



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 (2024). At Fusion Childcare Services, we recognise the importance of play in a child’s development and follow the Playwork Principles (see below). 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 where possible.

At Fusion we use elements of the **PARS** model derived by Newstead in 2016, which is based on the philosophy of the adventure playground pioneers from the 1950/60s. The model empowers adults to enable children to make their own choices about how they spend their free time and equips practitioners with the decisions to decide whether to intervene in a child’s play or not. Ultimately, we want to preserve the Emic (child perspective) of the activity as much as possible and not impose our Etic perspective (adult agenda). Staff make judgements about whether to be in **Containment** which is when the children are left to free flow in their activity, or whether staff need to intervene in the play. Where possible we try not to adulterate the play, but we acknowledge that some adulteration is necessary in order to keep children safe. There are 3 main reasons for **intervention/necessary adulteration**, which we refer to SOS:

Safety- Adult intervention which protects children’s emotional and physical safety- Telling children not to climb on something; talking to children who are upsetting other children

Operational- Adult intervention which is necessary to meet the restrictions of the setting. Reminding children about home time; roping off a part of the environment that children cannot use; limiting numbers in the kitchen.

Support - Adult intervention which assists children in progressing their own ideas and activities. Providing materials; showing a child how to do something; chatting with children; sending out play cues/returns to children.)

This often means that it looks like our staff are standing around doing nothing! In fact, they are using 'containment', where they are assessing whether intervention is really in the child/ren's best interests. Sometimes our staff will decide that it is in the child/ren's best interests to make decisions and solve problems for themselves, where they judge the child/ren capable of doing so. This means that at Fusion, children are often given time to sort out disputes between themselves, assess risk for themselves or just given space to enjoy time on their own. This enables children to develop independence, resilience and above all, a sense of freedom and opportunity to enjoy their childhood without the pressures of the adult world.

PARS Techniques are used by our staff to assess if intervention is needed, with most of these Techniques being carried out without the children noticing. Some examples of the techniques, are: AQMS, Scanning, Distance Supervision, Latent listening, Risk Benefit Assessment, Graduated Intervention and Redirection to assess what level of intervention is needed.

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, where possible, in an adult environment, is freely chosen, personally directed and motivated from within. Through play, the child explores the world and their relationship within, elaborating all the time a flexible range of responses to the challenges they encounter by playing, the child/ren learn and develop as individuals.

Fusion 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 and caters for all play types.
- Setting up the environment, so that activities are ready before the children arrive but also encourage children to change both the indoor and outdoor environments to suit their own play needs
- Providing a range of equipment, resources and activities daily 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 is denied, explaining why.
- Not expecting children to be always occupied and respect children's wishes not to engage in specific activities or with certain children.
- Making outdoor play available every day, unless there are extreme weather conditions, but we will assess the risk as we want children to experience, snow, rain, hail, wind and sun
- 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- SOS reasons
- 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 and if a request is denied, explain why.
- 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 limit 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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The Playwork Principles

The Playwork Principles establish the professional and ethical framework for playwork and as such must be regarded as a whole. They describe what is unique about play and playwork, and provide the playwork perspective for working with children and young people. They are based on the recognition that children and young people's capacity for positive development will be enhanced if given access to the broadest range of environments and play opportunities.

- 1

All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and wellbeing of individuals and communities.
- 2

Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.
- 3

The prime focus and essence of playwork is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.
- 4

For playworkers, the play process takes precedence and playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult-led agendas.



- 5

The role of the playworker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.
- 6

The playworker's response to children and young people playing is based on a sound up-to-date knowledge of the play process, and reflective practice.
- 7

Playworkers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young people's play on the playworker.
- 8

Playworkers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All playworker intervention must balance risk with the developmental benefit and wellbeing of children.

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Signed and approved:	Fusion Childcare Services		