

Easton Community Children's Centre - Play Policy

All children have a right to relax and play, and to join in with a wide range of recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

Article 31 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Easton Community Children's Centre values and recognises the need for children to play, explore and experiment. We understand play is a right. We understand play is vital to children's health and well being and through a quality play environment children will thrive and develop.

Our commitment

Easton Community Children's Centre works in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance and Every Child Matter's agenda.

We will provide a wide range and variety of activities and experiences, both indoors, outdoors and within the local community which reflect the children's individual interests, abilities and needs and the aims set out within the Early Years Foundation Stage and Every Child Matters agenda.

We understand play is individual and beliefs about play may vary according to personal beliefs and opinions, culture, gender and ability.

We will challenge stereotypes and discrimination in children's play, with children, parents and carers and members of staff through providing positive role modelling and creating a respectful and inclusive environment.

We will provide an environment with a good balance of free flow and self chosen activities with more planned and structured activity to support and extend children's learning opportunities and enable them to be in control of their own learning.

We understand children need to take risks and challenge themselves in play to support their growing curiosity and development and this supports developing self confidence, self-esteem and resilience.

We recognise through play children will develop attitudes, opinions and dispositions for learning and we have a responsibility to promote and foster these through role modelling a positive attitude to learning, celebrating achievements and providing a supportive and nurturing environment.

We recognise the vital role the adult and the environment play in supporting children's play and learning.

The Adult Role in Play

We recognise the adult and child relationship is an important one and will build warm, trusting and respectful relationships with the children and families in our care and that quality play experiences and learning often depends on this.

We understand the role of the adult in children's play is vital and with sensitive intervention the adult can support, extend and enhance the child's experiences and support them to the next level of learning or to a higher order of thinking.

We recognise, as adults we can influence children's play experiences, be it positively or negatively. We strive to provide a positive atmosphere and respond to and encourage children's learning through a welcoming environment, a warm tone of voice, facial expressions and body language and a positive attitude (see appendix 1 Active Interaction Guidance).

We acknowledge children communicate in different ways, verbally, non-verbally and in their home language. We strive to foster close, supportive relationships and 'tune' into children to support the individual and personal ways they communicate through engagement, interaction and observation.

Wherever possible we use open ended questions and engage in Sustained Shared Thinking, both verbally and non-verbally, to support children's thinking, extending on and reaffirming what is being learnt.

We recognise through taking the child's lead, playing with and alongside, reflecting back, mirroring actions and behaviours and being responsive and open to ideas and suggestions we can build a warm, trusting relationship's which supports play learning and development.

We will, through careful observation and interaction, foster and build on children's natural enthusiasm and willingness to learn through a variety of opportunities, experiences and an enthusiastic and encouraging attitude.

We use observation and interaction as a means to identify children's individual interests and use these as a basis to plan and prepare play and learning opportunities.

The Play Environment

We will provide a safe, secure environment where children feel valued, respected and supported and that the term environment encompasses both the physical and psychological environments.

We strive to provide an environment which is stimulating, interesting and promotes natural curiosity but is also reassuring, warm and comforting. Where there are spaces for children to be active, but also spaces for calmness and relaxation.

We recognise the important role the environment plays in supporting children's developing identities and self awareness and work to provide an environment which reflects the individuality, culture and diversity of those within the setting, the local community and the wider world through positive representations, images, resources and role modelling respect for one another.

We strive to provide an environment which is accessible and available to all, where resources are stored at child's level and are clearly labelled to promote independence, opportunities for choice making and self selection.

We understand the role the environment can play in supporting children's achievements, recognising their own learning and progress and supporting children's developing self esteem. We actively support this by celebrating children's achievements through displays, photo's and Learning Stories, observations and adult-child interaction.

We will provide an environment which is well presented, appealing and attractive towards young children and their families, with up-to-date display, is clutter free, clean, tidy and well organised.

We will work with the children to promote responsibility and care for their environment, including promoting involvement in cleaning and tidying up, caring for resources, materials and furniture and sharing with children the value of such resources, materials and furniture.

Whenever possible we will involve children in developing the layout and design of the indoor and outdoor environments. Celebrating the child's voice by recognising and respecting the valid and important views children can and may have on their environment and what happens within it.

Wherever possible we will implement free flow play between the indoor and outdoor environment, to promote choice and exploration and provide children with independence, the freedom of choice and control over their play.

