

# Module 4 Handbook

## Play and Active Learning

*Revised 2012*



chwarae • dysgu • tyfu  
play • learn • grow

cyfnod sylfaen 3–7 foundation phase



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## Module 4: Play and Active Learning

### Introduction

This module focuses on planning for and the effective delivery of experiential learning. It deals with the importance of play and active learning. The module explores a delivery model that aims at ensuring balance across all the key elements of learning and teaching.

In order to reflect the Foundation Phase objectives of promoting and providing support for children's holistic development the module offers a delivery process that focuses on an appropriate child-centred curriculum. The module focuses on creating an exciting, stimulating and purposeful learning environment for children using all the space available both indoors and outdoors.

The training is delivered through a combination of slide presentations and group/individual activities and is broken down into three main sessions which cover:

- Learning and Teaching Model
- Putting the Model into Practice
- Planning for Progression.

This handbook contains all of the 'handouts' required to deliver the training. The following 'Slide sequence guide' details the different elements of the training and marks where the handouts should be used.

## Slide sequence guide

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## Amser Tacluso! (Or how to get 61 children to tidy-up!)

We work within a large and very busy Early Phase Unit. This September we were lucky enough to have a brand new school with lots of lovely new furniture and resources. The staff and the children were very excited.

We knew that we needed to set up our classroom so that tidy-up time was an achievable task. We did this by colour coding our resource boxes so that they belonged to a specific area. For example all the writing area resources were kept in blue boxes and investigation area resources were kept in yellow boxes. We also labelled all the coloured containers and added a photograph onto the shelf for the children to match the resources back. Not only does this help with the teaching of colour identification, sorting, matching and classifying objects, but is a visual prompt to assist with tidy-up time for the children (and the adults).



During the first week most of our children were at the developmental stage of tipping all the resources out of boxes onto the floor then running off to another area and repeating that process all over again. We had to be really patient during this time and remind ourselves that this is a stage of development in children's progress. We knew as adults that it was going to take months and months to role model and teach the skill of tidying up. This was sometimes hard to accept, especially when visitors came into our classroom and it looked like a whirlwind had been through it.



This photograph was taken in the first week in September. Note the empty shelves in our mathematics area. The resources have been tipped out and are lying all over the floor. Also notice the children's coats, where they have come in from outside, taken off their coats and thrown them on the shelf or dropped them on the floor. This was very frustrating at first but by approaching this as a whole team and working alongside the children modelling the skill the children learnt how to keep our classroom tidy. Our headteacher will even come in during some tidy-up sessions to help. Talk about being a good role model.

We spent the first autumn half-term role modelling being a good tidier and spent all day every day saying out loud "I've finished playing in the small world now I will just tidy these dinosaurs up before I go and play with Shannon in the sand," and "Look at this book on the floor, I will pick this up and put it back on the shelf!". We even went so far that after story time we would say out loud "Now we've finished our story where does this book live? Oh yes, it lives on the book shelf!". It was exhausting but after a while it really started to pay off. We also placed great emphasis on the older Reception children being good role models for the younger nursery children during this time. Investing this time was the best service we could have done for our children and we treated this as our Focused Task teaching. This is because we were confident in all the personal and social, language and mathematical skills that were being developed during this time.

As time went by we reflected on the process of 'shake our tambourine' to indicate the start of Amser Tacluso! We realised that for some children who are totally involved in their play that this could often be a shock to be told to stop, finish and put all your hard work away. So we invented 'little tidy' and 'big tidy'. We decided to give the children a five minute, then two minute, then one minute countdown to these tidying sessions. I thought that this was quite a good idea until one of our reception boys said "Why are you saying all those numbers?". He made me realise that this was quite

abstract so we did lots of work on using big sand timers to indicate these concepts of the passing of time in our mathematics sessions. We also recognised that for some children their play had come to a natural end before their peers so for these children 'little tidy' was perfect. Little tidy is when we tell the children if they have finished then they can begin to have a small tidy. Usually during this time those who are painting will start to finish their work, wash their brushes, write their names on their pictures, etc. Little tidy is really a winding down and finishing-off time. It gives those who are immersed in their play the opportunity to continue with the understanding that big tidy is getting very close now. After five or ten minutes we then shake our tambourine again, sing our song and big tidy commences.

