



IMPORTANCE OF OUTDOOR PLAY

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CONTENTS:

- To demonstrate breadth of knowledge on play, predominately Outdoor play
- History of Outdoor play
- Discuss play and risk
- Benefits of outdoor play
- The practitioners role in outdoor play



WHAT IS PLAY?

Can we really define play?

Different views of play

Types of play:

1. Physical Play
2. Play with objects
3. Symbolic play
4. Pretence/ socio dramatic play
5. Games with rules



IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

Play has been recognised as an important right for all children and is firmly embedded in the UNCRC (1989)

Article 31:(Leisure, play and Culture) States that all children have the right to relax and play.

Play Strategy Scotland (Scottish Government, 2013) the vision:

We want Scotland to be the best place to grow up. Nation which values play as a life-enhancing daily experience for all our children and young people; in their homes, nurseries, schools and communities.





“Play as we know, is an essential part of a healthy, happy childhood, taking place within the home from birth, through formal and informal learning, and in community settings through the use of public spaces and services.” (Aileen Campbell MSP, Minister for Children and Young People, Play Strategy, 2013)

HISTORY OF PLAY

Records of children's play date back to ancient times. Archaeological excavations of ancient China, Peru and Egypt have revealed drawings of various play scenes (Frost, J. 2010)



FRIEDRICH FROEBEL (1782 – 1852)

Friedrich Froebel was instrumental in his approach to play.

He had a passion for nature

He developed the word 'Kindergarten' meaning 'children's garden' or 'garden of children'

He wrote many articles and had firm views on play and its place in child development

He believed it raised enjoyment, emotional well-being and was an important source of benefit to children.

He was famous for saying:

“Play is a child’s work”



MARGARET MCMILLAN (1860-1931)

Margaret McMillan was a socialist politician, who ran an open-air camp for children in the slums of South London, where disease was widespread. She believed that time spent outdoors dramatically improved children's health

She was supportive of Froeblian methods and became a member of the Froebel society to train teachers

By 1917 the Rachel McMillan Nursery school was set up for 100 children

It had a strong emphasis for being outdoors

The classrooms were and still are called shelters and were set in large attractive gardens

Medical supervisors reported an improvement in children's physical and mental well-being

LINK OF PIONEERS

All the pioneers Froebel, Montessori, McMillan and Isaac all had a common thread of meaningful outdoor experiences were beneficial to children.

All the pioneers recognised the child's desire for challenge and adventure in their own ways

All pioneers saw adults as having a significant role on outdoor play



IMPORTANCE OF OUTDOOR PLAY TODAY

The importance of outdoor play is explored in the Pre-Birth to three

“Outdoor play in particular can also be a major contributor to outcomes around physical activity and healthy weight. Developing play spaces, and play opportunities for children and removing barriers to play is therefore a priority.” (Scottish Government, 2008)

BUILDING THE AMBITION

“Play encompasses children’s behaviour which is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. It is performed for no external goal or reward and is a fundamental and integral part of healthy development which seeks to improve play experiences for all children.”(Building the Ambition, Scottish Government, 2014)

CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE

“Learning environments should be welcoming and inclusive to support the individual needs of all children. The term 'learning environment' in its widest sense means the place where children learn. This can be the child’s home, pre-school or primary setting, the outdoors, the wider community and visits to places of interest.” (Education Scotland, 2009)

OUTDOOR PLAY

**“Children should be able to learn for most of the day if they choose to do so!
(Bruce, T, 2009)**



OUTDOOR PLAY

Decline in outdoor play due to:

Urbanisation

changes to family lifestyles

changes to parenting styles

Children are too busy to play



PLAY AND RISK

Should children be allowed to take part in play that has risk?

Pre-Birth to Three discusses the benefits that risks can have for children

Tim Gill, David Ball and Bernal Spiegel composed the Managing Risk in Play Provision Implementation guide, which gives details of balancing risks with benefits

Tim Gill aims were for early years practitioners to be imaginative and creative outside.

“Play is a safe and beneficial activity.” (Gill, 2012)

ADULT ROLE

Adult role is extremely important

Adult needs to use their good judgement to provide or allow a child to be exposed to unnecessary risk.

Ellen Beate Hansen Sanseter discusses the role of the practitioner in risky play:

Practitioners who have a personal interest in physical play and outdoors have a more open minded approach to supervision of children during play.

Forest Schools practitioners adopt a more liberal approach to risky play.



BENEFITS OF OUTDOOR PLAY

Providing children with challenge and the freedom to explore

Improved emotional well-being

Opportunities for risk

Physical development

Problem solving

Understanding the world that we live in

Self –resilience

Confidence and self-esteem

Holistic development

