**BTEC Children’s Play, Learning and Development**



**Bridging Course - Week 2**

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****St Mary’s Catholic School

BTEC Children’s Play, Learning and Development Bridging Course

**Entry Requirements for Studying BTEC Children’s Play, Learning and Development?**

* Students who are expected to achieve at least a grade 4 in GCSE English and Maths.
* Students who are prepared to undertake 50 hours of mandatory work experience in an early years setting and undertake practical activities with children in their care.
* Students who enjoy learning about child development and the different theories about learning and development.
* Students who are willing to take part in class discussions and presentations on their research findings.
* Students who enjoy independent research tasks and preparing written assignments.

**What to expect from BTEC Children’s Play, Learning and Development.**

BTEC courses do work differently to other subjects and you will be expected to work hard both in and out of your lesson to meet coursework deadlines. You will also be presented with many different opportunities to broaden your vocational learning as you will be expected to work 50 hours in an early years setting. During this time you will work closely with your mentor and be expected to undertake activities with the children. A variety of other assessment methods are also used, ranging from external exams to course work. Additionally, this BTEC qualification has been designed with employers and representatives from higher education and professional bodies. In this way, the qualification is up to date and covers all of the knowledge, skills and attributes that are required in the early year’s sector.

**This bridging course will provide you with a mixture of information about BTEC Children’s Play, Learning and Development, and what to expect from the course, as well as key work to complete. Students who are expecting to study Children’s Play, Learning and Development, and are likely to meet the entry requirements, must complete the bridging course fully and thoroughly, to the best of their ability. You should complete all work on paper or and keep it in a file, in an ordered way. You will submit it to your teacher in September. All of the work will be reviewed and selected work will be assessed, and you will be given feedback on it. This work will be signalled to you. If you do not have access to the internet, please contact the school and appropriate resources will be sent to you. If you are thinking about studying BTEC Children’s Play, Learning and Development you should attempt this work to see whether or not you think studying a subject like this is right for you. If you later decide to study Children’s Play, Learning and Development, you must ensure you complete this work in full. This work should be completed after you have read and completed the Study Skills work that all of Year 12 should complete.**

**Course outline**

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| **External Assessed Units** | **Coursework Unit** |
| * You will undertake **2** external exams. * Unit 1 Child Development *1hr 45 min exam*. In this unit, you will learn about theories and models of development that explain how and why children develop and how this relates to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). You will develop an understanding of a range of factors that may influence children’s development. * Unit 2 Development of Children’s Literacy, Numeracy and Communication skills – *3 hr exam*. In this unit, you will learn the sequence of children’s speech, communication, language, literacy and numeracy skills development. You will have 48 hours before the exam to plan stage appropriate activities that encourage children’s development and understanding by stimulating their enthusiasm. | * You will undertake **2** coursework units. That will require you to complete referenced reports and provide evidence of witness testimonies from your work placement experiences. * Unit 3 Play and Learning. In this unit, you will produce two written assignments that link to your placement experience. You will report on the types of play and the opportunities that should be made available to children at different ages and the theoretical perspectives, philosophies and curriculum approaches to play. * Unit 6 Keeping Children Safe. In this unit, you will look at the legislation, regulations and guidance relevant to health, safety and safeguarding. You will investigate approaches to creating safe and secure environments and policies and procedures to control and prevent the spread of infection. |

In week 2 we will focus on the **concept of play** and **how it supports the learning and development** in children. Additionally we will consider what play opportunities Early Years settings provide to encourage children to play in a meaningful way. Developing on from this you will explore the emergence of outdoor play and **Forest School principles** that have influenced children’s learning in the UK.

Children learn so much from play; it teaches them social skills such as sharing, taking turns, self-discipline and tolerance of others. Children’s lives are enhanced by playing creatively and by playing children learn and develop as individuals; it assists in their emotional and intellectual development and mental health resilience which are core building blocks for their transition years. Children like to play as there is no “right way” or “wrong way”, they can use their imagination to develop games and interact with each other without being in an adult-led environment. Play is often called the ‘work’ of children. We therefore need to encourage unstructured free play, loosely supervised, as much as possible as over programming spoils the true benefits of play. Children’s play may or may not involve equipment or have an end product. Children play on their own and with others. Their play may be boisterous and energetic or quiet and contemplative, light-hearted or very serious.

