Level 3 Children's Care, Play, Learning, and Development: Practice and Theory Extended Investigation

Unit 331: Investigating current issues in children’s care, play, learning, and development in Wales

Exemplar
Merit Awarded

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Level 3 Children's Care, Play, Learning, and Development: Practice and Theory

TIMESHEET must be submitted with the candidates work

Centre Name/*Enw'r Ganolfan*:

Centre Number/*Rhif y Ganolfan*:

Candidate Name/*Enw'r Ymgeisydd*:

Candidate Number/*Rhif yr Ymgeisydd:*

Extended Investigation

The total time allowed must not exceed 15 hours. / *Ni ddylai'r cyfanswm yr amser a ganiateir fod yn fwy na 15 awr.*
The timed, supervised hours took place as follows: / *Cynhaliwyd oriau dan oruchwyliaeth wedi'u hamseru fel a ganlyn:*

Dates *Dyddiadau*			Time Allowed (15 hours) *Amser a Ganiateir (15 awr)* Hours/*Oriau*	Minutes/*Munudau*
28	03	2022	5	
29	03	2022	5	
30	03	2022	5	
			Total / Cyfanswm	

I certify that the candidate completed this assessment **within the designated 15 hours** on the above dates. / *Tystiaf fod pob ymgeisydd wedi cwblhau'r ase wn* ***o fewn y 15 awr dynodedig*** *ar y dyddiadau uchod.*

Supervisor's Signature/*Llofnod yr Athro:* .... **Date/*Dyddiad:***

I confirm that the evidence submitted for assessment has been produced by me without any assistance beyond that allowed. / *Cadarnhaf fy mod wedi cynhyrchu'r dystiolaeth a gyflwynwyd i'w hasesu heb unrhyw gymorth heblaw am yr hyn sy'n cael ei ganiatáu.*

Candidate's Signature/*Llofnod yr Ymgeisydd:* .. .. **Date/*Dyddiad:***
.....

Research and evidence – based practice impacts on current legislation and government initiatives.
Research how currently policy and legislation have informed changes in early years education in wales.

Task 1

This essay explores my chosen four topic areas to discuss, after researching to find my data. For my essay I will be discussing Flying start, The Welsh language, The Additional learning needs and education tribunal Bill and lastly Forest schools and how changes have been made. Additionally, I will be mentioning a lot about the UNCRC, The Right to Play and the seven core aims, as there Is a lot of information that link to the focus areas. When given this topic question I originally found it hard to stick to certain topic areas and limit the amount I write. Due to having a word count I needed to find something I enjoy as well as something that would reach the word count. Through the Children's care, play learning and development course I have learnt a lot about each one of my topics through different sources. The Welsh language is something very important to me and I feel that every child in wales should have the opportunity to speak and learn the language and culture of their country. Forest schools and the ALN Bill are topics that has influenced my learning and enjoyment for this topic. Also, through previous experience, working in a forest school setting as well as working with children who have additional needs. Looking at the reflections I had made on behalf of my experience of placement, helped me to develop my interest more and widen my range of knowledge. Significantly these 4 topics all link together in a way that I will discuss further on. Extra research through different sources such as books, journals, placement experience and the internet has shown me more information that I didn't quite pick up on during the course or finding new and recent information about the topics that wasn't there before. To gather all my data, I mainly used the internet as I found it hard to find books on my chosen topics. Throughout, I have used many different websites to find most of my research as there was a better range of information to read. Books have also been used to develop my knowledge but for my personally I found that the internet was easier and quicker to use.

Task 2

My chosen focus areas support children's learning and development through many different theories. In 2015 ideas were sent out to create a new law around helping and supporting the development of children with additional needs. Each child as well as young people with an additional learning need will have a plan called "individual development plan" The plan will include information on what each specific person needs to be able to learn as well as including what will be done in order to support them. Local authorities, nurseries, schools and colleges, health and any other service that the person/child uses such as the prison service will work together in order to support the child/person holistically. As noted, they will all share information on the child and what they will be doing to help out each other. These chosen focus area (ALN Act) is all about the child and offers, much support to develop and create such a confident, young being. The welsh government has now published its ALN Act 2018, which will replace the existing SEN system from September 2020.The term ALN will replace 'special educational needs' (SEN) and learning difficulties (LDD) covering all children and young people with additional needs regardless of how complex and severe they are. The ALN act positively supports each child and young person by overcoming barriers to learning and reaching their full potential every day. However negative issues may

