

Appendix C

PLAY ENVIRONMENT AUDIT

"Artificial play environments should be highly diverse in terms of the experiences they offer; experiences should as a minimum include the elements, the senses, identity and concepts; environments should be secure and free from hidden risks; they should be operated by knowledgeable, committed and motivated Playworkers." (Hughes, B. 1997)

According to 'Quality in Play' the play environment can be audited "...for its ability to facilitate a range of play behaviours and a specified number of play types, availability of loose parts, opportunities to experience natural elements..."(Conway & Farley, 1999). There should be resources for planned play as well as freely chosen, personally directed activity.

The aim of a play environment audit is to ensure that the play needs of children are met. It enables reflection, review and a record of:

- a) the presence or absence of facilities and resources in the physical play environment
- b) adult interventions that maximise opportunities for play

It also requires a plan to compensate for any deficiencies found.

Name of Setting:

Name of person undertaking audit:

Date:

Location in setting:

Time:

LOOSE PARTS

What loose parts are available?

How do children access them?

What is being used, in what way, where and by whom?

What is not being used, in what way, where and by whom?

A VARIED AND INTERESTING SOCIAL, PHYSICAL, INTELLECTUAL, CREATIVE & EMOTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

(This list is taken from a document supplied by Ali Wood in January 2005)

Does it provide?	In what way?
Access to different heights	
Spaces of different size and shape	
Places to hide	
Manufactured and natural materials	
Places to inspire mystery and imagination	
Freely chosen access to outdoors	
Choice of when to play alone or with others	
Opportunities to negotiate, compete, co-operate, resolve conflict	
Interaction with individuals & groups of different age, ability, interest, gender, ethnicity & culture	
Activity which tests the limits of capability	
Places and tools for digging	
Possibilities for playing in water, mud and puddles	
Access to snow, rain, sun, wind	
Places for running, jumping, rolling, climbing, balancing, going fast	
Sounds of different intensity and tone shouting/whispering, music	
Different colours and	

shapes	
Dark and bright spaces	
Opportunities for building, demolishing and transforming the environment	
Freedom to make concoctions	
Tools for building and deconstruction	
Opportunities for making and mending	
Stuff for dressing up	
Freedom to imitate and pretend	
Opportunities to perform	
Taking on responsibility of different kinds	
For experience of a range of emotions and opportunities to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader/follower • Powerful/powerless • Scared/confident • In/out of control • Brave/cowardly 	

QUALITY PLAYWORK IS ABOUT LEAVING THE CONTENT & INTENT OF PLAY TO CHILDREN, WAITING TO BE INVITED TO PLAY AND ORGANISING ONLY WHEN CHILDREN WANT IT

Are playworkers encouraging...	Who, what, how, where and when?
The use of resources in different ways?	
Flexible ways of playing, for example, by introducing themes or games to prompt the imagination?	
Children to play in different ways, for example, by attracting those who always play sports or do arts to engage with another type of play activity?	
Use of the play setting in new or different ways, for example, by introducing new loose parts, changing the way the room is arranged and changing routines?	
Uninterrupted play?	
Children to improve their own performance in whatever way they choose?	
Children to explore their own meaning and values?	
Children to decide what is appropriate behaviour?	

ACTION PLAN

<i>What, if any, change is necessary?</i>	
<i>How and when will change be implemented?</i>	