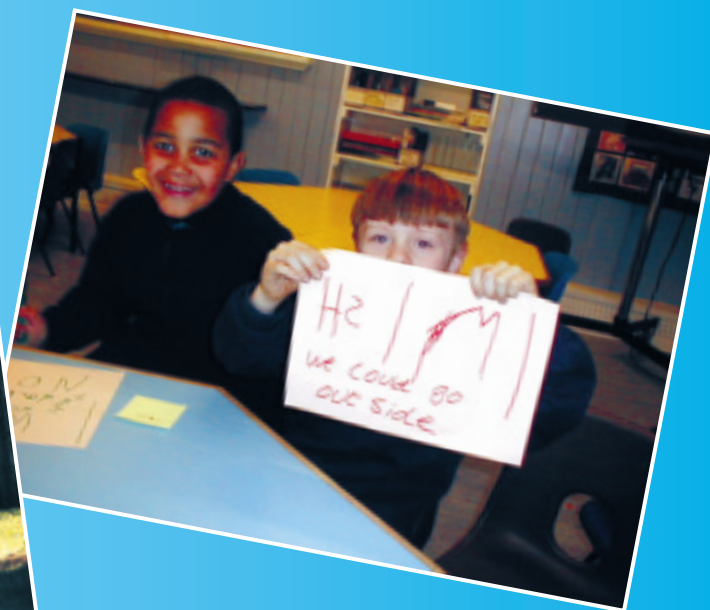




We aim to ensure that quality play environments are available to all children in Bath and North East Somerset



PLAY POLICY



CREATING A RICH PLAY ENVIRONMENT

CHILDREN USING PLAY PROVISION IN BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET SHOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING.

Criteria

Examples

The physical world; for example, earth, air, fire, water.

Flowerbeds, kite flying, shadow puppets, water play.

Fabricated and natural material, manipulable and moveable objects.

Pebbles, logs, planks, crates, blankets, boxes, plastic sheeting.

Challenge in relation to the physical environment.

Equipment and activities that push the boundaries of the child's abilities while not presenting unacceptable risks.

Movement: running, jumping, climbing, balancing, rolling.

Tunnels, climbing walls, swinging-ropes, visiting parks, building obstacle courses, going out side.

Emotions: learning about oneself, sadness/gladness, rejection/acceptance, frustration/achievement, boredom/fascination, fear/confidence.

Stories, drama, chatting, hanging-out, arguing, making up.

The operation of the five senses through sounds, textures, tastes, smells and sights.

Making music, sculpting clay, cooking, gardening, celebrating festivals.

Playing with identity and concepts of the self: for example role play, dressing up, masks.

Hat box, clothes box, visits from adults in different jobs; builder, nurse, firefighter; role play props and areas.

Social interactions - enhancing self esteem and understanding of others through freely chosen social interaction, e.g.

- within peer groups
- with individuals
- groups of different ages, abilities and capacities, interests, gender, ethnicity and culture.

Ensuring policies on inclusion and equality are in place and carried out with enthusiasm so all children feel welcome.
Having a policy of low intervention-high response to children's interactions - only stepping in when deemed really necessary.

Change: for example building/demolishing, transforming the environment, experiencing the seasons.

Den making, sand castles, newspaper structures, willow benders, observation of nature and weather.

An interesting and varied physical environment.

Planning for all different types of play. Using free and cheap resources, e.g. sand, wood, blankets, newspaper, water.

THE FOLLOWING VALUES AND PRINCIPLES WILL INFORM ALL OUR DECISIONS ABOUT PLAY PROVISION

Adults view

Child's view

Each child is entitled to respect for his or her own unique combination of qualities and capabilities.

I deserve respect for the things that make me - me.

The views, opinions and reactions of the child should be taken into account to the maximum degree consistent with health, safety and respect for the needs of others.

I have the right to be listened to when people are making decisions for me.

A child has the right to play environments that are free from unacceptable levels of risk. Children using a play provision must be able to trust their physical environment and the adults involved.

I should feel safe about where I play and who looks after me.

The child's choice and control over their play is essential to enhancing their development. Play provision will be based on the principle of empowering children and increasing their choice.

Play is what I do when everyone else has stopped telling me what to do.

Play is first and foremost 'fun' from the child's point of view. There need be no task or product, though the child may decide differently from time to time.

Sometimes I like to make stuff, sometimes I like to play games, sometimes I like to mess about, sometimes I don't feel like doing anything.

There must be consistency and clarity in adult values. Children must see the connection between policy and what actually happens. Children need to feel part of a community of trust and co-operation.

The adults who look after me should agree with each other what they are doing and why they are doing it.

**This document is a summary of the main points of the play policy.
For the full document or any advice on play development please write to:-**

**Michael Follett, Play Development Officer, Bath & North East Somerset, Education Department,
P.O. Box 25, Riverside, Temple Street, Keynsham, Bristol BS31 1DN**

Telephone: (01225) 395137. Email: michael_follett@bathnes.gov.uk

Everyone wants the best for children...

The purpose of writing a play policy is to have a set of values and standards we can all agree on.

There are many issues involved in providing for children's play, including: Safety and risk; Equipment; Training; Improving quality.

If we are clear about what play is and why it is so important we can make better decisions.

We aim to encourage all play settings to adopt clear play policies and use them as a basis for planning and everyday practice.



THE VALUE OF PLAY...

Play enables children to learn through experience what cannot be taught. Through exploring and testing ideas children learn:

- about their bodies
- about how to get on with people
- about the physical world around them.

If they are denied access to a range of stimulating play opportunities their development will be inhibited.

We recognise the importance of play and aim to ensure all services affecting children meet the criteria for quality play environments.

PLAY IS...

Satisfying to the child and freely chosen by the child. It may be serious or light hearted. It may produce something or it may be done simply for its own sake.

We aim to ensure that children's choice over their experience is promoted in all play settings.



EVERY CHILD...

Has their own special needs. Disability, race, gender or parental income should not be obstacles to children playing together.

We aim to meet the needs of all children in an inclusive way.

OUR DUTY...

Is to ensure play settings provide a challenging and stimulating environment. Children should be allowed to take acceptable risks in a setting where that is clearly an aim.

Play providers should be clear about their aims and their ability to make judgements between 'hazards', 'acceptable risk' and 'unacceptable risk'. Regular risk assessments are a requirement of the law.

We aim to provide the training and support to enable play providers to use risk assessment as a positive tool for the development of quality play environments.