occur where you may disagree with your child's IDP (independent development plan) In this case if you are unhappy with the decision for your child, you have the right to raise a dispute and contact the local authority to see what else is in place for your child. As a practitioner it gives us the opportunity to build a
positive and healthy relationship with the child. By looking at the behaviour of the child and focusing on how they act according to Pavlov, Watson and skinner, it gives us a better understanding. It is also very important that the children can understand us as the practitioners we can be the best role models for them. Personally, I feel strongly about this act as I believe it supports the child way more than before as all focus is on the child to really break the barriers and reach their full potential.
Did you know that almost one in four people in wales lives in poverty which means they get less than 60% of the average wage? That is about 700,000 of our fellow citizens. That level of relative poverty as remained unchanged for decades. Approximately 600,000 children live in Wales: of those, one in three or 200,000 are in poverty. In short, child poverty means that parents can't afford the basics of food, clothing, shelter. There are millions of children living in poverty who have at least one employed parent. The poorest children are less likely to follow instructions, make themselves understood, manage their own basic hygiene or play well with others. By age five, many children have started reading simple words, talking in sentences and can add single numbers. Research shows that far fewer of the poorest can do these things well. Children from low income families are far more likely than their better off peers to lag been at age three. Too many do badly by the end of primary, and carry on doing badly. (Willshaw,2014, p.3) (Accessed 22/03/22)
As a result of this, flying start has appeared. Flying start is the welsh governments targeted early years programme for families with children under 4 years of age who live in some of the most disadvantaged area of wales. This programme is only available to those who live in the area of in certain locations. As I live in , this is a major help to our society. Children now get the chance to learn and achieve their full potential without feeling left out or lonely. To support the children, flying start doesn't just offer childcare however it offers support programmes that can help with a child behaviour, creating positive approaches to building a healthy relationship and also baby bonding classes for a new born. You never want to see a child or person left out due to issues linking with poverty. By involving and welcoming every child and their family, we never have to discriminate as we know every child is welcome no matter the situation. The welsh government started the seven core aims which links very well with what I am discussing. One of their aim's states 'is not disadvantaged by child poverty' The concept of play deprivation (where a child's health, well-being and long-term development is detrimentally affected by lack of opportunity to play) is still being debated, but it is clear that there is such a thing as poverty of experience, which may occur whatever the circumstances or social background of a child or young person. I haven't had experience in a flying start setting however I have heard how supportive they are on not just the child but also the family, including everyone Is the main. From my point of view John Dewey relates a lot to flying start and its topic. Dewey believed that children need to interact with other people, work both alone and cooperatively with their peers and adults. Education should also reflect the child's interests and backgrounds and that their social and cultural backgrounds are important. Dewey saw learning as lifelong and that educators need to not only teach skills and knowledge but also help children live and exist in today's society. (accessed 17/03/22)

For many children today, their experience of play can be limited. Its not unusual to hear practitioners talking of their lack of physical play in the lives of some children. This has led many to consider the benefits of play outdoors where children can be introduced to new activities that support learning sand develop confidence. The recognition of those positive aspects offered by forest school has added significantly to the opportunities that early years practitioners now offer children. Forest school is a child centred, inspirational learning environment that encourages holistic development through regular sessions. It's a long-term programme that encourages children to play, explore, and take risks. It fosters self-esteem and confidence in learners through student-led, hands on experiences in a natural context. From previous knowledge and experience previous to research, forest schools have a major impact on a child's learning as far as I'm concerned. Learning through natural and environmentally friendly things children get the chance to get a head start into future life as they grow up. By experiencing real life things other than plastic toys gives them the imagination and skills to creatively think about what's to come in the future. Even though I feel positively about the child being very independent to their own learning, as much as its not labelled repetitive, I believe that it is. Children learn from the practitioners, the role models so without us encouraging a child to learn with, how do we know the child is going to reach their full potential if we're not there helping them learn. Like Bandura said with the actions of others, children increase their potential for social learning by copying us, the practitioners. (accessed 17/03/22)

