

It's not "just" play!

Why do we play?

Education Scotland Play Pedagogy toolkit states:

Play is an intrinsic part of human nature and development. The essential role of play beyond the ELC or school environment is well documented. We know how important it is for children to be given time to play throughout the day in order to follow their own line of enquiry or individual interest.

Play is sometimes thought of as children's work (Isaacs, 1930). Through play, children learn to answer their own questions, learn new skills and learn to work collaboratively with other children or adults.

Some theorists emphasise that when playing, the child tries out ideas and comes to a better understanding of thoughts and concepts; others see play as a means of the child coping with reality through using their imagination; and, others see play as a means to practise new skills.

Why do we play?

Children have a right to play (UNCRC, 1989, Article 31, para 1)

General Comment No. 17

Children's play is any behaviour, activity or process initiated, controlled and structured **by children themselves**; it takes place wherever and whenever opportunities arise. Caregivers may contribute to the creation of environments in which play takes place, but play itself is non-compulsory, **driven by intrinsic motivation** and undertaken for its own sake, rather than as a means to an end.

Play involves the exercise of **autonomy**, physical, mental or emotional activity, and it has the potential to take infinite forms, either in groups or alone. These forms will change and be adapted throughout the course of childhood.

The **key characteristic of play is fun, uncertainty, challenge, flexibility and non-productivity**. Together, these factors contribute to the enjoyment it produces and the consequent incentive to continue to play. Play is a fundamental and vital dimension of the pleasure of childhood, as well as an essential component of physical, social, cognitive, emotional and spiritual development. UNCRC, 2013, Para 14c

Why do we play?

"It brings joy. It is within this context that learning can occur" Kyle Snow (PHD Early Childhood Education)

The Leuven Scales were developed by Ferre Leavers and his team at Leuven University, Belgium, to measure engagement and wellbeing. Research shows that when young children are highly engaged, they are more likely to learn.

"High levels of involvement, coupled with high levels of well-being – that's the perfect recipe for deep learning and development."

Table 2: The Leuven Scale of Involvement

Level	Wellbeing	Signals
1	Extremely Low	Activity is simple, repetitive and passive. The child seems absent and displays no energy. They may stare into space or look around to see what others are doing
2	Low	Frequently interrupted activity. The child will be engaged in the activity for some of the time they are observed, but there will be moments of non-activity when they will stare into space, or be distracted by what is going on around
3	Moderate	Mainly continuous activity. The child is busy with the activity but at a fairly routine level and there are few signs of real involvement. They make some progress with what they are doing but don't show much energy and concentration and can be easily distracted
4	High	Continuous activity with intense moments. The child's activity has intense moments and at all times they seem involved. They are not easily distracted
5	Extremely High	Continuous activity with intense moments. The child's activity has intense moments and at all times they seem involved. They are not easily distracted

Moving the child from the passive to the active learner!

WHY NOW?

