

2025 specification  
(first certification in 2027)



# Activity Pack

for BTEC Nationals (AAQ)  
in Early Childhood Development

*Unit 3: Play and Learning*

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# Teacher's Introduction

This pack contains 30 activities to assist the delivery of BTEC National in Early Childhood Development (Extended Certificate) Unit 3: Play and Learning. The activities have been designed to exactly match the specification and can be used to introduce and/or consolidate the learning of specific topics covered in Unit 3. The activities will enhance students' learning.

Every activity is accompanied by teacher's notes, which provide details of the aim of the activity and the student task, as well as instructions for the teacher on how to implement it. A range of activity types is included to meet the needs of students with different learning styles. In addition, many of the activities include differentiation, with suggestions for teachers to stretch students or extend their learning.

Throughout the pack, there are suggestions for individual, paired, small group and whole group activities, although teachers may use their discretion to adapt the activities to suit their teaching style and the learning style of the student group.

This resource is designed for students to write their answers in their exercise books. Where possible, questions have been duplicated on a page for efficient photocopying.

January 2026



*A web page containing all the links listed in this resource is conveniently provided on ZigZag Education's website at **zzed.uk/12976***

*You may find this helpful for accessing the websites rather than typing in each URL.*

## Activity-by-activity Plan

No.	Spec ref	Topic title	Activity summary	Preparation
<b>Types of play and learning activities and how they promote children's development</b>				
1.	A1	What are the types of play?	Brainstorm and note down the types of toys or activities required for the five broad play types of physical, imaginative, sensory, creative art and design and construction for age ranges 0-2, 2-3, 3-5 and 5-7 years.	Ensure students have access to a range of play type headings in notes and resource catalogues between groups.
2.	A1	Observations of social stages of play	Place Mildred Parten's social stages of play in correct order and match provided observations to them.	Print out worksheets.
3.	A1 C1	Different approaches to play	Watch the five videos on free-flow play, structured play, adult-initiated, adult-led and child-initiated play. Create definitions and answer questions related to the videos.	Access to video resources and worksheet.
4.	A1 D1 D2	What is a treasure basket?	Students to research the concept of a treasure basket play for 'one' week and complete the worksheet in their own words in class.	Print out worksheets.
5.	A1 D1 D2	What is heuristic play?	Watch the video and create a definition for heuristic play together, discussing the difference between heuristic and treasure basket play. Assign a 'theme' for a heuristic basket (suggestions provided) for students to 'fill'.	Access to video resources and laminate cards.
6.	A1 D2	Story sacks and boxes	Discuss the concept of story sacks and boxes. Divide the class into small groups. Provide each group with a well-known children's book. Ask groups to make a list of resources, activities and provocations that would enhance the reading experience.	A story sack to take home to class. Differentiated worksheets.
7.	A1 D2	Pitching it right – play and learning opportunities across different age groups	Assign one of the learning themes (13 provided) to each group. Create a plan mapping resources, activities, provocations and interactions for each theme. Present to the class.	Laminate the worksheets and print out an activity sheet for each group (or student books). Early access to resource catalogues.

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No.	Spec ref	Topic title	Activity summary	Pre
8.	A1 D2	Indoor or outdoor play?	Print out the activity sheet for each student. Students to look at each area of play (painting, blocks, manipulative play, role play, music, books, wheeled toys), and give examples of the type of play it supports including what resources you would need to have, and how they could be used indoors and outdoors. Feedback in class.	Print out work
9.	A1	What to play with? (Health and safety considerations)	Discuss risk assessments in class. Students to complete the activity sheet for homework. If required, play the Risk Assessment card game either as a whole class game or in small groups.	Print out activ laminates the g and decide wh
10.	A2 D1 D2	What does the holistic nature of play mean?	Groups to brainstorm activities, games, interactions, provocations or resources showing how they benefit children's physical, cognitive, communication and language, moral, numeracy, early literacy and social and emotional development through play and learning. Feedback in class.	Print out the a provide each g
11.	A2	It's OK to make mistakes	Scenario, ask students to share any mistakes they have made, what they learned from them, and why it is important to make mistakes. Discuss the role of a sensitive practitioner. Watch the video. Divide the class into small groups and give each group a 'mistake' scenario. Groups to brainstorm ways in which they could assist, scaffold or model supportive behaviour, or not. Feedback in class.	Access to video and laminate t for group work
12.	A2 D1 D2	How play helps children to make sense of the world	After discussion on how children learn through engaging with everyday experiences students to cut out pictures of three different types of toy explain how they help children engage with and learn about the world around them. Feedback in class.	Provide old ed catalogues, sci
13.	A2	Life is full of changes	Create a definition for transition and list four different types of transition. Choose a transition scenario and list as many activities or ways they can think of help a child get through this. Feedback/discussion in class.	Print out activ

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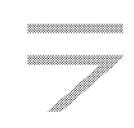
No.	Spec ref	Topic title	Activity summary	Pre
<b>B: Investigate theoretical perspectives of learning and development</b>				
14.	B1	Match the theorist to the statement	<p>The game may be played in three ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Divide class into two teams. Give each team a list of the theorists. Teacher to call out a statement and each team to assign it to a theorist. Swap papers for marking.</li> <li>2. Divide class into two teams. Teacher to call out a statement for one team; if they get it wrong, it goes to the other team. The team who gets it right wins the card.</li> <li>3. Divide class into small groups. Provide each group with a list of theorists. Designate one of the group as 'caller' and provide the caller with the statements from the theorist. Team with the most correct answers wins.</li> </ol>	Decide how to laminate answers if necessary. Ensure list of phrases, hand
15.	B2 B3	Unique selling points – what is different about our curriculum	Divide class into four groups and give each group an area of the curriculum approach to research using the seven indicators. Groups to create a poster in class. Feedback in class.	Either print out for each student or students with and indicators homework to Poster: educational scissors, glue, pens, etc.
16.	B2 B3	Curriculum approaches multiple choice	Multiple-choice questions on curriculum approaches to be completed and marked in class.	Print activity sheet
<b>C: Understand curriculum approaches to play and their impact on practice</b>				
17.	C1	How views of play can affect a professional role.	Ask students to make two observations at their placement ideally, one inside and one outside or look at online video of children playing – suggestions provided. Students to complete the activity. Feedback in class	Print out the activity sheet. Access to video. Student access to placement/set observations.
18.	C1	Playwork Principles – propose a poster for an after-school club	Ask students to research the Playwork Principles and answer the questions for homework. Feedback in class. Or use as an introductory discussion in plenary. Then ask students to create a poster for an after-school club featuring the Playwork Principles.	Print out activity sheet for homework. Laminating educational cards, glue, pens, etc.

