

Foundation Phase Good Practice Case Study

Setting	Lullabyz Nursery, Newport.
Information provided by	Nicola Reed- Nursery Director and Manager.
Date	August 2019
Focus of case study	Risky play.

Information on the setting.

The nursery is owned by Nicola Reed who is also one of the managers. Nicola trained to be primary school teacher at university, and since has continued to develop her skills and experience of working with children and is dedicated to providing the highest quality of care. Lullabyz Nursery uses the slogan 'Childcare at its Best', aiming for high quality provision through continuous improvement to ensure children "have a flying start in life and the best possible basis for their future growth and development".

The nursery spans over two floors and has been specifically designed to provide large amounts of floor space in which children can explore their creative sides. Every room in the nursery is bright and welcoming and has been designed to challenge and excite the children. With planned topics and activities, the children are encouraged to learn through play. Stimulating activities are planned by qualified teachers and cover the Seven Areas of Learning from the Foundation Phase. The grounds are undergoing continuous development and have been specifically adapted to create a safe 'outdoor' classroom for the children to explore and be accessed in all weathers.

Context and background

The ground floor of the nursery has been designed as a large open plan space that allows children to move freely through different areas and become independent learners, whilst following the principles of the Foundation Phase. The children have access to a role play area, book corner and writing area and an 'investigation station' leading to their outdoor space, ICT area, carpet area for 'free choice' play activities as well as a creative/messy area that doubles up as their dining area. The children have direct access to the enclosed outdoor space which is used as an extra classroom where they are encouraged to explore, discover and learn through play.

Foundation Phase Weekly planning is displayed in the waiting room along with the interactive planning board and the children's planning ideas. Lullabyz produce their planning according to a suggestion from their local authority early years team to follow three strands; 'Seize the Season', 'Special Days' and 'In the moment', in order to secure continuous engagement from the children in a natural manner.



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Newport Early Years Education forms part of the Education Achievement Service (EAS), a consortium aimed at raising education standards in South East Wales. The team offers professional advice support and guidance and will work with schools and non-maintained settings to develop and embed the vision for Foundation Phase. One aspect of provision used to achieve this development is Foundation Phase Leader network meetings to disseminate good practice followed by specific training related to Foundation Phase pedagogy. It was through this provision that staff witnessed the use of 'Risky Play' at another nursery during a good practice sharing visit and were signposted to training regarding 'Risky Play'.

Initial process

Upon deciding they wanted to explore 'Risky play' and introduce it within the pre-school room, Nicola and her team sat down to discuss their next steps. Within their next application for the Early Years Pupil Development Grant, they included resources to support 'Risky play' within the nursery, including a workbench and primary work working tools such as hammers, nails and personal protective equipment. Research was carried out by the qualified teaching staff to inform their planning for the inclusion of 'Risky play' and 'loose parts' activities and provision. Risk assessments were completed by the staff and children's parents received a letter home explaining the plans for the new activities, the benefits of 'risky play' and a permission form for parents to sign and return to the nursery.

An additional section was added to the nursery contract and statement of purpose. New admissions to the nursery, where the child is very young and the parents rescind permission within the contract, are re-consulted when the child reaches the age of 'Risky play' to update the permission if possible.

Implementation within the Nursery

The children are given a wide range of opportunities to take part in risky play, including;

- Cooking sessions where knives, graters, sharp utensils and cooking equipment, such as halogen ovens, grills and portable hobs are used.
- Continuous provision within the outdoor area that includes large loose parts- crates, different shaped pieces of wood and ladders.
- Enhanced provision within the creative area that includes loose parts available for decorative purposes - paperclips, pins, buttons, pegs.
- Focused tasks within the maths corner using hammers and pins to fix shapes onto cork boards.
- Focused task within the woodwork area, where children can access pins/nails, screwdrivers/hammers and personal protective equipment (PPE).

The above activities and provision provide children with the opportunities to develop their skills in a wide range of aspects- making choices, problem solving, assessing risk, social skills, creativity and resilience. Children are given the responsibility to experiment with their ability to assess risk levels and determine what is and what is not safe. This responsibility in turn develops their independence skills too.



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Impact

The development of independence has been the biggest positive impact observed by the staff at the nursery, following the inclusion of 'Risky play' within the continuous and enhanced provision and focused activities. The children are more aware of risk themselves when taking part in activities and have been more inclined to assess the risk and help themselves before asking for help from adults. Risky play has also increased the amount of problem solving and team work witnessed within the nursery. Children are partnering up together to build ramps, dens, structures etc with the loose parts and then role playing with their creation. This enthusiasm with construction and creativity has developed the children's use of their imagination to bring context and purpose to the play, using inspiration from nursery themes and topics and their own personal interests to create castles, lorries, boats, bridges etc. to enhance their role playing. The inclusion of loose parts and risky play within the creative area has rocketed participation, especially from boys. The opportunity to use pins, hammers, small parts etc. has enticed children into creative activities, where interest was minimal before. Within their food preparation and cooking sessions, children were previously missing out on the entire cooking process as they were unable to enter the nursery kitchen. They would prepare a dish and then not see it again until it was completed. Now the children are able to witness the changes that take place with the raw ingredients to create the food and meals that they consume, developing their knowledge and understanding of where meals come from and the entire cooking process. The inclusion of 'Risky play' within the nursery has broadened the children's learning experiences whilst developing their skills across the seven areas of learning within the Foundation Phase framework and providing a wealth of opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills too.

Future plans and development.

Lullabyz are passionate about sharing their advocacy for 'Risky play' within the early year's sector and have become a leader setting with Newport to share good practice amongst their fellow childcare providers through supporting mentoring nursery visits and welcoming visits to Lullabyz. They also hold an abundance of sharing events at the nursery, both with parents and schools. Parents are invited in to the nursery to take part in cooking sessions with their children. Children from local schools are invited in to work with the nursery children on a range of projects from creative art sessions to role play and storytelling.

After witnessing the benefits it has had on the children within the nursery, Lullabyz are extremely enthusiastic to continue to develop their use of 'Risky play' and ensure continuous improvement. Nikki Cardwell, Foundation Phase lead has attended 'Risky Play' training and would like to see their current focused activities as continuous provision within the Foundation Phase Nursery class, with a hope to capitalise on the current success of 'Risky play' within the nursery.