

# PLAY: POSITION STATEMENT



## Why a Millen Play Statement?

We set high expectations of success for every student and are committed to implementing high quality care for all students.

At Millen Primary School we believe play is an essential part of every child's learning. It is integral to their enjoyment of life, their physical and emotional growth, their intellectual and educational development and for acquiring and enhancing their social and behavioural skills. Through play students explore the world around them, naturally develop understanding in their own time, at their own point of need and have the opportunity to practice and refine new skills.

At Millen playfulness is celebrated, examined, made visible, and understood as a powerful pathway of learning. The core principles of play: Taking risks, making mistakes, exploring new ideas, and experiencing joy are promoted when we bring play into a central role in our school. Dedicated play spaces assist children to learn how to solve problems, persevere, compromise and cooperate with others. Through play they practise and apply the skills they are taught in the classroom.



## ALL CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT TO PLAY

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child affirms '... the right of the child to..... play' (Article 31).

We know that '... play shapes the architecture of the brain in unique ways; it links social, creative and cognitive skills' (Bartlett, 2010)

The Early Years Learning Framework (p. 46) defines play-based learning as:

*A context for learning through which children organise and make sense of their social worlds, as they engage actively with people, objects and representations.*

## Guiding Principles of Play at Millen

The Principles are the core ideas and values that serve as the conceptual foundation for a pedagogy of play. Most of the principles apply both to children and adults, however the last three address adults in particular.

1. **Playing with an educational purpose.** Playful learning often situates curricular goals, content, and activities, as well as learners' lives and interests, within a larger purpose or inquiry.
2. **Learners leading their own learning.** Taking playful learning seriously means tipping the balance of responsibility for learning toward the learners. Playful learners are intrinsically motivated to reshape the world and to test the limits of their abilities without fear of failure.
3. **Experiencing choice, wonder, and delight.** Learners experience choice, wonder, and delight when they are learning through play and interacting with people, ideas, materials, or spaces. At the same time, what is playful to one may not be experienced as playful by another. Not all learning has to involve play, nor will every moment of play entail significant learning.
4. **Connecting life inside and outside the classroom.** Playful learning frequently invites a transfer of knowledge and experience between the classroom and life outside the classroom.
5. **Learners reflecting on playful experiences.** Learners need to reflect on their learning in order to learn through play. This can happen before, during, or after a learning experience.
6. **Cultivating a culture of playful learning for adults.** In order to create a culture of playful learning for children, there needs to be a culture of playful learning for adults. Playful learning benefits from teachers' capacity and disposition to find the extraordinary in the ordinary (whether materials, physical environment, academic content, etc).
7. **Fostering trust and welcoming negotiation.** Trust at all levels (administrators, teachers, children, families) and a willingness to negotiate policies and rules are necessary in order for playful learning to flourish.
8. **Collectively studying the paradoxes between play and school.** Fostering playful learning entails navigating a set of paradoxes (two true statements that are seemingly contradictory) between the nature of play and the nature of school (e.g., play is timeless, school is timetabled; play can be chaotic, messy, and loud, schools are places of order; play involves risks, in school, children should be safe; in play, children are in charge, in school, the agenda is generally set by adults). Collaborative and systematic study, supported by documentation, can help educators navigate these paradoxes.

*Harvard Pop Playbook & International School Of Billund, 2018*

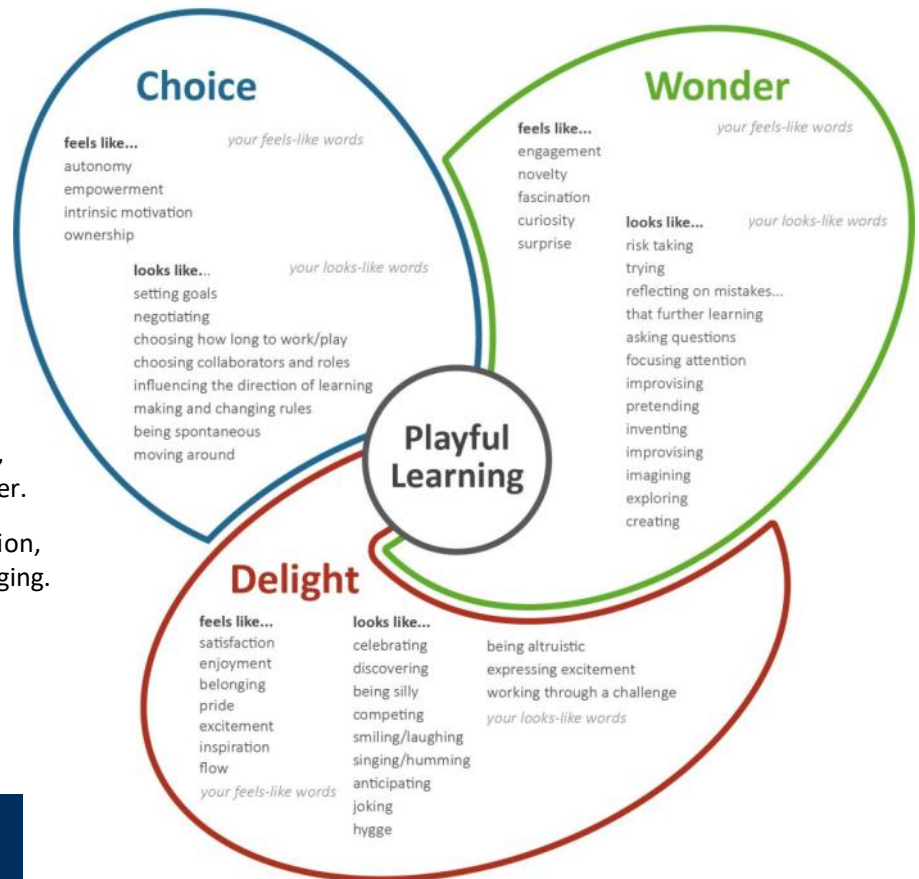


## INDICATORS OF PLAYFUL LEARNING:

**Choice** includes a sense of empowerment, autonomy, ownership, spontaneity, and intrinsic motivation.

**Wonder** entails the experience of curiosity, novelty, surprise, and challenge, which can engage and fascinate the learner.

**Delight** include excitement, joy, satisfaction, inspiration, anticipation, pride, and belonging.



Play-based learning involves careful decisions and support from teachers, so children grow to accept responsibility for their learning while still receiving purposeful guidance and feedback.

## TYPES OF PLAY:

### TYPE

Child-initiated

Guided

Adult-led

### WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

- \* Freely chosen by the child
- \* Little direct adult involvement or interaction
- \* Spontaneous
- \* Initiated by the child or adult
- \* Adults may join in to extend learning through questioning and demonstrating
- \* Organised and directed by an adult and may include instructions but remains open ended
- \* Intentions are clear, specific and promote high level thinking skills

Department of Education 2019: Importance of Play Based Learning





## Risky Play

Risky play can be defined as a thrilling and exciting activity that involves a risk of physical injury, and play that provides

opportunities for challenge, testing limits, exploring boundaries and learning about injury risk (Sandseter (2007; Little & Wyver, 2008).Feb 25, 2015)

“Risk-taking is an essential part of children’s play. Managing that risk is the key to providing opportunities that support growth and development and keep children safe from unreasonable risk and injury. The balancing of these two is vital for our children’s health and development. (Allen and Rapee, 2005 cited in Sanseter, E. and Kennair, L. 2011)

Everyday life is full of risks and challenges and children need opportunities to develop the skills associated with managing risk and making informed judgements about risks from a very young age.

## Learnt Life-Skills

Risky play helps to develop important life skill learnings such as;

- Building resilience and persistence
- Balance and coordination
- Awareness of the capabilities and limits of their own bodies
- The ability to assess and make judgement about risk
- Handling tools safely and with purpose
- Understanding consequence to action
- Confidence and independence
- Resourcefulness
- Creativity and inventiveness
- Curiosity and wonder
- Problem solving



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