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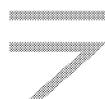
No.	Spec ref	Topic title	Activity summary	Pre
19.	C1	How theoretical perspectives inform approaches to play	Students are to choose two curriculum approaches (taken from Activity 15) and compare them with regard to the play and learning opportunities they provide for children, using the parameters of child-initiated play; hands-on/exploratory play; outdoor play; the use of natural materials; sensory play; role of the teacher. Feedback in class.	Print out the activity sheet as required. (You may need to write the mind map on a separate sheet of paper instead.)
20.	C1 D1	What comes next? Observation, learning and development game	<p>Play the game in three ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whole class: Deal 20 cards in a pile, face down in the middle of the table. Students take turns to pick a card, read out the scenario, etc.</li> <li>Small groups: as above, giving each group a selection of cards.</li> <li>Pairs: one card read out in turn.</li> </ol> <p>Discuss and make notes on what a more knowledgeable other (MKO) could do to scaffold learning and development, and which theorists could inform their decision. Feedback in class.</p>	Print out and use the cards as required. Answer sheets are available.
<b>Understand how to plan activities and experiences to support children</b>				
21.	D1	Observation and assessment skills	<p>Activity in two parts.</p> <p>Part 1: in plenary, discuss the different types of observation used to assess children's learning and development, and class provision. Divide the class into two groups. Ask one group to make a 15-minute tracking observation, and the other to make a 15-minute provision area observation in the current setting.</p> <p>Part 2: Discuss the observations made. Feedback in class.</p>	Plenary discussion in provision area placement, or appropriate video.
22.	D1	Quick check of early education skills and understanding	Multiple-choice questions on early education.	Print out the activity sheet as required.
23.	D1 D2	How sensory experiences and modelling new skills assist learning and development	Using the pictures (one per group), ask students to answer the questions about modelling and new skills and scaffolding learning and development. Feedback in class.	Print out and use the pictures as required. Print out the questions as required.



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No.	Spec ref	Topic title	Activity summary	Pre
24.	D1 D2	Understanding need for... era... to port learning development	Using small printed observations, students to note strategies they could use to help a child engage in an activity.	Print and laminate and laminate a questions if re
25.	D2	Zoning the play and learning environment	Four hypothetical play space areas for groups 0-18 months, 18 months - 3 years, 3-5s and 5-8s. Divide class into four groups and assign a space to each group. Each group to zone areas appropriately for learning and development. Feedback in class.	Print out area group. Provide catalogues that ages to assist s ideas.
26.	D2	Building support relationships, group learning and socialisation	Discuss what is understood by supportive relationships, group learning and socialisation and introduce the concepts of diversity, equality and inclusion. Divide class into small groups and give each group a book that explores this. Complete the worksheet. Feedback in class.	Print out the a Source childre (suggestions g
27.	D1 D2	Recognising and engaging with unplanned spontaneous events	In plenary, discuss what is meant by spontaneous events. Divide class into groups and give each group a card. Students to discuss and list ideas for extending learning possibilities, or what other actions they might need to take. Feedback in class.	Print and laminate
28.	D1 D2	Supporting purposeful play - maths and play dough	Encourage students to make a small batch of play dough at home (recipes include...), students to answer questions on mathematical concepts, how to use play dough and role of the adult. Feedback in class.	Print out recipe Prepare play d are unable to activity sheet
29.	D2	Understanding and supporting purposeful play encourage higher level thinking skills (sustained shared thinking or SST)	In plenary, discuss the concept of purposeful play and higher level thinking skills or sustained shared thinking. Either assign a framework or divide the class into small groups to complete the activity sheet. Feedback in class.	Print out the a required.
30.	D2	Developing positive attitudes towards persona dolls or other puppet	Students to research the concept of persona dolls for homework. In class discuss their findings then split class into small groups and give each group a doll, soft toy or puppet and one of the scenarios from the list below. Ask them to perform a 5 minute time activity that addresses the scenario. Share/feedback in class.	Print out the a and laminate s



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# Activity 1: What to play with

## Teacher's Notes

<b>Spec area:</b>	A1 Types of play and learning opportunities	<b>Topic title and spec ref:</b>	What (A.1)
<b>Suggested use:</b>	Plenary/class activity (small groups)	<b>Timing:</b>	20 min
<b>Aim:</b>	To help students understand and be able to identify the five broad play types: physical, imaginative, sensory, creative art and design, and construction.		
<b>Teacher's instructions:</b>	Place students in small groups and ask them to brainstorm and note down on a sheet of plain paper, what types of toys or activities would facilitate physical, imaginative, sensory, creative art and design, and construction for 2-3 years, 3-5 years and 5-8 years. There should be a minimum of 5 ideas for each age range. Feedback in class.  You may wish to assign this activity for homework after discussion.		

**Note:** adults can use the same toys, resources and activities across different age groups and the list below is just an indication. You may wish students to go into more depth about individual toys and activities.