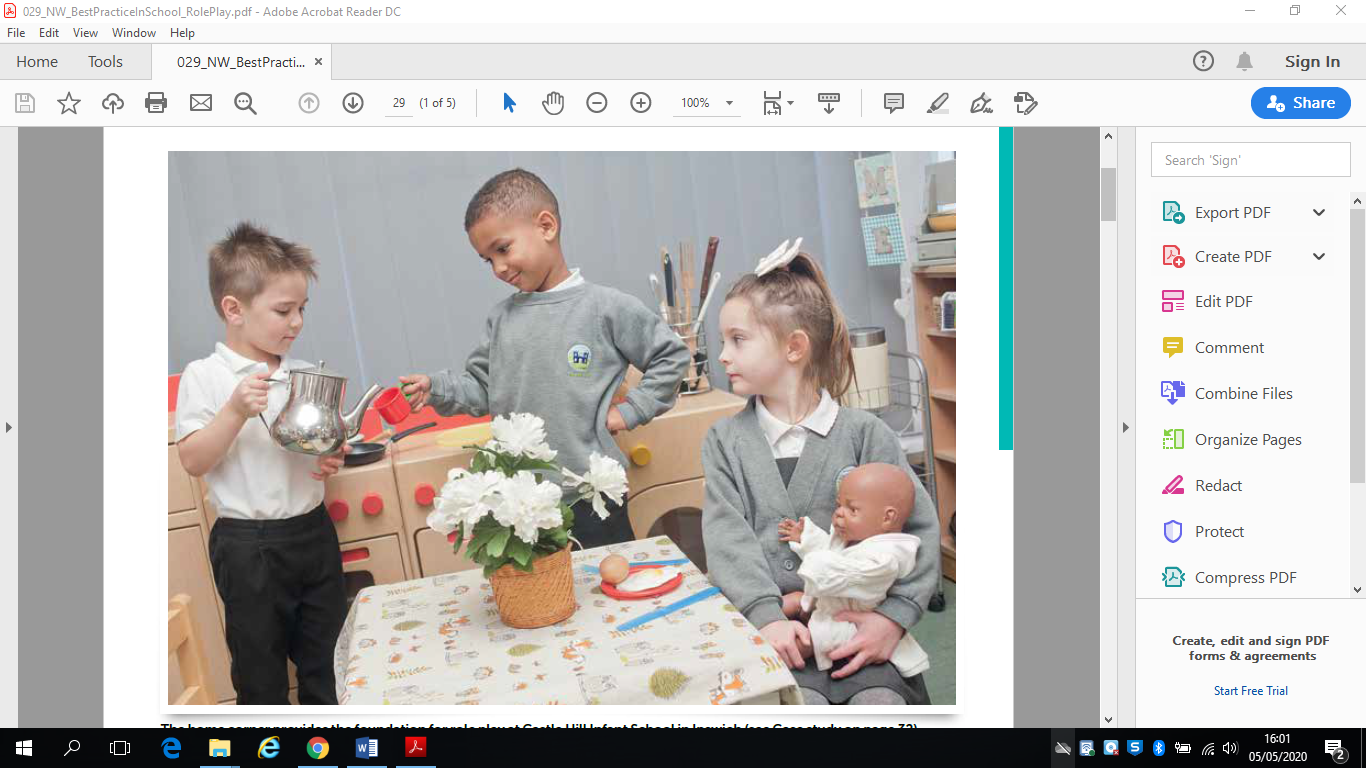
Play is a very emotive word which means different things to different people, and has been defined in many ways. The meaning of play has been debated by philosophers and academics for centuries, and was recognised as far back as Plato who is quoted as saying ‘avoid compulsion and let your children play’! In the last century David Lloyd George stated that ‘play is a child’s first claim on the community’ (1926), and play gained wider recognition under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in which Article 31 enshrines the child’s right to play.

1. Read through the following narrative about ‘play’ and how it underpins all aspects of child development. Prepare a written response to the following statement, giving reasons to support your opinions:

*‘****Play is very important and helps children to develop’***

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| Play underpins the Early Years Framework. It also underpins learning and all aspects of children’s development. Through play, children develop language skills, their emotions and creativity, social and intellectual skills. For most children their play is natural and spontaneous although some children may need extra help from adults. Play takes place indoors and outdoors and it is in these different environments that children explore and discover their immediate world. It is here they practise new ideas and skills, they take risks, show imagination and solve problems on their own or with others. The role that adults have is crucial. Adults provide time and space and appropriate resources. These might include clothes, boxes, buckets, old blankets that will inspire play and fire children’s imaginations. They observe play and join in when invited, watching and listening before intervening. They value play and provide safe but challenging environments that support and extend learning and development.  Living, playing and learning are almost one and the same thing for babies and young children for much of the time. For young babies play begins in their first encounter in the womb with their mother’s hand touching the place where they have just kicked her stomach or when she sings or talks to them. A mother’s voice before the baby’s birth and her face, touch and gestures when the baby is born all play a part in creating emotional warmth and interaction which lead to play and learning for babies.  New babies are drawn to look at the human face and they begin to learn how to ‘read’ the face of their mother or another caregiver. They carefully watch her eyes and mouth – finding out all about her and they enjoy hearing her singing and seeing the different movements of muscles in her face. Playfulness begins in earnest – smiles become broader as the baby expresses delight at seeing special people like dad, or mum, big brother and grandparents. The movement of a mobile or seeing and hearing a black and white squeaky toy soon begins to interest young babies because they are finding out about the world through whatever they can see, hear, touch, smell and taste. By the time babies are reaching out and grasping small toys another phase has begun where baby may be able to shake a rattle or raise an object to the mouth to find out more about it by placing it in the mouth to explore it more thoroughly.  Movement leads to new possibilities for babies’ play and learning – rolling and reaching allows them to make things happen and by the time they are able to sit unaided they find out what they can do with a wooden block or a ball or a shaker. Physical dexterity then allows fuller exploration of scrunchy material, paper or anything within reach. As babies continue to explore the world in this way their understanding and enjoyment are enhanced by warm caregivers who know how to be partners in their play helping them to hold something the right way or showing them how to push or pull something; always watching over them yet allowing them ‘space’ so that they can enjoy some independence whilst keeping safe.  Babies and young children love to play with anything from their fingers and toes, to their toys, as well as with sounds and with adults and children. When young children play they learn at the same time, so play is a very important way for children to learn. If you watch very young children playing you will notice that they don’t always need other children or adults because they are quite happy playing alone, provided they can see and hear others nearby. When babies play, their whole bodies are involved in reaching, grasping, rolling and touching things. As they become more mobile and they gain control over their bodies babies enjoy putting things together such as piling blocks on top of one another or banging balls together, or filling and emptying containers. Two year olds love to pretend, basing their play on imitating things they have seen you, or other people do, like vacuuming, talking on the telephone or playing a trumpet. When they play like this they don’t always need the real thing, as they will make do with anything that they can adapt to their pretend play. By the time they are moving towards their third birthday children begin to play with others more, and increasingly enjoy playing with other children.  Babies and young children also enjoy looking at books, listening to stories and rhymes and joining in with songs. As they hear and join in with stories, songs and rhymes and look at books, young children become familiar with different sounds and words, and they begin to anticipate events. Babies and young children are learning all the time. They learn through looking, listening, touching, tasting, investigating, exploring, experimenting and through playing and talking. This means that young children need to have opportunities to:  • look at interesting things such as birds, animals, plants, trees, mobiles, shells, stones, boxes, tubes, mirrors  • listen to a range of sounds such as songs, rhymes, jingles, stories, music  • touch a variety of objects – hard, soft, bumpy, smooth, rough, cold, warm  • taste a range of flavours such as those in fruit, milk, vegetables, bread  • investigate things that open, close, float, sink, twist, turn  • explore objects such as large boxes, things that make noises, things that move  • experiment with water, sand, clay, dough, paint, glue, felt pens  • play for uninterrupted periods of time, alone or alongside others, with help from adults, and in their own way  • talk to other children and adults and to have their efforts rewarded  Play and learning cannot be divided during the earliest years because as children are finding out about what things do when they touch them and what they can do when sitting, crawling, cruising, clambering, climbing, standing, reaching, pulling, pushing and so on they are also gaining mastery and control of their bodies – so play is learning. At the same time the sounds and words and gestures that they have experienced in interactions with others help babies to understand ways of relating to others and whilst they will have had great fun blowing raspberries or squealing with delight when somebody has played peek-a-boo with them they have also begun to learn social and emotional skills which will help their development as people. Young children soak up the atmosphere around them and are affected and can be upset if others are depressed or sad so it would be fair to say that they are learning about emotions right from the start. And by the time a child is a year old their understanding of language is growing rapidly. |

1. There are many ways that children enjoy playing in an early years setting. One of the most common forms of play is the ‘**home corner’**. Whilst this may seem like an everyday play activity, it holds a rich importance in an early years setting. Research has shown that it can support literacy, numeracy, communication and social and emotional development.



