



## **PLAY POLICY**

All children are entitled to play; it is intrinsic to their quality of life and an important part of how they learn and enjoy themselves.

We believe that “Play is essential for children’s development building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.” Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2017), At Fusion Childcare Services, we recognise the importance of play in a child’s development and follow the Playwork Principles. We offer a range of structured and unstructured activities in a free choice environment to suit individual children and their diverse needs. As Play Assistants we support and facilitate play, and do not seek to control or direct it. We will never force children to participate in play and allow children to initiate and direct the experience for themselves.

Resources and activities will be made available to support children’s development and enjoyment. We encourage children to make positive contributions in choosing experiences that they will find both stimulating and fun.

All children’s play at Fusion is freely chosen, personally directed and motivated from within. Through play, the child explores the world and his/her relationship within, elaborating all the time a flexible range of responses to the challenges he/she encounters by playing, the child learns and develops as an individual.

The setting aims to offer children the chance to stretch themselves by testing and developing their abilities without exposing them to unacceptable risks.

Children’s play provides them with a range of personal skills. Some of these can be taught, however, there are many that can only be learned through experience.

Fusion will take steps to ensure that the risks are managed and controlled so far as is reasonably practicable while still allowing the potential benefits to be delivered.

Fusion recognises the value of risky play and aims to manage the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children safe. Our **Play /Risk Benefit Assessment** details this for specific activities.

### **Facilitating play:**

We support and facilitate play by:

- Providing an environment which is safe and suitable for playing in.
- Setting up the environment so that activities are ready before the children arrive.
- Providing a range of equipment, resources and activities on a daily basis, and keeping a record of these to ensure that varied play opportunities are offered
- Encouraging children to request additional or alternative equipment as they choose, using the Toy Catalogue and if a request has to be refused, explaining why.
- Not expecting children to be occupied at all times.
- Making outdoor play available every day, unless there are extreme weather conditions.
- Involving children in planning activities, to reflect their own interests and ideas.
- Planning activities that enable children to develop their natural curiosity and imagination.
- Allowing children freedom of creative expression, particularly in artistic or creative play.
- Intervening in play only when necessary: to reduce risks of accident or injury, or to encourage appropriate social skills.
- Warning children in advance when an activity or game is due to end.

### **Play areas and equipment:**

- All indoor and outdoor play areas are checked and Dynamically Risk Assessed daily before the children arrive in accordance with our **Health and Safety Policy**. Children are also involved with Risk Assessments.
- Children are involved in selecting additional equipment and resources for use at Fusion.
- The resources used at Fusion promote positive images of different ethnic backgrounds, religions, and abilities, in line with our **Equalities Policy**.
- Fusion has a selection of fiction and non-fiction books, suitable for all age ranges.
- Children are involved in Toy and App testing with Fundamentally Children.

### **Weapon/ Gun and Superhero Play:**

At Fusion we feel that imaginative play is extremely powerful for children to make sense of the world they live in. There is a continuous discussion about whether gun play, weapons and super-hero re-enactment should be promoted and allowed in play settings and our view is that

children need to explore this and where best to discover than in a play setting that is facilitated by adults. In the EYFS guidelines it states, “value play which is based on characters, such as superheroes who may mean a lot to children, even if you do not appreciate them yourself”. Children do not have the vast experiences that most adults have, so they have to make sense of things through play in order for them to understand it- the main way we can support this is through role-play. Role play allows children to explore all the questions and emotions in a controlled environment and safe context and allows children to know what acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and the limits of reality is, as there is so much exposure to guns and violence in the media. Children need the space and support to chase, compete, have a battle/war, struggle, capture, hunt, fight, wrestle and make noise etc and that’s where we can support their fantasy play and develop skills of power, risk, control and emotions and the more opportunity children have to express themselves, the more proficient they become at managing feelings. There is the chance that this type of play will lead to violence and this is where adults will be observing children and intervene when needed but the benefits outweigh the negatives.

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<i>Written in accordance with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021): Learning and Development requirements [1.1- 1.17]; Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements: Safety and Suitability of Premises, Environment and Equipment [3.58 – 3.59 &amp; 3.65]</i>			
<b>Signed and approved:</b>	Fusion Childcare Services		