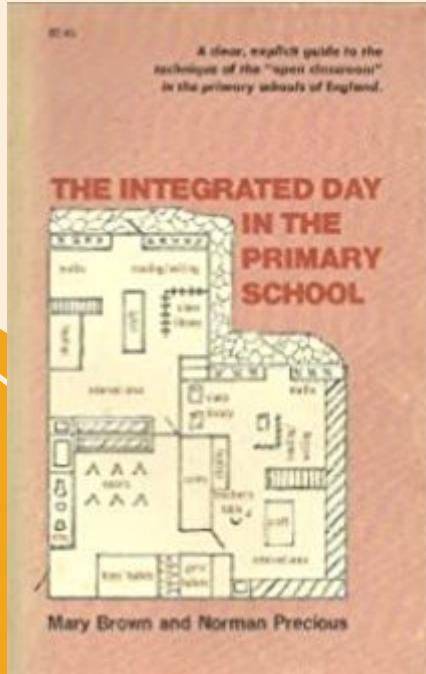


DYW

Developing the
Young Workforce



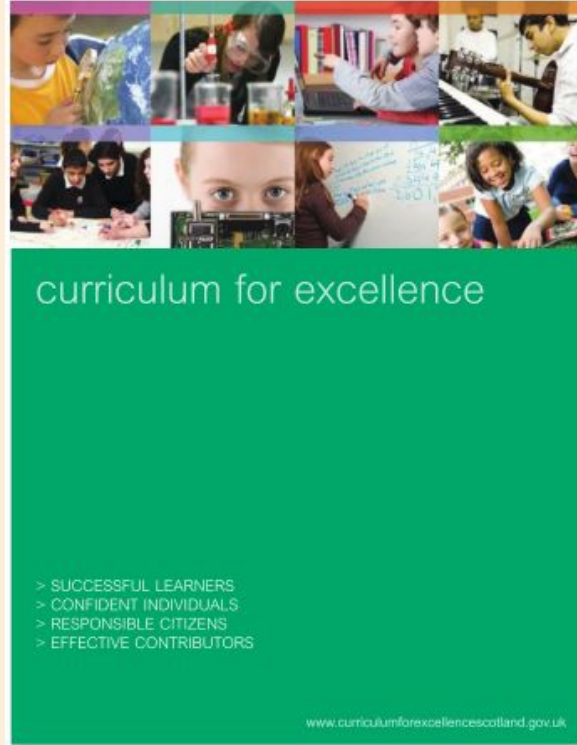
Scottish education context...



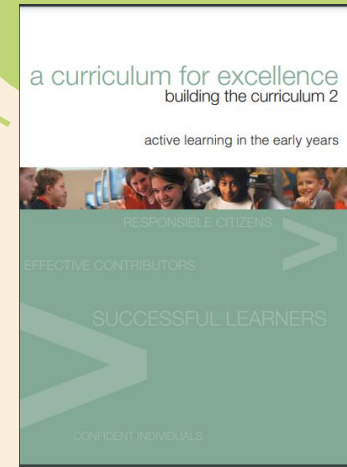
1960s



1990s



2010



2013



2020

Planning for choices and changes

Learners need to experience opportunities which are designed not only to raise their awareness of future choices but also raise their expectations and aspirations. They develop the skills for personal planning and making decisions in the context of curriculum, learning and achievement which will prepare them for next stages in life.

Learners should experience activities which enable them to develop the skills and attributes they will need if they are to achieve and sustain positive destinations beyond school. Demands and employment patterns are changing, so it is particularly important for all young people to develop high levels of skill and also an understanding of the world of work, training and lifelong learning so that they can embrace opportunities.

	Early	First	Second	Third	Fourth
	<p>In everyday activity and play, I explore and make choices to develop my learning and interests. I am encouraged to use and share my experiences.</p> <p>HWB 0-19a</p>	<p>Through taking part in a variety of events and activities, I am learning to recognise my own skills and abilities as well as those of others.</p> <p>HWB 1-19a</p>	<p>Opportunities to carry out different activities and roles in a variety of settings have enabled me to identify my achievements, skills and areas for development. This will help me to prepare for the next stage in my life and learning.</p> <p>HWB 2-19a</p>	<p>I am developing the skills and attributes which I will need for learning, life and work. I am gaining understanding of the relevance of my current learning to future opportunities. This is helping me to make informed choices about my life and learning.</p> <p>HWB 3-19a</p>	<p>Based on my interests, skills, strengths and preferences, I am supported to make suitable, realistic and informed choices, set manageable goals and plan for my further transitions.</p> <p>HWB 4-19a</p>

Furthermore...

“Schools will rightly wish to prioritise wellbeing needs of children and settle them in gently with due regard to their experiences of lockdown. Education Scotland acknowledge this in their [Transitions 2020](#) advice and warn against plans being over-determined by understandable anxieties to “catch everyone up”. They suggest learning will in fact proceed best, and this “transition will likely be smoother for the child if play remains and continues as the main vehicle for their early learning in P1 and beyond”. This is especially the case in a blended model of provision where similarities between pedagogical environment at home and school are more likely to be helpful than stark contrasts. Paradoxically, experience in Highland also shows that play-based approaches in the classroom free up teacher time and attention to direct additional assistance or challenge to pupils who need or benefit from it.” James McTaggart, Ed Psych.

What is play? self-directed learning exploratory learning

"Play can be and mean very different things to children and adults. We may describe activities we plan as 'play' whereas a child may not see these as play at all. 'Play' is therefore both a tricky word and concept to describe. It can be fun and joyful or difficult and complicated. This is a challenge for us as the act can be misinterpreted as being 'just play'."

"We also may consciously or unconsciously place more value on tasks we plan and lead with predetermined outcomes."