Play type	0-2	2-3	3-5
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pull along toys</li> <li>• Sit on ride toys</li> <li>• Push along trolley</li> <li>• Baby bouncer</li> <li>• Tummy time</li> <li>• Baby activity gym</li> <li>• Baby swing</li> <li>• Cruising around furniture</li> <li>• Baby swimmer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ride on toys without pedals</li> <li>• Small slides</li> <li>• Kicking a large, lightweight ball</li> <li>• Toddler swings</li> <li>• Small climbing frame</li> <li>• See-saw</li> <li>• Pull along toys</li> <li>• Bucket and spade</li> <li>• Walking up and down stairs</li> <li>• Helping around the home, e.g. dusting</li> <li>• Swimming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trikes with pedals</li> <li>• Scooters</li> <li>• Climbing frame</li> <li>• Hopscotch</li> <li>• Buckets and spades</li> <li>• Gardening</li> <li>• Helping around the home, e.g. watering plants</li> <li>• See-saw</li> <li>• Ball games, e.g. catch</li> <li>• Throw and catch</li> <li>• Swimming</li> </ul>
Imaginative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peek-a-boo</li> <li>• Mirror games</li> <li>• Books</li> <li>• Hide and seek</li> <li>• Songs and rhymes</li> <li>• Treasure basket</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heuristic play</li> <li>• Hide and seek</li> <li>• Dressing up</li> <li>• Home corner in nursery</li> <li>• Books and stories</li> <li>• Songs and rhymes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dressing up</li> <li>• Role play</li> <li>• Superhero play</li> <li>• Books and stories</li> <li>• Songs and rhymes</li> <li>• Small world play with dolls, cars, animals, etc.</li> <li>• Den making</li> </ul>
Sensory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigating pureed food</li> <li>• Finger food (for 1-2-year-olds)</li> <li>• Peek-a-boo with a scarf</li> <li>• Sensory bins with water beads or small objects</li> <li>• Sensory paper (assess choking hazard)</li> <li>• Bath time water play</li> <li>• Bubbles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensory bins with pasta, paper, sand and water</li> <li>• Sensory bins with water beads</li> <li>• Finger painting</li> <li>• Play dough</li> <li>• Going on a walk</li> <li>• I-Spy game using colours not letter sounds</li> <li>• Cooking</li> <li>• Bath time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensory bins with sand and water</li> <li>• Sensory bins with gloop, rice, lentils, water beads, etc.</li> <li>• Collage</li> <li>• Mixing colours</li> <li>• Science activities e.g. investigation</li> <li>• Cooking</li> <li>• Bath time</li> </ul>

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Play type	0-2	2-3	3-5
Creative art and design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making noises, e.g. for animals</li> <li>Singing</li> <li>Playing simple musical instruments</li> <li>Playing with large cardboard boxes</li> <li>Hand and finger painting</li> <li>Drawing</li> <li>Play dough</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Home corner role play</li> <li>Singing</li> <li>Dancing</li> <li>Making actions to rhymes</li> <li>Playing simple musical instruments</li> <li>Painting with large cardboard boxes</li> <li>Hand and finger painting</li> <li>Painting with brushes and stampers</li> <li>Drawing</li> <li>Play dough</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Role play (hospital, home, garage, etc.)</li> <li>Singing and music making</li> <li>Making new actions to rhymes</li> <li>Playing musical instruments, individually or in a group.</li> <li>Creating car, rocket, ship, etc. using cardboard boxes</li> <li>Finger painting</li> <li>Painting with brushes, stampers, rollers, etc.</li> <li>Play dough</li> <li>Collage</li> <li>Chalking</li> <li>Drawing</li> <li>Dancing</li> <li>Making necklaces and bracelets from beads, pasta, etc.</li> </ul>
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stacking rings</li> <li>Large stacking blocks</li> <li>Large stacking interconnected blocks</li> <li>Toddler toy train tracks</li> <li>Playing with cardboard boxes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large stacking blocks</li> <li>Soft blocks</li> <li>Duplo or other connecting blocks</li> <li>Train tracks</li> <li>Painting with large cardboard boxes and tubes</li> <li>Puzzles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lego and other connecting block toys, e.g. stickle bricks</li> <li>Wooden blocks planks (indoor and outdoor) and other non-connecting blocks</li> <li>Magnetic building sets</li> <li>Marble runs</li> <li>Gear building toys</li> <li>Train and road tracks</li> <li>Den building</li> <li>Junk modelling</li> <li>Clay modelling</li> <li>Sculpture</li> <li>Woodworking</li> <li>Sewing</li> <li>Puzzles</li> </ul>

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## Activity 2: Observations of social stages

### Teacher's Notes

<b>Spec area:</b>	A1 Types of play and learning opportunities	<b>Topic title and specification:</b>
<b>Suggested use:</b>	Class activity (small groups) or homework	<b>Timing:</b>
<b>Aim:</b>	To engage students in the connection between children's play and the stages of play reached using Mildred Parten's classifications.	
<b>Teacher's instructions:</b>	Either use as a small group activity, or as individual homework. Use to first identify the characteristic in the right place on the table and then match observations of play to the correct stage of play.	

### Answers

Stage of play	Characteristic
Unoccupied	D. Children are not playing with anything or watching anyone
Onlooker	C. Children watch each other play, and may interact socially, but do not engage in the play activity itself
Solitary	E. Children play by themselves with no input from others
Parallel	B. Children play alongside each other, sometimes copying each other
Associative	F. Children are playing together but their play is uncoordinated and they have different play agendas
Cooperative	A. Children interact and play together without adult support

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## Student Activity Sheet: Activity

Mildred Parten theorised there were six stages of play that children go through. Use the characteristic description from the list below that describes the stage of play and write the number of the observation into the correct space on the table below. Then read the different observations, and match them to the characteristic and write the number of the observation in the correct column.

- A Children interact and play together with adult support
- B Children play alongside each other, sometimes copying each other
- C Children watch each other play, and may interact socially, but do not engage
- D Children are not playing with anything or watching anyone
- E Children play by themselves with no input from others
- F Children are playing together but their play is uncoordinated and they have

Stage of play	Characteristic
Unoccupied	
Onlooker	
Solitary	
Parallel	
Associative	
Cooperative	



## Student Activity Sheet: Activity

Mildred Parten theorised there were six stages of play that children go through. Use the characteristic description from the list below that describes the stage of play and write the number of the observation into the correct space on the table below. Then read the different observations, and match them to the characteristic and write the number of the observation in the correct column.