The welsh language is taught to all children from primary school to secondary and it is in fact mandatory. Growing up, there always used to be a bad name for the Welsh Language, mainly stating how boring the language is. I thoroughly enjoyed it in school, mainly for two reasons, the culture of wales is so interesting and I was also very good at the language. By encouraging the children to learn the welsh language it can open many different opportunities for them, later on in life. As a childcare practitioner you can make a real difference to ensure that every child has a chanc4 to become a confident learner by being the best role model. When we speak about welsh language development in early years there are many things to consider. First of the all, the level of Welsh skills from us the practitioner or the carers point of view, secondly the access to Welsh language resources available in the setting. We need to think if the language is being introduced to children and if it is how often? From my research many practitioners who have grown up in wales who have had the welsh language taught to them secondly, stated that not many have used their skills in their adult life and that they have very little confidence in using welsh as a result. The welsh government have also had a vision of increasing the amount of welsh speakers to a million by 2050. (accessed 17/03/22)

As part of this week they will ensure and support a number of work programmes for both children and adults, so everyone has the opportunity to learn welsh. In my school setting in placement, the children start with circle time. They start on the floor; the teacher says a phrase in welsh and the students reply back to them answering how they want to in the welsh language. All children show full concentration and excitement when learning new words, whereas, in my first ever placement most of the children didn't want to even hear about the language. This could be due to the curriculum changing slightly. When the children are learning welsh, their oracy skills can develop massively. Speaking allows the children to fully understand themselves, share ideas and opinions and ask questions an answer back based on a pattern. In wales government commitment to a truly bilingual wales are established. One of the key principles is that all children in wales have the right to feel a

sense of belonging in wales and to enjoy the experiences that come with the welsh language. The learning country: Foundation Phase 3-7 years indicates that, across this phase, children will need more opportunities to experience and to enjoy using their language in their everyday life. There long-term goal was to make sure under 5s get exposed to the welsh language. As far as I'm aware I can't really find any negatives for the welsh language, however the curriculum has changed.

Task 3

The term "equality" means "fairly" so in childcare, the word equality means to ensure that all children are treated fairly. They should all be offered the same opportunities and experiences and their rights should be protected always. Even though children come from diverse backgrounds, they should be treated equally and inclusively at all times. Everyone is unique, children are unique and some children have additional learning needs which must be met when it comes to care. No child is the same but no matter, they should all be respected and treated fairly. The aim is to create an environment that all students can thrive by understanding that individual; characteristics make people unique and prevent them from seeing differences as a negative thing from there early stages of development. By influencing it on day one, it will have an impact on how they treat others in the future. The equality act 2010 is the legislation surrounding the topics of equality and diversity to protect the rights of individuals. It works off of these nine characteristics: (accessed 22/03/22)

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partners
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

(accessed 23/03/22)

The UNCRC are important as it makes sure all children's rights are being upheld. The convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child embodies the principle that every child should be recognised, valued and safeguarded as a person with rights and as a unique human being. The cultural make – up of many early years settings and primary schools in the UK has changed significantly in the last few decades as new arrivals have entered the education system. In 2012, the national association for language development in the curriculum reported how the results of the annual school census in January of that year had indicated that one in six children in primary schools in England did not have English as their first language. The welsh government has set out seven core aims guided by the United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child as the basis of all its work for children and young people. These aims inform decisions on priorities and objectives nationally and inform strategy and service provision locally. By breaking it down briefly the ore aims make sure that all children get treated fairly and equally. Just to explain, the first core aim is that children 'have developed a flying start in life and the best possible basis for their future growth and development' This basically states that the government will provide young