- RtA p44

"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 fundamental and integral part of healthy development which seeks to improve play experiences for all children."

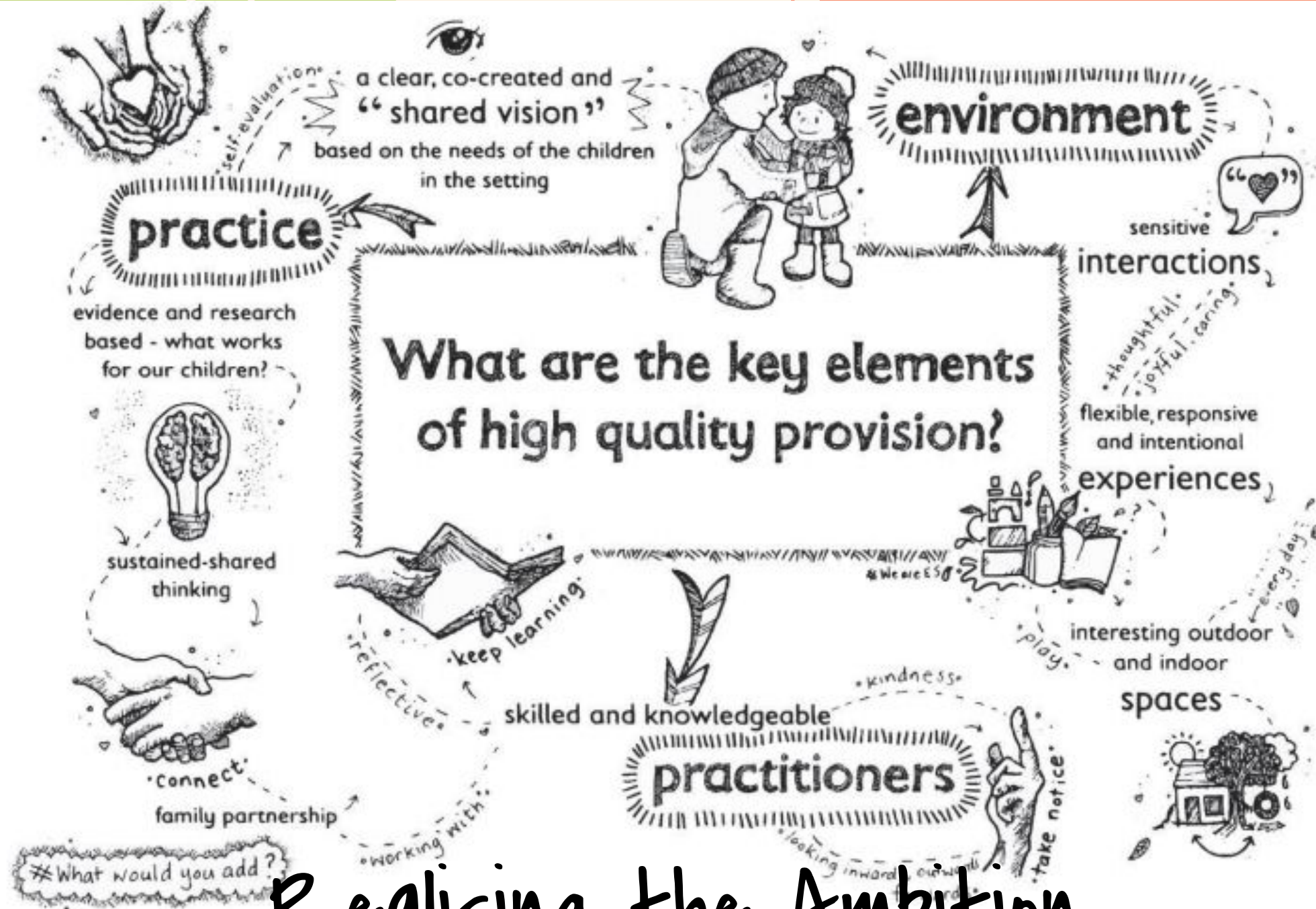
- **National Strategy for Play**

"In the early years of primary school there may be some difficulty with the word 'play' itself. Parents often need reassurance that their children will learn effectively through play because of its association with leisure." **Building the Curriculum 2 - Scot Gov, 2007.**

playful learning investigation & enquiry

active learning

discovery learning



Realising the Ambition



Start with the Child..