- A Children interact and play together without adult support
- B Children play alongside each other, sometimes copying each other
- C Children watch each other play, and may interact socially, but do not engage
- D Children are not playing with anything or watching anyone
- E Children play by themselves with no input from others
- F Children are playing together but their play is uncoordinated and they have

Stage of play	Characteristic
Unoccupied	
Onlooker	
Solitary	
Parallel	
Associative	
Cooperative	

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<p><b>Observation 1</b></p> <p>Three boys are playing in the block area. Karim is building a tower. Ryan moves closer and Karim puts out his arm protectively and says 'No don't bang it!' Ryan turns around, picks up a block and holds it out to Karim. Karim takes it and uses it without saying anything. He continues to build with Ryan helping every now and then.</p>	<p><b>Observation 2</b></p> <p>Millie is sitting in the toy the centre red button the time she succeeds in pre make a noise she laughs.</p>
<p><b>Observation 3</b></p> <p>Myra has pulled herself up in front of the mirror. She has pressed her nose up against the glass licking the mirror. Myra then looks at her reflection and the marks made.</p>	<p><b>Observation 4</b></p> <p>A group of children are di spread over two tables. J pencil and looks for anotl and takes it just as Jenny but then Jenny picks it up have it first'.</p>
<p><b>Observation 5</b></p> <p>In the home corner, Peter is serving coffee and cakes to Abby and Jacob. Abby says she wants sugar in her coffee, so Peter looks for some. Unable to find anything he improvises with a salt and pepper pot and shakes it over the coffee saying 'lots of sugar'.</p>	<p><b>Observation 6</b></p> <p>Tegan is sitting in the sa with sand carefully using Gemma is sitting next to</p>
<p><b>Observation 7</b></p> <p>Asha is sprawled across the large cushions in the book area on her tummy. She is picking at the fluff stuck to the edges of the pink cushion.</p>	<p><b>Observation 8</b></p> <p>Rebekah and Martin are treasure basket. Each or basket, without engagin</p>
<p><b>Observation 9</b></p> <p>Connor is watching his key person squeeze a plastic fish underwater in the water tray so bubbles come out. She invites him to try, but he pulls away from the tray making it obvious that he does not want to have a go himself.</p>	<p><b>Observation 10</b></p> <p>Irmy and Euan are playi sat a teddy bear at the ta finds a jug and pours mo it down and goes to look gets the kettle and prete</p>
<p><b>Observation 11</b></p> <p>Pranav is s the book corner. He has a book in his hand but he is not reading it, instead he is watching two boys building with blocks in the construction area. He laughs and smiles when they knock down the tower they have been building.</p>	<p><b>Observation 12</b></p> <p>Shane and Anthony are basket with different tex out a piece of blue fabric him. Anthony takes anot same thing.</p>
<p><b>Observation 13</b></p> <p>Serena is standing in the doorway, leaning against the doorframe. She is fiddling with one of her cardigan buttons, twisting it first one way and then the other.</p>	<p><b>Observation 14</b></p> <p>Kirstie is lying in her cot, watching her musical mo and turning above her he her feet and gurgles.</p>
<p><b>Observation 15</b></p> <p>Four children are gathered around the sensory table, which has had coloured rice put in it. Adults have also provided spoons, jugs, funnels and containers. The children are all engrossed in their own ar with the rice. Krishna puts a handful of rice in Megan's funnel. Megan says 'that' and they both watch it funnel th</p>	<p><b>Observation 16</b></p> <p>Ayesha and Simona are garden with long strips c around the end post and quite unevenly. Jane wa takes a strip of cloth fro other end of the fence a makes sure her cloth fol and out more evenly.</p>
<p><b>Observation 17</b></p> <p>Leila is sitting beside a basket containing different types of rattle. She picks up a blue back in the basket, and then she picks it up again and shakes it. She reaches both ha two rattles, which she bangs together.</p>	

## Activity 3: Different approaches

### Teacher's Notes

<b>Spec area:</b>	A1 Types of play and learning opportunities C1 Influences on current early years practice	<b>Topic title and spec ref:</b>
<b>Suggested use:</b>	Class activity (small groups or individual)	<b>Timing:</b>
<b>Aim:</b>	To help students understand the different terms associated with play	
<b>Teacher's instructions:</b>	Watch five videos on free-flow play, structured play, adult-initiated play and child-initiated play. Suggested questions included below or teachers supply their own. Students to create definitions for these terms on an activity sheet. Students to answer general questions related to the videos. Feedback in class.	

### Suggested videos:

- Free-flow play: [zzed.uk/12976-3a](https://www.zzed.uk/12976-3a) moving between indoor/outdoor environments to create a bus or train
- Structured play: [zzed.uk/12976-3b](https://www.zzed.uk/12976-3b) 4–5-year-olds playing in a builder's shop allowing for free play with materials
- Adult-initiated play: [zzed.uk/12976-3c](https://www.zzed.uk/12976-3c) travel agents\*, KS1 with forms to fill in
- Adult-led play: [zzed.uk/12976-3d](https://www.zzed.uk/12976-3d) parachute play 6–7-year-olds
- Child-initiated play: [zzed.uk/12976-3e](https://www.zzed.uk/12976-3e) early years – children chatting at a table

\* Fewer people use travel agents these days, but the video is a good representation of adult-initiated role-play activity that is geared towards KS1 learning goals.

### Definitions:

<b>Free-flow play</b>	Sustained play where children are free to explore, select and use resources indoors and outdoors, and play continues without interruption.
<b>Structured play</b>	Play that has been organised and planned for by more knowledgeable adults. Directed play, usually with a pre-agreed purpose.
<b>Adult-initiated play</b>	Play which may not be pre-planned, but which should be based on children's interests and provision of appropriate resources or prompts. Often initiated with some help from an adult and then independently. Often used to support learning and development in relation to EYFS or KS1 learning goals.
<b>Adult-directed play</b>	Play which may or may not be pre-planned, but which should be based on children's interests. Often arranged with provision of appropriate resources. Often require greater supervision and involvement from an adult than free-flow play.
<b>Child-initiated play</b>	Sustained play that has been initiated and continued by the child with minimal adult intervention.

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## Student Activity Sheet: Activity

Provide definitions for the five types of play activities listed below, and then answer the questions for the videos you have seen in class.

- Free-flow play
- Adult-initiated play
- Child-initiated play
- Structured play
- Adult-directed play



1. Thinking of the video of the children making a bus in the garden, provide at least three advantages and three disadvantages of 'free-flow' play.
2. Thinking of the video of the builder's yard, which has been limited to certain areas, provide at least three advantages and three disadvantages of this type of 'structured play'.
3. The travel agents role play area is an adult-initiated activity, with children using the area and independently. What might a) have led teachers to set this up, and b) what might you do to ensure children access the learning intentions successfully?
4. How does the adult-led parachute play help learning and development?
5. At the play dough table the children are engaged in their own play. What might you do to ensure children access the learning intentions successfully?