Initially we found that once we had tidied an area then some children would come and mess it up all over again, so we quickly created 'No Entry' signs which the children loved to display once they had finished tidying an area. They also liked to tell the other children "No entry, it's tidy now!". This approach was also very good in terms of developing the skill of reading signs, symbols and environmental print. After approximately six weeks we realised that we didn't need these signs any more as all the children were now on-board with what they needed to do during Amser Tacluso!

During big tidy the staff all have a sticky note and record which children are tidying. This places the emphasis on the positive reinforcement. We then reward these children with a sticker on their sticker chart. Whoever gets the most stickers on a Thursday wins something special out of the prize box.

We also reinforce the positive behaviour with 'Lola's book of good tidiers'. We take photos of the children tidying and stick them into this very special book. We then celebrate this book with parents and carers and it lives in the book nook for the children to access. The children love looking through the book and pictures of themselves with Lola. We also use this book at story time and tell the story. For example, we say "Once upon a time there was a school called Rhosymedre. In that school there was a class called Ogwen and Offa. In that class there were some children who





were very good at tidying up. Once upon a time there was a little girl called Eryn who tidied up the book nook. There was also a little boy called Archie and a little girl called Tayah who were very good at brushing up the sand". Being very specific about the behaviour that we are expecting means that it is very clear to all the other children specifically what they need to do.

One day Logan made a spectacular boat in the block play. It was so wonderful that he didn't want to tidy it away and we couldn't bear to take it down either. We were in a dilemma, so we decided to leave the boat up. We spoke to the cleaners about not cleaning that patch of the classroom that night. We also spoke to the children about what we could do to let everyone know not to tidy it during Amser Tacluso!. The children quickly made lots of signs of emergent writing including 'Do not touch!', 'Logan's boat' and 'Do not tidy'. It was amazing how the children were so enthusiastic and motivated to write for this very real purpose. We left it up overnight and Logan ran into class the next morning dragging his Mum in to see his boat.







Now we have adults situated in most areas of the classroom encouraging children, when they have finished with their resources, to tidy them away before they move on to the next step in their play.

## Frequently asked questions

How will I know whether all children have visited each area?

If you work through Continuous Provision planning sheets you will see that children will be able to develop the same skills in many of the areas. They will thus choose to access areas which they are interested in.

Will the children still be taught to read and write?

Yes of course – learning should be in context and appropriate to the children’s stage of development.

Will I still do whole class/small group teaching?

Yes. Foundation Phase emphasises the need for a balance between adult-led activities and spontaneous play. Children will still need to be taught new skills/concepts.

Will I need any tables?

You may need to review your space and remove some tables in order to develop different areas, but there will obviously be many opportunities when it is appropriate for children to sit at a table. But remember to provide opportunities for the children to work at different levels – some may be more comfortable working on the floor.

I haven’t got the physical space to create all these areas. How can I do it?

Continuous Provision could be set up using boxes/baskets on a shelf or worktop. What is important is that the children have regular access to all the areas and the opportunity to make choices.

Why can’t I change resources in some areas every day?

Changing resources every day would not allow children to consolidate learning from one day to the next. If they need to wait a week before resources reappear they may have forgotten all previous skills/learning and need to start again. Having resources out as part of Continuous Provision also will reduce the ‘rush’ or excitement of all wanting to access an area at the same time. If children know it will be there tomorrow they will be happier to wait. This will also ensure that the more timid children also have access.

Won't the children get bored having the same resources out every day?

Children will get bored if the Continuous Provision is not enhanced with resources which reflect a theme/topic or particular interest. The adult role is also very important in modelling play and keeping areas fresh and exciting.

School subject leaders want me to teach through a published scheme. This is very prescriptive. What can I do about it?

The Foundation Phase emphasises the importance of focusing on the needs of the child and starting from where they are – rather than where a scheme says they should be.

How will I answer people who think that children are only playing rather than learning?

If you have planned for Continuous Provision you will have identified the skills/key learning opportunities. This should give you confidence to know exactly what children are learning in the context of their play.

My children are not good at tidying up.

Adult involvement in play is crucial to model what to do in a particular area, and to promote the learning. Children need to know the 'rules' of how to use and respect an area. Adult involvement is also crucial to let the children know that you value their play.

