

Activity Definitions

Adult-led activities

An activity with adult support which has a planned learning intention and is guided towards an end result

The child...

- has direct adult support and direction
- may be involved in a specific task set up by the adult but carried out independently
- may be part of a whole group carpet time session, in a small group or working alone with an adult.



Child initiated activities

Child initiated activities allow children to organise their own learning, to structure their own knowledge and make sense of the world.

The child...

- chooses the activity
- owns the play by determining it's purpose and outcomes
- organises and decides upon the direction of the play
- selects their own resources
- develops the activity
- is in control

Children are not able to do this spontaneously. They need the appropriate environment to inspire and excite them; they need carefully selected and organised resources to select from; they need adults they trust to give them freedom and space but who are also available to model, support and join in with the play, on the child's terms. It is during child initiated play that we can build up a true picture of a child through observation, as they are operating independently, without adult guidance or support. Good observation is the basis for effective teaching because it informs us of where children are in their learning and enables us to engage in sustained shared thinking.



Adult-initiated activities

An activity with a planned learning intention, but the way to achieve and record this is left to the children. The adult is the facilitator, who stimulates and enriches the child's experiences; providing the context and the boundaries.

The child...

- takes the challenge/initial stimulus from the adult and chooses how to carry it out
- takes possible suggestions from the adult
- stays within the boundaries set
- will need time and space to develop their own ideas within the context provided
- be expected to feedback to the adult and those in the group their outcomes or discoveries
- will choose a way to record these discoveries.



It is suggested that a child's time in Foundation Stage consist of 50% child initiated play and 50% mix of adult initiated and adult led.

By Year One (after the initial transition period) their time will be 25% child initiated and 75% mix of adult led and adult initiated.