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## Activity 4: What is a treasure ba

### Teacher's Notes

<b>Spec area:</b>	A1 Types of play and learning opportunities D1 Professional skills for planning play and learning D2 Planning activities to support children's learning and development	<b>Topic title and specification</b>
<b>Suggested use:</b>	Homework, or plenary and homework	<b>Timing</b>
<b>Aim:</b>	To improve student understanding of treasure basket play.	
<b>Teacher's instruction:</b>	Ask students to research the concept of treasure basket play for homework and meet. Feedback in class. You may wish to assign this activity for homework after discussion.	

### Suggested answers:

- Who developed the treasure basket approach?  
*Elinor Goldschmied (Goldschmied E & Jackson S, People Under Three: Young Child*
- At what age should adults introduce children to treasure baskets?  
*Approximately 5–8 months: treasure baskets are for use with babies who can sit up independently.*
- How many items should a treasure basket contain?  
*Around 30 according to many websites, but in Developing Play for the Under 3's A items as being appropriate.*
- Give three reasons why treasure basket play is important.
  - Stimulates brain activity through sensory exploration*
  - Stimulates physical development (grasping, holding, etc.)*
  - Promotes the development of curiosity and learning in a safe environment*
  - Stimulates hand/eye coordination*
  - Promotes the development of an understanding of different texture – what is*
  - Unhurried opportunity to explore*
  - It is recommended that the treasure basket should be varied providing different sensory experiences between*
  - Treasure baskets promote concentration skills*
  - Treasure baskets provide sensory stimuli that allow the brain to absorb information e.g. cold and hard (metal spoon) or soft (piece of fabric)*
- What type of container is a treasure basket?  
*A treasure basket does not have to be a basket, but can be any container with low sides that can be accessed easily with their hands.*
- How often should you use a treasure basket?  
*The treasure basket should be made available every day. The ideal amount of time the basket should be between 30 minutes and one hour. The basket should be used when the baby is well rested, fed and not being distracted by other things, and adults are available for encouragement or support if necessary.*
- What is the role of the adult?
  - To create the treasure basket with appropriate resources that are safe (no choking hazards)*
  - To ensure resources are kept clean and are not damaged or broken*
  - To ensure that the baby has time to explore the basket independently without being overwhelmed by too many items to the baby*
  - To assist where necessary (e.g. untangling an item). Anita Hughes uses the term 'observer' – the practitioner or adult should stay quiet, watch attentively and only intervene if necessary*
  - To be sensitive to the needs of the babies involved*
  - To provide a safe and secure environment and secure relationship so that babies*

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8. What types of objects should **not** be included in a treasure basket?

*Objects that should not be included:*

- Anything made from plastic
- Toys
- Items that might provide a choking hazard
- Items that are sharp or can break easily
- Items that are damaged or broken

9. Below are suggestions for nine different treasure baskets and their contents.

- *Natural objects: shells, loofah, pebbles, feathers, cork, dried gourd, coconut shell, cone, pumice stone, orange peel, apples, avocado stone (watch the size), buttons.*
- *Metal objects: large and small keys of all sizes, tea strainer, small saucepan, sieve, keys for door, brass curtain rings, small food can (without ring pull), bang wiper (without sharp pieces), nutcracker, lemon squeezer, garlic press, cherry stoner, clothes pegs, some musical instruments, e.g. triangle, beater.*
- *Wooden objects: pegs, bowls, ruler, spoons, honey dipper, wooden bowl, rolling block (different shapes and sizes), wooden ball, embroidery hoop, cotton reel, splinters or loose bark), cork.*
- *Textiles: velvet, lace, silk, net, wool, felt, ribbons, yarn balls, fake fur, real fur, t-shirt, covers, socks, gloves, hats, scarves, powder puff, flannel, raffia mat.*
- *Leather items: baby shoe, phone case, purse, key fob, bracelet, leather offcut, small wash leather, mat, dog or cat collar.*
- *Brushes and bristled items: paint brushes of all sizes, dish washing brushes, nail brush, pastry brush, bottle cleaning brush, toothbrush, make-up brush, horse comb.*
- *Rubber: ball, plug, mouse mat, phone case, rubber glove, rubber seal from a Kitchen sink, washers linked together (like the keys).*
- *Glass and ceramics: face cream jars (with or without lids), sturdy jars, e.g. baby food jars, beads (continuous string), small mirror, essence bottles (well washed), candle holders.*
- *Miscellaneous: tennis ball, scouring pad, cane bag handle, door handle, ornamental glass, photo frame, greaseproof paper, aluminium foil, funnel, hair roller, hairbrush.*



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## Student Activity Sheet: Activity

What do we mean by the phrase 'treasure basket play' in early education?  
Research this concept and answer the questions below.  
Share your answers in class with fellow students.

1. Who developed the treasure basket approach?
2. At what age should adults introduce children to treasure baskets?
3. How many items should a treasure basket contain?
4. Give three reasons why treasure basket play is important.
5. What type of container is a treasure basket?
6. How often should you use a treasure basket?
7. What is the role of the adult?
8. What types of objects should **not** be included in a treasure basket?
9. Give three examples of different types of treasure baskets, and at least five items for each.



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5. What type of container is a treasure basket?
6. How often should you use a treasure basket?
7. What is the role of the adult?
8. What types of objects should **not** be included in a treasure basket?
9. Give three examples of different types of treasure baskets, and at least five items for each.

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Themes

Shiny	Stacking
Soft	Rolling
Red	Slotting
Brushes	Leather
Posting	Reflecting
Wood	Wood

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## Activity 6: Story sacks and boxes

### Teacher's Notes

<b>Spec area:</b>	A1 Types of play and learning opportunities D2 Planning activities to support children's learning and development	<b>Topic title spec ref:</b>
<b>Suggested use:</b>	Plenary/class activity (small groups)	<b>Timing:</b>
<b>Aim:</b>	To introduce the concept and show it relates to children's learning	
<b>Teacher's instruction:</b>	In plenary discuss the concept of story sacks and boxes. If possible the children to small groups. Provide each group with a well-known book and ask groups to make a list of resources, activities and provide a reading experience. Feedback in class.	

