

# Understanding the development of a child.

## R020

LO2

UNDERSTAND THE BENEFITS OF LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

# Scenario for the Assignment

You have been given the opportunity to work at a crèche in your local area for children from birth to five years. The organiser knows that you are studying a child development course and has asked you to produce materials and plan different play activities to support the knowledge and understanding of the other volunteers.

Your materials must include:

- the physical, intellectual and social developmental norms
- types of play and their benefits.

Play activities instructions:

- plan different play activities for a chosen developmental area
- carry out and record the play activities with a child
- compare the child with expected development norms
- evaluate the play activities.

**Read through all of the tasks carefully, so that you know what you will need to do to complete this assignment.**

## Task 2: Benefits of learning through play

---

This task covers all of Learning Outcome 2.

You must produce information, in your own words, in the form of a presentation, with notes, to give to the volunteers about:

- the types of play
- the benefits of learning through play.

**Total marks for Task 2: 12 marks**

# KEY TERMS

Explanations of the key terms used within this unit, in the context of this unit

Key term	Explanation
Centile chart	Used to plot the growth measurements (height and weight) of babies and children. This compares their growth to the standard norms to track their physical growth.
Co-operative play	Play which takes account of others actions within their play together.
Creative play	Where children experiment with materials, music, imagination.
Development	It is the process of learning new skills.
Developmental norms	Recognised stages in patterns of development.
Hazard	This is something that could cause harm. For example toys with sharp edges, or with small parts that could be swallowed.
Holistic development	Means the whole child, seeing that all of the different aspects of development interrelate to make each child a unique individual.
Intellectual development	Development of the mind, such as: learning to talk, understanding, memory, concentration, reasoning, problem solving, imagination, reading books, asking questions, telling stories, listening, and following instructions.
Independence	Developing the skills and abilities to be less dependent on others.
Manipulative play	This involves children using their hands, for example to move, turn or screw things to make them fit.
Milestones	Skills that babies and children have mastered which are linked to age. The idea being that the child has reached a certain point in their development.
Motor skills	Refers to movement skills and abilities, there are two types of motor skills: <b>Gross motor skills</b> – use and development of the large muscle groups. Large movements involving the limbs. <b>Fine motor skills</b> – the small muscles used in precise movements involving hand-eye co-ordination. Sometimes referred to as manipulative skills. Small movements involving the hands.
Observation	The process of watching accurately what is happening, e.g. watching how a child plays.
Physical development	The way in which the body increases in skill and complexity.
Physical play	Play that involves the muscles and moving around, such as football or a climbing frame.
Physical growth	This refers to an increase in the body's size.
Reflexes	Inborn, automatic movements. Babies are born with primitive reflexes, (grasping, sucking, rooting, etc.) which protect them over the first few months of life and which then gradually disappear.
Role play	Where a child pretends to do or be something. For example driving a car or being a nurse.
Safety strategies	Ways of reducing the risk or likelihood of danger, for example using round ended safety scissors.
Self-esteem	The way a child feels about themselves.
Social development	Refers to the growth of a child's relationships with others.
Solitary play	Where the child plays alone, exploring and experimenting with objects.

## Unit: R020 Introduction to development

### **LO2: Understand the benefits of learning through play**

<u>Connection phase</u>  Read through the 'Getting started' section on page 151 and complete the activity in your books	<u>Activation phase</u> Keywords: Manipulative play Solitary play Co-operative play Imaginative play Physical play Creative play  Read pages 152 - 156
<u>Consolidation phase</u>  1. Attempt the 'Case study' on page 156  2. Types of play: List as many specific examples of types of play as you can.  3. Now look back over pages 152-156 to see if there are any you have missed. If so, add them to your list.	<u>Demonstration phase</u>  1. Define the keywords 2. Describe each type of play in your own words – you can use the worksheet in the booklet to write out your ideas 3. Give examples for each type of play – explain how each example works 4. Attempt the activity on page 153

## **Unit R020: Understand the development of a child from birth to five years**

### **Learning through play**

#### ***Learner Activity***

##### **Introduction**

Completing this activity will help you to further develop your knowledge and understanding of the different types of play and the developmental benefits for a child.

You will have the opportunity to carry out research and select examples of toys or activities to represent the different types of play. You will explain how each toy or activity promotes development at different stages from birth to 5 years.

##### **Activity 1**

Your task is to apply your learning about play by producing an information booklet for new parents.

The title of the booklet is: '**Learning through play**'.

The booklet is to start with descriptions of the different types of play. Recall your learning from previous activities to write the definitions in the booklet provided by your tutor.

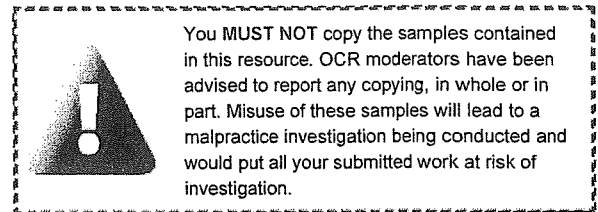
##### **Activity 2**

Your Tutor will hold a class discussion about the benefits of play and how the benefits can be physical, intellectual, social and/or creative.

In pairs, complete the 'Benefits of Play' table. List the benefits under the correct heading. Check with your tutor if you are not sure.

# CHILD DEVELOPMENT

## Learner Activity



### Activity 3

To complete your information booklet for parents you will need to find examples of toys or activities for each type of play and explain how a baby's or child's developmental progress will benefit.

Research examples of toys/activities to represent each type of play. You will need to find two examples for each type of play.

**For each type of play** you must complete your booklet with the following:

- two pictures of different toys/activities, each should be for a different age of child between birth and 5 years
- state the age of child each toy/activity is suitable for
- give an explanation of the development benefits for the child.

Sources of information for your research could include:

#### Textbooks:

- Meggitt, C. 2009. OCR Home Economics for GCSE: Child Development. Hodder Education.
- Minett, P. 2010. Child Care and Development 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. Hodder Education.
- Meggitt, C. 2012. Child Development: An Illustrated Guide: Birth to 19 Years. Pearson Education.

#### For cutting out pictures:

- toy retailer magazines/leaflets/catalogues
- mother and baby magazines.

#### Websites:

<http://www.elc.co.uk/> - Early Learning Centre. Has a 'how it helps my child' feature for each toy, relating it to aspects of development.

[http://www.mothercare.com/toys/cat\\_toys.default.sc.html](http://www.mothercare.com/toys/cat_toys.default.sc.html) - Toys buying guide. Advice on choosing age/stage appropriate toys to encourage development.

<http://www.johnlewis.com/toys/c5000012?rdr=1> - Wide range of toys that can be selected by age group or type of play.

[http://www.argos.co.uk/static/BuyingGuide/bgTrail/preschooltoys\\_00132.htm](http://www.argos.co.uk/static/BuyingGuide/bgTrail/preschooltoys_00132.htm) - Argos. Buying guide linked to development and toy safety advice.

## **Different Types of Play:**

### **Manipulative play:**

--

### **Co-operative play:**

--

### **Solitary play:**

--

### **Physical play:**

--

### **Creative play:**

--



Benefits of Play:

Physical	Intellectual	Social	Creativity

## Examples of types of play and their benefits

### Manipulative play

Toy/activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Toy/activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Developmental benefits:

## Cooperative play

Toy/activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Toy/activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Developmental benefits:

## Solitary play

Toy/activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Toy/activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Developmental benefits:

**Physical play**

<div>Toy/activity: _____</div> <div>Age: _____</div>
<div>Toy/activity: _____</div> <div>Age: _____</div>
<div>Developmental benefits:</div>

## Creative play

Toy/activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Toy/activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Developmental benefits:

## Activity 2

Benefits of play: link the benefit to physical, intellectual, social and/or creative areas of development.

Some examples of the benefits of play include:

Physical	Intellectual	Social	Creativity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• develops gross motor skills</li><li>• develops fine motor skills</li><li>• helps co-ordination of movement</li><li>• helps hand-eye co-ordination</li><li>• exercises the muscles</li><li>• develops strength</li><li>• develops fitness</li><li>• develops the senses:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- sight</li><li>- sound</li><li>- hearing</li><li>- touch</li><li>- taste.</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• communication skills</li><li>• language skills</li><li>• mental stimulation</li><li>• problem solving</li><li>• counting</li><li>• develops ideas and concepts</li><li>• learn about cause and effect</li><li>• develops memory</li><li>• helps concentration.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• learn about sharing</li><li>• understanding others</li><li>• co-operation</li><li>• make good relationships</li><li>• develop self-care skills – knife and fork, brushing teeth</li><li>• social skills – getting on with others.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• develops imagination</li><li>• helps express feelings about people, objects, events</li><li>• develops ideas/concepts</li><li>• improves confidence</li><li>• boosts self-esteem.</li></ul>

## Activity 3

You need to work independently to research the information needed to complete your booklets. You can use magazines or leaflets, cut and stick as you wish.

You need to:

- Carry out research to find examples of toys or activities to represent each type of play. Suggested sources of information are listed below.
- You need to find two pictures for each type of play, for two different ages from birth – five years.
- Write an explanation of the developmental benefits.

### Example: Manipulative play

Toy/activity: **shape sorter**



Age: **18 months – 2 years**

Developmental benefits:

**Intellectual:**

- purposeful exploration of shapes
- learning new shapes
- problem solving – how to sort
- cause and effect – if I put the shape in the hole it disappears – but it is still there even though I can't see it.

**Physical:**

- hand-eye co-ordination.

**Social:**

- If played alongside an adult – communication skills; learning to say and recognise names of shapes.

Further examples can be found in:

Meggitt, C. 2009. OCR Home Economics for GCSE: Child Development Hodder Education. Pages 259 – 262

### Sources of information learners could use include:

**Textbooks:**

- Meggitt, C. 2009. OCR Home Economics for GCSE: Child Development. Hodder Education.
- Minett, P. 2010. Child Care and Development 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. Hodder Education.
- Meggitt, C. 2012. Child Development: An Illustrated Guide: Birth to 19 Years. Pearson Education.

**To cut out pictures:**

- toy retailer magazines/leaflets/catalogues
- mother and baby magazines.



## Websites:

<http://www.elc.co.uk/> - Early Learning Centre. Has a 'how it helps my child' feature for each toy, relating it to aspects of development.

[http://www.mothercare.com/toys/cat\\_toys,default,sc.html](http://www.mothercare.com/toys/cat_toys,default,sc.html) - Toys buying guide. Advice on choosing age/stage appropriate toys to encourage development.

<http://www.johnlewis.com/toys/c5000012?rdr=1> - Wide range of toys that can be selected by age group or type of play.

[http://www.argos.co.uk/static/BuyingGuide/bgTrail/preschooltoys\\_00132.htm](http://www.argos.co.uk/static/BuyingGuide/bgTrail/preschooltoys_00132.htm) - Argos. Buying guide linked to development and toy safety advice.



We'd like to know your view on the resources we produce. By clicking on 'Like' or 'Dislike' you can help us to ensure that our resources work for you. When the email template pops up please add additional comments if you wish and then just click 'Send'. Thank you.

If you do not currently offer this OCR qualification but would like to do so, please complete the Expression of Interest Form which can be found here: [www.ocr.org.uk/expression-of-interest](http://www.ocr.org.uk/expression-of-interest)

### OCR Resources: *the small print*

OCR's resources are provided to support the teaching of OCR specifications, but in no way constitute an endorsed teaching method that is required by the Board, and the decision to use them lies with the individual teacher. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the content, OCR cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions within these resources.

© OCR 2016 - This resource may be freely copied and distributed, as long as the OCR logo and this message remain intact and OCR is acknowledged as the originator of this work. OCR acknowledges the use of the following content: Page 12: Child playing with shape sorter – CroMary/Shutterstock.com

Please get in touch if you want to discuss the accessibility of resources we offer to support delivery of our qualifications: [resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk](mailto:resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk)

## Learning outcome 2

# Understand the benefits of learning through play

### About this Learning outcome

To develop well, children need to learn and understand many things, and they learn best through play, which they love to do. When children are given good, fun play experiences, they will learn naturally *and* have a great time.

This will encourage a love of learning and discovering new things, which will be of huge benefit to children when they move on to formal learning at school. In this learning outcome, you will learn about the different types of play and the benefits of this for children, including the physical, intellectual, social and creative benefits.

### Assessment criteria

In this learning outcome you will cover:

#### 2.1 Types of play:

- manipulative play
- co-operative play
- solitary play
- physical play
- creative play.

#### 2.2 Benefits of play:

- physical
- intellectual
- social/social skills
- creative.

### Getting started

Think back to when you were a young child. Thought-storm the ways in which you liked to play. You can include activities such as dancing or playing hide and seek. You can also include playing with favourite toys, such as dolls or a train set.

Use a coloured pen and underline all of the activities and toys that you played with alone. This type of play is known as **solitary play**. In a different coloured pen, underline all of the activities and toys that you played with alongside other children. This is known as **co-operative play**. If there are some activities or toys that you played with both solitarily and co-operatively, underline them in both colours.



### Key terms

**Solitary play** when a child plays alone.

**Co-operative play** when a child plays alongside one or more other children.

## 2.1 Types of play

Children initiate play instinctively or on impulse because they find it enjoyable, exciting and fun. To a certain extent, the way in which children play is influenced by the activities and play resources they have available. But children can find ways to play virtually anywhere and with anything. You may have seen children finding ways to play in the supermarket or when waiting for a bus.

Children enjoy and learn from different types of play in very different ways. By understanding these, parents and carers can provide a broad range of play activities to ensure that a child's development is well rounded.

### Manipulative play

**Manipulative play** (see page 153 for definition) occurs when children engage in an activity that involves making delicate operating movements with their fingers. Learning and practising these fine movements is part of a child's physical development.

At first, a young child's manipulative movements are crude – young babies use their whole hand to pick up objects such as rattles. But in time, they will be able to pick up smaller objects using just their index finger and thumb. Many skills that children will use throughout their lives depend on manipulative skills – for example writing and using tools.

Manipulative movements are linked to the development of vision. Children need to look carefully at the object they want to manipulate, then move their fingers accordingly – using hand-eye co-ordination.

### Puzzles, drawing and painting

Puzzles, drawing and painting are good examples of activities that require manipulative skills. Puzzle pieces need to be carefully manipulated in order for them to fit together. Children's drawings and paintings will become increasingly sophisticated as their manipulative skills improve.

### Activities that promote manipulative play

- puzzles
- mark making, such as drawing, painting, writing and chalking
- shape sorters
- threading beads
- malleable materials (materials that can be squeezed and shaped), e.g. clay, playdough, cornflour paste, jelly and modelling clay
- craft activities, e.g. collage, making recycled models, making things from paper or card (such as planes or hats)
- construction toys, e.g. blocks, interlocking bricks and popping beads
- cooking alongside adults
- gardening
- activities that require tools such as scissors, a computer mouse, utensils and cutlery.



**Figure 11.1:** Mark making promotes manipulative development.



### Key term

**Manipulative play** physical play involving delicate, operational movements made with the fingers.

### Activity

Browse a supplier of children's art and craft materials. You could do this in a shop, online or by looking at a catalogue. Make a list of the art and craft tools available that would require children to use their manipulative skills. (Only include those suitable for children aged three to five years of age.)

## Co-operative play

**Co-operative play** begins from the time children are around three years of age. It occurs when two or more children play together, interacting with one another, with shared goals in mind. A child who is playing co-operatively will be interested in the children they are playing with, as well as the activity they are doing.

### Board games

Board games and circle games (such as 'Here we go round the mulberry bush') are a very good example of co-operative play, especially when children are required to follow rules essential to playing well together, such as taking turns. Pair or group imaginary games also require co-operative play, and might involve children organising themselves into roles, for example: 'You work in the shop, and I will be the customer...'



### Good practice

Young children need plenty of support when playing co-operatively. They will at times need adults to help them manage problems or conflicts that arise due to tricky issues such as sharing, patience, give and take or handling emotions when they lose a game. Through these experiences and lots of practice, children increasingly learn to successfully play co-operatively with others.



### Good practice

It is important to have realistic expectations about young children's co-operative play. Whatever our age, we all struggle at times to get on well with our peers.

### Activities that promote co-operative play

- board games (e.g. Lotto, Snakes and ladders)
- circle games (such as 'Here we go round the mulberry bush', 'The farmer's in his den')
- playground games (e.g. 'What's the Time Mr Wolf?', 'Traffic lights')
- imaginary role play (may include props such as dressing up clothes, imaginary areas such as a home corner, or toys such as teddies or tea sets)
- imaginary play with small world toys (e.g. cars and a road play mat, a farmyard set, toy figures, a doll's house).



**Figure 11.2:** Co-operative play with small world resources. What other small world resources do you think this child would enjoy?



## Solitary play

All children, whatever their age, will frequently engage in **solitary play**, or playing on their own. At times this is probably because friends to play with are not available, but often it is their choice. When playing alone, children can set their own pace and explore their own thoughts or ideas. They may also concentrate for longer periods.

Solitary play is the first type of play that babies and young children experience. From birth until the age of around two years, children only play alone. From around two to three years of age, children will enjoy playing alongside one another at the same activity, but will not actually interact or play together – this is known as **parallel play**. From around three years of age, children begin to play co-operatively (as you learned above). At the same age, children will often engage in **onlooker play**. This means they will happily watch other children play, and may copy them. They may eventually join in, or may prefer to keep watching. Together, these different ways of playing are often referred to as the 'stages of play'.

## Imaginative play

Imaginative play is an important way in which children learn and make sense of the world. It occurs when a child acts out an experience they have had in their play, or when they pretend to be having an experience that interests them. This allows them to explore various roles in life.

## Activities that promote solitary play

- imaginary play (e.g. role play, small world play)
- puzzles
- books
- video/computer games



## Key terms

**Solitary play** when a child plays alone.

**Parallel play** when children play alongside one another but do not play together.

**Onlooker play** when a child happily watches other children at play.

## Activity

Try to arrange a visit to a playgroup (ensuring you have gained permission from your teacher and the childcare setting). Watch children of different ages playing. Can you spot examples of solitary play and co-operative play? Make a note of what children are doing while engaged in this play. In your next lesson discuss the types of play you observed with a partner.

- mark making (e.g. drawing, painting and writing)
- construction play (e.g. blocks and interlocking bricks).

## Physical play

We have looked at manipulative play, which is an aspect of **physical play**. In addition, physical play also includes:

- activities that require children to use their large motor skills – the movements they make with their arms, legs, feet or their entire bodies
- activities that develop balance and/or co-ordination
- activities that develop the **senses**
- activities that exercise the body and limbs (promoting fitness).

In order to thrive, young children need a balance between physical play opportunities and more restful activities. Many children's settings, such as nurseries and pre-schools, now allow children to move freely between indoors and outdoors during many of their play sessions. This helps children to choose when they wish to use lots of space to play physically – for example, to run or ride a tricycle.



## Key terms

**Physical play** this happens during activities in which children use their manipulative or large motor skills, develop balance or co-ordination, develop the senses or exercise the body and limbs (promoting fitness).

**Senses** sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch.

## Ball games and climbing

Ball games promote many physical skills, such as kicking, throwing, catching and bouncing balls. In later years, children will learn how to use the skills to participate in sports and team games.

As well as promoting climbing skills, climbing helps children to develop strength and fitness. It is important to allow a young child's climbing skills to develop at their own pace. Some children may feel a little anxious at first when leaving ground level.

## Activities that promote physical play

- ball games (e.g. involving kicking, throwing, catching, bouncing)
- different ways of travelling (e.g. running, jumping, skipping, hopping, rolling, crawling, climbing)
- playground equipment (e.g. slides, swings, climbing frames)
- ride-on toys and bikes
- push and pull toys
- stepping stones
- tunnels
- mini trampolines
- dancing
- feely bag games (based on touch)
- sound lotto
- gardening.

Also see page 152 for activities that promote manipulative play.

## Creative play

Children are engaged in **creative play** (see page 156 for definition) when they express themselves by responding to something that sparks their imagination. For example, a child might make something with materials or objects, for example:

- art and craft resources
- household items (such as cereal boxes or blankets)
- natural objects (such as leaves or twigs).



**Figure 11.3:** Climbing is a key physical skill for children to develop. Do you think climbing successfully impacts on a child's self-confidence?

## ? Did you know?

Young children are often more interested in the process of their creative play than in the end product. They may very much enjoy making something, but not want to keep it.

A child might also express themselves in other ways, such as:

- dancing
- singing
- making music
- making up a story.



## Good practice

Sometimes, the end product of a child's creative play may not be recognisable, but it is very important to praise their handiwork. Disapproving or making fun of a child's efforts can have a negative effect on their self-esteem and well-being. It might also discourage them from engaging in creative play, which could eventually impact on their development.



## Key term

**Creative play** this is when children express themselves by creatively responding to something that sparks their imagination.

## Music and dancing

Making music is a wonderfully creative play experience. Children can express themselves by playing musical instruments. They can also respond creatively to the music that they hear – by dancing along for instance, in their own unique way.

## Activities that promote creative play

- music
- dance
- mark making (e.g. painting, drawing, printing)
- collage
- making models (e.g. with recycled objects or malleable materials)
- sand play
- water play
- exploring nature (e.g. playing with leaves, collecting conkers, looking at shells)
- stories
- imaginary play.



## Case study

Ali works in an early years setting. He is approached by three-year-old Marlie. She is holding out a model she has made from recycled objects, including yoghurt pots and cardboard boxes. To Ali, it looks like a tower. Marlie says, 'Look at this! It is the donkey I saw on the beach ... I do not know what his name was.' Ali replies, 'So it is! Well done, Marlie. Perhaps we could think up a name for him. Have you got any ideas?'

## Questions

- 1 Do you think Ali's response was positive? Explain your reasons.
- 2 If Ali had said, 'I could not tell it was a donkey,' how might Marlie have felt?

## Activity

### Types of play

- 1 List as many specific examples of types of play as you can.
- 2 Now look back over pages 152–156 to see if there are any you have missed. If so, add them to your list.

**Unit: R020 Introduction to developing**  
**LO2: Understand the benefits of learning through play**

<p><b><u>Connection phase</u></b></p> <p>Define the following keywords:  Solitary play  Parallel play  Onlooker play  Check page 154 to correct any mistakes</p>	<p><b><u>Activation phase</u></b></p> <p>Think about the physical, intellectual and social benefits of play to a child.</p> <p>Read pages 156-159</p>
<p><b><u>Consolidation phase</u></b></p> <p>Attempt the 'Test your knowledge' section on page 160 in your books.</p> <p>Read over the assessment preparation section.</p>	<p><b><u>Demonstration phase</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How does physical play develop hand-eye co-ordination? Give an example of an activity that helps develop hand-eye co-ordination</li> <li>2. Physical play allows fitness to be promoted, how does it do this?</li> <li>3. How does intellectual play develop mental stimulation? Give an example of an activity that helps develop mental stimulation</li> <li>4. Do the same for problem solving and communication – don't forget to give examples</li> <li>5. How does social play develop the following:  Independence, confidence, sharing, self-esteem and communication?  Don't forget to give examples for each one</li> </ol>



## 2.2 Benefits of play

---

Children benefit *hugely* from play. It allows them to:

- develop and learn
- have fun
- relax
- be active.

Let's look at the developmental and learning benefits of play in more detail. These fall into four main categories: physical, intellectual, social and creative.



**Figure 11.4:** Developmental benefits of play: What area of development is being promoted here?

### Physical benefits

Physical benefits of play include the development of:

- fine manipulative skills
- large motor skills
- balance and co-ordination
- fitness and strength.

[Also see pages 154–155].

### Hand-eye co-ordination

Physical play helps children to develop hand-eye co-ordination. As children become more experienced in manipulating the objects they see, their hand-eye co-ordination becomes more sophisticated. For instance, a pre-school child will thread large beads onto string, but in their primary school years, they will be able to thread a needle.

### Promotes fitness

Physical activity promotes fitness. This is vital to children's health and well-being. Young children are built to be physically active and enjoy the opportunity to run around and move freely. Being fit and active also helps children to avoid becoming overweight.

### Intellectual benefits

The intellectual benefits of play fall into three categories: mental stimulation, problem solving and communication.

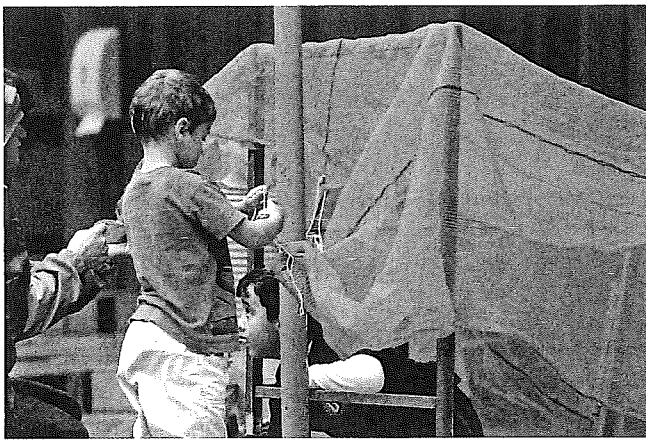
### Mental stimulation

Children can have new ideas and thoughts and explore them during play. They can also make their own discoveries. They can learn about the

world, and learn to understand concepts such as counting. They can also develop awareness of mental processes, such as reading. When high quality play activities are provided, children's **attention span** and their memory will both develop.

## Problem solving

Through play, children can experiment and test things out. For instance, a child playing at a water tray might discover which objects sink and which float. Or, through trial and error, a child might work out the best way to stick two items together, or to transport many objects from one place to another. This makes learning a real and vivid experience.



**Figure 11.5:** Through play, children can work things out.

## Communication

Play strongly promotes children's communication and language skills, especially when children spend time in a language-rich environment. This is a place (at home, or at a childcare setting perhaps), where adults and peers talk frequently with a child. They will expose them to songs, rhymes, stories and new vocabulary.

Children can also be encouraged to:

- ask questions
- listen
- follow instructions during play activities
- talk about their own experiences and ideas.

Remember that some young children will be learning more than one language through their play.



## Key term

**Attention span** the amount of time for which a child can concentrate on a particular activity.

## Social skills and benefits

Play is vital to well-being; children need it to thrive and to feel happy. Play can impact positively on children in several ways.

## Independence

When children go off to play with their peers, they are independent of their parent or carer (even if they are supervising from across the room). This is a big step for a young child. In addition, a playgroup will be many children's first experience of being cared for by someone other than a close family member. Play also helps children to master skills that foster independence. For instance, dressing up and dressing dolls help children to learn to dress themselves.

## Confidence

Successfully trying new activities and becoming increasingly independent helps children to build confidence. Many play activities specifically foster confidence – games that involve talking in a group for instance, or the act of joining in with singing and dancing. Activities that involve appropriate risk taking can also boost a child's confidence – learning to ride a bike for instance, or putting their face in the water at a swimming pool.

## Sharing

To behave in a socially acceptable way, children need to learn how to share. This is not an easy task, because it requires a child to put what is fair, or another person's feelings, above what they want themselves. In group settings, practitioners tend to spend quite a lot of time helping children to cope with sharing, and supporting them to resolve disagreements over objects desired by more than one child.

## Self-esteem

When children have positive play experiences in which their contributions, ideas and feelings are respected, there is a positive effect on their self-esteem. When a child feels good about themselves, they are likely to approach play enthusiastically, and this will influence how much they benefit from activities. Playing with both friends and adults helps children to feel accepted, loved and valued.

## Communication skills

Play promotes conversation and non-verbal communication between children, and between children and adults. Generally, children soon learn to put across their own ideas, and to understand other people's ideas – this is the basis for all shared play. Resources such as play phones and walkie-talkies can promote communication during play. (Also see Intellectual benefits, page 157).

Play also promotes social skills such as:

- taking turns
- learning to follow the rules – this includes rules that relate to socially acceptable behaviour (such as using good manners and respecting other people) and rules that relate to safety (such as no running up the slide or no jumping from the climbing frame)
- learning to get along with others.

### Activity

Talk to the parent of a child aged around three or four years. Ask them to tell you about the development of their child's social skills. How does the child cope with sharing, taking turns, following the rules and getting along with others? How has the parent supported their child's development of social skills?



### Did you know?

Under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child treaty, children have a right to play.



Figure 11.6: Play promotes conversation between children.

## Creativity benefits

Play has a wonderful way of promoting creativity. When children can play freely with access to a wide range of resources, creativity will naturally occur.

## Imagination

Children use their imagination effectively when:

- they think and behave imaginatively – this includes problem solving, mark making, crafts or imaginary play
- their imaginative activity is purposeful – their play fulfils an objective. For example, making a tall tower that does not fall down, or getting from one side of the room to the other without touching the floor
- they express creativity in a unique way, creating something original – for example, a child may create a picture, a model, or their own song or dance.

### Activity

#### Benefits of play

- 1 Explain what the term 'benefits of play' means in practice.
- 2 Think of one type of play and explain some of the ways in which children benefit from it. The more detail you can include, the better.

## Test your knowledge

- 1 If a child plays alone, what type of play are they engaged in?
- 2 Give two examples of play activities that promote co-operative play.
- 3 Discuss how play benefits children in terms of mental stimulation.
- 4 Name two pieces of playground equipment that promote physical play.
- 5 Name a social skill that is a benefit of play. Discuss the impact that this skill may have on a child's relationships with others.

## Assessment preparation

The OCR model assignment will ask you to:

For Learning outcome 2, you will need to explain the types of play from birth to five years of age. You should also give examples of the benefits of learning through play.

- 1 Name the types of play for children from birth to five years of age.
- 2 Explain the types of things you might expect children up to two years of age to be doing

when they are engaged in each of the types of play. Give as much detail as you can.

- 3 Explain the types of things you might expect children aged three to five years to be doing when they are engaged in each of the types of play. Give as much detail as you can.
- 4 Children benefit greatly by learning through play. How many benefits can you think of? Explain these, giving as much detail as possible.

## Assessment guidance

### Learning outcome 2: Understand the benefits of learning through play

#### Making Criteria for L02

Explain or outline the types of play from birth to five years, and give examples of the benefits of learning through play.

Mark band 1	Mark band 2	Mark band 3
<b>2.1</b> Uses a <b>few</b> specific examples of types of play. <b>2.2</b> <b>Outlines some</b> of the benefits of learning through play.	<b>2.1</b> Uses a <b>range</b> of specific examples of types of play. <b>2.2</b> <b>Explains most</b> of the benefits of learning through play.	<b>2.1</b> Uses a <b>wide range</b> of specific examples of types of play. <b>2.2</b> <b>Explains in detail</b> all of the benefits of learning through play.

Table 11.2: Grading explanation bands.



#### Top tips

##### Command words:

- outline – set out the main characteristics
- explain – set out the purposes or reasons.

##### The evidence you need to produce:

- stages and types of play
- benefits of play of children from birth to five years.

##### Examples of evidence format:

- presentation with notes.

##### When creating this evidence, it may help to:

- show images of children playing within your presentation, to help explain the stages and types of play
- practise your presentation aloud.



## Cambridge National in Child Development

OCR J818 Unit R020 Level 1/Level 2

Cambridge Nationals Certificate in Child Development

Unit Recording Sheet

Please read the instructions printed at the end of this form. One of these Unit Recording Sheets should be completed for every candidate during internal assessment.									
Unit Title	Understand the development of a child from birth to five years		Unit Code	R020	Session	Jan/June/Nov	Year	2	0
Centre Name						Centre Number			
Candidate Name						Candidate Number			
Criteria			Teacher Comments			Mark		Page No.	
LO2: Understand the benefits of learning through play									
2.1 MB1: 1 - 4 marks	MB2: 5 - 8 marks	MB3: 9 - 12 marks							
Uses a few specific examples of types of play, outlines some of the benefits of learning through play.	Uses a range of specific examples of types of play, explains most of the benefits of learning through play.	Uses a wide range of specific examples of types of play, explains in detail all of the benefits of learning through play.							

## Resource Links for Learning Outcome 2

### Magic Number Squares

An introduction to what magic number squares are and how they work. Includes links to information about how to develop your own magic number squares.

Produced by the NRICH mathematics project – University of Cambridge. The website also has a range of other resources and activities for developing early years number skills.

**Supports:** LO2

**Cost:** Free

**Format:** Website

<https://nrich.maths.org/2476>

### Printable puzzles

Downloadable puzzle sheets to support skills development.

**Supports:** LO2

**Cost:** Free

**Format:** Website

<http://www.kidsdevelopment.co.uk/printable-puzzles-category.html>

### John Lewis

Wide range of toys that can be selected by age group or type of play.

**Supports:** LO2

**Cost:** Free

**Format:** Website

<http://www.johnlewis.com/toys/c5000012?rdrf=1>

### Mothercare

Toys buying guide. Advice on choosing age/stage appropriate toys to encourage development.

**Supports:** LO2

**Cost:** Free

**Format:** Website

<http://www.mothercare.com/on/demandware.store/Sites-MCENGGB-Site/default/MicroSite-Show?msid=buyers-guides&cfid=toys-buyers-guide>

### Early Learning Centre

Features a wide range of toys and includes a 'how it helps my child' feature for each toy, relating it to aspects of development.

**Supports:** LO2

**Cost:** Free

**Format:** Website

<http://www.elc.co.uk/>

### Argos

Buying guide linked to development and toy safety advice.

**Supports:** LO2–LO4

**Cost:** Free

**Format:** Website

[http://www.argos.co.uk/static/BuyingGuide/bgTrail/preschooltoys\\_00132.htm](http://www.argos.co.uk/static/BuyingGuide/bgTrail/preschooltoys_00132.htm)