children and their families with quality opportunities to play, so it supports the development of positive early attachments. Play enables physical, emotional and mental development and the learning of skills that contribute to children's healthy development. It also supports the development of good parenting skills. Policy and procedures in different child care settings will all have information about the child's rights as well as safeguarding. As one of my chosen topics is forest schools, policies and procedures will state that all children have freedom to participate and play. Within a forest school setting the children are encouraged to do what they like and have the freedom to learn by themselves. However, within a typical normal school setting child are given activities and tasks to do in order to learn. Article 31 of the UN convention on the Rights of the Child states that every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participle freely in cultural life and the arts. In Vygotsky's cultural – historical theory, play is an important part of early childhood. Vygotsky believe that play promotes cognitive, social and emotional development in children. On the other hand, Piaget viewed play as integral to the development of intelligence e in children. His theory of play argues that as the child matures, their environment and play should encourage further cognitive and language development. Lastly, Sara smilanskys main findings in her research was that children engage in four types of play; functional play, conditional play, games with rules and dramatic play. Functional play is play where children engage in activities that utilise muscles or the sensorimotor. By allowing the children to have a choice they are able to understand that they can start making their own decisions and what they do when they grow up. Letting the child become responsible and independent while being safe can help and support a child massively which Is what they are influencing in schools recently.

Task 4

Many theories and legislations have influenced practice in children's care play and learning development. Due to the new legislation Cymraeg 2050; a million welsh speakers, settings have now encouraged children to learn wales. Using new sources of teaching such as films, books, pictures and songs top really enforce to language onto the students. I feel that this is a very strong goal that looks good for our country, however I feel like it won't be as strong as we think. Its all down to the generation now to deliver the welsh language and use it more as my generation would not be confident to use welsh by 2050. I would say there are many strengths to this such as opening new opportunities for children but the weaknesses overweigh the strengths. From what I have observed in my child care settings, hardly any welsh is being used. If they give a lesson in welsh it would be very brief and straight after their lesson they would go back top using full English again. I understand why they would go back to full English; however, it would be more beneficial to use short sharp welsh phrases for the children to get used to. Also, I haven't seen any recent or any new information regarding this new plan.

The additional learning needs educational tribunal (ALNET) has impacted on children whop struggle to learn. This means that ALN will cover a whole spectrum of needs, from so called 'high functioning' autism, through to dyslexia, dyspraxia and ADHD, to serious global learning delays/difficulties and major physical disabilities. Children and young people will be working with not only practitioners but healthcare and other services. I feel that this makes it easier for staff to fully understand how to work with these children as well as plan easily to work together. With an IDP staff are able to tell what person needs what. There has definitely been a significant change in attitudes towards children with addition needs over

the past few decades, with increasing numbers of children with additional needs in mainstream schools. When I worked I a nursery for placement, I worked with a boy who had autism. He would choose the same toys every day, the same three cars and would sit and play all day on his own. With his IDP the staff were able to plan lessons and activities that he could do with his cars to reach his full potential. Linking in with forest schools, the Regio e milia approach is also relatable. The curriculum emphasises creative thinking with much attention given to problem solving and exploration. Malaguzzi, the founder of Regio Emilia used the term 'one hundred languages of children' to refer to how children express their thinking. Elements pf the principles underpinning the Regio Emilia approach can be found in the theories of Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner and Dewey. Clearly this approach places children in the centre of the learning process and emphasises the importance of individuality and children being seen as having rights. With the Regio Emilia approach, the nursery that I have worked in has really boosted the children out of their comfort zone. Just by letting the child choose what they want to play with can show them a sense of understanding. For example, I worked with a little boy who was very frustrated because we were forcing him to do this certain activity and he was getting really anxious and distressed. Just by us saying 'finish this task then you can go and play with whatever you want, really calmed him down' as soon as he was finished, he was back to his normal self, playing with his chosen toys. Just by observing the behaviour and attitudes of how to deal with that little boy made it easier for the next time it occurred. This links in with Montessori teachers. Montessori theory believed strongly in the importance of repetition being central to children's learning and as an important means of laying down the foundations for more abstract learning. Montessori teachers are encouraged to sit quietly in a place where they will not distract the children and to record even the smallest of details.