### Suggested answers

Questions to be discussed in plenary.

- What do we mean by the idea of a story sack or box, and why make one?  
*A story sack or box contains props that will enhance the story experience. The props are provocations. The idea is to make the story meaningful and fun, and to stimulate child engagement.*
- What types of resources might one find in a simple story sack?
  - Soft toys
  - Small figures of people, Lego figures
  - Small objects that relate to the story, e.g. a key
  - Puppets
  - Textured material to imitate a river or snow, etc.
  - Small animals
  - Small cars
  - Natural items
  - Cards, calendars
  - Mats, cloths, etc.
- How could you use a story sack?
  - Use or show the props to someone else reads the book to a group
  - Tell the story with the props only
  - Send the story sack home with the book for parents to read and share with the children
  - Encourage children to access a story sack independently within a particular area
  - Use the story sack or box as a writing prompt for older children
  - Use the story sack as a creative prompt for role play, acting, making music, painting
  - Take an item from the story sack and place it on a sensory table, e.g. water, playdough, etc. for children to make their own stories
- What learning opportunities do story sacks and boxes encourage?
  - Increasing vocabulary
  - Knowledge and understanding of the world
  - Taking on or negotiating a role
  - Working together
  - Gaining independence
  - Sequencing (story)
  - Problem-solving
  - Recreating stories
  - Listening to others
  - Gaining confidence

### A few suggested books and what you could put in the sack or box

#### Axel Scheffler's Fairy Tales: Goldilocks and the Three Bears

- Three different-sized bears and a chair representing goldilocks (or puppets)
- Three different-sized bowls and spoons, chairs or beds
- Language cards to describe the story
- Make porridge for breakfast or snack time
- Activities around hot and cold (warm water and ice, etc.)
- Make oat-based playdough
- Role play, outside area
- Vocabulary – different sizes
- What do bears really eat?
- Social discussion about what is yours and what are not yours
- Naming emotions

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**The Three Billy Goats Gruff (Ladybird well-known tales)**

- Three different-sized goat figures
- A troll-type figure and a bridge made of blocks
- Different cloth to represent the river and the shore
- Recreating the story outside with large blocks and planks
- Dancing as trolls
- Troll music ('In the Peer Gynt by Grieg)
- Goat milk and cheese
- The seasons

**Handa's Surprise, by Eileen Brown:**

- A flat basket
- Fruit – real, plastic, puzzle pieces
- Different animal figures
- Go shopping to find the different fruits
- Talk about the journey of giving and receiving
- Play dough – fruit cutters, different-coloured play dough, paper for the fruit, scented play dough (orange or pineapple)
- Walking with a basket to tell the story
- Cooking with fruit
- Snack time fruit
- Difference between giving and receiving
- How do they grow?

**Going on a Bear Hunt, by Michael Rosen**

- Toy bear
- Musical instruments for sounds
- Make a cave indoors or outdoors
- Outdoor or indoor imaginative play – going on a bear hunt
- Block play – making a cave
- Sand play with small toys for bear hunt
- Drawing, painting
- Talking about feelings

**Giraffes Can't Dance, by Giles Andreae**

- Animal figures
- Jungle sounds
- Dancing
- Music making
- Listening to different genres of music
- Block play / small toys to tell the story
- Dressing up / masks
- Beating out or clapping to music
- Play dough with animal cutters

**Charlie and Lola: We Honestly Can Look After Our Dog, by Lauren Child:**

- Soft toy dog
- Collar and lead
- Grooming kit (brush, comb)
- Dog tags
- Letters and numbers
- Role play area – vets
- Role play area – dog groomers
- Pictures of different breeds of dog (what type is Sizzles?)
- Pictures of children to make a display
- Why is Sizzles a good dog? (do you know what a good dog is?)
- Invite a dog to nurse
- What do dogs eat and drink?
- Junk modelling – dog
- Block play with small toys with pets
- Different pets

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# Activity 7: Pitching it right – play and learning across different age groups

## Teacher's Notes

<b>Spec area:</b>	A1 Types of play and learning opportunities D2 Planning activities to support children's learning and development	<b>Topic title and spec ref:</b>	Pit opl gre
<b>Suggested use:</b>	Class activity (small group)	<b>Timing:</b>	30-
<b>Aim:</b>	To encourage students to think about the holistic nature of play ac		
<b>Teacher's instructions:</b>	Divide the class into small groups. Provide one copy of the worksheet so students can write in own books. Assign one of the learning themes to create a mind map of resources, activities, provocations and materials that would encourage play and facilitate learning. You may wish to provide information from educational companies to provide more information. Share the findings for discussion.		

## Suggested themes

<b>Mark making</b>	<b>Maths</b>	<b>Sand play</b>	<b>Cr</b>
<b>Role play</b>	<b>Storytelling</b>	<b>Construction</b>	<b>Fine</b>
<b>Outdoor play</b>	<b>Sensory play</b>	<b>Gross motor skills</b>	<b>V</b>

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General suggestions for activities, resources, interactions and provocations that might be in

Area	Age 0-2	Age 2-5
Mark making	Investigating pureed foods finger painting, gloom time.	Finger painting, chunky chinks, crayons, paintbrushes, etc. Writing in sand, gloom or shaving foam. Using clipboards to complete in role play. Colouring in. The beginning of writing for a purpose e.g. name on a drawing.
Maths	Counting, stretching, and moving in a controlled way. Treasure basket and heuristic play. Singing number or spatial awareness rhymes. Books and stories. Shape stackers and sorters.	Peg puzzles, size activities, number rhymes and songs, board games, stories, putting up the right fingers for age, counting 1-3, counting, posting shapes. Puzzles of 10-30 pieces. Counting then 1-20, then 1-100. Number rhymes and songs. Sharing e.g. cutting a cake. Cooking activities. Size activities, e.g. Goldilocks and the three bears. Shape activities, e.g. finding shapes in the environment. Names of 2D and 3D shapes. Role play (e.g. shop, centre, gym or clinic). Block play. Playing musical instruments. Keeping a drum beat. Water play. The beginning of addition.
Creative area	Finger paints. Chunky crayons. Hats and other dressing up. Mirror. Music making and dancing. Edible play dough. Gloop. Colour mixing with finger paints or gloom.	Finger paints. Chunky crayons. Hats and other dressing up. Music making and dancing. Painting at an easel. Different paint brushes (thick and thin). Colour mixing. Drawing, chalkboard, cutting, junk modelling. Role play and dressing up. Creative dance and rhymes. Playing musical instruments.
Role play	Providing safe and secure experiences that children can walk to and copy, e.g. going out for walks or going shopping. Child-sized role play toys, e.g. kitchen, telephone, dolls, dressing up books and rhymes.	Providing safe and secure experiences that children can walk to and copy, e.g. going out for walks or going shopping. Child-sized role play toys, e.g. kitchen, telephone, dolls, dressing up books. Extending role play provocations depending on age group to include activities with mark-making, maths, etc.
Storytelling	Cloth books, board books and simple interactive books. Adults reading and/or retelling a story. Props.	Adults reading and/or retelling a story. Age appropriate picture books and reference books. Props for storytelling by the children. Creative opportunities to create own props. Dressing up, puppets, etc. World play with and without blocks. Digital stories/computer. Creating own story with photos.