"What do the children's **actions, emotions** and **words** tell you about what they **require** from you and others in terms of **interactions, experiences** and the **different spaces** they need to **grow and develop** in every way?"

Pupil Voice & Choice

observation and documentation of learning

responsive and intentional planning, assessment and evaluation

implementation

Identified Areas For Focus:	Learning Journey For...	Date: T.L.C. Week 7	Area of Learning: Observations
General: Continue to build Confidence in English	See new puppets + work to play with them. Disappointed to a show with her friends.		PSED ✓ Pupil ✓ ELW ✓ CD ✓ Oth Ind ✓ Obs Address ✓ Confessions with ✓ Parent meeting ✓
From Parents: to who speak who whom	ask "how are you" and "what show are you in?"		3 drew a picture of a cat in a book. He was making a story book. He was a very good one. He was a very good one. He was a very good one.
From Pupils: One more exercise than 5 objects	asked her how to put puppet on her hand. She started talking with puppet.		3 made a picture of a cat in a book. He was making a story book. He was a very good one. He was a very good one. He was a very good one.
	child made up 142 for chairs in puppet. Number 1. asked what number was next. D said "3" then drew a 3, cut it out & attached it to chair.		3 was encouraged to read the morning instructions. He was confident to read them. He was confident to read them. He was confident to read them.
	For pass in the part. When at the part. saw a girl holding a book. She then started making children in the class to be cast. Suggested she make a real cake tomorrow. real cake design and ingredients.		3 was encouraged to read the morning instructions. He was confident to read them. He was confident to read them. He was confident to read them.
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Our Learning Journey

Week 1: Our new book What the Ladybird Does

Week 2: Learning along in different ways

Week 3: ...

Week 4: ...

Week 5: ...

Novel Study

Pupil Voice & Choice

Does that mean kids get to do whatever they want and no “work”?

NO!

Pupil Voice & Choice

"No child held back, no child left behind"

Cook, J (Northern Alliance - Emerging Literacy)

Our teaching and learning must be developmentally appropriate to support and challenge the children in front of us.

"We will always be doing the right thing if we are aware of each child's development and are providing interactions and opportunities that match the needs of the child."

*Realising the
Ambition, Education
Scotland (2020)*

Types of Play:

Child as autonomous learner

Child as creative learner

Child as investigator

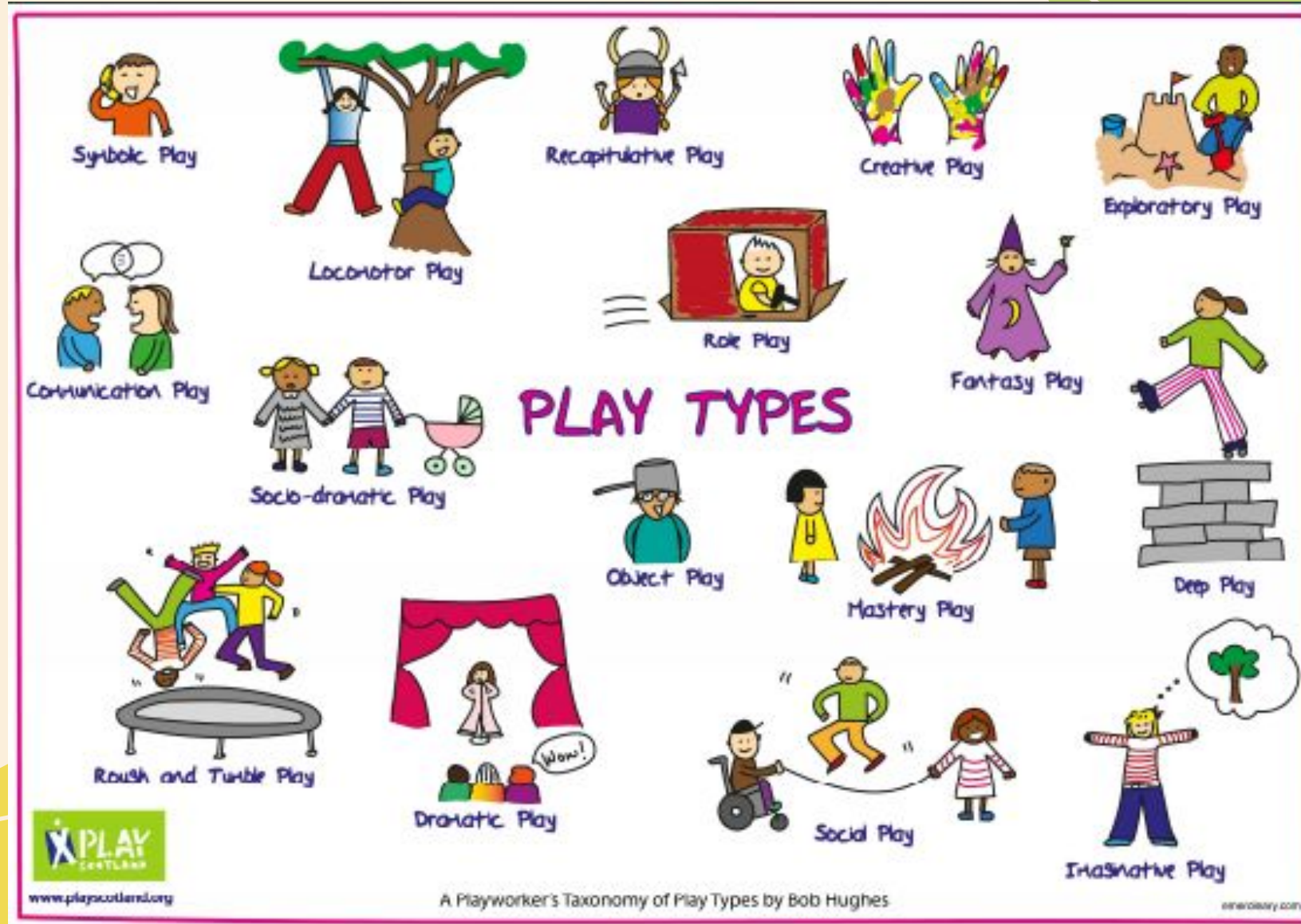
Child as problem solver

Child as reflective learner

Child as social learner

- Artistic or design play
- Controlled imaginary play/social dramatic play
- Exploratory play
- Games play
- Integrated play
- Play using the whole school environment and beyond
- Replication play
- Small world play
- Role play
- Virtual play

Types of Play:



Role of the Adult

Facilitate experiences with meaningful & skilled interactions...

Planning	How/to what extent/what resources or provision
Lesson	What role? Manager, Supporter, Player
Reflect	Interacting or interfering? Next steps?

Chatting now - talking helps me learn Try...

Play and talk together



The wipers on the bus go ...

- Have fun playing, singing, and looking at books together.
- Make your words sound interesting - this helps your child to listen.

Pause and wait



Just wait, I need time to think what to say

- Wait... Give your child time to think and then tell you his idea.
- It can take children a long time to plan what to say.

Copy and add words



Peppers... you want more red peppers?
I want more of that

- When you child says "it" or "that" say the word she meant. Then say the same word in a sentence.

Be careful with questions




Ouch! That's sore
That's a rose. Roses are prickly, they can make the love itches though.

- Don't ask questions to teach new words. Instead say the words again and again in different sentences.


 Developed by Speech and Language Therapy, Care and Learning
 

Listening and talking together Try...


Repeat and revisit



Think time are parallel
You're already a parallel line

- It is crucial that the adult explains and then repeats new vocabulary across a range of experiences.
- Children need to hear and experience a new word many times before they understand and use it.


Give thinking time



Think to only one pizza and that people
I'll add to see if they can follow the instructions better though

- Wait... stand to 3 in your head before saying something else.
- Encourage children to ask for clarifications.
- It can take some children a long time to process, plan and do.


Use gestures meaningfully



The wind turbines are all MOW-OW-OW



- Using gestures helps children to concentrate and reinforces new learning.
- When you use gestures, it gives more time for thinking.

Be careful with questions



A good one to remember Can you tell me any other problems we've seen before?

- It is important to balance comments with questions, particularly for new learning.
- Questions can develop problem solving when they are simple enough to understand.


 Developed by Speech and Language Therapy, Care and Learning
 

Finding Balance...

“A balance of responsive planning and intentional planning is essential in providing suitable experiences that connect with and extend children’s interests and motivations.”

Realising the Ambition, 2020, p.63

Adult-directed
experiences

Adult-initiated
experiences

Child-led
experiences

Child-led experiences

Using materials to design and carry out an experiment to prove...

