Unit 2: Promoting Children’s Development Through Play

Level:1 and 2

Unit type:Core

Guided learning hours:30

Assessment type:Internal

Unit introduction

We know that play has a pivotal role in helping children to learn new skills and knowledge. All early years settings now use play as a way of teaching children and supporting their development, and it forms the basis of early years frameworks.

In this unit you will look at how early years settings use play to promote children’s learning and development at different ages and stages, including babies, and the types of play opportunities that early years settings usually provide. You will find that play can be structured in broadly three ways: adult-led, adult-initiated and child-initiated play. Each way has its benefits, but also potential disadvantages, and early years settings use a combination of these structures to support children’s play.

By the end of this unit, you will have learnt that play is complex, yet very important to children’s learning and development.

Learning aims

In this unit you will:

a. understand how play promotes children’s development in early years settings

b. understand how different play opportunities promote children’s development

c. understand how play is structured in early years settings to promote children’s development.

Learning aims and unit content

| What needs to be learnt |
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| Learning aim A: Understand how play promotes children’s development in early years settings |
| Topic A.1 How children play at different ages/stages of development  The nature of play is that it is enjoyable and motivating for children of all ages. It is used in early years settings to support children’s development. Learners must be able to understand that children at different ages/stages of development have different play needs as this is essential in providing play that ensures that children are sufficiently challenged, are engaged, find play enjoyable and learn new skills.  Play from birth up to two years:   significant time spent playing with adults, e.g. playing close to familiar adults, watching other children playing   focus on moving and touching things, and until around eighteen months putting things in their mouths, e.g. exploring objects and their surrounding environment   games and actions are repeated and remain enjoyable, e.g. knocking down towers  of blocks, jack in the box, pushing toy cars down a slope.  Play **at two up to five years:**   increasing interest in being with others and from three years starting to actively play with others, e.g. playing alongside other children, starting to take turns in play and beginning to learn to share   play becomes more complex and requires greater gross and fine motor coordination, e.g. balancing on climbing equipment, throwing and kicking balls   talk becomes central to play, especially during construction and imaginative play, e.g. talking through their actions and their experiences during play   children may need adults to play with them and to provide supervision and support, e.g. wanting adult encouragement and reassurance.  Play **at five up to eight years:**   begin to increasingly organise and structure their play with minimum adult support, e.g. making decisions about how they want to play and what resources they need   they may introduce their own rules, e.g. making games more challenging, choosing who can join in   play is complex and requires increasing levels of skill, e.g. involving physical challenge and a combination of skills. |

| What needs to be learnt |
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| Topic A.2 How and why adults support children’s play at different ages  Learners must understand how and why adults in early years settings support children’s play at different ages to promote development.  Birth **up to two years:**   playing with children to help them learn that play with others is enjoyable, e.g. finger rhymes, Humpty Dumpty   choosing items that are safe, e.g. identifying choking hazards, selecting items that are safe if put in the mouth   holding out toys and resources to a child to encourage interest, e.g. rattles, puppets   showing how toys are used to help children play with them, e.g. pop-up toys, stacking blocks, peg and hammer toys, shape sorter.  Two **up to five years:**   encouraging children to select resources to develop independence, e.g. easy access, resources put at child’s height, asking children to make choices   supervising children to ensure safety, e.g. stopping boisterous behaviour, intervening when children become angry with each other   joining in play with children to show how to take turns, share equipment and be cooperative   setting up play opportunities attractively to encourage children to try them and so learn new skills, e.g. sensory materials, home corner, collage materials.  Five **up to eight years:**   allowing children longer periods in which to play with minimum adult supervision in order for children to develop imagination, turn taking and confidence   teaching children how to play games that require logic, or counting to support mathematical skills, e.g. noughts and crosses, board games, chess   providing more challenging opportunities for physical play, e.g. greater height, balance, team games   discussing with children how they might play safely to help them learn to manage risk, e.g. boundary setting, writing rules. |

