

Play Bites

PLAY BITE No.1: What is Playwork?

Playwork offers play opportunities; it is what children and young people do when they follow their own ideas and interests in their own way for its own sake with not necessarily any external goal or reward.

PLAY BITE No.2: What is a Playworker?

Playworkers are adults who deeply respect children and young people and their right to play with as little adult intervention as possible who are keenly observant and responsive to children and young people's needs. Whose primary function is to enhance children and young peoples play by helping to regularly create and resource a variety of play spaces offering all types of play. Playworkers work in a range of settings, both statutory and voluntary, which aims to provide for children's play, such as adventure playgrounds, breakfast clubs, playschemes and out-of-school clubs. They sometimes may work in other specialized settings such as prisons, detention centres, hospitals, in which providing play has been recognized as an important way of supporting children.

PLAY BITE No. 3: What are the 'Play Types'?

There are acknowledged to be a number of different play types (around 16) which provide playworkers and others with a common language for describing play. These include: Fantasy Play – play which rearranges the world in the child's way, a way which is unlikely to occur; Locomotor Play – movement in any or every direction for its own sake; Social Play – play during which the rules and criteria for social engagement and interaction can be revealed, explored and amended. Playworkers learn about the play types and aim to provide opportunities for children to experience them.

PLAY BITE No. 4: What are the benefits of play?

For children play is hard work. What may seem like fun, cute or even silly activities to adults are really the ways in children learn about their world. Through play children explore their surroundings, understand their place in the world, develop physical, cognitive and emotional skills and learn social cues to practice their social skills.

PLAY BITE No. 5: What are the rights of children?

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a comprehensive human rights treaty that enshrines specific children's rights in international law. These rights define universal principles and standards for the status and treatment of children worldwide. Particularly relevant to playwork is Article 31 'All children have a right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of activities.' If you would like more information on the convention please speak to a member of staff.

PLAY BITE No. 6: Why is risky play important?

The benefits of risk taking include: extending skills, developing physical and emotional capacities, challenging ourselves in new ways and gaining direct experience of the consequences of our actions. Being brave and conquering a fear is something that is very important to children and a sign of growth. But we are not suggesting that we would be putting children in danger, we mean providing opportunities for all children to encounter or create uncertainty, unpredictability, and potential hazards as part of their play.

PLAY BITE No. 7: Do Playworkers have qualifications?

There are a number of Playwork specific qualifications available, these range from short, foundation courses to full degrees and even post-graduate qualifications. It is a requirement for settings that Playworkers hold relevant qualifications in Playwork and also attend regular Paediatric First Aid, Child

Protection, Food Hygiene, Fire Safety and Health and Safety training. So, being a playworker is not as easy as it may seem - we can assure you!