

Summer Independent Learning

Subject/Group	AAQ BTEC Certificate in Early Childhood Development (Y11-Y12)
Topic	Play and Learning
Timescale	5 hours
To be completed by	This work must be completed and handed in to your subject teacher on the first day of term.

Background Information / Context – Play and Learning

In this unit, you will explore the importance of play in supporting children's learning and development from birth to 8 years. You will learn about different types of play and how they support children at various stages, as well as the role of adults in planning and supporting meaningful play opportunities.

You will investigate key theories, philosophies and curriculum approaches that influence how play is used in early years settings and consider how these shape current practice. You will also develop an understanding of the skills required by professionals working with young children and how these support effective learning experiences.

This unit provides a foundation for further study and progression into careers within the children's care and education sector.

Objectives

By completing these independent tasks, you will:

- Analyse how different types of play support holistic development in early childhood.
- Apply knowledge of play to real-world early years settings.
- Reflect on how play supports learning, transitions, and emotional wellbeing.
- Understand the EYFS framework

Task 1: Types of Play Research Grid

Using online sources (e.g. NHS Start4Life, BBC Bitesize, or CACHE websites), complete the following grid with **clear definitions**, **examples**, and **linked developmental areas**. The table has been started for you.

Types of Play	Definition	Areas of development it supports	Example from practice
Physical Play		Fine motor Hand –eye coordination	

		Balance Strength	
Creative Play			
Imagination/Role Play			Playing in home corner
Exploratory Play			
Co-operative Play			

Task 2: Critical Thinking – Play & Development

Choose **three types of play** from your table and write a short explanation (about 150 words each) discussing:

- How the play type contributes to **at least two** areas of development
- How an early years practitioner can **promote or facilitate** this type of play
- Why this play type is important during the early years foundation stage (EYFS)

 Suggested sentence starters:

“Imaginative play contributes to both communication and emotional development because...”

“An early years practitioner could encourage this by...”

Task 3: Holistic Development & The EYFS

Linking Play to Learning Outcomes

Match each of the following **areas of holistic development** to types of play that support them. Then, explain how a practitioner can use play-based activities to support that area.

Area of Development	Play Type(s) That Support This	How Practitioners Can Support This Through Play
Physical development (gross & fine motor)		
Cognitive development (problem-solving, creativity)		
Language & communication development		
Early literacy & oral language		
Numeracy & mathematical understanding		
Social development (relationships, co-operation)		
Emotional development (confidence, resilience)		
Coping with transitions/significant life events		

Include references to **EYFS areas of learning**, such as "Communication & Language" or "Personal, Social & Emotional Development".

Task 4: Create a Professional Information Leaflet

The Power of Play

Design a **professional A4 leaflet** aimed at **parents** or **new early years staff** explaining:

- Why play is essential in early childhood
- At least **three types of play** and their developmental benefits
- Examples of **practical play activities** that support learning
- A short section on how play helps children:
- Understand the world
- Build resilience
- Cope with transitions (e.g. moving house or starting school)

Tools you can use: Canva, Microsoft PowerPoint, Microsoft Word, Google Docs, hand-drawn designs

Task 5: Reflection – Professional Values

Write a reflective response (200–300 words) on the following:

“How does high-quality play support a child’s ability to thrive emotionally, socially, and cognitively in the early years?”

Use specific examples of types of play and reference at least one real-world example from an early years setting.

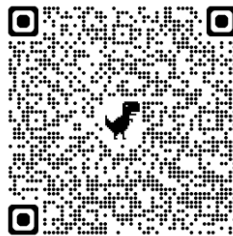
Suggested structure:

- Introduction: Why play is important overall
- Key points: Link play to emotional, social, and cognitive development
- Conclusion: The role of adults in creating play-rich environments

Task 6: Exploring the EYFS Framework

The EYFS is a statutory framework that sets standards for learning, development and safeguarding for children aged 0–5-copy and paste the link to the EYFS or scan the QR code:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68c024cb8c6d992f23edd79c/Early_years_foundation_stage_statutory_framework_-_for_group_and_school-based_providers.pdf.pdf



Your task is to create a research poster, fact file or digital presentation explaining the EYFS and how it links to play and learning in early years settings.

Your resource must include:

What is the EYFS?

- What does EYFS stand for?
- What is its purpose in early years settings?
- Why is it a legal requirement?

The 7 areas of learning

- List and briefly explain:
 - 3 prime areas
 - 4 specific areas
- Give a simple example of a play activity for at all areas

Role of play in EYFS

- Explain why play is important for learning
- Link to at least one benefit of play (e.g. social, cognitive, language development)

Adult role in supporting learning

- What is the role of the practitioner according to the EYFS?
- Include at least 2 ways adults support learning through play
 - e.g. modelling, questioning, scaffolding

Planning and observation

- What is meant by:
 - Observation
 - Planning
- Why are these important in meeting children's needs?

Link to real practice

- Give one example from placement OR create a realistic scenario showing:
 - How EYFS is used in an activity
 - How it supports children's development

Submission Checklist:

- ☐ Completed play research grid
- ☐ 3 mini-analyses of types of play
- ☐ Holistic development table
- ☐ Parent/staff leaflet
- ☐ 300-word reflection
- ☐ EYFS Poster/Digital presentation