you must cover

*From your work you must show that you have supported self-directed play using the following types of:*

- a play spaces**
  - 1 physical
  - 2 affective
  - 3 transient
  - 4 permanent.

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## PW22.4

### Help children and young people manage risk during play

#### The National Standard

##### What you must do

*To meet the national standard, you must:*

- 1 allow children and young people to experience and explore risk during play
- 2 identify **hazards** when they occur
- 3 assess the risks that these **hazards** pose in a way that is sensitive to the nature of the children and young people involved
- 4 raise children and young people's awareness of **hazards** and encourage them to manage risk themselves
- 5 balance the risks involved with the benefits of challenge and stimulation
- 6 only intervene if the level of risk becomes unacceptable.

##### What you must cover

*From your work you must show that you managed risk for the following types of:*

- a hazard**
  - 1 physical
  - 2 emotional
  - 3 behavioural
  - 4 environmental

# PW22 Research, design and facilitate possibilities for self-directed play

## What you must know and understand

*To be competent in this unit, you must know and understand the following*

### For the whole unit

- K1 How the Playwork Principles specifically relate to this unit
- K2 The short and long term benefits of play
- K3 Playwork theories and models
- K4 Theories from other disciplines such as psychology, biology and sociology which are relevant to an understanding of play
- K5 Conflicting concepts of play provision such as socialisation, education, protection and compensation
- K6 The importance of placing the playing child at the centre of the process
- K7 The importance of inclusion and strategies to ensure play spaces and possibilities are inclusive
- K8 Indicators/objectives you can use to evaluate play provision
- K9 Behavioural modes associated with play
  - personally directed
  - intrinsically motivated
  - in secure context
  - spontaneous
  - goalless
  - where the content and intent is under the control of the children and young people
- K10 The range of play types that are commonly accepted.
- K11 How to design opportunities for the following play types:
  - communication play
  - creative play
  - deep play
  - dramatic play
  - exploratory play
  - fantasy play
  - imaginative play
  - locomotor play
  - mastery play
  - object play

- role play
- rough and tumble
- social play
- socio-dramatic play
- symbolic play

K12 The mood descriptors associated with play and how to recognise these:

- happy
- independent
- confident
- altruistic
- trusting
- balanced
- active or immersed
- at ease

K13 The main stages of child development and how these affect children's play needs and behaviours

K14 How to design and enable play for disabled children

### For Element PW22.1

K15 Methods of observing play and interacting with children and young people during play

K16 The importance of having a critical understanding of your own experiences of and responses to play

K17 How to critically evaluate playwork theories and models in the light of your observations and interactions with children and young people

K18 How to test your ideas for play spaces and possibilities

K19 Sources of information on play spaces and how children and young people may use them

### For Element PW22.2

K20 How to design play spaces that reflect your observations, research and critical evaluation

K21 How to obtain and/or create resources needed for a range of play spaces

K22 How to involve children and young people in the creation of play spaces

K23 The importance of access for all children and how to ensure this happens

K24 The health and safety requirements that are relevant to play spaces and how to ensure you take account of these

### For Element PW22.3

K25 Why it is important for children and young people to choose and explore play spaces for themselves

K26 The types of support you may need to provide and how to decide when it is appropriate to provide support

K27 Why it is important to leave the content and intent of play to children and young people

K28 Why it is important to allow play to continue uninterrupted

K29 Why it is important to allow children to develop in their own ways and not to show them 'better' ways of doing things when they are playing unless they ask

K30 The main stages of the play cycle

K31 How to define a play frame

K32 How to identify play cues

K33 How to identify when and how to respond to a play cue

#### For Element PVW22.4

K34 Why risk is important in play and how to encourage and support acceptable risk taking

K35 Particular risks that disabled children face and how to help them manage these

K36 Levels of risk acceptable according to organisational policies and procedures

K37 The range of hazards that may occur during children's play and how to recognise these

K38 The basic stages of child development and the implications these have for levels of risk

K39 How to assess risk according to age and stage of development

K40 The importance of balancing risk with the benefits of challenge and stimulation.