Through observation and assessment we evaluate the effectiveness and learning potential of the indoor and outdoor environments and modify accordingly in the best interests of the children.

Addendum 1

1. We Recognise the Benefits of Physical Play

Easton Community Children's Centre recognises that physical play is an important contributor to babies and young children's learning and development. We recognise that physical play offers babies and young children a range of benefits and opportunities including;

- a) The opportunity to develop awareness of one's body including
- b) Spatial awareness and hand-eye co-ordination
- c) Exercise and muscle building
- d) Freedom of expression and emotional release
- e) The opportunity to set one's own goals and challenges and take appropriate risks
- f) Social skills such as turn taking, negotiation and rules and boundaries
- g) Encouraging healthy choices in the present and in later life
- h) Enhancing understanding and knowledge about healthy eating, the importance of exercise and how to care for one's body

2. Physical Play

- a) We understand that babies and young children develop as whole people and that physical play is inter-related with other learning areas. Physical play support's and enhances all areas of learning and development including literacy and numeracy skills.
- b) We recognise physical play can occur through both planned and unplanned experiences, indoors and outdoors, at home, school, nursery and elsewhere in the community.
- c) We recognise physical play can include both fine and gross motor movements and can take a variety of forms.
- d) We understand, as adults, through involvement and engagement we can enhance the quality of physical play, support children's courage, confidence and developing independence and social skills

3. Our Commitment

- a) Our commitment is to provide a diverse range of fun, interesting and changing physical play experiences and opportunities which are inclusive of children of diverse backgrounds and of different physical and learning abilities.
- b) We will provide a well-considered play environment planned to meet the children's diverse and developing needs.
- c) We will be engaged, enthusiastic and supportive adults to help children channel and extend their interests and gain the full range of benefits and opportunities available from physical play

4. We are committed to Equality and Inclusion in Physical Play

- a) We recognise children can be affected by stereotypes, prejudice and/or discrimination with regards to physical play and abilities. We are committed to working in ways which actively challenge this and which positively promote inclusion, equality and respect for all.
- b) As adults we are committed to, provide positive role modelling and develop an atmosphere of respect and equality for all.
- c) Children learn and develop individually and uniquely and to the best of our ability we are committed to meeting each child's unique and individual needs.

5. We are committed to providing Positive Adult Role-models in Physical Play

- a) As adults we will challenge our own limitations and engage fully with physical play with appropriate respect for our own and others physical abilities.
- b) We will actively challenge gender, cultural and other stereotypes to model that being physically active is a natural and enjoyable regular part of life for everyone.
- c) We will help children retain and develop their interest and enthusiasm for physical play by providing fresh, creative and changing experiences and by showing our own enthusiasm and interest in physical play.

6. We are committed to providing an Appropriate Play Environment

- a) We will provide a safe and secure environment for all children.
- b) Through physical play children will experiment with skills and abilities and take risks. We will ensure opportunities for risk taking is promoted whilst ensuring children's health and safety is maintained.
- c) We will provide a variety of accessible and available resources and materials to support children's physical play and promote choice and variety.
- d) We will ensure children have adequate space for movement and opportunity to develop their physical skills.
- e) We will, through the environment, share information and knowledge about Healthy Living, including the importance of exercise and a healthy diet and lifestyle

Addendum 2

1. We recognise the benefits of Outdoor Play

Easton Community Children's Centre recognise Outdoor Play and learning is a crucial contributor to Babies and Young children's learning and development and physical and emotional health and well being as recognised within the Early Years Foundation Stage (2008)

'Outdoor Learning has a positive impact on Children's well being and development'

- a) Outdoor Play includes the nursery garden and outdoor areas and the immediate and local community
- b) Outdoor Play supports all areas of learning, development and play
- c) Outdoor Play provides the opportunity to explore the natural environment and the different materials, resources and elements it provides
- d) Outdoor Play can provide an opportunity for self expression and an emotional release
- e) Outdoor Play can provide the opportunity to take risks and set goals not always unavailable within the indoor environment

2. Outdoor Play

- a) We understand being outdoors is beneficial to children's health and well being
- b) We understand it is essential for children learning to have independence and choice and they need to be able to move freely from the indoor to outdoor play environment
- c) We will ensure children are supported in risk taking whilst ensuring their health and safety is maintained both in the immediate and out of setting Outdoor Play Environment's

