

## Unit 4, Katie Griffiths

### PLAY POLICY

Play is considered so important to a child's development that the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child (1989) has established Article 31 that every child has a right to play and to engage in other recreational activities, including participation in cultural activities and the arts.

The key characteristics of play as written by Garvey in 1991 outlines that childrens' play is something that happens because it has always happened. That this is what we do. Each child is drawn to an area of play when they want to do it, and it's how we learn and draw pleasure and enjoyment from life. This active engagement means that we develop many positive dispositions for learning. We are intrinsically motivated.

When there is an adult there doing things, that is not play! Play is "any behaviour or process initiated, controlled and structured by children themselves; it takes place wherever and whenever opportunities arise. They decide when to stop and try something else."

Play is valuable! We have a role at forest school; facilitating learning and play outdoors by providing opportunities and resources that are appropriate to their needs and relevant to the outdoor setting.

The essential characteristics of play: (Making Sense of Play: Perry Else)

1. Play is a process, not a specific action.
2. Self-chosen, with a willingness to participate.
3. Active engagement, attentive response to feedback.
4. Sufficiently safe, physically and psychologically.
5. A whole body/mind experience.
6. Timelessness, lost in the moment.
7. Curiosity; attracted to newness or new experiences.
8. Pleasurable.
9. Different for each person.
10. Satisfaction is self-defined, with no extrinsic goals.

Adults at WishWoods Forest School will:

Uphold firm interpersonal and physical boundaries for safety. Within this safe framework there will be more freedom for play.

Observe and support children's learning during the experience and consider next steps based on children's responses.

Present tasks in imaginative ways.

Ensure tasks are as open ended as possible allowing children to make choices and express their own ideas using materials or story lines that children associate with play.

Provide for children's hands-on participation.

Respect that children need choice, and time, and to let them absorb themselves in play.