Task 5

As a practitioner in a setting you can influence children through many different ways. The children look up to you as their role model and will without a doubt copy what you do. Bandura proposed two key elements central to children's learning – imitation and identification. Children, he argued, imitate the actions of those around them ad, though identifying with others assimilate new learning into already existing concepts. Bandura proved to us that children imitate us. The bobo doll experiment occurred in to early 1960s which he filmed woman aggressively hitting a large toy doll. Bandura invited a group of young children to view the film and then asked them to play in a separate room where there was a similar doll. The children started hitting the doll as they had observed the woman doing in the film. They were imitating the woman's actions. They were, in practice, engaging in the behaviours they had observed but that had not been reinforced in any way, for example, receiving a reward. Bandura then stated that learning was taken place because of observation and not because of reinforcement. From my observations and experience, this theory can actually be put into everyday life. Imitating the actions of others is commonplace and young children frequently identify with older children, adults and characters they have watched on a tv, film and the internet or even come across in books. This is one of the main reasons why we as practitioners have to be so careful and appropriate at all times around children. The strengths to this theory are that he drew attention to the importance of the social environment for children's learning and the impact significant others have in modelling learning to children. On the other hand, the theory has been criticised for not

going far enough in explaining, for example, how children acquire and develop inner thought and feelings.
Forest schools can be a great way to educate children and really get them to enjoy being outdoors. In settings, as a practitioner I will encourage outdoor play by including different types of toys to play outside with. To really encourage a child's creative imagination while playing outside, you can use chalk. Chalk is a great way for them to explore and express themselves by drawing and colouring outside. This can ion face focus on not only their creative skills but their physical, intellectual, language, emotional and social skills. Additionally, taking a group at a time to toast marshmallows around a small fire while letting the children have a turn can give the child a level of independence as well as gaining love for the outdoors. There's also a sense of risk taking, fire is normally associated with danger, so by children being allowed to work in that environment, their responsibility and sensibility will start to show. All children love animals and 'creepy crawlies' as well as finding out what type they are. As a practitioner in my setting I will give the children an opportunity to do what they like with insects, whether that's making them a friendly home outside or whether its just simply naming them. Both of these activities encourage holistic development by making it enjoyable. From experience, I actually made a house for a snail out of wood and leaves ad the children also helped me create it. The children really enjoyed being so imaginative.
The welsh language, as the government are trying to reach a million speakers by 2050, I feel that the language lessons must be taught so children and young people can enjoy it a lot more. Due to covid many of the young children haven't experienced anything other than their home town at the moment due to being put into a global lockdown for almost three years. As a practitioner in would influence school trips to happen with families to join for the younger ones to visit so we can influence the language and culture of Wales onto the children.
When focusing on the IDP (independent development plan) there will be more focused learning on the specific child. Knowing what to do and when will make it a lot easier for you to do the work as well as create a routine for your child. Having a routine will offer you and your child a calmer workplace.

Task 6
From gathering my research, I have found a lot of information out from different sources about different parts of Child Care. While learning about all the different theories and their perspectives, I feel like I could enforce most of them into settings. Albert Banduras theory Is definitely my favourite and definitely the one that will stay with me through settings. Children learn by doing, so by imitating us, that's how they pick up on things. Finding out about other theories made my interest fly as I had never heard of some of them before. With my focus areas I feel like I have researched them well and fund the information out that I needed. My focus areas highlighted to me that everything does link with in child care as I managed to bring in a lot of information. Most of the information learnt was also though experience and placement. In placement I picked up a lot about Forest schools and the Welsh language which is why I found it so interesting to research more. I still feel like Wales will struggle to meet a million speakers by 2050 due to how the language is being taught. In the future I would really like to have more experience in different settings such as a day-care, nurseries, schools and even a creche. I want to experience schools that are run by Regio Emilia or forest schools as I haven't fully experienced a setting like that in a long

time. If I get the chance to ever work in setting where the follow a certain legislation or theory, I feel like it would widen my knowledge even more and lead me to new opportunities and jobs. Especially having experience with older and younger children as I can get both viewpoints on the generation. As a practitioner in practice I will ask children and young people opinions and viewpoints on what I have discussed today to see if they fully understand the idea behind it. By finding out what the children like and want, it gives us more of an idea how to teach especially how they like to be taught. After learning and researching all about my four topic choices, I can influence my learning into other child care settings. The ALN bill helped to understand how the independent development plan works and how to put it into practice.

Reference list:

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Twinkl.co.uk.2022. [online] Available at: https://www.twinkl.co.uk/teaching-wiki/play-theories-in-early-years> (accessed 16/03/22)