

*“Children need the freedom and time to play. Play is not a luxury.  
Play is a necessity.”*

Kay Redfield Jamison



Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Outdoor Play and Learning  
@ Belmont School

# Your Memories

## What was play like when you were a child?

Think back to being 10 years old and playing out with your friends. How do you think you benefited from the play you had as a child?



### Where were you?

At home, in the garden, in the street or in the park?



### What were you doing?

What was the riskiest or most challenging thing you used to do?



### Who were you with?

Was it your siblings, friends from school, your neighbours, or were you alone?



### How did adults support your play?

Were they involved, in the background or absent?

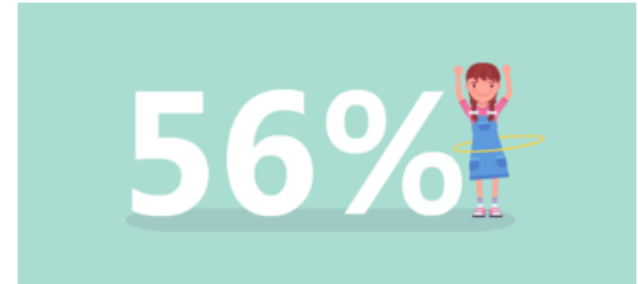
# Play has changed...



The habitat of play is disappearing –  
**Time, space** and **permission**.



**Society has changed** but children's  
needs have not.



In the UK **56%** of primary school  
children only play outside with  
friends while at school.

# The Right to Play

## All children have the right to play

This universal right is enshrined in Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

It is the legal and moral duty of all schools and all adults working in schools to uphold human rights, including the right to play.



# Why improve play?

- Children spend 1.4 years of their primary school attendance in playtime.
- Just 27% of children said they regularly play outside their homes
- More than eight in ten children and young people (85%) agree that being in nature makes them very happy.

# Benefits of Play

- ① It helps children explore and make sense of the world
- ② They can discover new things and test ideas
- ③ They can develop social skills like sharing and collaboration
- ④ They can exercise body and mind
- ⑤ It makes them happy and enjoy school more
- ⑥ It improves behaviour and focus in the classroom

Play Video



## Our Play Vision

Belmont School is committed to ensuring quality play opportunities are available to all children. As a school, we aim to improve the way we think and provide opportunities for play. We believe that play is essential for the physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development of all children.

In a time where outdoor play environments and opportunities are on the decline, our school grounds provide a crucial place for children to experience self-initiated play.

We believe that play has a vital role in promoting children's happiness and wellbeing should be planned collaboratively with the children. Our Play Policy encourages our children to be respectful of each other and the environment in which they are playing and therefore fully embraces our Mission Statement, **'every child, every day make us Stronger Together.'**





# Our Play Mission

Play needs to be:

- Freely chosen
- Self-directed
- Intrinsically motivated



# Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL)



- Supporting us to develop and improve play for all of our children.
- Started the journey in Oct 2022, launching after Easter 2023.
- Emphasis on promoting all different aspects of play
- If one child is not enjoying play, then things still need improving.



Symbolic play



Locomotor play



Recapitulative play



Creative play



Exploratory play



Communication play



Socio-dramatic play



Role play



Fantasy play



Deep play



Rough and tumble play



Dramatic play



Social play



Object play



Mastery play



Imaginative play

# Through OPAL, all children will have the opportunity to:

- **Explore** the world around them through playful experimentation
- **Develop** social skills, enhancing communication, collaboration and problem solving
- **Build** resilience and self-confidence
- **Think** creatively
- **Be** independent and take responsibility for themselves and others
- **Flourish** through activities that build physical health
- **Thrive** emotionally; allowing the balance between acting freely and allowing everyone to have their rights.
- **Grow** in confidence, developing the necessary skills to self-assess and manage risk

## What do children need in a play environment?



### Space

The more space you can give your children the better. If you have underused or unused parts of the school site then start using them.



### Variety

Play is the way children learn about what the world is made out of. In a play environment there should be as much variety of everything as you can cram in.



### Lots of stuff

Don't be mean! You have lots of children so they will need lots and lots of stuff to play with. How ever much you thought, times that by ten!



### Sheltered places

If you go out to the pub you don't stand in the car park. Children need lots of small, cosy sheltered place to carry our their social lives. Help them find or create them.



### Challenge

A learning mind is one open to risk and challenge. Risk and challenge go hand. A bored child is one who had no challenges.



### Ability to make changes

A play environment is not so much about things to play on as things to play with. The greater the degree of changability the better.



### Newness

Children are nosy and curious creatures. Ideal you should be changing around and putting new things for them to find and discover very regularly.



### Nature

As with all young animals children gain huge benefits from closeness to nature. It makes them happy and calmer, improves their health and is a changeable flexible play environment.



# Benefit, Risk Assessment and Play

*‘Play is great for children’s wellbeing and development. When planning and providing play opportunities, the goal is not to eliminate risk, but to weigh up the risks and benefits. No child will learn about risk if they are wrapped in cotton wool.’*

Managing Risk in Play Provision: An Implementation Guide (Play Safety Forum, 2012)

- Allowing children to take acceptable risk develops their ability to judge risk independently and learn new skills.
- All children both need and want to take risks in order to explore their limits, venture into new experiences and develop their capacities, from a very young age and from their earliest play experiences.
- All equipment will be risk assessed and reviewed regularly, both by adults and children.



Construction  
Play  
(e.g. LEGO)

Belmont Beach

Mud  
Restaurant

Fancy Dress

Tyres and  
Crates Play

# What could it look like?

Quiet Reading  
and Board  
Game Spaces











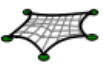










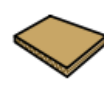

Water Play

Play Video

# But we need the help of the **whole** community!

Whole School loose  
parts collection: Week  
beg. 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Please donate anything  
you can so the children  
have lots to explore!

 suitcases	 crates	 briefcases	 pots and pans	 Kitchen Equipment
 DUPLO and LEGO	 brooms	 spades	 buckets	 Toy Cars
 tubes	 nets	 ropes	 fancy dress	 fabrics
 pallets	 cable drums	 guttering	 noodles	 watering cans
 pegs	 wellington boots	 planks	 cardboard	 umbrellas



Any questions?