

Childcare practice policy

8.16 Weapon and Superhero Play

Most Children enjoy engaging in imaginative play that relates to, and makes sense of, the world they live in. For lots of children this imaginative play contains a strong element of weapon and superhero re-enactment. Re-enacting weapon use is a universal language of play for children and usually results in high level of engagement for the children actively involved in it.

Images and ideas gleaned from the media are common starting points in children's play and may involve characters with special powers and/or weapons. Adults can find this type of play particularly challenging and have a natural instinct to stop it. This is not necessary as long as practitioners help the children to understand and respect the rights of other children and to take responsibility for the resources and environment.

Creating situations so that children's interest in these forms of play can be fostered through healthy and safe risk- taking opportunities, will enhance every aspect of their learning.

St. George's, we feel it is important to create a whole setting approach of which staff, children, parents, governors and other agencies have a clear understanding.

We ensure:

- Approaches to teaching and learning in role play should reflect the interests of the children and not exclusively those of adults.
- Planning for role play in the environment should be based upon assessment information from the observed play of the current cohort.
- St. George's will acknowledge the positive aspects of the character of the superhero and highlight the negative aspects of weapon use and physical violence at a level that is appropriate to the age and needs of the children. This will mainly be done through story, drama and appropriate discussion.
- Styles of teaching and learning should meet the needs of the children and not preconceived notions of what is or is not appropriate role play.
- All children's emotional welfare, wellbeing and involvement should be assessed in relation to this style of play.
- Children should enjoy the play opportunity.
- The weapon/superhero play should motivate and challenge children.
- The creation of an effective culture of weapon/superhero play in our setting takes time and is a process rather than an event.
- Parents and carers need to feel well informed about and comfortable with the approach to weapon/superhero play and the principles that underpin it.
- Effective and engaging play is about St. George's fitting the interests of the children.
- Ongoing opportunities for quality play are not overlooked or left to chance but thought about and planned in advance.
- Staff are expected to identify possible areas in which to challenge and extend the child's current learning and development.

Further guidance Development Matters and Birth to 5 Matters - Characteristics of Effective Learning