

## Supporting play - including risky play

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2025 1.30-3pm

Lisa Morris- introduction

Ali Wood – the benefits of play

Jo Holt and Katie Rudge – what is it like to be a child in this setting?  
Inspecting setting-led practice.

Nicki Evans- a balanced approach to health and safety

Plenary- reflecting on your practice

Audience: Solihull leaders, Councillors, site managers, all age school and settings, holiday play schemes and out-of-school clubs, DSLs, social workers, play workers, community teams, Family Hubs, and anyone with an interest in the benefits of play.

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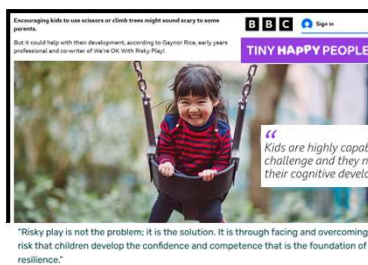
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## Supporting play- including risky play

While children must not be exposed to harm in the realisation of their rights under article 31, some degree of risk and challenge is integral to play and recreational activities and is a necessary component of the benefits of these activities. **United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child.**

*The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) encourages a balanced approach to managing risk in children's play. The HSE says clearly that anyone planning or providing play opportunities should aim to weigh up the risks and benefits, rather than completely avoid risk.*

Children seek risk and uncertainty in their play. They are drawn to challenge, novelty, and the unexpected. Self-organised play helps children respond flexibly to difficult or changing situations.



Peter Gray, psychologist



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## Early years foundation stage (EYFS)

3.68 Providers must provide access to an outdoor play area. If that is not possible, they must ensure that outdoor activities are planned and taken on a daily basis ..

3.76 Providers must ensure that they take all reasonable steps to ensure staff and children in their care **are not exposed to risks** [?] and must be able to demonstrate how they are managing risks. Providers must determine where it is helpful to make some written risk assessments in relation to specific issues, to inform staff practice, and to demonstrate how they are managing risks if asked by parents and/or carers or inspectors. Risk assessments should identify aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis, when and by whom those aspects will be checked, and how the risk will be removed or minimised.

### Childcare register-

#### Child welfare

You are responsible for ensuring the children's welfare and safety. You must:

- keep the children being cared for safe from harm and make sure that everyone looking after children is alert to any signs of harm

- provide access to a secure outdoor space, or if this isn't possible, make reasonable arrangements for outdoor activities
- take all necessary measures to minimise any health and safety risks to children and staff from the premises, equipment or activities



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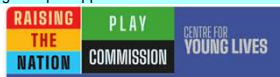
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## Play in education & care



Professor Vivian Hill, from the BPS's Division of Educational and Child Psychology responding to the Raising the Nation *State of Play* report Feb 2025:

"Educational psychologists have a vital role in ensuring there is child-led play for all children both in and outside school. This includes supporting whole-school play initiatives and advocating for access to play within their day-to-day casework. "Ultimately all children and young people should have access to free, high quality, local opportunities for play. This is particularly important for children who may experience exclusion from play such as those with disabilities or children living in poverty. We must level the playing field to give equal opportunities to all."



Practitioners carefully organise enabling environments for high-quality play. Sometimes, they make time and space available for children to invent their own play. Sometimes, they join in to sensitively support and extend children's learning  
Development Matters CofEL

Wrap  
around  
8am – 6pm  
provision



Why not?

**Play England**

Freedom to play

"The right to play is a child's first claim on the community. Play is nature's training for life. No community can infringe that right without doing deep and enduring harm to the minds and bodies of its citizens"  
David Lloyd George, 1925

For England to be a child-friendly country where all children and young people have freedom to play at home, at school, in parks and public spaces.

- All children and young people have freedom — time, space, permission and opportunity — to play
- All children and young people can regularly play indoors and outdoors
- Everyone is aware of the importance of play

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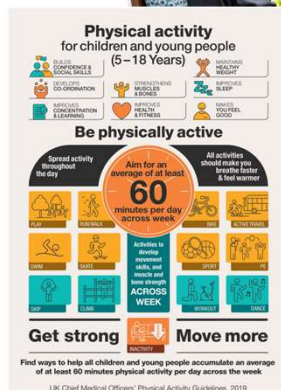


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## Screen time vs green time Safety inside and out

- What opportunities do you have in your school- 'play-time', after school club, holiday play scheme, breakfast club?
- Prison guidelines UK say adult prisoners should be outside for a minimum of 30m-1h in the open air daily - do your children have more access than this?
- Does everyone have a similar understanding of play and its benefits?
- How do you promote this with families you work with?
- What is your approach to risk?



What will you do as a result of your reflection today?

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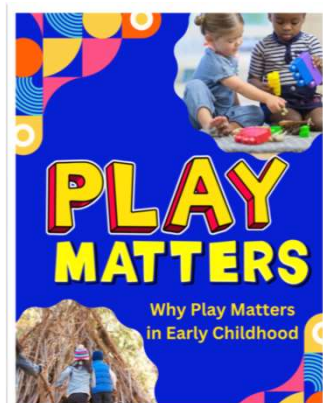


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## Further reading about play- early years reviews



Free download



Dr Aaron Bradbury  
Early Childhood Academic, Author  
International Speaker

**Early Years Reviews** and colleagues from across the Early Childhood Sector proudly announces the release of **Play Matters**, an inspiring and comprehensive guide that redefines the role of play in early childhood development. Edited by Dr. Aaron Bradbury, this collaborative work unites leading professionals from education, psychology, and health to advocate for the transformative power of play for children aged 0-8.

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## Evaluation –please help us reflect on this training and its place in our wider offer of support.

We will ask [\* response required].....

Name

Setting and /or role \*

What did you find most helpful?\*

What was not as useful?\*

What will you do as a result of today?\*

What areas would you like more support with?

Area you aware of the solgrid/ eyc website? Yes/ No for example -

<https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/resources/safeguarding-and-welfare/health-and-safety/>

<https://forms.office.com/e/eWVV8as96G?origin=IprLink>



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Scan the QR or  
use link to join



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## Too safe for children's own good?



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q2f76pgNap4> –prisoners 2.38

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSQd-DIUWdY> -robot 66



Watching the birds and squirrels always has a calming effect and takes me out of my own head.



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