**Activity**

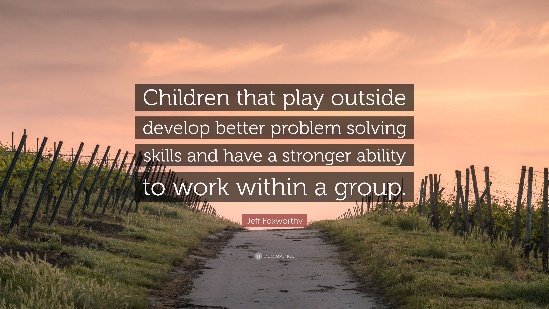
Read through the following journal article and present a **detailed mind map** of the importance of the ‘home corner’. You will also need to do **your own independent research** to support your mind map information.

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| **Nursery World Journal (Jan 2019)**  **‘Home and Away’**  Whether it is playing mothers and fathers in the home or superheroes battling villains in a magical land, role play has always been a crucial part of children’s play and development. Schools are increasingly aware of the importance of this kind of imaginative play, and opportunities for it have opened up as settings dedicate more time to outdoor play. However, schools also face barriers in their delivery of this vital part of provision. ‘Although there have been some real developments in practice because of the outdoor emphasis, there is still pressure to develop the school readiness agenda,’ says Professor Sue Rogers at the Institute of Education, University College London. ‘Opportunities for play are getting smaller in some schools,’ agrees early years trainer Alistair Bryce-Clegg. ‘Once you have done the register, then phonics, then assembly, then PE, play is squeezed. In lots of places, the issue is thinking that attainment happens only through adult-led, table-top activities.’  Even young babies engage in mimicry and imitative play, but by around the age of four, children’s imaginative play becomes more complex, expanding a simple premise like a birthday party with their own experience and imagination. Their creativity, detail, use of language and social interaction are all increasing significantly. ‘Very young children need more props in their play, and these must be realistic – they do a lot of imitative play and are just beginning to imagine that a banana is a telephone, for example,’ says Professor Rogers. ‘As they move into Reception, more open-ended resources come into their own and their imagination and social skills develop so they can imagine what it is like to be someone else. ‘Their play becomes richer as they are able to combine their own experiences with those of other children.’ The benefits of role play include the development of:  ■ imagination and storytelling  ■problem-solving skills  ■understanding of mathematical concepts  ■ language and communication  ■self-regulation through negotiation co-operation and conflict resolution as children agree the roles and rules of play  ■gross and fine motor skills.  Role play also enables children to:  ■ take risks in a safe environment  ■express feelings  ■ learn about other cultures  ■engage in sustained shared thinking.  Role play is particularly important for a child’s social and personal development. ‘There is a social dimension to role play, as the best role play is with others – you learn social skills around taking another person’s perspective,’ says Professor Rogers. ‘By the age of four or five, children understand that if they don’t play by the rules being set up in the fantasy game, their friends won’t want to play anymore, so there is learning around behaviour and social interaction as well as storytelling and the language it might reveal.’ Judith Twani, assistant head teacher and associate of Early Excellence, believes role play is especially important for children learning English as an additional language. ‘A home corner can provide real everyday vocabulary for them to get hold of and use in a relaxed way,’ she says. Adults need to recognise too when not to interfere in children’s play. ‘If you can see a child is immersed and in character, there is no need for us to interfere,’ says Sherise Richardson, vice-principal at Castle Hill Infant School in Suffolk. Far better sometimes to just observe, says Professor Rogers. ‘You get a lot of insight into a child’s speech and language development, and you may be able to pick up on their interests for learning opportunities later on.’  Rightly, the home corner is often the cornerstone of classroom role-play. Early years teachers can feel pressure from senior leadership to change it to a travel agent’s or a café depending on the term’s topic, but a permanent home corner is important, says Ms Twani.‘Home is the one thing all children have in common,’ she explains. ‘It is better to have a permanent home corner which you enhance, so it becomes a home celebrating Chinese New Year, rather than a Chinese restaurant.’ While home corners stocked with very open-ended resources are becoming more popular, Ms Twani prefers well-equipped realistic home corners over deconstructed versions. ‘I rarely see them done well,’ she says. ‘Of course, every classroom needs to have things children can create from loose parts, and we know children will create their own role play from these open-ended resources, but I’d rather have fabrics, tubes and so on as well as a home corner, not instead of.’  Specific themed role-play areas, such as a doctor’s, dentist or shop, can be created in response to children’s current interests or experiences. Continuous provision can also be enhanced easily to reflect their interests. ‘Again, there is a responsibility to be more proactive here,’ says Mr Dubiel. ‘An estate agent might not be somewhere a child has been nor understands. Visiting one in the locality would both broaden the child’s experience and also enhance the level of play within it because it would have a real “experienced” context. ‘Have a box of hairdressing resources, a pets’ box, a box of summer things,’ says Ms Twani. ‘And have coats, hats and wellies, not fairies and superheroes, otherwise they become obsessed with being princesses place they feel comfortable.’ Role play provides an invaluable means for children to consolidate their understanding of knowledge and skills through meaningful experiences, or to try out new ideas in a safe and familiar environment. When considering how to plan and resource role-play areas, Jan Dubiel, national director of Early Excellence, believes settings need to focus on children’s interests and experiences and acknowledge also their responsibility in introducing new ideas and situations in meaningful ways. ‘Children cannot develop an interest in something that they don’t know about,’ he says. ‘Some children start school with very limited experiences, and practitioners have a role to play in broadening and deepening their experiences, so there are opportunities – and responsibilities – for extending children’s experiences and knowledge of the world around them.’ It is also important to recognise that children will constantly want to play out scenarios that may be inspired by, say, recent experiences, books or computer games. So, says Mr Dubiel, ‘It’s vital that settings provide well-equipped continuous provision, including lots of open-ended resources, such as blocks and loose parts, so children have the spaces and means to create scenarios that support and extend their learning, understanding and knowledge.’ Thoughtful resourcing enables practitioners to maximise the learning opportunities within children’s role-play scenarios. ‘In the home corner, you can include a timer, clock, different types of measuring cups, so it is reflecting how maths is used in real life,’ says Ms Twani. ‘Have the book area next to the home corner so it looks like a lounge, with a couch and uplighter, and children engage emotionally with it as part of the home corner experience. Include recipe books, and catalogues, and have a whiteboard on the fridge, a calendar on the wall, providing writing opportunities that are meaningful.  In terms of technology, think about providing little angle lamps, or even a little vacuum cleaner that really works. |

