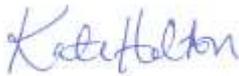




3.5 Play Policy

This policy was adopted at the meeting of Little Thetford Acorns Pre-school and Children's Club. Staff failure to comply with this policy may be considered serious enough to result in the induction of disciplinary procedures.

Date of adoption	March 2018
Date of review	September 2019
Signed (on behalf of the management committee)	
Name of signatory	Kate Hilton
Role of signatory	Chair
This policy will be reviewed	Every 2 years
Date of next review	September 2021

3.5 Play Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: The Learning and Development Requirements

“Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children’s development building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.”

Policy statement

All children and young people are entitled to and need to play; it is intrinsic and essential to their quality of life and an important part of how they learn and enjoy themselves. It also plays a fundamental part to their healthy development and well-being. Through play children learn about the world around them – play also fosters creativity, critical thinking, resilience and independence. At Little Thetford Acorns we recognise the importance of play within a child’s development. We ensure that all of our staff members understand and work within the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and also follow 'The Playwork Principles' (2005).

Our setting provides a wonderful safe and accessible space, both indoors and outdoors, for the children to enjoy at all times. We work towards creating a space in which all children feel involved and included and can thrive in their play. As reflective Early Years practitioners we support and facilitate play at all times, ensuring there is a balance of both adult-led and child-initiated play. Children initiate and direct their own play, it is freely chosen and self directed. We will accept and follow their lead or request for our involvement.

At Little Thetford Acorns we support and facilitate play by:

- Providing a play environment that is safe and suitable for children to play in and adapt, where possible, to meet the needs of all children who attend our setting.
- Recording observations of children's play, and talking to children about what they enjoy playing with, and recording this. We will then use the information gathered to ensure our activities and resources are exciting, stimulating and challenging.
- Ensuring children are actively encouraged to be a part of our setting, they are actively encouraged to make their own choices in regards to the rules we set, the resources available, how they would like to play and who they would like to play with.

- Our staff members will play a supportive role by encouraging child-led play, independence, confidence and resilience in children and supporting them to make their own choices. They will respond to the children's needs, intervening only when appropriate (eg when a child's safety is at risk), when requested or to support children in developing and building relationships.
- Setting up the room so that the layout and some activities are ready before the children arrive.
- Providing a range of equipment, resources and activities on a daily basis, and keeping a record of these to ensure that varied and interesting play opportunities are offered.
- Encouraging children to request additional or alternative equipment as they choose, and if a request has to be refused, explaining why.
- Having clear safe boundaries, but no expectations that children must be occupied at all times.
- Making outdoor play available every day, unless the weather is particularly bad.
- Involving children in planning activities, to reflect their own interests and ideas.
- Planning activities that enable children to develop their natural curiosity and imagination.
- Allowing children freedom of creative expression.
- Intervening in play only when necessary to reduce risks of accident or injury, or to encourage appropriate social skills.
- Warning children in advance when an activity or game is due to end.
- Ensuring that all staff members are reflective, regularly evaluate their own practice and work as a team to reflect and evaluate on the way the setting is organised and planned.

Play areas and equipment

- The resources used promote positive images of different ethnic backgrounds, religions, and abilities, in line with our Equal Opportunities & Diversity policy.