Manchester Local Care Organisation

Trafford Local Care Organisation

Play

What is play?

⇒ Play is any activity that is done just for fun, with no purpose!

⇒ All children play, in every culture across the world.

⇒ We play different games and with different toys we play but it is the same thing.

⇒ All children have the right to play.

⇒ Sometimes, the way children play or the things they play with may seem strange or boring to adults. This is OK – this is just what they find fun.

Importance of play

⇒ The main reason to play is for fun, enjoyment, and entertainment.

⇒ But play is more important than this! It is key to children learning.

⇒ When children play they learn lots about the world around them. We all learn from what we see, hear and feel – it is the same for children.

⇒ Children feel safe and happy when they play. This means they can practice doing things. This is how they learn skills.

⇒ Talking is one of these skills. They also learn other skills that are important to know for talking to and being around other people.

⇒ Because there is no "right way" to play and they can't get it wrong, they can practice and get confident using skills in play, so they know they can use them well.

⇒ Later, they can use their new skills with when they are not playing and it matters that they get it right.

Pre-Linguistic Skills

A lot of what children learn during play is very important to learning to talk. You may hear your Speech and Language Therapist (or other professionals) call these "pre-linguistic skills" – these are things you need to learn before you can learn to talk.

Here are some of these important skills and how children learn them in play.

⇒ Cause and effect - knowing that when you do something, something else happens because of what you did. The child knows that when you push a button on a Pop-Up toy, a figure will pop up.

⇒ Taking turns – waiting for your turn. The child might wait to have a go with a ball, or play simple board games. It takes time to learn to share!

⇒ Playing pretend/using imagination – taking one thing and pretending it is something else, using make believe. The child might pick up a stick and pretend it is a sword.

⇒ Social skills – the rules of being with and talking to other people.

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