Provision of more skilled materials for pupils to create...

Using cardboard to make...



Adult-initiated experiences



Pupils investigate resources linked to story of the week.
Pupils could...

A suitcase with items linked to a country or period of time to prompt discussion.
Pupils could...

A staged incident or setting to introduce a new character or event from a class novel.
Pupils could...



Exploring grouping and sharing with playdough biscuits.

Using stopwatches to record time taken to complete obstacle course and ordering places e.g. 1st, 2nd, 3rd.

Adult-directed experiences

Planning and measuring garden area and producing total costs for compost.



Child-led

Pupil Voice: ownership
and motivation to learn

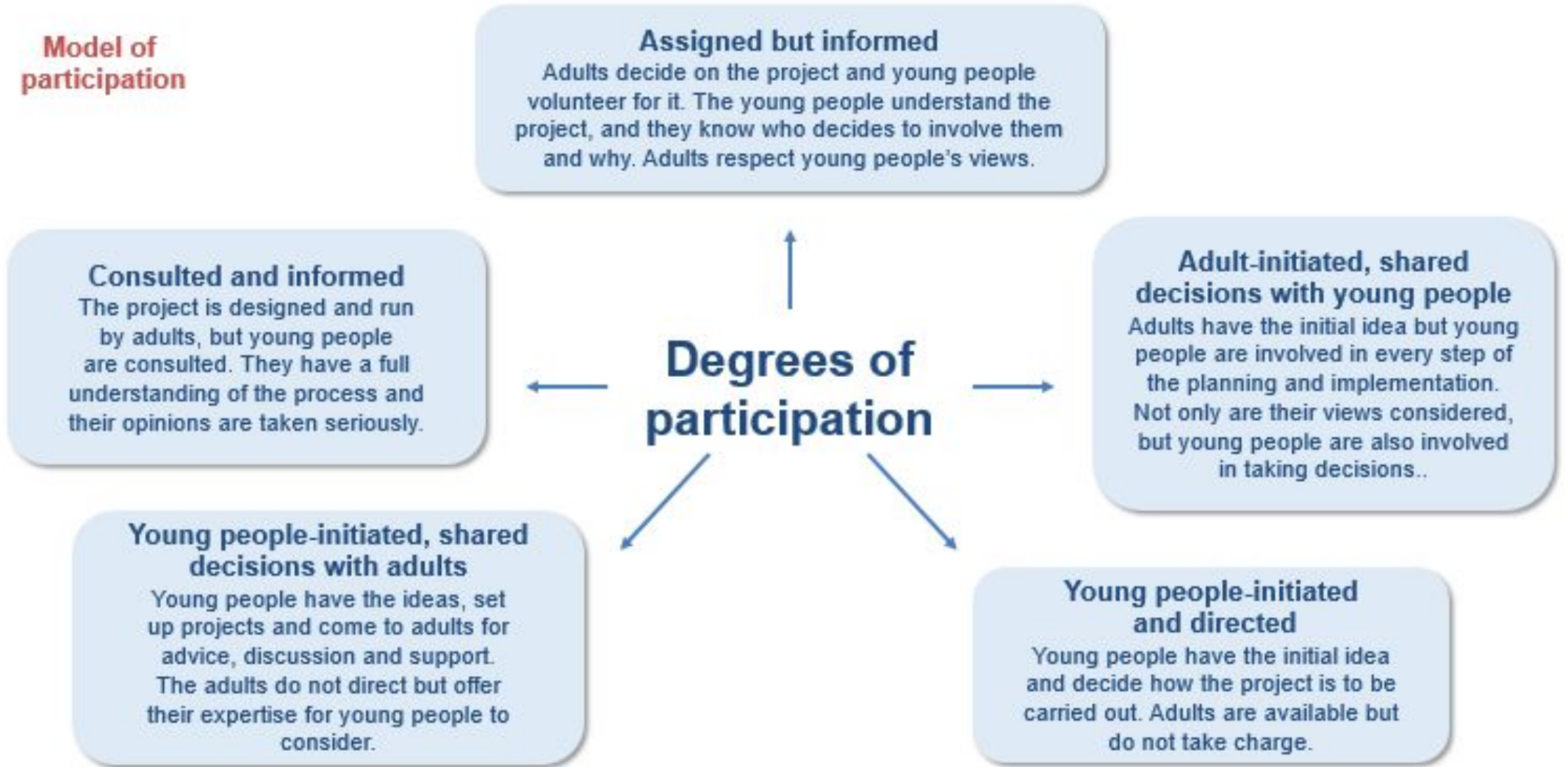
Assessment:

Observations, Learning
Conversations, Focus
Child/KATS

Adult-
initiated

Adult-
directed

Model of participation



Moving on...

