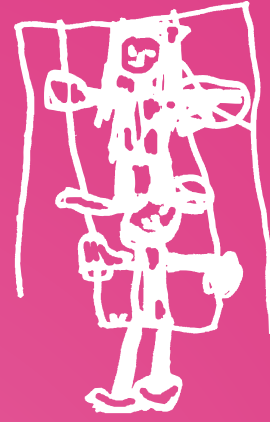


# PLAY AND PLAYFULNESS

## Professional Support Document



### IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY

- Use Flexible and Fluid Thinking
- Invent Systems of Representation
- Explore New Possibilities



### PLAYFUL EXPLORATION AND PROBLEM SOLVING

- Explore Properties of Objects
- Test Limits
- Negotiate Joint Undertakings
- Invent Approaches to Practical Problems



### DIZZY PLAY

- Take Pleasure in Being on the Edge
- Take Pleasure in Sharing the Joy of Laughter

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# NEW BRUNSWICK CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE ~ ENGLISH

## PLAY AND PLAYFULNESS

*Professional Support Document*



By Emily Ashton, Kim Stewart, Anne Hunt, Pam Nason, and Tara-Lynn Scheffel.

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## PRIMARY AUTHORS

Emily Ashton      Kim Stewart      Anne Hunt      Pam Nason      Tara-Lynn Scheffel

## CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

|                     |                     |                  |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Tammy Basque        | Judith Bass         | Jill Bateman     | Erin Brewer         |
| Karen Clark         | Ann Clayton         | Darlene Clinch   | Mary Cole           |
| Angie Colford       | Leisa Comeau        | Jenny Davidson   | Sarah Duguid        |
| Loo Elton           | Keltie Foster       | Maria Gillis     | Lynn Hatfield       |
| Alexandra Keenan    | Christa Keirstead   | Natalie Lauren   | Tonia Leavitts      |
| Jenna LeBouthillier | Pauline Love        | Tanya MacFarlane | Bernadette McKnight |
| Linda MacLean       | Susan Meredith      | Katie Parlee     | Kathy Pictou        |
| Cheryl Ritzhaupt    | Cassandra St. Louis | Trish Van Goch   | Cynthia O'Donnell   |
| Sarah White         |                     |                  |                     |

## UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Pam Whitty, Project Director, University of New Brunswick  
Pam Nason, Project Director, University of New Brunswick  
Emily Ashton, University of New Brunswick  
Jan Ashton, University of New Brunswick  
Kembubi Christie, University of New Brunswick  
Anne Hunt, University of New Brunswick  
Lisa LeBlanc, University of New Brunswick  
Lindsay Maxwell, University of New Brunswick  
Andrew Pulvermacher, University of New Brunswick  
Sherry Rose, University of New Brunswick  
Tara-Lynn Scheffel, University of New Brunswick  
Kim Stewart, University of New Brunswick  
Gillian Yeomans, University of New Brunswick

### ON SITE SUPPORT FACILITATORS:

Jennifer Arsenault  
Donna Baisley  
Wanda Butt  
Jennifer Curtis  
Linda Gould  
Tammie Hachey  
Sharon Hachey  
Lynda Homer  
Shirley-Ann Howe  
Kelly Naish  
Sue Sears  
Avril Wood-Toner

## CONTRIBUTING CENTRES

We are inspired in our work by the commitment of early childhood educators throughout the province and by the children in their educational care.

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# PLAY AND PLAYFULNESS



*Children experience open and flexible environments where playful exploration, problem solving and creativity are encouraged and purposefully planned.*



At play, children are empowered to learn on their own terms, in their own ways, and in their own time; this freedom is what distinguishes play from other activities. Play allows children to take the initiative, to test their physical and mental limits, and to explore positions of power and questions about good and evil. In play, children use words and symbols to transform the world around them, creating worlds where they can act “as if” rather than “as is.” Play is a pleasurable and highly motivating context in which children can explore possibilities and solve problems that are beyond their reach in ordinary life.

Early childhood communities that acknowledge the educative and developmental potential of play make provisions for a range of different kinds of play: playful exploration and heuristic play, for children to learn about the physical properties of materials and rules of thumb for problem solving; constructional play, for them to invent new connections as they design and create with mud, sand, twigs, cardboard, and blocks; socio-dramatic play, so that they can take up cultural roles and practices, play out their hopes fears and dreams, test relations of power, and imaginatively explore new possibilities; board games and word games, songs and rhymes that require deep concentration or just invite fooling around with language in order to take possession of it; games of courage and chance; outdoor play that exercises the muscles, lungs, heart, and mind — running, jumping, digging, swinging, rolling, and strolling; and shouting and squeaking and twirling and swirling— dizzy play for the pure pleasure of being on the edge and sharing the joy of laughter and life with others.



## USING THIS DOCUMENT

This support document accompanies the *New Brunswick Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum Framework — English*. Building on the values, goals and intended learnings introduced in the Framework, additional ideas and suggestions for planning and practices are offered. This document presents possibilities, provides openings for collaborative explorations, and celebrates the work of New Brunswick early childhood educators who bring the Framework to life in their local centres. You will find examples that illustrate what some children and early childhood educators *have* done using the framework, rather than a model of what *should* be done. There are many other possibilities. We invite you to join us in the ongoing process of creating curriculum with and for our youngest children.

