

Play Policy

Introduction

'Play is the work of children' Encyclopedia of children's health 2015

Through play all areas of a child's development can be enhanced. It is a biological, psychological and social necessity and is fundamental to the healthy development and wellbeing of individuals and communities. To play is to allow one to freely explore and make sense of the world, experiment and express things without fear of judgement. The right to play is set down under the United Nations convention on the rights of the child (1989).

There are 4 Developmental Stages of play as described by Beyer and Gammeltoft in 2000:

- ⊙ Sensori-Motor play....exploring toys/objects through all senses e.g. may shake a sound maker but will also look intensely at it and put it in their mouth
- ⊙ Organisational Play.....concerned with organising the play items but no understanding of purpose e.g. lining toy cars up but not driving them around
- ⊙ Functional Play.....understanding the purpose of a toy e.g. driving a car around the floor.
- ⊙ Pretend Play.....items are used in a functional way e.g. pretending to drink from a toy cup. At a more advanced level a child may use one item to represent something else.

There are 5 stages of Social play as described by Sheridan 1999:

- ⊙ Solitary
- ⊙ Spectator
- ⊙ Parallel
- ⊙ Associative
- ⊙ Co-operative

Play can be qualitatively different in a CYP with ASD. Play can be limited, repetitive and often solitary. It is frequently based around special interests and obsessions or sensory seeking play. The play of children with ASD often does not match their chronological age.

The higher stages of social play are very challenging for CYP with ASD because they require individuals to have good communication and interaction skills as well as imaginative ability.

Aims and Objectives

Drumbeat Outreach Service aims to enable children to develop their ability to interact and play with others.

Drumbeat Outreach Service aims to support adults who work with children with ASD to ensure that their response to the child is based on sound knowledge of the play stages and a thorough understanding of the individual child, their interests, motivators, social awareness and sensory sensitivities. The role of the adult is to facilitate and develop, scaffold, enhance and extend a child's play skills and have fun!

Strategies Include

- Parallel Play
- Intensive Interaction
- Explicit Teaching
- Special Time
- Social Stories

- Circle of Friends
- Small group work
- People games
- Lego Therapy