

PLAY POLICY & PROCEDURES

1. General Statement:

The Let's Play Project recognises Young People's right to play as contained in Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991.

The Let's Play Project advocates Playing as integral to Young People's enjoyment of their lives, their health and their development. Young People – whatever their age, culture, ethnicity, physical or mental health, or social and economic background, need and want to play, indoors and out, in whatever way they can. Through play, Young People are creating their own culture, developing their abilities, exploring their creativity and learning about themselves, other people and the world around them. (Play England)

2. Policy:

2.1. The Let's Play Project operates in accordance with the Play Work Principles:

- 2.1.1. All 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 well-being of individuals and communities.
- 2.1.2. Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is 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.
- 2.1.3. The prime focus and essence of Play Work is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.
- 2.1.4. For Playworkers, the play process takes precedence and Playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult led agendas.
- 2.1.5. The role of the Playworker is to support all Young People in the creation of space in which they can play.

- 2.1.6. The Playworkers response to Young People playing is based on a sound up to date knowledge of play process and reflective practice.
- 2.1.7. Playworkers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of Young People's play on the Playworker.
- 2.1.8. Playworkers choose an intervention style that enables Young People to extend their play. All Playworker intervention must balance risk with the developmental benefit and well-being of children.

3. The Play Cycle

3.1. Staff at the Let's Play Project recognise the importance of free play where the Young People choose what they want to play with and a Playworker's role is to facilitate their play and the Play Cycle:

3.2. The Play Cycle:

- **Play Drive:** The idea to play starts inside the Young Person's mind, and they might then do an action or send out a signal (a Play Cue) to start the play.
- **Play Cue:** a signal sent out by the Young Person (to another Young Person, Young People, adult, animal or even an inanimate object) inviting the other to join in with the play. For example, a Young Person might throw another young person a ball to catch, or they may say, "Shall we play?"
- **Play Return:** this is a signal returned in response to a Play Cue showing that they would like to join in the play. For example, a Young Person might catch a ball thrown to them, and throw it back.
- **Play Flow:** When a Young Person is absorbed in their play, they are in the Play Flow, which can last for minutes, hours or sometimes days at a time.
- **Play Frame:** The imaginary or real boundary around the Young Person/ Young People's play, which can be altered by changing the space, people, things, etc. in it to maintain and extend the Play Flow.

- **Annihilation:** When a Young Person/Young People decide to end the play (or when they are forced to end their play, or their play is interrupted by an adult) the Play Frame 'pops' and is extinguished, and the cycle of play ends.
- **The Play Cycle:** All the above elements together constitute the Play Cycle, starting with the Play Drive and ending with annihilation of the play.
- This comes from the ground-breaking Colorado Paper by Perry Else and Gordon Sturrock.

4. Procedures

- 4.1. The Let's Play Project aims to create a varied and interesting environment that stimulates social, physical, creative, emotional and intellectual play.
- 4.2. Session Leaders set up the play space for After School Clubs and Holiday Sessions with planned activities such as cooking, arts and crafts, sensory play, shop and kitchen or cars for example but the Young People are always encouraged to lead their own play and may choose what they'd like to play with.
- 4.3. The setting includes a provision of open space inside and outside, music, lighting and range of objects and materials (loose parts) the Young People can select to develop their own play.
- 4.4. The Let's Play Project will plan activities and provide resources that are based on the Young People interests and supports specific requirements to ensure all Young People enjoy themselves.
- 4.5. The Let's Play Project recognises and allows Young People to engage in the 15 types of play taken from Bob Hughes Taxonomy of Play types.
- 4.6. By following the 7 best play objectives the Let's Play Project aims to:
 - 4.6.1. Extend the choice and control that children and Young People have over their play, the freedom they enjoy and the satisfaction they gain from it.
 - 4.6.2. Recognise the Young Person's need to test boundaries and respond positively to that need.

- 4.6.3. Manage the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep young people safe from harm.
- 4.6.4. Maximise the range of play opportunities.
- 4.6.5. Foster independence and self-esteem.
- 4.6.6. Foster Young People's respect for others and offer opportunities for social interaction.
- 4.6.7. Foster the Young Person's well-being, healthy growth and development, knowledge and understanding, creativity and capacity to learn.
- 4.7.** The Let's Play Project supports staff to undertake Play Work training annually where possible and to keep up to date with developments in Play Work.
- 4.8.** The Let's Play Project will consult with Young People and parents about the provision in a variety of ways on a regular basis. Consultation methods include discussions, suggestion box and observations of Young People.
- 4.9.** The Let's Play Project will regularly evaluate practice and resources and will keep an inventory which is updated when required.