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## Image of THE PLAYFUL CHILD

Play is a basic entitlement guaranteed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Providing time, space and materials for children to play for the sake of playing, to engage deeply in pursuits of their own making, or to just fool around for the sheer pleasure of it is the educator's responsibility. The playful child is one full of the zest for living and learning.

Children at play are curious and competent explorers who use all their senses to find out about the people, places and things they encounter; and ingenious actors who reach beyond ordinary life to create imaginary worlds and transform their identities. They are resourceful inventors who design novel and innovative ways of doing things, courageous acrobats who dare to push the limits of their bodies in space, and clever-minded players who pit their wits against a common threat or push the limits of the rules that govern the game.



## Cultural contexts of PLAY

At play, children reflect and reshape what they experience in ordinary life. Popular culture and superheroes often cross social and cultural boundaries in Canada, while more varied play themes, props, games and expectations for children may be culturally specific, reflecting our rich and diverse cultural heritage.

Different professionals, families, communities and cultures value play differently. Some uphold play as a fundamental right of children, others may value it primarily for its educational potential, and yet others more for its recreational benefits. Some families may see daring and physical risk taking as essential to the formation of character and courage, others may view it as unduly hazardous. And the cunning strategists and tricksters some celebrate for their cleverness may be criticised by others for being devious.

Bearing in mind that there are differences both between and within social and cultural groups, and similarities that bind us all together, provisions and practices must be sensitive to cultural dynamics and mindful of the need to build cohesive communities. Always negotiating the role of play within culture, educators provide responsive play environments in which children can re-enact their own cultural experience, explore the cultural experiences of their peers, discover commonalities and reinvent culture.



Learning Land by Valerie

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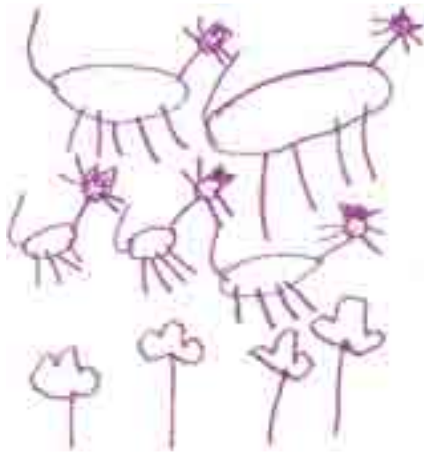
# PLAY AND PLAYFULNESS AT A GLANCE

## IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY

*Flexible and fluid thinking*

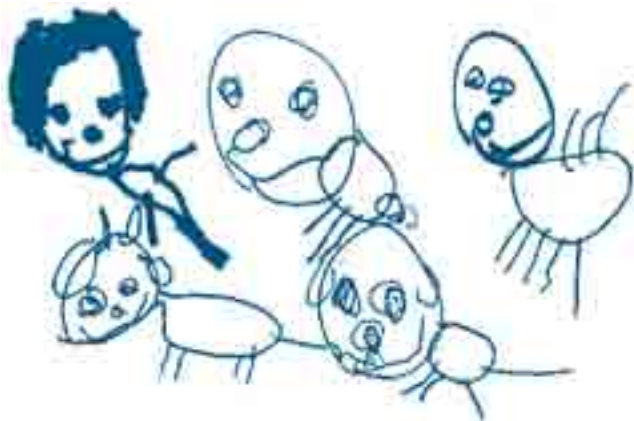
*Symbols and systems of representation*

*Imaginary scenarios to explore new possibilities*



Jenna

- Seeing people, places, and things in new ways
- Expressing unique and imaginative ideas
- Making their own words, marks, and movements
- Negotiating the meaning of symbols with others
- Taking up and reshaping cultural experiences
- Developing awareness of the imagined and ordinary worlds as they move between them in play
- Creating social spaces and shared narratives
- Creating alternative systems of power
- Coping with emotional pressure



Kaitlyn



Keona

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## PLAYFUL EXPLORATIONS AND PROBLEM SOLVING

*Explore properties of objects*

*Test limits*

*Negotiate joint undertakings*

*Creative approaches to practical problems*



Keegan

- Playfully exploring and investigating the properties of objects
- Experimenting with action and reaction, cause and effect
- Creating patterns and relationships – sorting and matching, sizing and ordering, sequencing and grouping
- Developing a vocabulary to describe similarities and differences, patterns and relationships
- Testing their powers of observation and sensory discrimination
- Testing strength, speed, agility, and control over movement
- Negotiating rules of time, space, and roles
- Making collective plans and decisions about the directions of their play
- Developing a sense of fair play
- Developing sustained, shared thinking
- Raising questions and making hypotheses about how and why things happen
- Choosing from a range of materials, tools, and languages to investigate, experiment, and make their thinking visible.
- Creating imagined worlds in which they can explore possibilities and test alternative solutions

## DIZZY PLAY

*Pleasure in being on the edge.*

*Pleasure in sharing the joy of laughter.*



Beatrix

- Engaging in rough and tumble play
- Experiencing exhilarating physical release
- Playing at games of disrupting and restoring order
- Making nonsense
- Clowning and physical humour



Nina

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