| What needs to be learnt |
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| Learning aim B: Understand how different play opportunities promote children’s development |
| Topic B.1 Play opportunities and how they promote children’s development  The importance of providing a range of different play opportunities to ensure that children learn a range of skills across each of the areas of development (physical, cognitive, language and communication development, emotional and social). The importance of early years settings providing different play opportunities according to the age/stage of the child. Learners must be able to describe play opportunities to promote development in each of the age ranges (birth up to two years, two up to five years and five up to eight years). Learners must know how the play opportunities promote skills in the areas of development and how each play opportunity could promote more than one area of children’s development.  Play opportunities from birth up to two years:   physical play provision of equipment to promote fine and gross motor skills,  e.g. rattles, baby gym, push and pull toys, stacking beakers   heuristic play – play with collections of objects and everyday materials of different shapes, textures and sizes in a treasure basket for babies until mobile and in containers for toddlers, to promote concentration, imagination and learning about shape, size and texture   games played with an adult – e.g. knocking down stacking beakers whereby babies learn to take turns and make eye contact, hiding toys under a cushion   sensory play – e.g. water, shaving foam, dried pasta, gloop (mixture of cornflour and water) to help concentration, fine motor skills, learning about texture and promotion of confidence   imaginative play with adults – e.g. toy telephones, puppets, toy kitchens   construction play with adults (from nine months) – e.g. stacking beakers,  using small wooden bricks, lift up puzzles.  Two **up to five years:**   physical play to help children learn coordination and balance, and to develop gross motor movements and learn social skills, e.g. balls, climbing frames, hoops, tricycles   heuristic play, e.g. play with collections of objects and everyday materials  of different shapes, textures and sizes to encourage sorting skills and language,  and to allow children to discover new objects   simple board games (from three years), e.g. picture lotto, snap, magnetic fish game to promote turn taking, counting, problem-solving   sensory play, e.g. sand, water, dough to help concentration, fine motor skills,  early writing movements, encouraging communication   imaginative play, e.g. dressing-up clothes, home corner, toy cars, toy farm animals and people, in order for children to develop communication, social skills and imagination   construction play, e.g. wooden blocks, building blocks to encourage turn taking and imagination, and for children to learn about textures, shapes and problem-solving. |

| What needs to be learnt |
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| Play opportunities from five up to eight years:   physical play and games, e.g. climbing frames, scooters, football, skipping – to help children learn co-ordination and balance, and to develop gross motor movements and learn social skills   heuristic play (loose part play), e.g. play with natural and synthetic objects left outdoors for children to find and discover their properties, to support children’s cooperation, language, problem-solving and imagination games   games, usually board games with rules, e.g. noughts and crosses, beetle drive, happy families, this promotes logic, counting, problem-solving and memory; word games e.g. I Spy, twenty questions to support communication, problem-solving and literacy   sensory play, e.g. paint, provision of art and craft areas to help children develop imagination, fine motor movements and confidence   imaginative play, e.g. dressing up, re-enacting films, television shows, plays to  help children learn, explore ideas, develop confidence, support communication and literacy skills, express emotions and creativity   construction play, e.g. building dens outdoors, technical kits to make models –  to encourage children’s imagination, problem-solving, creativity and physical skills. |

| What needs to be learnt |
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| Learning aim C: Understand how play is structured in early years settings to promote children’s development |
| Play can be structured and organised in different ways. It is good practice and a curriculum requirement for early years settings to provide a combination of play experiences to promote children’s development. Learners must be able to describe  the different ways play is structured and organised, and the benefits of each structure to children’s development.  Topic C.1 How play is structured in early years settings to promote development  Adult-led play in which the adult plans, organises and leads the children in a play activity, e.g. playing peek-a-boo with babies, cooking, gardening.  Potential benefits of adult-led play:   enable children to carry out higher risk activities e.g. cooking, arts and crafts and learn how to use tools and equipment safely e.g. knives, scissors   supports acquisition of specific skills and experiences, e.g. counting, visiting a zoo   enhances language development, e.g. introducing new vocabulary, discussion.  Potential disadvantages of adult-led play:   learning is not always effective, e.g. child may not be given enough time to solve problems, practice skills or develop their own ideas and concentration may be affected if adults are leading the play   learning may be limited, e.g. no opportunity for child’s own creativity, independence, asking questions.  Adult-initiated play in which the adult puts out resources and toys that prompts children to play in a certain way, e.g. hiding coins in a sand tray to support counting.  Potential benefits of adult-initiated play:   encourages children to develop new concepts and practise skills, e.g. using equipment, counting   effective learning may take place, e.g. perseverance, concentration, increased interaction.  Potential disadvantages of adult-initiated play:   ● children may not learn expected skill or concept, e.g. ignore play opportunity,  not understand what to do.  Child-initiated play in which children choose resources and how to play with them, e.g. making available a wide range of toys, equipment and sensory materials for children to self-serve without asking permission.  Potential benefits of child-initiated play:   encourages children to develop and persist with own ideas, e.g. increased concentration, making models, creating dens   opportunities for children to develop social skills, e.g. cooperation, turn taking.  Potential disadvantages of child-initiated play:   children may develop or practise skills in just one area, e.g. play repetitively,  choose limited range of resources   learning may be limited, e.g. without adult help children may not learn concepts, know about numbers, be able to do complex tasks. |

Assessment criteria

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| Level 1 | Level 2 Pass | Level 2 Merit | Level 2 Distinction |
| Learning aim A: Understand how play promotes children’s development in early years settings | | | |
| 1A.1 Identify two ways in which children play at each age range. | 2A.P1 Describe how children play at each age range, using appropriate examples.  # | 2A.M1 Explain the importance of the support provided by adults in early years settings for children’s play at each age range.  # | 2A.D1 Assess the suitability of the support provided by adults for children in an early years setting, using a case study. # |
| 1A.2 Identify two ways in which adults in early years settings support the play of children in each age range. | 2A.P2 Describe how adults in early years settings support children’s play  at each age range, using appropriate examples.  # |
| Learning aim B: Understand how different play opportunities promote children’sdevelopment | | | |
| 1B.3 Identify play opportunities for each age range and the development that will  be promoted. | 2B.P3 Describe play opportunities for each age range and how development will be promoted, using appropriate examples. \* | 2B.M2 Explain how two selected play opportunities for each age range promote different areas of child development. \* | 2B.D2 Assess the value of  two selected play opportunities on all areas of a child’s development. \* |

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| Level 1 | Level 2 Pass | Level 2 Merit | Level 2 Distinction |
| Learning aim C: Understand how play is structured in early years settings to promote children’s development | | | |
| 1C.4 Outline how early years settings structure play  in different ways to promote children’s development. | 2C.P4 Describe how early years settings structure play  in different ways to promote children’s development, using appropriate examples. | 2C.M3 Discuss the extent to which the way play is structured in an early years setting may benefit children’s development. | 2C.D3 Assess the effect on  a child’s development  of the way play is structured in an early years setting, using a case study. |

#Opportunity to assess English skills

\*Opportunity to assess mathematical skills

Teacher guidance

Resources

There are no special resources needed for this unit.

Assessment guidance

This unit is assessed internally by the centre and externally verified by Edexcel. Please read this guidance in conjunction with Section 8 Internal assessment.

When learners undertake assessments, they need to be aware that assessment criteria are hierarchical. For example, within a learning aim, the Level 2 Merit and Distinction criteria directly build on and encompass the expected learning of the Level 2 Pass criteria. Where there are examples of comparison, review, analysis, discussion or   
in-depth evaluation of selected examples, these must build on the breadth of understanding required through the definition of topics in the content section.

This unit can be achieved either through one holistic assignment designed to assess all assessment criteria within a level, or through several smaller assignments. For example, learners could produce guidance for early years learners about how play is used in early years settings to support children’s learning and development. Evidence could include presentation slides, verbal presentations, leaflets or written guidance.

Learning aim A

For 2A.P1: learners are expected to describe how children play at each age range (birth up to two years, two up to five years and five up to eight years). Learners must describe how children play at each age range and provide examples to illustrate the play behaviour described. Children’s play changes as they develop within these age ranges and learners are expected to explore this in their descriptions, for example, children’s play at four years is different from the play of a two-year-old   
as they are usually able to share and communicate with others at four years.

For 2A.P2: learners are expected to describe how adults in early years settings support children’s play at each age range (birth up to two years, two up to five years and five up to eight years). This needs to include how adults encourage children’s development in play, by providing an age-appropriate level of adult involvement, supervision, encouragement and challenge. Learners could begin by describing ways in which adults support children’s play at birth up to two years and include examples of how this is achieved, using the unit content in topic A.2 as guidance. This should be repeated for two up to five years and five up to eight years.

For 2A.M1: learners need to explain the importance of the support provided by adults in early years settings for children’s play at each age range (birth up to two years, two up to five years and five up to eight years). Learners are to link the differences in the way children play in each of the age ranges described in 2A.P1 to explain how and why these affect the various ways adults provide for children’s play as described in 2A.P2. As an example, learners could explain that adults need to provide playthings that would not be choking hazards for babies up to eighteen months as they explore objects by putting them in their mouths to learn about textures: once children are not mouthing they can be offered smaller objects for sensory play. This needs to be covered for each of the age ranges.

For 2A.D1: learners need to assess the suitability of the support provided by adults for children in an early years setting. Learners could use a case study to make a judgement about the appropriateness of the adult’s support in promoting children’s development. This could include reference to age/stage appropriateness of support offered, provision of sufficient challenge, and ensuring children were safe and enjoyed their play, were not frustrated and were able to learn new skills.

For 1A.1: learners are expected to identify two ways children play at each age range (birth up to two years, two up to five years and five up to eight years).

For 1A.2: learners must identify two ways in which adults in early years settings support children's play in each age range, appropriate for the age/stage of development of the children.

Learning aim B

For 2B.P3: learners are to describe play opportunities for each age range and how development will be promoted. Learners need to use examples to describe play opportunities for each age range (birth up to two years, two up to five years and   
five up to eight years). Learners then need to show how each play opportunity will promote children’s development. When describing play opportunities for children from two up to five years, for example, learners could describe an imaginative play opportunity such as dressing-up clothes and then show the development that would be promoted. Examples of play opportunities and how development is promoted would then be included for each of the age ranges. Examples of play opportunities are given in topic B.1. Learners must cover each play opportunity given in topic B.1 (physical, heuristic, games, sensory, imaginative, construction) at least once in their evidence for 2B.P3.

