

TALENTS Curriculum Social

Intent

Friedrich Froebel, a German educator believed that,
'play is the highest expression of human development in childhood, for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child's soul.'

'Play is a child's natural dominant learning approach and contributes to their knowledge and skill development across the cognitive, social/ emotional, creative and physical domains, while also providing a solid foundation for future learning'
Uren & Stagnitti (2014)

The Social strand of our curriculum includes all the opportunities our learners get to be together, to play together and to support each other, including in the wider community. The Social strand of our curriculum supports learners with their behaviours, attitudes and personal and social development.

Social development refers to the process by which learners learn to interact with others around them. As they develop and perceive their own individuality within their community, they also gain skills to communicate with other people and process their actions. This includes how learners develop and maintain friendships and other relationships, as well as how they handle conflict with their peers. Learners with strong social skills find it easier to establish good relationships and this in turn has a positive impact on their wellbeing.

Play is an activity where learners show their remarkable ability for exploration, imagination and decision making. The type of play learners engage in and its purpose changes over the course of childhood from infancy to adolescence.

Play is crucial for developing a young person's development and communication skills. Here are 10 reasons why it is so important:

- **Play lays the foundation for literacy.** Through play learners learn to make and practise new sounds. They try out new vocabulary, on their own or with friends, and exercise their imagination through storytelling.
- **Play is learning.** Play nurtures development and fulfils a learner's inborn need to learn. Play takes many forms, from shaking a rattle to peek-a-boo to hide-and-seek. Play can be done by a learner alone, with another learner, in a group or with an adult.
- **Play encourages adults to communicate with learners.** Adults are vital in actively supporting play by giving learners opportunities to play, and by knowing when to intervene, and when not to intervene.
- **Play gives learners the chance to be spontaneous.** You may think learners should be rolling the truck on the ground but that doesn't mean that truck is not equally useful as a stacking toy.
- **Play gives learners' choice.** Having enough toys or activities to choose from will allow learners to express themselves.
- **Play gives learners' space.** To practise physical movement, balance and to test their own limits.
- **Play gives adults the chance to learn how to play again.** One of the most challenging parts of play is incorporating yourself in it.
- **Play allows adults to learn learners' body language.** Knowing when you should incorporate yourself in a learner's play is key.
- **Play teaches adults patience and understanding.** If you do choose to join in with a learner's play make sure that you do not try to take it over and force incorporation of your ultimate learning objectives into their play. Structured adult-led activities have their time and place but remember to allow for time for learners to control and decide their own play.
- **Play is fun.** Learning to play well, both by themselves and with others, sets learners up to be contented and sociable.

The learner voice feeds into our Social strand of our curriculum

Implementation

At Kennel Lane School we balance 'Social' and 'play' based experiences for enhancing learners learning and with structured 'lessons' or formal teaching experiences.

We set up various social opportunities and games both indoors and outdoors that are developmentally and age appropriate, which learners can attend to, engage with and participate in safely and enjoyably. Please see the learning map on page 3 which details some of these.

We encourage learners' learning through play by:

- Using a learner's motivations, interests and 'comfort zone' activities as a starting point to develop play skills.
- Using adults to join in with these individual interests ('comfort zone' activities) through such strategies as intensive interaction, encouraging learners to firstly become aware of others and then engage, participate and finally initiate interaction.
- providing resources that reflect learners' developmental needs, ages, interests, knowledge, strengths, abilities and culture to stimulate and support play. Resources which allow open ended use of items like blocks or cardboards boxes foster creativity and the ability to manipulate concepts mentally as children. For example, turn a box into a car.
- planning play experiences based on the assessment of learners' individual differences, interests, developmental needs and abilities. For example, as a learner learns to hold a pencil to draw and write, educators will give learners different sized objects to grasp, and to build strength in the learner's fingers.
- observing learners as they play so that they can understand how they play with other learners, what skills and understanding they demonstrate in play and what activities can strengthen their skills in play.
- joining in learners' play to extend the learners' learning and to model skills such as reasoning, appropriate language, and positive behaviours.
- providing large blocks of unhurried and uninterrupted time for play for learners' ideas and games to develop.

TALENTS

Curriculum Events
Assemblies
Awards & Achievement Assemblies
Enrichment Week
Intra-school competitions
Inter-school competitions
Offsite Trips
Productions
Working Experience

Unstructured Times (Break & Lunch)
Football Club
Gardening Club
Library Club
Netball Club
PLAY

Leisure Options
Chess Club
Dancing / Uno / Colouring
Film Club
IT
Rugby

Social

Social Responsibility
Children in Need
Comic Relief
Harvest Festival
Red Nose Day
Other fund raising opportunities throughout the year

External Partners
Larchwood
The Wayz
Wellington College

Timetabled Curriculum
College Visits
Community Links

Impact

Impact of Social Development

Social development can actually impact many of the other forms of development a learner experiences.

A learners' ability to interact in a healthy way with the people around them can impact everything from learning new words, to being able to resist peer pressure, to successfully navigating the challenges of adulthood. Healthy social development can impact learners by:

- **Develop language skills.** An ability to interact with other learners allows for more opportunities to practice and learn speech and language skills. This is a positive cycle, because as communication skills improve, a learner is better able to relate to and react to the people around them.
- **Build self-esteem.** Other learners provide a learner with some of their most exciting and fun experiences. When a learner is unable to make friends it can be frustrating or even painful. A healthy circle of friends reinforces a learners' comfort level with their own individuality.
- **Strengthen learning skills.** In addition to the impact social development can have on general communication skills, many researchers believe that having healthy relationships with peers allows for adjustment to different settings and challenges. Studies show that learners who have a hard time getting along with peers are more likely to experience later academic difficulties.
- **Resolve conflicts.** Stronger self-esteem and better language skills can ultimately lead to a better ability to resolve differences with peers.
- **Establish positive attitude.** A positive attitude ultimately leads to better relationships with others and higher levels of self-confidence.

Impact of Play

- **Physical development** – active play uses large and small muscles when climbing, running, ball games, digging, jumping, and dancing. This supports learners' overall health and sense of wellbeing, physical growth, appreciation for the benefits of active lifestyles and skills for independence in self-help such as dressing and/or feeding.
- **Social and emotional development** – dramatic and imaginative play which includes dressing up and role play can develop positive social and emotional skills and values. This provides opportunities for learners to:
 - practise how to work with other learners, negotiate ideas, and make choices and decisions
 - develop self-confidence by experiencing success and challenges
 - learn to control their emotions, reduce impulsive behaviour, or reduce stress as they act out feelings and events that might be worrying them
 - develop empathy and fairness as they learn to play alongside and with other learners.
- **Cognitive development** – when a learner plays individually and with others their cognitive skills, such as thinking, remembering, learning and paying attention are all being developed. Learners develop the following cognitive skills through play:
 - problem solving
 - the power of imagination and creativity
 - concepts such as shapes, colours, measurement, counting and letter recognition
 - strengths such as concentration, persistence and resilience.
- **Literacy and numeracy development** – play requires thinking, language, interactions, curiosity and exploration. Through play learners develop skills and understandings including:
 - an increased understanding of words and their use
 - listening and speaking skills
 - writing skills through scribbling, painting and drawing
 - learning how stories work (plot, characters, structure, purpose and format of words on a page)
 - learning that objects can stand for something else (a block can be a symbol for a telephone) which is foundation learning for formal reading, spelling and numeracy because letters, words or numerals are part of symbol systems
 - learning that letters, words, symbols, numerals and signs have a purpose and are meaningful to others.