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Area	Age 0-2	Age 2-5
Fine motor skills	Treasure basket play and heuristic play. Eating finger foods. Squeezing sponge (bathtime play).	Threading large beads, leg puzzles, drawing, chalking and Play dough and other manipulative sensory play. Dressing. Combing and brushing hair. Turning on taps, putting on a hat, etc. Spoons, spoons. Spooning sand, rice, etc. Bath time play with bubbles and other toys. Threading smaller beads or pasta. Chalking, painting, etc. Tracing shapes in sand or gloop, or sandpaper. Sewing. Water and sand play, e.g. pouring and Junk modelling.
Outdoor play	Exploring the environment play, e.g. crawling on different textures. Sit on rides. Swings and slides. Walks. Push or pull along toys. Jumping in puddles. Playing in the rain or snow. Sand and water play. Picnics.	Walks, visits to different places (e.g. farm). Age-appropriate frames. See-saw. Balance bike. Three-wheeled toys. Ball games. Swings and slides. Simple dressing up, e.g. hats. Loud instruments. Hide and seek. Larger climbing frame with rope slide, etc. Swing to stand or sit on with others. Throwing. Hoops and small balls. Parachute play. Outdoor sand, water and water play opportunities. Running, hopping, jumping. Role play.
Sensory play	Edible play dough. Meal times. Bath time. Finger painting with edible paint. Treasure baskets and heuristic play.	Different play doughs. Gloop. Jelly play, clay, paints of all colours. Shredded paper. Collage (supervised). Nature walks. Music and singing. Junk modelling. Cooking. Sensory bins with objects.
Water play	Bath time. Swimming.	Water tray with the ability to attach pipes and funnels. Water balloons. Syringes, syphons. Ice. Water beads. Sponges. Swings. Sticky letters and shapes. Bubbles.
Sand play	Exploring. Wet sand. Bucket and spade. Shape moulds. Three-wheeled toys to push.	Exploring. Bucket, spade, rake, moulds, funnels. Wheeled toys. Wet sand. Dry sand. Constructing sand (hardens). Wheel and other small world objects for imaginary play. Bucket, spade, moulds, sand wheel, funnel. Mark-making opportunities and letters.
Gross motor skills	Managing body movements. Crawling, walking. Treasure basket and heuristic play. Clapping. Stamping feet. Hammering.	Managing body movements. Walking, climbing stairs (using one leg and then alternate). Wheeled sit-on toys (no pedals). Wheel and other small world objects for imaginary play. Using a scooter. Slide. Different types of climbing. Coordinating movements to songs and rhymes e.g. clapping etc. Running, stopping, hopping, skipping with alternate feet. Ball. Jumping, hopping on one leg. Making/following movements to songs and dances. Painting at an easel.
Music	Recognising songs and rhymes and sometimes joining in. Clapping. Shaking rattles. Banging drums.	Recognising songs and rhymes and joining in with words and movements. Playing simple musical instruments. Dancing. Making simple musical instruments. Musical chairs. Playing percussion type of simple musical instruments. Playing simple flute/recorder type instruments. Playing electronic musical instruments.
Construction	Playing with toys, e.g. stacking rings or soft blocks.	Soft blocks. Wood blocks. Large interlocking bricks moving bricks by 4-5 years. Train tracks and other interlocking construction toys. Magnet blocks. Junk modelling and prop making for role play. Sand play. Sculpture and clay modelling.

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# Student Activity Sheet: Activity

Create a Venn diagram of the play theme that has been provided, listing as many activities, adult interactions or provocations that would be seen in the home and children's play and learning on that area. Share your diagram with the class.

A Venn diagram with three overlapping circles. The top circle is labeled "0-2 years". The bottom-left circle is labeled "2-5 years". The bottom-right circle is labeled "5-8 years". In the center, where all three circles overlap, there is a rectangular box labeled "Theme:". The page contains several "INSPECTION COPY" watermarks and the Zig Zag Education logo.

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## Activity 8: Indoor or outdoor play

### Teacher's Notes

<b>Spec area:</b>	A1 Types of play and learning opportunities D2 Planning activities to support children's learning and development	<b>Topic title spec ref:</b>
<b>Suggested use:</b>	Homework	<b>Timing:</b>
<b>Aim:</b>	To get students to understand that both the indoor and outdoor environments offer important play and learning opportunities.	
<b>Teacher's instructions:</b>	Print out the activity sheet for each student. Students to look at each example of the type of play it supports (i.e. physical, imaginative, sensory and construction), including what resources you would need to have indoors and outdoors. Feedback in class.	