“For older children curriculum objectives normally take precedence and traditionally learning is seen as a structured activity controlled by the teacher. While it is appropriate to have high expectations of children’s learning and progress there is a tendency to make this type of learning routine and formulaic.”

Play for Life!

“Play in its widest sense - is appropriate for humans of *any* age”

New hobbies/skills, taking part in competitions, travel, new jobs

Briggs, M. & Hansen, A. (2012) Play-based Learning in the Primary School

Moving on...

child-led

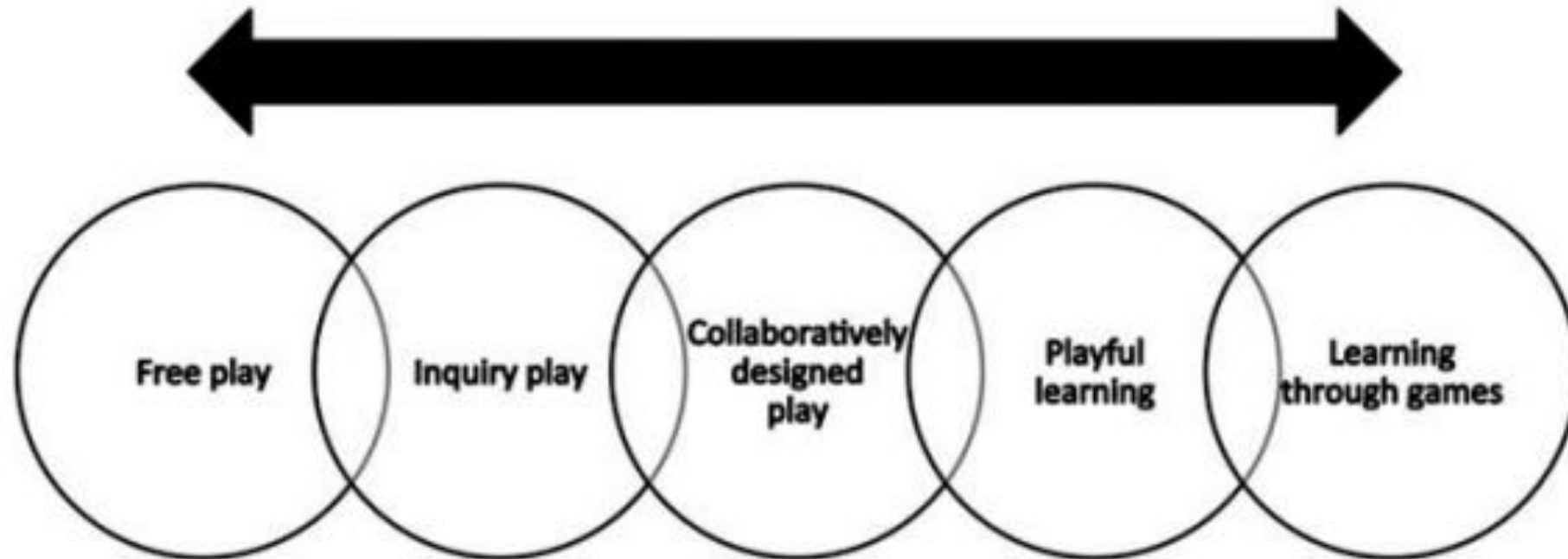
adult-initiated

adult-directed

child directed

collaborative

teacher directed

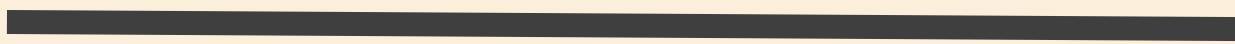


Angela Pyle & Erica Danniels (2017) A Continuum of Play-Based Learning: The Role of the Teacher in Play-Based Pedagogy and the Fear of Hijacking Play, Early Education



What are we doing in our school?

2011



2021

Where the magic of learning comes alive...

Developing a play-based approach to Early, and Early into First

