

Children’s Play, Learning and Development:

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.

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



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:	Potential disadvantages of adult-led play:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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:	Potential disadvantages of adult-initiated play:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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:	Potential disadvantages of child-initiated play:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.