

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Top tips: Free flow play

Free flow, as the name suggests, offers children the opportunity to move freely between different play areas, including the outdoors. Free flow prioritises children's autonomy to choose where and how they engage with activities, promoting independence, exploration and self-directed learning. Here are some tips that will help you demonstrate that you value children's voices and choices in their own learning journey:



- Ensure both indoors and outdoors areas are safe and supervised; remove hazards and regularly inspect and carry out risk assessments
- Try and visualise how the space/resources will be used to anticipate what will be required to facilitate access, children's choices and play
- Equip children with the skills to identify risks and manage their own safety. Promote calculated risk-taking during outdoor play such as climbing, balancing and exploring nature. Provide opportunities for children to take risks and problem solve
- Offer a variety of stimulating environments that ignite curiosity and exploration, e.g. sensory areas, construction materials, creative spaces etc.
- Ensure flexibility in how resources are used by children, avoid putting limits on where and how children can access resources. Encourage their ideas and creativity by excluding limiting statements such as, "You're not supposed to do that with ..."
- Ensure children and adults have access to appropriate clothing such as warm clothing for cold weather, waterproofs for the rain and sun hats for hot weather, to keep them comfortable and protected. Teach and encourage children to be independent when dressing and undressing
- Facilitate smooth transitions by establishing clear rules and routines, e.g. putting tools away after use, washing paint brushes, etc.
- Regularly observe children's interests and interactions. Engage with them by asking open-ended questions, providing materials that match their interests and, when invited, join in with their play
- Respect individual preferences and give encouragement and support to those who need it, e.g. if children have had little or no experience of playing in the rain, they may need to be gently shown its delights – splashing in puddles, looking for rainbows etc.

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NDNA products to support you with these tips

- Development Zone – Continuous Provision online course: <https://ndna.org.uk/product/continuous-provision/>
- England factsheet – Continuous Provision: <https://ndna.org.uk/product/continuous-provision-england/>

And more resources at www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna