



STARLINGS PRESCHOOL

Weapon & Superhero Play Policy

Policy statement

“Value play which is based on characters, such as superheroes who may mean a lot of children, even if you do not appreciate them yourself!” – EYFS card 4.3 Learning and Development

At Starlings preschool, we recognise that each child is unique and we will do everything to support children to be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of secure and loving relationships, as well as having the opportunity to learn in a positive and stimulating environment.

Most children enjoy engaging in imaginative play that relates to, and makes sense of, the world that they live in. For lots of children (particularly boys) 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 levels of engagement for the children actively involved in it.

Historically, this type of play has often been banned from early years settings, in the belief that it encourages aggression and violence. This ban, as well as being difficult to enforce, may well have a negative impact on young children’s development, particularly boys.

Recent research and current writings suggest that children learn important lessons by exploring these themes in a safe arena of play, for example, concepts such as good and evil, life and death, strength and power, gender, and identity.

At Starlings we feel it is important to create a whole preschool approach of which staff, children, parents, and other agencies have a clear understanding. This policy is a formal statement of our approach to children’s weapon and superhero play.

Images and ideas gleaned from the media are common starting points in boys’ play and may involve characters with special powers 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 boys to understand and respect the rights of other children and to take responsibility for the resources and environment.

Principles that underpin the policy

- Approaches to teaching and learning in role play should reflect the interests of the children and not exclusively those of the adults



STARLINGS PRESCHOOL

- All children's emotional welfare, wellbeing and involvement should be assessed in relation to this style of play
- Weapon/superhero play should motivate and challenge children
- Starlings preschool 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 be mainly done through story, drama and appropriate discussion
- Ongoing opportunities for quality imaginative play are not overlooked or left to chance, but thought about and planned in advance
- Children should enjoy the play opportunity
- Parents and carers need to feel well informed about and comfortable with the approach to weapon/superhero play and the principles that underpin it

Aims and objectives

If children wish to make a weapon, then this will be supported by a practitioner, as it may be ideal learning opportunity to follow their interests. Children will also be allowed to be creative with the props they use during this play, providing it will not break, hurt others and is observed by a practitioner.

When superhero or weapon play is taking place, a practitioner will be nearby to observe and extend play. The practitioner may introduce other storylines or characters to develop this in a creative way.

Superhero costumes are allowed into preschool brought in from home, just as princess dresses or fairies are allowed. This will help practitioners to plan for individual children interests.

Conflicts and disagreements will happen, as it would in any play, and this will be dealt with a practitioner listening, discussing, compromising and resolving the problem. (Please see our behaviour management policy for more information.)

If parents are concerned by weapon/superhero play, then they are asked to speak to a member of staff and may be referred onto the deputy or manager. Their concerns will be taken seriously and the issue will be addressed.

Continuing professional development

- The staff in the setting know what the development matters and Early Years Foundation Stage profile contain and how to interpret the scale points in relation to role play.
- All staff are confident in making assessments through the observation of children
- Staff plan opportunities for role play collaboratively checking that continuity and progressions are evident and based on children's preferences and interest



This policy will be reviewed regularly and will be assess how we can best support, assist and facilitate weapon and superhero play.

This policy was adopted by Starlings Preschool

On 6th September 2021

Date to be reviewed

Signed on behalf of the management committee

Name of signatory Tricia Hunt

Role of signatory Chairperson