Expressive Arts and Design in Early Years

Being Imaginative through Enabling Environments

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| **For Review and Reflection** | **In place** | **Even better if…** |
| There is a shared understanding of imaginative play amongst the staff |  |  |
| This shared understanding is communicated to parents |  |  |
| It is recognised that imaginative play can take place across all 7 areas of learning |  |  |
| Expressive Arts and Design is given equal status with other learning |  |  |
| Everyone has a chance to be imaginative (children, parents/carers and staff) and there is an awareness of imaginative strengths and interests |  |  |
| Staff are aware of their training needs for imaginative play and CPD opportunities are provided (mentoring, training) |  |  |
| **The role of the adult** |  |  |
| Staff model and encourage experimentation with different imaginative media and materials |  |  |
| Staff use observation to note *how* children use the imaginative areas as well as for observing the development of skills |  |  |
| These observations are evidenced in planning |  |  |
| Adults demonstrate imaginative play in a wide variety of ways so that learning takes place |  |  |
| Specific praise is given which helps to develop imaginative skills |  |  |
| Adults support children in developing their own imaginative ideas and children are encouraged to be unique in their creations (story-telling, role play, puppet theatre, construction, small world, song, dance etc) |  |  |
| Children are supported in developing language related to their imaginative play |  |  |
| Visits are organised to inspiring venues e.g. theatre, galleries, shops, parks, zoo etc |  |  |
| Visits by actors, puppeteers, story-tellers, musicians, dancers etc are arranged |  |  |
| **Enabling Environments** |  |  |
| Children are given time and space to develop their ideas |  |  |
| Children can work at their own pace |  |  |
| The environment supports children in making decisions about their own imaginative journey |  |  |
| There are enough materials and equipment for the children to use in all areas of learning |  |  |
| Creative workshop areas are well organised, well-resourced and kept well stocked so that extra resources can be made to support imaginative play |  |  |
| Materials and equipment are of a good quality and there is an interesting range of materials/media |  |  |
| There are opportunities for differentiation and challenge for all age ranges supported |  |  |
| Resources offer opportunities for working on different scales and in different ways |  |  |
| There are opportunities to use large and small ‘loose parts’ inside and outside |  |  |
| There are books/information/videos/music available to support current imaginative ideas |  |  |
| Children can work at different levels (floor, table, high platform, stage, puppet theatre,) and in different ways (small, large) |  |  |
| Creativity and imaginative play are encouraged outside (this might look very different to imaginative play inside) |  |  |
| Children have the chance to work collaboratively as well as independently on imaginative stories, rhymes, music, dance etc |  |  |
| Children can discard and change their imaginative play areas and interests if they wish |  |  |
| **Display** |  |  |
| Children can have a say whether their imaginative work is shared or not – whether this be writing based or performance based |  |  |
| Children’s work is displayed/shown/listened to with respect |  |  |
| Displays are mainly of the children’s unique imaginative independent creations |  |  |
| Displays are at the children’s eye level |  |  |
| Children have spaces to display their own imaginative creations and can choose to interact with them (e.g. music display) |  |  |
| Displays are up to date and relevant to the children currently in the setting and their current interests |  |  |
| Children are encouraged to label their work in an ‘age and stage’ appropriate way |  |  |
| There are opportunities to display 3 dimensional imaginative creations |  |  |
| Children can revisit their imaginative creations to edit and add to, as they are stored in an accessible way |  |  |
| Children are encouraged to record their ‘transient’ non-fixed imaginative creations – photo, video, drawing or plan, writing, song, dance, story-telling performance |  |  |
| A range of artefacts, pictures, photos, instruments, puppets and books for inspiration are available for adults and children to refer to |  |  |