

Inclusive play in early years

Inclusive play is a way of providing good quality, balanced and meaningful play opportunities for all children.

Inclusive play is not just about inclusion or about something special we do for particular children.

“Equally important is the provision of high-quality play opportunities to children regardless of their needs and abilities. While children won’t always be able to participate in all available activities, an inclusive project should offer all children a real choice of play activities.”

Ludvigsen, Creegan and Mills, 2005

What is the value of inclusive play?

Inclusive play welcomes and celebrates richness and diversity and creates an atmosphere of trust and acceptance. Children’s experiences are unique. The benefits of inclusive play are wide and long-lasting.

“Every child is entitled to rest and play and to have the chance to join in a wide range of activities including cultural and artistic activities.” (Article 31 of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child: UNCRC)



How does inclusive play support the 'unique child'?

Each child must be at the centre of your practice. Individual children should feel included and supported. Inclusive play promotes a positive sense of self-esteem and sense of identity and offers children the ability to exercise their rights under UNCRC.

How does inclusive play support 'enabling environments'?

Inclusive play offers your children a richer play environment and evolves according to their changing needs and interests. It offers a sense of place and is supported through observation-led planning.

How does inclusive play support 'positive relationships'?

Inclusive play provides respect for the culture of children’s play and recognises that all individuals are welcomed and valued.

As a practitioner, you are a role model for the children and should offer children opportunities to share and discuss attitudes, assumptions and stereotypes. Settings should demonstrate inclusive behaviours with families as well, supporting their individual needs.



What can practitioners do?

- Provide a wide range of teaching strategies, based on individual children's learning needs
- Provide a wide range of opportunities to motivate, support and develop children and help them to be involved, concentrate and learn effectively
- Plan for each child's individual care and learning requirements including additional or different provisions required to meet particular individual needs
- Be prepared to challenge children's misunderstandings or assumptions by reinforcing value and respect for others
- Enable children to be consulted effectively.

Find out more

Contact our training team for Inclusion support for your setting on 01484 407070 or email training@ndna.org.uk