



## Play policy

### Definition

Through play, children explore social, material and imaginary worlds and their relationship with them, elaborating all the while a flexible range of responses to the challenges they encounter. By playing children learn and develop as individuals and as members of the community. Play can be fun or serious.

### Purpose

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. It is also a key component of a healthy lifestyle, enabling good physical, emotional, mental and social development.

The right to play is enshrined in Article 31 of UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991.

### Procedure

OSCARS endorses the Charter for Children's Play and operates in accordance with the Playwork Principles.

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 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.

**By following the seven best play objectives Oscars aims to:**

1. Extend the choice and control that children have over their play, the freedom they enjoy and the satisfaction they gain from it.
2. Recognise the child's need to test boundaries and respond positively to that need.
3. Manage the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children safe from harm.
4. Maximise the range of play opportunities.
5. Foster independence and self-esteem.
6. Foster children's respect for others and offer opportunities for social interaction.
7. Foster the child's wellbeing, healthy growth and development, knowledge and understanding, creativity and capacity to learn.

**Facilitating play**

We support and facilitate play by:

- Providing an environment, which is safe and suitable for playing in, aiming to create a varied and interesting environment that stimulates social, physical, creative, emotional and intellectual play. We allow children freedom of creative expression, particularly in artistic or creative play. We make outdoor play available every day unless the weather is particularly bad.
- Providing a range of equipment, resources and activities that are based on children's interests and supports children's needs to ensure all children enjoy themselves. We involve children in planning to reflect their own interests and ideas and we plan activities to develop children's natural curiosity and imagination. We encourage children to request additional or alternative equipment as they choose, and if a request is refused, explain why.
- Staff in OSCARS recognise the importance of free play with minimal intervention whilst keeping children safe from harm. We do not expect children to be occupied at all times.
- OSCARS staff intervene in play only when necessary: to reduce risks of accident or injury, to encourage social skills or when invited by children to play. We will give children advance warning when an activity or game is due to end.

- OSCARS will consult with children and parents about OSCARS in a variety of ways on a regular basis. This includes the children's wish wall, observations and discussions, newsletters, parents evenings and A.G.M.
- OSCARS supports staff to undertake Playwork training and to keep up to date with developments in Playwork
- OSCARS will regularly evaluate practice and resources and keep an inventory, which will be updated when required.

### **Play areas and equipment**

- All indoor and outdoor play areas are checked and risk assessed daily before the arrival of children in accordance of our ***Risk Assessment procedure.***
- Children are involved in selecting additional equipment and resources for use at OSCARS.
- The resources used at OSCARS promote positive images of different ethnic backgrounds, religions, and abilities, in accordance with our ***Equal Opportunities policy.***
- OSCARS has a selection of fiction and non-fiction books, suitable for all ages.

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| <b>Date first adopted by OSCARS management committee</b> | <b>23.02.2015</b>  |
| <b>Date of latest review</b>                             | <b>23.02.2015</b>  |
| <b>Review signed on behalf of OSCARS</b>                 | <b>C. Mumby</b>    |
| <b>Position</b>  | <b>Chairperson</b> |