### Suggested answers

Area of play	Type of play it supports	Resources required	How to use
Painting	Physical Imaginative Sensory Creative art and design	Different types of paint, e.g. textured paint, shiny paint or puffy paint. Different types of brushes, rollers or stampers. Mixing palettes or cups. Media to paint on such as card, paper, wall, glass or wood. Protective aprons.	Individual painting Group painting Painting sculpture junk models. Making and mixing paints. Easel.
Blocks	Physical Imaginative Sensory Creative art and design Construction	Wooden blocks in different shapes and sizes, e.g. cones, cubes, rectangular prism and triangular and square based pyramids. Small toy vehicle to build on. Small toy props such as cars, figures and animals.	Making towers farms, garages etc. with or without small world people. Creating own stories. Retelling stories. Testing ideas of construction.
Manipulative play	Physical Imaginative Sensory Creative art and design	Play dough, cookie cutters in different shapes and sizes, pizza wheels, rolling pins, pastry cases, twigs, sticks, feathers, straws, jewels – anything that makes a pattern or mark.	Making the play dough. Cooking. Rolling out dough. cutting out shapes. creating 'cake' and other foods. Use in the role play.
Role play	Physical Imaginative Sensory Creative art and design Construction	Various different clothes, hats, etc. with different fastenings. Props for home corner, shopping, hospital, dentist, etc.	Home corner kitchen, surgeon's office, aeroplane, office. Re-enacting past experiences/travelling to gain sense of the world.
Music	Physical Imaginative Sensory Creative art and design	Different instruments covering percussion, string, wind, brass, etc. including homemade, e.g. triangle, drum, claves, maracas, recorder or whistle. Tape recorder. CD player.	Accompanying stories and rhymes. Creating rhythms. Listening to music. Beatboxing. Naming instruments. Loud and soft activities. Fast and slow activities. Using musical instruments to tell a story. Making different types of instruments.

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Area of play	Type of play it supports	Resources required	How to use
Books	Physical Imaginative Sensory Creative art and design	Different books: board books, lift-the-flap books, rhyming books, story books, reference books, touch and feel books, books on numbers, letters, fiction	Reading books and small group Asking questions about the story – ‘what next?’ Acting out story using puppets
Wheeled toys	Physical Imaginative Sensory Creative art and design	Different cars, trains and trucks in many sizes. Sit-on wheeled toys. Push and pull wheeled toys. Trikes, scooters, doll pushchairs, wheelbarrow.	Smooth surface and pull toys Space to sit on Able to combine constructions slide down ramps into garages (play). Use toy tracks in playgloop or paint

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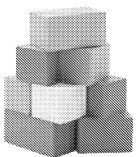
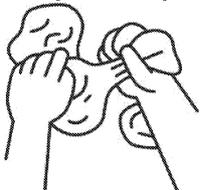
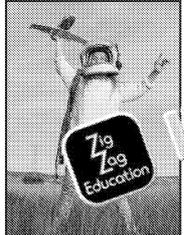
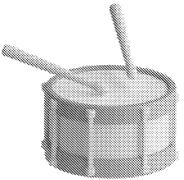
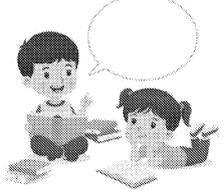
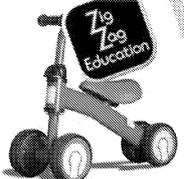


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## Student Activity Sheet: Activity

Using your knowledge of types of play (i.e. physical, imaginative, sensory, creative construction), complete the table below with as many different resources and use

Area of play	Type of play it supports	Resources required	How it is used
<b>Painting</b> 			
<b>Blocks</b> 			
<b>Manipulative play</b> 			
<b>Role play</b> 			
<b>Music</b> 			
<b>Books</b> 			
<b>Wheeled toys</b> 			

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# Activity 9: What to play with? (Health and safety)

## Teacher's Notes

<b>Spec area:</b>	A1 Types of play and learning opportunities The importance of suitable resources	<b>Topic title and spec ref:</b>
<b>Suggested use:</b>	Plenary/class activity (small groups)	<b>Timing:</b>
<b>Aim:</b>	To provide students with a clear understanding of why risk assessments are carried out and an outline of how it is done.	
<b>Teacher's instruction:</b>	Print out the activity sheet for homework. Discuss risk assessment with the class. Print and laminate the game cards. Use the assessment card game in one of two ways, either: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teacher selects card, invites feedback from class as to how they assess the risk on the card. Students make notes.</li> <li>2. Teacher divides class into small groups and gives one card to each group. They discuss the risk on the card and what they think a risk assessment on their subject card might look like.</li> </ol>	

## Suggested answers

1. What does HSO stand for? *Health and Safety Officer*
2. What does COSHH stand for, and why do we have COSHH sheets?  
*Control of Substances Hazardous to Health. COSHH sheets are available for all substances used in the workplace. Employers are obliged to:*
  - Assess the risks of possible exposure
  - Prevent and control such risk
  - Train and inform staff about risks and precautions to take
  - Have arrangements in place in case of accidents or emergencies
3. Is it necessary to undertake risk assessments? Why?
  - Find out where and what the risk is
  - Find out who is at risk
  - Find out the level of risk i.e. high, medium or low
  - Find out what is being done to minimise the risk
  - Find out who is responsible for risk control measures
  - Review the controls being carried out and are they working?

In the UK, companies who employ more than five staff are required to undertake risk assessments. In a nursery or school environment, this means that every single item the children use or play with should be assessed. Toys may be grouped under generic headings, e.g. shape sorters, pencils, etc. Risk areas within the setting that may be hazardous in some way, e.g. carpet tiles in hallways, etc.

Once hazards have been identified, they must be checked and reviewed on a regular basis. Managers must identify all risks from the environment, but managers must show that reasonable precautions have been taken to protect the health and safety of everyone working or visiting.

4. Who is responsible for undertaking risk assessments?  
*The responsibility for risk assessments usually lies with the Manager and Health and Safety Officer. Staff also bear a responsibility of reporting risks to those in charge when they see them.*

Sample risk assessment provided on homework sheet.

Potential hazard	What is the risk?	Level of risk	Control measures	Action who
Climbing frame in outdoor play area	Children will fall and hurt themselves. Staff will hurt their backs and arms lifting children up onto frame.	Low	Staff monitor play and make sure they are close by to avoid accidents happening. All staff have lifting training. Children must be able to climb onto and up the frame themselves. Staff must not lift them up high.	HSO* Staff Manager Room leader Staff

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Risk assessment cards for game

Walks outside the setting	Sand play	
Large wooden block and plank play	Lego	
Water play	Muddy area at back of garden	
Dressing up clothes	Drinks	
Cleaning fluids	Peanut allergy (one child)	

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## **Preview of Questions Ends Here**

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This is a limited inspection copy. Sample of questions ends here to avoid students previewing questions before they are set. See contents page for details of the rest of the resource.