## Useful information and contacts

Pascal, C a Bertram, T, Effective Early Learning Project/Programme (EEL),  
Worcester College

Pascal, C a Bertram, T, Primary Effective Early Learning Project/Programme (PEEL),  
Worcester College

(These are programmes for assessing children's involvement in their learning)

Hobart, C a Frankel, J (1999) 2nd Edition: A Practical Guide to Child Observation and  
Assessment, Nelson Thornes ISBN: 0 7487 4500 9

Harding, J a Meldon-Smith, L (1996) How to make Observations and Assessments,  
Hodder and Stoughton ISBN: 0 340 64748 5

Hutchin, V (1996) Tracking Significant Achievement in the Early Years,  
Hodder and Stoughton

Laevers F (research started 1976) A Process-Oriented Child Monitoring System for  
Young Children (Experiential Education Series), Centre for Experiential Education,  
Belgium

Website: [www.universityofleuven](http://www.universityofleuven)

(This is a programme for observing and assessing children's well being and their  
involvement.)

Early Excellence Centre for Inspirational Learning, The Old School, New Hey Road,  
Outlane, Huddersfield, HD3 3YJ Tel: 01422 311314 [www.earlyexcellence.com](http://www.earlyexcellence.com)

## Further reading

Looking Closely at Learning and Teaching (Early Excellence) [www.earlyexcellence.com](http://www.earlyexcellence.com)

The Genius of Play (Sally Jenkinson – 2001)

Creating a Space to Grow – Gail Ryder-Richardson – ISBN 1843 12045. (These are  
simple ideas geared towards children in non-maintained settings.)

Learning Through Play – Tina Bruce – ISBN 0 340 80152 2

Boys and Girls come out to Play – Sally Featherstone/Ros Baily – ISBN 1 905 019 173

Observation and Assessments – Jackie Harding/Liz Meldon-Smith – ISBN 0 340 647 185

Documenting Children's Work (Wingate Community Nursery School, Partridge Terrace,  
Wingate, County Durham, TS28 5BD, Tel/Fax: 01429 838206 – Video)

Outdoor Banking (role of the adult) (Wingate Community Nursery)

All the cakes are different (Worcestershire County Council – book and video – Sheila Sage, County Hall, PO BOX 73, Spetchley Road, Worcester, WR5 2YA

Starting from the Child – Julie Fisher – ISBN 0 335 209 181

## Suggested references and booklist

### Planning for experiential learning

#### Articles

Sally Featherstone: "Reflecting on Priorities for Children". (EYE vol 8 no. 11 March 2007)

Margaret Sutherland: "Continuous Provision". (EYE vol 8 no. 9 January 2007)

Pat Brunton and Linda Thornton: "Children follow the very paths we choose to tread". (EYE vol. 7 no. 8 December 2005) (The Role of the Adult)

Sue Allingham: "Consider how your setting supports children's learning". (EYE vol. no. 3 January 2005)

Helen Bilton: "Outdoor Play in the Early Years – Management and Innovation (1998) (David Fulton Publishers, ISBN 1 853 465 194)

#### Books

Sally Featherstone and Ros Bayley: "Foundations for Independence: Developing Independent Learning in the Foundation Stage". (Featherstone Education, ISBN 1 902233 57 3)

Liz Marsden and Jenny Woodbridge: "Looking Closely at Learning and Teacher ... a journey of development." (Early Excellence Ltd, ISBN 0 9551041 0 6)  
[www.earlyexcellence.com](http://www.earlyexcellence.com)

LEARN: "A Place to Learn: Developing a stimulating learning environment". (Lewisham, ISBN 090 1637106) [www.eyes.advisers@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:www.eyes.advisers@lewisham.gov.uk)

Hilary Harriman: "The Outdoor Classroom: A Place to Learn" (2006). (Corner to Learn, ISBN 1 905464 07 3)

Neil Griffiths: "A Corner to Learn: Ideas for learning through play and home corners for ages three to nine" (Stanley Thornes, ISBN 0 7487 3087 7)

The "Little Book" Series, Featherstone Education – [www.featherstone.uk.com](http://www.featherstone.uk.com)

## Hyn sydd i dystio bod This is to certify that

wedi cwblhau/has completed

### **Modiwl/Module 4**

Chwarae a Dysgu Gweithredol fel rhan o  
Becyn Hyfforddi Cenedlaethol y Cyfnod Sylfaen  
Play and Active Learning as part of the  
Foundation Phase National Training Pack

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