1. Play and resources are often grouped into five different categories, each one has a particular benefit to children’s development. These categories are physical, imaginative, creative and construction.

Find a definition and an example for each of the 5 categories in the table below.

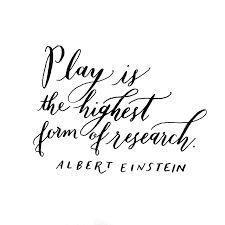
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| **Play Type** | **Definition** | **Example of this type of play.** |
| **Physical Play** |  |  |
| **Imaginative Play** |  |  |
| **Sensory Play** |  |  |
| **Creative and Design Play** |  |  |
| **Construction Play** |  |  |

1. Forest schools have their origins in Scandinavian countries, which have vast woodlands. The idea behind Forest schools is that by playing out in the woodlands and learning skills such as building a campfire will help children to develop their confidence and social skills. Forest School is an inspirational process that offers **ALL** learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees. Forest School is a specialised learning approach that sits within and complements the wider context of outdoor and woodland education. At Forest School all participants are viewed as: equal, unique and valuable, competent to explore & discover, entitled to experience appropriate risk and challenge, entitled to choose, and to initiate and drive their own learning and development, entitled to experience regular success, entitled to develop positive relationships with themselves and other people, entitled to develop a strong, positive relationship with their natural world. This learner-centred approach interweaves with the ever-changing moods and marvels, potential and challenges of the natural world through the seasons to fill every Forest School session and programme with discovery and difference.

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| **Activity 1:**  To develop your knowledge further about the Forest school approach, watch both video clips that show how children have benefitted from this type of play.  [**https://youtu.be/9zat9ef1vHo**](https://youtu.be/9zat9ef1vHo)  [**https://youtu.be/xOdAmwif2Kc**](https://youtu.be/xOdAmwif2Kc) |
| **Reflection on videos:**   * *What do you think the benefits are of children playing outdoors to indoors?* * *What do you think is the biggest benefit of Forest school for children?* * *What two things have you discovered about Forest school approach?* |
| **Activity 2:**  An important attribute of an early year’s worker is to be creative. Please can you create a poster A3 or A4 size that is very engaging and colourful? It must contain the following information:   * What is a Forest School? * The benefits of a Forest School. * Ideas and example of activities that can take place in a Forest School. |

1. To consolidate your learning for week 2 you need to create a PPT presentation for an open evening in a local nursery called ‘***Happy Stones’***.

The information on the PPT will be used by the Early Years co-ordinator in the setting to explain to parents about the importance of play in their nursery. Be as *creative* as possible and use internet resources and your learning from this week to give lots of detail.



You must include:

1. A definition of the word ‘play’.
2. An explanation of the types of play in the setting.
3. A description of how the setting uses a ‘home corner’ for role-play.
4. A description of the types of outdoor play available.
5. An explanation of the overall benefits of play for children who attend the nursery in relation to literacy, numeracy, communication, social and emotional development.