For 2B.M2: learners need to explain how two selected play opportunities (selected by the teacher) for each age range promote different areas of child development. Learners are to use the play opportunities they have described in 2B.P3. Learners are expected to show how each play opportunity may promote more than one area of development. As an example, a water activity filling and emptying beakers with a child of eighteen months provides a sensory experience which promotes cognitive development; physical development is developed as hand–eye coordination is needed; turn taking encourages social development. This needs to be covered for two play activities for each age range.

For 2B.D2: learners need to assess the value of two selected play opportunities on all areas of a child’s development. Learners are to use two play opportunities for one age range explained in 2B.M2. Learners are expected to make a judgement about the extent to which all areas of a child’s development (physical, cognitive, language, emotional, social) would be promoted in the play opportunities.

For 1B.3: learners need to identify play opportunities for each age range and development that will be promoted. This would include play opportunities for children from birth up to two years, two up to five years and five up to eight years. Learners need to identify the learning which each play opportunity would promote.

Learning aim C

For 2C.P4: learners need to describe how early years settings structure play in different ways to promote children’s development. Learners could give examples   
of adult-led, adult-initiated and child-initiated play. Learners should then describe how each way of structuring play in an early years setting could benefit children’s development. Learners need to refer to the potential disadvantages of each structure to children’s development. When describing adult-led play, for example, learners would describe how this allows a child to be taught specific skills to further their development; however, a child may lose interest in adult-led play, meaning development may not be promoted. The potential benefits and potential disadvantages of the different ways early years settings structure play are   
given in topic C.1.

For 2C.M3: learners need to discuss the extent to which structuring play in an early years setting may benefit a child’s development. Learners could use a case study to examine how a child’s development would be affected both positively and negatively by adult-led, adult-initiated and child-initiated play in the early years setting.

For 2C.D3: learners need to make an assessment about the extent to which at least one way of structuring play affects a child’s development positively and negatively, using a case study.

For 1C.4: learners are expected to outline how early years settings structure play in different ways to promote children’s development. Reference must be made to adult-led, adult-initiated and child-initiated play.

Assignments do not have to be presented in written format. Learners could, for example, give a verbal presentation or engage in a class discussion observed by   
the teacher. Evidence presented verbally should be recorded. Detailed observation records/witness statements should be completed and retained for internal and external verification.

Suggested assignment outlines

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignment outlines that cover the assessment criteria. This is guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any assignments we provide to meet local needs and resources.

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| Criteria covered | Assignment | Scenario | Assessment evidence |
| 1A.1, 1A.2, 2A.P1, 2A.P2, 2A.M1, 2A.D1 | How play promotes children’s development | You are about to start work in an early years setting and in preparation for this the manager has asked you to look at how children play at different ages and how adults support children’s play at each age range. This will help you to provide age-appropriate play opportunities for children and know how to support them. You  are to produce a leaflet or a chart.  You need to:   describe how children play at birth up to two, two up to five, and five up to eight years, with examples   describe how adults in early years settings support children’s play at birth up to two,  two up to five, and five up to eight years,  with examples   explain the importance of the support provided by adults for children’s play at  each age range (birth up to two, two up to five, and five up to eight years)   assess the suitability of the support provided by adults for children in an early years setting. | The leaflet could include a chart and a report. |

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| Criteria covered | Assignment | Scenario | Assessment evidence |
| 1B.3, 2B.P3, 2B.M2, 2B.D2 | How play opportunities promote children’s learning and development | You have been asked by the manager of Footsteps Children’s Centre to put together  an information file about play opportunities  to promote the learning and development of children that staff will be able to refer to. The children who attend the centre are aged from birth up to eight years. You are to produce an information file.  You need to:   use examples to describe play opportunities for children (aged from birth up to two, two up to five, and five up to eight years)   show how each of the examples of play opportunities for children (aged from birth up to two, two up to five, and five up to eight years) will promote their development   explain how two selected play opportunities for each age range promote different areas  of child development   assess the value of two selected play opportunities on all areas of a child’s development. | This could include written/IT-produced accounts. |

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| Criteria covered | Assignment | Scenario | Assessment evidence |
| 1C.4, 2C.P4, 2C.M3, 2C.D3 | How early years settings structure play to promote children’s learning and development | Some parents of children in the setting have been questioning staff about why children spend time playing without adult direction.  You have be asked to help the staff prepare for an open evening to inform parents about why play is structured in different ways in the setting. You are to produce information for parents for the open evening.  You need to:   use examples to describe how early years settings structure play in different ways to promote children’s development   discuss the extent to which structuring play in an early years setting may benefit children’s development   assess how structuring play in an early years setting may affect a child’s development. | This could include handouts, posters, articles and presentation slides. |