

SHIRLEY CHILDREN'S CENTRE LEARNING, PLAY AND PLAY EQUIPMENT POLICY

This Policy links to the following:

- Partnership with parents and the local community
- Equality and Diversity
- First Aid

Document Control

Amendment History

Version/Issue Number	Date	Author	Remarks/Reason for change	Review Date
1	October 2014	Eyullahemaye Henry-Miller	To be ratified by the governing body	October 2015
2	October 2015	Eyullahemaye Henry-Miller	Review	October 2016
3	October 2016	Eyullahemaye Henry-Miller	Review	October 2017
4	October 2017	Yvonne Charalambous	Review	October 2018
5	October 2018	Nicky Cook & Katie Coomber	Review	October 2019
6	November 2019	Katie Coomber	Reviewed	November 2020

Learning, Play and Play Equipment Policy

1. Statement of intent / policy statement

Shirley Children's Centre believes that all children are capable and competent learners. As such, the children who use this centre and its facilities have the right to enjoy clean, safe, age-appropriate and non-discriminatory play equipment. Active play should encourage all aspects of a child's learning and development; these aspects encompass physical, intellectual, cultural, spiritual, language, emotional and social learning and development.

Aim / purpose

Shirley Children's Centre will:

- Recognise and value the importance of play in a child's learning and development and that as individuals, they develop and progress at various rates
- Contribute to developing the awareness and understanding of the importance of play among parents and carers
- Encourage all children to reach their full potential by engaging in positive experiences of play
- Promote learning through active engagement in meaningful contexts
- Recognise that parents/carers are a child's first educator, and therefore the staff will aim to work in partnership with families, to deepen a shared understanding of the importance of play within each child's development
- Offer children the opportunity to develop and extend their understanding of their worlds through talk and play
- Arrange planned experiences which provide the foundation for later attitudes to learning
- Encourage children to explore and investigate their world in a unique and non-threatening manner that allows them to make sense of their environment
- Use Early Years Practitioners to support children who trust, respect and care for their ideas and actions
- Provide periods of uninterrupted time to persist at activities both indoors and outdoors
- Offer opportunities for children to make informed decisions and to take responsibility for their ideas and actions
- Encourage children to show consideration for others and to treat all equipment with respect
- Challenge stereotyped ideas about children's play
- Employ staff who are able to accurately observe children at play, interact with them sensitively and monitor their development in all areas of the curriculum to inform future planning of play provision
- Encourage children to have equal access to all kinds of play opportunities and experiences

2. Scope

This policy applies to everyone in the centre

'Staff' includes both those employed by the Croydon Council as well as those from other as part of the multi-agency framework delivering the Every Child Matters change for children agenda. This also applies to staff from the statutory and non-statutory sector; the latter includes private, voluntary and independent groups.

3. Legal context

This policy is covered by:

- The Early Years Foundation Stage Principle 2018: **A Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments, Learning and Development**
- Best Start Children's Centre Practice Guidance 2013
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Disability Equality Duty 2006
- The Gender Equality Duty 2007
- Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations 2006
- The Childcare Act 2006
- The Children Acts 2004 & Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Every Child Matters: change for children 2004. Outcomes: **Be healthy, Stay safe, Enjoy and achieve, Make a positive contribution**

4. Mandatory systems and procedures

Play resources

- The centre will provide a range of resources and materials which can be used in a variety of ways that encourage children to express their ideas, make decisions, solve problems, apply their own reasoning and share their experiences with others
- All toys, activities and play equipment should portray images of people that positively reflect male and female roles, and also a range of ethnic cultures and disabilities
- Any broken or damaged equipment will be disposed of safely and securely in line with any manufacturer's guidelines. For example, any electrical equipment needs to be disposed of according to the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations 2006
- If equipment needs to be thrown out the Children's Centre Manager must be informed
- After each school term the staff will check the play equipment carefully and be prepared to make recommendations for any purchases as well as equipment needing to be repaired or discarded
- Throughout each session with children, staff will keep a watching brief on the play resources and the learning environment for any damaged or broken equipment
- When considering buying new play equipment, staff should find innovative ways of consulting with children to inform their decision-making
- There should be an annual audit of all equipment to account for any missing or damaged equipment

- Resources within areas are labelled and organised so that children can access them independently and take responsibility for tidying them away
- Resources should include items which are bought, collected and recycled
- Children are encouraged to use materials creatively and imaginatively and to reflect on their play experiences
- Resources are monitored regularly for suitability and safety
- Resources are cleaned/washed regularly by staff, or as part of the children's play experiences e.g. washing up in the home corner

Recording and assessment

- A variety of tools are used to record evidence of a child's progress and development; these might include photos, video clips, artwork a child has created or observational evidence. Such material is generally shared immediately with the child, and put, where possible, into a child's achievement book/personal learning pathway
- It can sometimes be useful to share with other staff e.g. therapists, health visitors and family support staff as evidence or work created by the children. This can inform the work of other practitioners

Review and evaluation

- Depending on the children's interests, sessions will reflect preferred themes, interests and possible ideas for extending their indoor and outdoor individual/group learning. This will inform the short-term planning process. To this end, staff will review and evaluate activities on a sessional basis
- Staff, e.g. crèche workers, will meet regularly to plan on the basis of the above, so that learning goals are established for that week, any differentiation for children with special/additional needs is made and other adults e.g. staff and volunteers are aware of their roles

Role of the staff

- Staff will support and encourage children's natural curiosity in the world around them by supporting and extending children's play/learning through talk and providing additional resources/activities in a sensitive manner so that the children control and direct their learning
- Staff will help the children to develop a positive image of themselves both as a learner and as a member of the community by valuing all their contributions and observations
- Staff should also regularly monitor and evaluate their own activities and provision for supported learning through peer observation and individual staff supervision

Organisation for play

- All children with disabilities should have the same play opportunities as their peers
- The adult/child ratios are observed at all times
- Planning for play includes provision for different kinds of play. The following situations and resources are readily accessible to the children:
 - ✓ Outdoor play
 - ✓ Imaginative play

- ✓ Small world area
- ✓ Water and sand
- ✓ Construction play
- ✓ Writing area
- ✓ Workshop creative area
- ✓ Book corner
- ✓ Malleable
- ✓ Computer area

Organisation of the outside space

- The outdoor play area can be split into different areas for planning purposes to contain:
 - ✓ Sand area
 - ✓ Small apparatus
 - ✓ Quiet area
 - ✓ Story telling area
 - ✓ Gardening area
 - ✓ Water area

6. Implementation / methods

The Children's Centre Manager will ensure, through the supervision process that the above checks are made in a regular and timely manner. Regular liaison with other agencies using the centre will also enable all the above standards and requirements to be met.

Self evaluation form (SEF) and annual conversation

This will be monitored on an annual basis with the Advisory Board and through OfSTED inspections.

7. Monitoring and reviewing

- It is the responsibility of the Children's Centre Manager to monitor and review the effectiveness of all policies relating to the centre
- The Children's Centre Manager will review and update this policy in line with the children's centre policy review cycle
- The Children's Centre Manager will update and amend this policy and its procedures in line with any emerging and relevant government legislation or Croydon Council guidance

8. For further information please contact:

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It is intended that by adopting this policy and keeping staff, volunteers, families and the management committee informed/trained and up-to-date with procedures, the centre can avoid the need for complaints.

However, the Children's Centre Manager is the first point of contact should any queries arise over this policy and its related procedures.

9. Policy endorsement

This policy is agreed and signed by the governing body of Forest Academy School