3. Our Commitment

- a) We will utilise the natural resources and learning opportunities that arise within the natural environment to support children's learning, play and development
- b) We recognise it is through hands on experiences that children learn and develop and aim to provide an Outdoor Play Environment that supports exploration and investigation
- c) We will embrace the Outdoor Play Environment all year round, this includes in different weather conditions, and ensuring children are adequately clothed and protected, such as wearing sun cream in warm weather and waterproof clothing in wet weather
- d) We will create an ethos of care and respect for the environment, caring for the wildlife within it and the natural habitats, removing litter etc
- e) We will embrace and plan for the use of what is available within the local community, such as local parks, open spaces, wooded areas etc

4. We are Committed to Equality and Inclusion in Outdoor Play

- a) We will provide an Outdoor Play environment which is inclusive and accessible to all
- b) We understand children learn and develop individually and uniquely and we are committed to meeting each child's unique and individual needs

5. We are committed to Providing Positive Adult Role-models in Outdoor Play

- a) We will, as adults, through involvement and engagement enhance the quality of outdoor play by supporting children's risk taking whilst taking measures to ensure their well being and safety, such as carrying out regular risk assessments
- b) We recognise the Outdoor Play Environment belongs to the children and aim to listen to their views, wants and needs through observation, interaction and conversation
- c) We will provide a variety of resource and materials too support Outdoor Play and Learning, those which include natural materials, open ended materials and those which support all areas of play, learning and development
- d) We understand as adults we are a role model and will promote and create an ethos of respect for our immediate and out of setting Outdoor Play Environment

6. We are committed to providing an Appropriate Outdoor Play Environment

- a) We will provide a variety of stimulating, interesting and challenging resources which supports children's play, learning and development.
- b) We will provide a safe and secure environment where children feel confident and able to explore and experiment with their creativity and take risks
- c) We will promote independence and choice through the storage of resources and ensuring these are accessible and available to all
- d) We will ensure the Outdoor Play Environment provides a balance of areas to be active and for activity, areas for reflection and quiet and areas for conversation and being social
- e) We will bring the indoors, outdoors, and provide experiences, resources and play opportunities which supports all areas of learning and development

Addendum 3

We recognise the Benefits of Creative Play

Easton Community Children's Centre recognises creativity is essential for babies and young children's development and well being and provides opportunities for children to explore ideas, express themselves and make connections. We recognise and understand creativity is a form of expression and for some children creativity can provide an emotional release and give insight into their thoughts, feelings, ideas and interests

'Creativity emerges when children become emerged in the world around them'

Early Years Foundation Stage (2008)

Creative Play

- a) We understand that creativity takes many forms, including imagination, the visual arts, exploration, investigation and music and dance.
- b) We understand that creativity is about the process and not the end product and provides opportunities for developing curiosity, innovation and imagination
- c) We recognise every child has the ability to be creative but for each child how they express their creativity will be unique and individual to them
- d) We understand that through being creative children are taking risks, exploring and experimenting
- e) We understand that all areas of learning are related and that creative play enhances and contributes to learning in other areas

Our Commitment

- a) Our commitment is to provide a diverse range of fun, interesting and changing creative play experiences and opportunities which are inclusive of children of diverse backgrounds and of different physical and learning abilities.
- b) We will provide a well-considered creative play environment planned to meet the children's diverse and developing needs.
- c) We will be engaged, enthusiastic and supportive adults to help children channel and extend their interests and gain the full range of benefits and opportunities available from creative play

We are committed to Equality and Inclusion in Creative Play

- a) We will use the environment to reflect and celebrate the broad and diverse ways children explore and express their creativity through means such as Photos, Learning Stories, Displays and Examples of work

- b) We will ensure creative materials and resources are readily available and fully accessible to all children

We are committed to Providing Positive Adult Role-models in Creative Play

- a) We will through positive encouragement and praise value what children do and support their growing self esteem and self confidence
- b) We understand creativity can develop over time and will ensure children have opportunities to revisit activities and develop their creativity and imagination
- c) We will support children in developing their creativity and explorative and discovery skills by providing a positive approach and attitude towards creativity.

We are committed to providing an Appropriate Creative Play Environment

- a) We recognise creativity can occur in any area of play or the environment
- b) We will provide a safe and secure environment where children feel confident and able to explore and experiment with their creativity and take risks
- c) We will provide a wide variety of resources and materials which actively encourage children to explore and extend their interests

