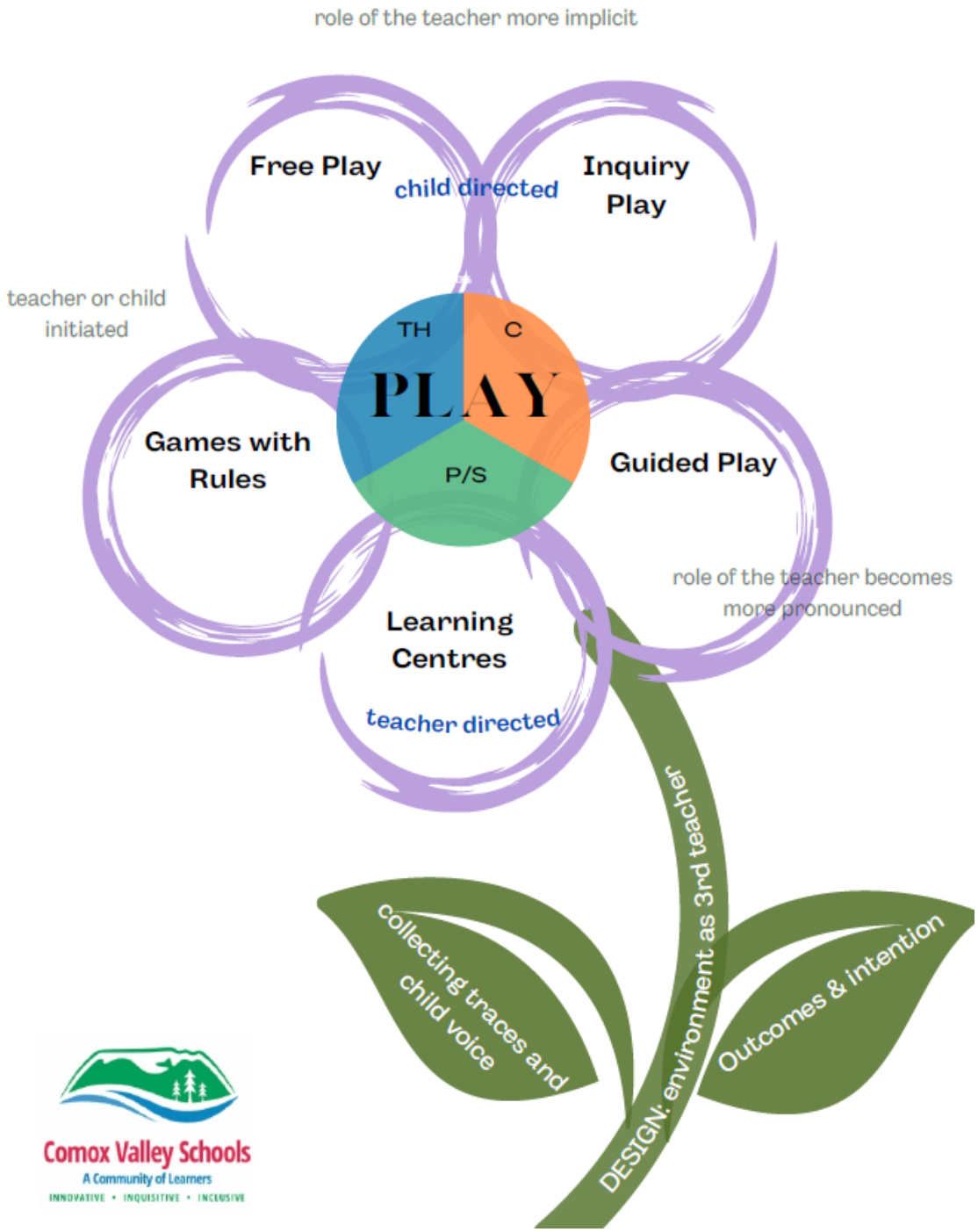
DISTRICT SD71 PLAY DOCUMENT



Comox Valley Schools
A Community of Learners
INNOVATIVE • INQUISITIVE • INCLUSIVE

Acknowledgement

This document was created through a collaborative process, shaped over time by the insight and dedication of many educators across the district. From early conversations to the most recent revisions, educators at all stages of the process contributed valuable perspectives, experiences, and ideas that have deeply enriched this work.

We gratefully acknowledge that this work took place on the traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation. We honor the K'ómoks people as the original and ongoing stewards of these lands and waters. This acknowledgment reflects our respect for Indigenous ways of knowing and doing, and our ongoing commitment to learning in relationship with this place and its peoples.

Play is one of the oldest and most meaningful ways of learning. It lives at the heart of many Indigenous knowledge systems and continues to offer powerful pathways for connection, imagination, growth, and relationship—with ourselves, with one another, and with the living world around us.

Thank you to all who contributed their time, care, and insight to this document. Your input has helped shape a resource that we hope will continue to grow and evolve alongside our shared learning.

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Play Foundations

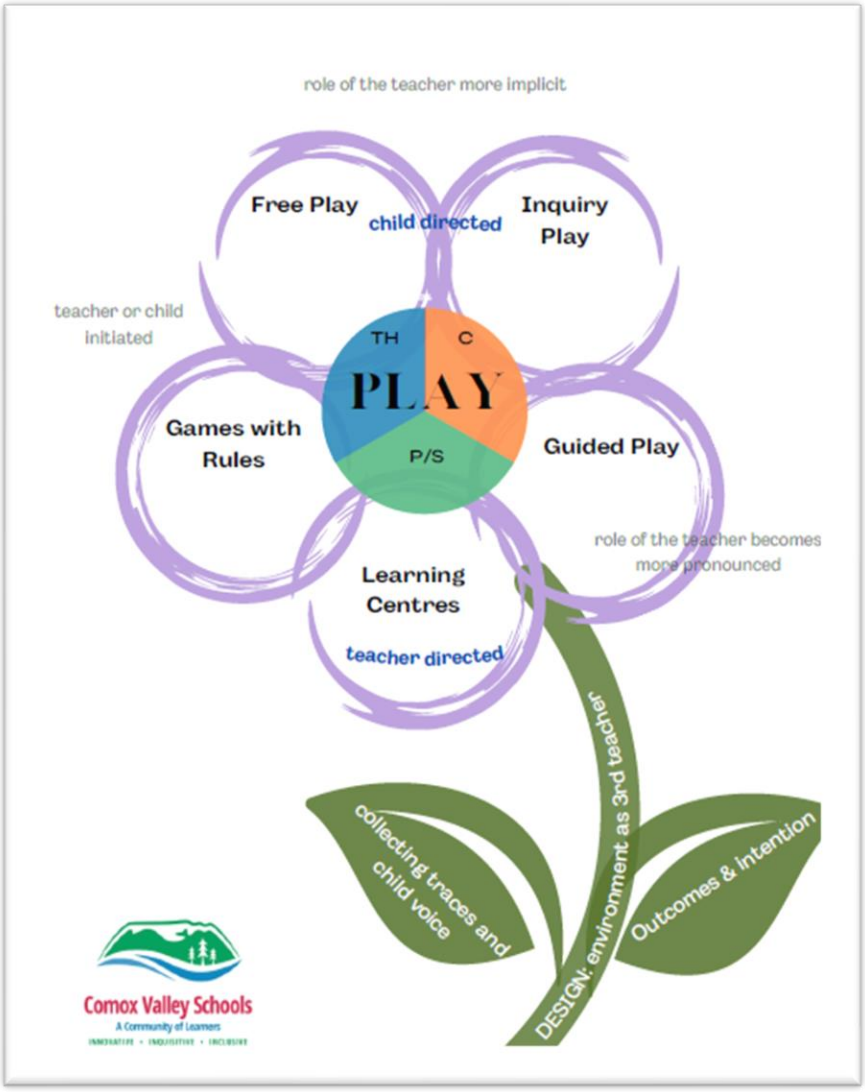
Play is a fundamental right of every child, as articulated in Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that children have the right to rest, leisure, and to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to their age.

From preschool through Grade 3, play is not merely a break from learning – it ***is*** learning. Through diverse types of play – such as physical, imaginative, constructive, symbolic, and social play – children make sense of their world, develop essential life skills, and cultivate a sense of agency and belonging.

Foundational theorists have long recognized the central role of play in human development. Friedrich Froebel described play as the highest expression of human development, while Jean Piaget linked play to cognitive growth, observing how it supports the construction of knowledge through active exploration. Lev Vygotsky emphasized the social and cultural dimensions of play, introducing the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development—the space between what a child can do independently and what they can achieve with guidance. Within this zone, learning is scaffolded by knowledgeable adults or peers who offer just enough support to extend the child's capabilities.

Contemporary thinkers continue to champion play as essential to children's well-being and learning. Stuart Brown and Peter Gray underscore its importance for emotional and psychological health, advocating for unstructured, self-directed experiences. Finnish educator and scholar Pasi Sahlberg reminds us that "play is the way children learn to take risks, make mistakes, and negotiate relationships." Drawing on Finland's educational success, Sahlberg advocates for play not as an add-on, but as a vital foundation for creativity, problem-solving, social competence, and intrinsic motivation. In contrast to rigid, test-driven models, he argues that protecting time for child-led play is essential to nurturing emotionally resilient, curious, and capable learners.

SD71 Play Visual



In a play-based learning environment, children engage in various types of play—*free play*, *inquiry play*, *guided play*, *learning centres*, and *games with rules*—each offering unique opportunities for exploration, discovery, and skill development. The *role of the teacher* is dynamic: observing, co-learning, scaffolding, and intentionally designing environments that provoke curiosity and deepen learning. These environments, often described as the *third teacher*, are thoughtfully arranged to support engagement, independence, and collaboration. Teachers collect *traces of learning* and capture *child voice* through documentation, which not only makes learning visible but also informs responsive planning and assessment. This approach aligns with the *BC Core Competencies*—Communication, Thinking, and Personal & Social—by fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and social-emotional growth. The balance of *outcomes and intentions* ensures that while children follow their interests, educators maintain a clear focus on developmental and curricular goals, supporting holistic, meaningful learning experiences.

The image of the flower represents how the different elements of play-based learning align to support meaningful and holistic learning for children.

Why Play?

> *"Play is the answer to how anything new comes about."*
> *– Jean Piaget*

In School District 71, our Strategic Plan for Education (2025–2030) invites us to engage in the ongoing and necessary work of reimagining teaching and learning—moving beyond colonialized approaches that have historically shaped education.

Guided by our Design Principles—**Decolonizing and Indigenizing, Inclusion, Personalized Learning, Student-Centred Assessment, Social Emotional Learning, Experiential Learning, Flexible Learning Environments, Digitally Enhanced Learning, and Land-Based Learning**—we hold space for transformation.

Play is deeply woven through these design principles, acting as both a pedagogy and a mindset that nurtures curiosity, creativity, and connection. The ways children play and learn are reflected in, and supported by, each design principle:

- **Decolonizing and Indigenizing**: Play provides space for children to connect with Indigenous knowledge systems through story, song, language, and relationship with the land. In playful inquiry, students learn through cycles of observation, reflection, and community connection—ways of knowing that reflect First Peoples Principles of Learning.
- **Inclusion**: Play naturally creates multiple access points for learning. Through building, storytelling, role play, or problem-solving students all students can participate, contribute meaningfully, and see themselves valued within the learning community.
- **Personalized Learning**: Through play, children pursue their own curiosities and follow their passions. Educators can observe and respond to these interests, scaffolding experiences that deepen understanding and make learning pathways more individualized and authentic.
- **Student-Centred Assessment**: Play generates authentic evidence of student growth. As children collaborate, negotiate, design, and create, educators can document learning processes and products that reflect critical thinking, creativity, and communication, making assessment responsive and meaningful.
- **Social Emotional Learning**: Play offers daily practice in empathy, cooperation, and problem-solving. In navigating friendships, conflicts, and collaborative projects, students

develop resilience and self-regulation, skills essential for both academic success and personal wellbeing.

- Experiential Learning: Play is inherently hands-on and inquiry-driven. Students experiment, test theories, and engage with materials and ideas in ways that deepen understanding through lived experience rather than abstract instruction.
- Flexible Learning Environments: Play thrives in adaptable spaces that encourage movement, collaboration, and creativity. Classrooms, Learning Commons, outdoor areas, and community spaces become learning environments where students design, build, and imagine in ways that are not confined by industrial structures.
- Digitally Enhanced Learning: Digital tools expand the possibilities of play by allowing students to research questions that emerge from their interests, design creative solutions, and share their learning in new ways. Technology supports inquiry and creativity, helping children connect their playful explorations to a broader world of knowledge and communication.
- Land-Based Learning: Play on the land nurtures curiosity, respect, and a sense of belonging. When children climb, build, explore, and imagine in natural spaces, they develop relationships with place, season, and community, grounding their learning in the living world around them.

Within these interwoven principles, play is not an add-on, but a vital thread. When we honour play as a pedagogy, we nurture learning environments where children are seen as capable, creative, curious, and connected learners. Through play, children live and grow the BC Core Competencies – Communication, Thinking, and Personal and Social – the heart of BC's curriculum.

COMMUNICATION

In play, communication is purposeful and dynamic. Children listen, share ideas, negotiate roles, tell stories, and solve problems together. These rich interactions foster both expressive and receptive language development, laying the foundation for literacy and collaborative learning.
Play supports social and emotional development as children navigate relationships, practice empathy, and resolve conflicts. These daily experiences build the confidence to express themselves, advocate for their needs, and understand others—skills essential for learning and life.

THINKING

Play is fertile ground for both critical and creative thinking. Children experiment, ask questions, invent, adapt, and reflect. They make predictions, test theories, and revise their ideas based on feedback and outcomes. Through these processes, learners develop cognitive flexibility, executive functioning, and the ability to transfer learning across contexts. Whether designing a

block structure, imagining a story world, or solving a social dilemma, they are actively building the habits of inquiry and innovation. Play also fosters deeper learning and memory retention, as hands-on, meaningful experiences engage the whole child—head, heart, and hands.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL

Play supports learners in developing strong identities, emotional regulation, and social responsibility. It provides space for children to explore who they are, what they value, and how they relate to others and the world. Inclusive play environments honour diverse ways of being, knowing, and doing. They are culturally responsive, accessible, and adaptable, allowing every child to contribute, connect, and thrive. In play, children practice caring for others, making ethical decisions, and building community. They develop the resilience, flexibility, and relational skills needed for both the learning environment and the complexities of life.

"Children learn as they play. More importantly, in play, children learn how to learn."
- D. Fred Donaldson

Global Perspectives

Around the globe, educators and researchers are re-examining how children learn best, and a growing consensus points to play as a cornerstone of both development and learning. Far from being a pause from "real" work, play is recognized as a powerful mode of inquiry, creativity, and relationship-building that supports problem-solving, social connection, and emotional well-being—while also laying the foundation for academic success and lifelong learning. Though the expression of play varies across cultural and educational contexts, international approaches reveal shared principles that guide rich, purposeful learning.

Harvard Project Zero's Pedagogy of Play identifies play as most powerful when it is meaningful, socially interactive, and actively engaging (Baker, Krechevsky, & Mardell, 2023). Italy's Reggio Emilia Approach reinforces this perspective by centring documentation and children's agency as essential components (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 2012). Building on these ideas, Australia's Walker Learning integrates children's interests and real-life contexts with explicit teaching to create a balanced and meaningful curriculum (Walker, 2011), while in New Zealand, Longworth Education equips educators with strategies to design purposeful play environments that honour children's agency and highlight the intentional role of the teacher during play (Longworth Education, n.d.).

In Canada, and particularly in British Columbia, play is increasingly becoming recognized as a cornerstone of learning in the early years (0-8 years). Play Today: BC Handbook , Play Today: A Guide for Families (BC Ministry of Education, 2019) and Learning in the Primary Years (BC Ministry of Education and Child Care, 2024) emphasize play as a vehicle for developing the core competencies, while supporting self-regulation, literacy, numeracy, problem-solving, and social-emotional learning. Neuroscientist Adele Diamond's research further reinforces the importance of play in early development, demonstrating that activities which engage executive functions – such as working memory, cognitive flexibility, and inhibitory control – are critical for children's success in school and life. Diamond advocates for playful learning environments that nurture these functions, noting that such approaches not only enhance academic outcomes but also promote emotional resilience and social well-being (Diamond, 2013)

Across these global perspectives, common principles emerge:

- Agency and Voice – Children are seen as capable learners who lead inquiry.
- Purposeful Pedagogy – Educators design and extend play to deepen learning.
- Relational and Contextual Learning – Relationships, community, and culture, including land, are central.
- Balanced Curriculum – Playful inquiry is complemented by explicit teaching of skills and concepts.
- Authentic Assessment – Documentation and student reflection make learning visible.

Together, these international and local approaches affirm that play is both universal and context-specific: its essence is shared globally, while its expression is shaped by local cultures, traditions, and educational priorities.

Continuum of Play-Based Strategies

In the early years of schooling – preschool through Grade 3 – play is the foundational mode of learning. As outlined in ***Learning in the Primary Years (2024), and the*** [***BC Early Learning Framework***] ***(2019),*** educators are encouraged to intentionally design learning experiences that reflect a continuum of play, recognizing that play looks different across developmental stages and contexts and the educator plays a different role in each of the types of play.

In their 2017 work, Pyle and Danniels identified five distinct ***pedagogical approaches to play***, helping to frame how educators can intentionally support learning through play in early childhood classrooms. Each approach varies in the degree of child agency and teacher involvement:

1. Free Play
   Children lead the play with minimal adult involvement. Educators provide a rich environment but do not direct or intervene, allowing children to explore, imagine, and create on their own terms.

2. Inquiry Play
   Children initiate the play based on curiosity or questions, and educators respond by guiding investigations and extending thinking. This approach blends child interest with teacher support for deeper learning.
3. Collaboratively Designed Play
   Both the educator and children co-construct the play. Teachers help plan or shape the play environment and materials, but children help decide how the play unfolds. This approach balances agency and structure.
4. Playful Learning
   Educators set learning goals and embed them within playful contexts. While the teacher initiates the activity, it is designed to feel playful and engaging to the child, promoting both enjoyment and intentional learning.
5. Learning through Games
   This involves structured activities or games with specific rules and learning outcomes. These are teacher-directed but still playful in nature, often used to teach targeted concepts or skills.

These types of play are not mutually exclusive or hierarchical; rather, they flow along a continuum and often coexist within a learning environment.

"Play is a practice-run at 'real life' without the real-world consequences."
- Dr. Sarah Aiono, Longworth Education

Schemas/Urges

Schemas (sometimes called play urges) are repeated patterns of action through which children explore ideas, test theories, and make meaning about how the world works. Originating from constructivist theory and early childhood research, schemas help educators notice the intentionality behind children's play. When educators recognize schemas, they can respond more thoughtfully by providing materials, environments, and provocations that extend learning rather than redirecting behaviour.

Schemas are not stages children move through in order; rather, children may explore several simultaneously, revisit them over time, and express them differently depending on context, culture, and environment. Understanding schemas supports inclusive, strengths-based practice by viewing children's behaviours as expressions of learning rather than problems to manage.

Below are common schemas observed in early learning and primary classrooms:

- ***Transporting*** – moving things from place to place, often using bags, containers, vehicles or hands.
- ***Gathering*** – collecting or accumulating objects, often perceived by the child as 'treasures'.
- ***Construction*** – building, joining, sticking, stacking, or tying materials together.
- ***Deconstruction*** – knocking down, taking apart, smashing, or dismantling structures.
- ***Trajectory*** – fascination with movement, direction, and force, often explored through throwing, dropping, rolling, or watching objects move.
- ***Enclosure*** – drawing, building, or creating boundaries; occupying spaces within barriers or defined areas.
- ***Enveloping*** – covering objects or oneself; hiding, wrapping, or being enclosed by materials.
- ***Posting*** – placing objects into spaces, holes, containers, tubes, or slots.
- ***Transformation*** – changing materials or properties; mixing, combining, or altering substances (e.g., mud, water, flour, paint)
- ***Ordering/Patterning*** – arranging objects in sequences, lines, or patterns; organizing by attributes such as size, colour, or shape.
- ***Rotation*** – interest in spinning, twisting, turning, or rolling objects or bodies.
- ***Orientation*** – exploring perspectives by viewing things from different angles; hanging upside down, climbing, or repositioning the body.
- ***Running/Chasing*** – movement play involving speed, pursuit, and direction changes
- ***Playing with Fire*** – fascination with heat, light transformation, and risk (often expressed safely through candles, light, cooking, or symbolic play).
- ***Playing Families*** – role play related to relationships, belonging, caregiving and social roles.
- ***Playing with Water*** – pouring, filling, emptying, flowing, splashing, and exploring volume or movement.
- ***Climbing/Jumping*** – testing physical limits, gravity, balance, and body control.
- ***Digging/Burying*** – excavating, covering, hiding, or exploring what is beneath the surface.

Why Schemas Matter in a Pedagogy of Play

Recognizing schemas supports educators to:

- Interpret behaviour as communication of learning needs
- Design responsive environments and invitations to play
- Extend thinking through questions, materials, and documentation
- Support self-regulation and engagement
- Connect play to curricular and core competencies
- Honour children's agency and identity as capable learners

When educators observe repeated actions over time, they can document patterns and plan intentionally to deepen learning. For example, a child exploring trajectory may benefit from ramps, balls, loose parts, or outdoor movement opportunities, while a child exploring enclosure may seek tents, boxes, or drawing boundaries on the ground.

Educators Reflective Questions

- What repeated actions or interests am I noticing?
- What might the child be trying to understand?
- How can the environment support this exploration?
- How might I extend the learning without interrupting the play?
- What curricular connections are emerging?

"Schemas remind us that play isn't random. It's rarely intentionally disruptive. Most often, it's guided by a child's innate wisdom, an intuitive knowing of what they need in that moment to make sense of the world around them. When we arrive with a commitment to observation and trust, we can more easily grow a habit of being reflective, not reactive."
- Christine Murray

Pedagogy of Play

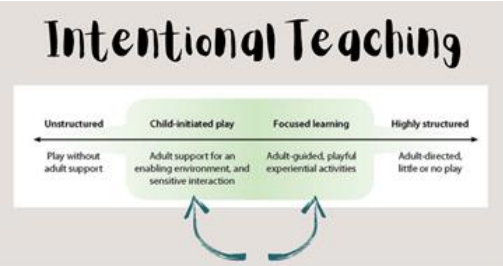
While the Continuum of Play helps us describe ***what*** children are doing—ranging from free play to guided play to learning games—the **Pedagogy of Play** focuses on ***how*** and ***why*** educators intentionally design environments, interactions, and experiences that honour play as a powerful context for learning.

Defined by Project Zero (2022), the Pedagogy of Play is a systematic approach to embed play within teaching and learning in school settings. It positions play not as a break from learning, but as a legitimate and powerful pathway to it. This pedagogical approach encourages educators to cultivate environments that nurture playfulness, exploration, and joy. It recognizes play's role in fostering academic development, creativity, social connection, and learner agency.

Central to the Pedagogy of Play is the belief that children are capable, confident, and active contributors in their own learning. It promotes learner agency by inviting children to take ownership of their learning through playful experiences that are both meaningful and relevant. Educators participate in moments of joint play—engaging alongside children to co-construct understanding—while also facilitating reflective dialogue that helps learners think deeply about their experiences and growth.

In their definition of Pedagogy of Play, Play Scotland describes it as an approach that integrates children's lived experiences with curricular goals, giving them the flexibility to explore solutions to new and familiar problems. It supports autonomy and nurtures children's intrinsic motivation to learn, while also strengthening their sense of identity and relationships with others.

What distinguishes the Pedagogy of Play is the intentional and active role of the educator. Rather than pre-determined outcomes, educators observe, respond, and scaffold learning in ways that extend thinking and deepen engagement. This approach is not limited to a particular type of play; instead, it spans across the play continuum—most often aligning with the middle—where child agency and adult support are balanced. Ultimately, the Pedagogy of Play is not a method or a program, but an educational stance that values play as a valid and vital way of knowing, thinking, and learning.



From Dr. Sarah Aiono, Longworth Education

Intentional Role of the Teacher

Research has shown that when teachers engage with children in their play experiences on a regular basis, children deepen their social interactions with peers, and extend their capacities for problem solving, stamina and investigations of new ideas (Kirk and Jay, 2018, Journal of Research in Childhood Education).

In addition, in keeping with the principles of the BC Early Learning Framework, these ways of participating in a pedagogy of listening communicate to the child that we see them, and we value their unique contributions to the learning community. These attributes of our interactions with children help us build relationship with them. This is the foundation of respectfully living and learning together.

When children are engaged in play, the teacher takes an active role in a variety of ways. During play, educators can:

Be a player.

Take on a role in the play and follow the children's lead.

Be a mirror.

Describe in detail what children are doing, using rich vocabulary. E.g. "you're drawing a curved yellow line using the thin paintbrush..."

Be a connector.

Scaffold children to connect with each other around a common goal or play theme.

Be a steering wheel.

When play becomes unproductive, repetitive, or unsafe, steer it back in a positive direction.

Be a rubber band.

Stretch and extend the play through open-ended questions, embedding vocabulary and reinforcing teaching of concepts. Try the question stems to the right.

Be a documenter.

Record learning processes in order to deepen and extend learning

"What the educator does in teaching is to make it possible for the students to become themselves."
-Paulo Freire

Noticing and Naming

When children are engaged in play, the teacher needs to be noticing and naming what they are seeing. This deepens learning, strengthens relationships, and builds a shared language for meaning making. Noticing and naming play is not interrupting play – it is honoring it. This practice is a cornerstone of responsive pedagogy, as it:

1. Affirms Children's Thinking and Identity

When educators notice and name children's actions, strategies, or ideas, they communicate:
"I see you. What you're doing matters."
This builds confidence, fosters a sense of belonging, and supports identity development as learners, problem solvers, creators, and collaborators.

2. Makes Learning Visible

Play is rich with cognitive, social, emotional, and physical learning, but it isn't always obvious to others—or even to the child. Naming what's happening in the moment makes the thinking and learning visible:

- "You've tried three different ways to build that bridge—that's perseverance."
- "I see you using math when you measure how far the car goes."

3. Supports Language and Concept Development

Noticing and naming introduces or reinforces vocabulary and concepts in meaningful, contextualized ways. Instead of abstract instruction, children hear rich language linked to their lived experience.

4. Builds Shared Understanding and Sustains Play

When teachers reflect what they see and hear, it validates the play and helps deepen it. Naming can:

- Extend the narrative
- Introduce a new idea
- Prompt reflection or collaboration

For example: "You said the doctor is checking the baby's heartbeat—do you need a stethoscope?"
"You're setting rules for your game—sounds like you're creating a system together."

5. Guides Assessment and Planning

By observing closely and naming what they see, teachers gather authentic assessment data in real time. These insights guide next steps in planning and help educators respond to each child's interests, strengths, and needs.

6. Models Reflective Thinking and Metacognition

When teachers name children's strategies or choices, they model how to reflect on learning. Over time, children begin to internalize this language and use it to describe their own thinking:

- "I figured it out by testing it!"
- "We worked as a team."

Role of the Teacher

When we are noticing and naming, whether adult or child, we ask:

What do we see here? What does it mean? And why does it matter?

How is it part of the story of being human? (Ann Pelo)

So we might ask them:

What is the story here? Tell me what is happening.

What is the part that you are most curious about?

What has been tricky about it?

What are you most please about it? How did you get there?

How did you solve that problem?

What made you think of that idea? (Connection from peers? Favourite topic? Inspiration from a lesson?)

How have your ideas (in a group) worked together?

What materials might you need?

How will you share this idea with others?

Connections to Core and Curricular Competencies

Shared Language/Process Words

Using a shared language to describe learning is essential in helping students develop the skills to reflect, set goals, and engage meaningfully with their own growth. When we consistently model and use clear, descriptive language—such as *noticing, listening, wondering, exploring, trying, planning, communicating, collaborating, problem-solving, reflecting,* and *persisting*—we empower students to better understand themselves as learners.

These words offer more than just vocabulary; they represent key competencies and dispositions that support deep learning and personal development. By integrating this language into our daily conversations, documentation, and feedback, we give students the tools to recognize and articulate what they are doing, how they are growing, and where they want to go next.

This language aligns with the Core Competencies—*Communication, Thinking, and Personal & Social*—which serve as foundational aspects of the curriculum and guide students in becoming thoughtful, adaptable, and self-aware learners.

By embedding this vocabulary into the learning culture, we create consistent touchpoints that support students in developing metacognitive awareness. Over time, learners begin to say things like, "I noticed…," "I was wondering…," or "I showed persistence when…"—using a common language that bridges their actions with intentions.

These learning dispositions—or "language tools for learning"—support self-awareness, encourage goal setting, and nurture a reflective mindset. When students can name what they're doing and why it matters, they are more likely to take ownership of their learning journey, recognize growth, and identify next steps. This is how we build confident, capable, and lifelong learners.

Example words from the K-3 curriculum: **(*Please see appendix for K- 3 Science Concept Language)**

Analyzing	*Applying*	*Asking*	*Brainstorming*	*Building*
Classifying	*Collaborating*	*Collecting*	*Communicating*	*Connecting*
Constructing	*Contrasting*	*Contributing*	*Creating*	*Demonstrating*
Designing	*Describing*	*Developing*	*Discussing*	*Documenting*
Engaging	*Estimating*	*Evaluating*	*Explaining*	*Exploring*
Expressing	*Generating*	*Identifying*	*Imagining*	*Incorporating*
Inferring	*Interpreting*	*Justifying*	*Listening*	*Manipulating*
Making	*Measuring*	*Modelling*	*Observing*	*Organizing*
Patterning	*Planning*	*Predicting*	*Problem Solving*	*Reasoning*
Recognizing	*Recording*	*Refining*	*Reflecting*	*Representing*
Responding	*Recording*	*Sequencing*	*Sharing*	*Sorting*
Suggesting	*Summarizing*	*Testing*	*Thinking*	*Visualizing*

Scaffolding

A **scaffolding question** during play is one that gently extends a child's thinking without taking over their play. It builds on what the child is already doing or saying and invites deeper exploration, problem-solving, or perspective-taking—while still honouring their agency.

> ***"What a child can do today with assistance, they will able to do by themselves tomorrow."***
> ***- Lev Vygotsky***

The above quote underpins the concept of the **Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**—the space between what a child can do independently and what they can do with support. Scaffolding questions help children work within their ZPD, nudging them toward deeper understanding while keeping them actively engaged in the process.
Here are a few examples of scaffolding questions during play, depending on the context:

For Problem-Solving or Design:

- "What could you try next?"
- "What do you notice about what's working—or not working?"
- "How might you make it stronger/faster/last longer?"

For Encouraging Collaboration or Perspective-Taking:

- "What does your friend think about that idea?"
- "How could you include everyone in the game?"
- "What do you think the character is feeling right now?"

For Deepening the Narrative:

- "What happens next in your story?"
- "Who else might be part of this world you're creating?"
- "Can you tell me more about what's going on here?"

For Exploring Concepts (math, science, literacy, etc.):

- "How many blocks did you use to build that tower?"
- "What do you think will happen if you add more water?"
- "Do you want to write a sign or label for your structure?"

The Key:
A good scaffolding question is:

- Open-ended
- Connected to the child's current play
- Not leading or directing, but offering a next layer of thinking

It invites, not instructs. The goal is to **extend, not control** the play.
So instead of asking, "What are you learning?" a more effective scaffolding question might be:
"I noticed you changed your plan—what made you decide to do that?"
This kind of question respects the child's process while gently opening new doors for thinking and growth—just as Vygotsky envisioned.

Co-Construction of Learning

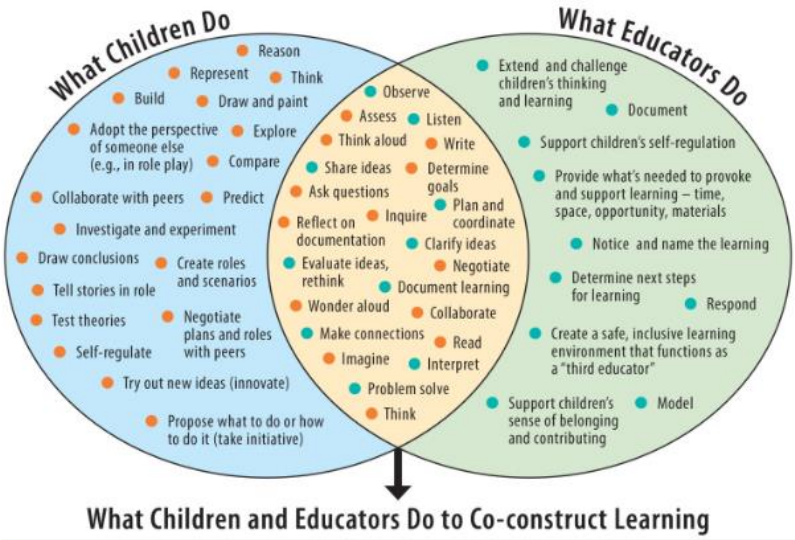


Figure 4. This graphic depicts the interdependent roles of children and educators in play-based learning. It identifies the various ways in which children and educators engage throughout the day, showing their roles in the co-construction of learning.

From: Play-based Learning in a Culture of Inquiry, Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2016

This graphic illustrates the interdependent roles of children and educators in play-based learning, emphasizing how learning is co-constructed through their shared actions and interactions. On the left, it highlights the many ways children engage in thinking, exploring, creating, and collaborating—demonstrating agency, curiosity, and initiative. On the right, it outlines the intentional moves educators make to extend and support this learning: observing, listening, documenting, and thoughtfully responding.

At the intersection of the two spheres lies the heart of the Pedagogy of Play—a dynamic space where children and educators build knowledge together. In these shared moments, educators are not simply facilitators, but active partners who help shape learning through intentional provocation, support, and reflection. They join children in inquiry, problem-solving, and meaning making, allowing both parties to contribute ideas, negotiate meaning, and deepen understanding. This co-construction fosters learner agency, strengthens relationships, and creates a rich context for authentic, joyful learning.

Ultimately, the diagram reinforces that play is not something children do *separately* from learning, nor something educators simply *observe*. Instead, it is a collaborative, relational process—where teaching and learning happen together, through mutual engagement in playful exploration.

Role of the Environment

The environment plays a vital and intentional role—it is often referred to as the **"third teacher,"** alongside children and educators. This concept originates from the Reggio Emilia approach and is foundational in play-based learning, where space is not neutral but a powerful co-constructor of meaning and possibility.

The Role of the Environment as the Third Teacher:

1. Invitations to Play and Learn

A thoughtfully designed environment sparks curiosity and wonder. Materials are intentionally placed to provoke questions, invite exploration, and support children's agency. Whether through open-ended resources, natural elements, or loose parts, the environment encourages children to make choices, test theories, and construct understanding.

2. Communicating Values and Possibilities

The environment reflects what we believe about children and learning. When we create spaces that are beautiful, organized, and responsive, we communicate respect for children's ideas, interests, and capabilities. The layout, materials, and documentation within a space all signal what kinds of interactions, relationships, and thinking are possible.

3. Supporting Relationships and Collaboration

Environments are set up to support both individual reflection and social interaction. Spaces are arranged to invite collaboration, shared storytelling, negotiation, and co-construction of knowledge. Small group areas, cozy nooks, and flexible spaces allow children to connect with others or engage deeply on their own terms.

4. Making Learning Visible

The physical environment also acts as a canvas for pedagogical documentation. Walls, displays, and learning journals that feature children's work, voices, and thinking make learning processes visible and open for reflection—by children, educators, and families. This fosters a culture of shared meaning-making and celebration of learning.

5. Responding to Play as It Emerges

A dynamic environment is not static—it evolves in response to children's play and inquiry. Educators observe closely and adjust the space and materials to extend learning, scaffold complexity, or introduce new provocations. This reciprocal relationship between child, adult, and environment reflects the responsive, co-constructed nature of the Pedagogy of Play.

"The physical environment is not just where learning happens—it is a fundamental part of how learning happens."
— Walker Learning

In essence, the environment is not just a backdrop but a participant in the learning process. When designed with intention, it becomes a silent teacher—one that listens, speaks, and inspires.

Classroom Resources

This list of resources is intended as a starting point—for setting up new classrooms, reimagining existing spaces, or replenishing materials. It is not an exhaustive inventory of everything a teacher might find useful, but rather a collection of foundational items upon which to build a rich and responsive learning environment. Some resources are essential and needed in all learning spaces at all times, while others can be shared. Additional materials may be borrowed from the LRC to support specific units of study, and many meaningful items can also be found outdoors reflecting and connecting us to the place in which we live and learn.

In compiling this list, we also considered larger furniture items that help define space for various modes of learning within the classroom. Storage shelves of varying heights can be used to create more intimate areas for quiet reflection or small group play. These shelves also serve to guide movement, establish natural boundaries, and create open or enclosed spaces as needed—supporting both flow and flexibility.

Learning spaces are designed to invite children to engage with literacy and numeracy in meaningful, integrated ways across the day. Rather than being confined to isolated areas, these foundational skills are woven into multiple areas of the classroom. For example, a dramatic play space might include notepads, signs, and recipes to support writing and reading, while loose parts or building areas may encourage counting, patterning, estimating, or measuring. Cross-curricular opportunities emerge naturally when materials are purposefully selected and placed to support both spontaneous play and intentional instruction.

Tables and flexible seating options give educators the ability to design areas suited to different kinds of experiences, while offering children choices in how they learn best. Above all, we aim to create learning environments that reflect the identities, interests, and cultural traditions of the students who inhabit them—spaces that honour who they are and how they learn.

> *"Children and adults live and learn in relationships with the people around them but are also profoundly affected by their relationships with spaces and materials."*
> *BC Early Learning Framework. p.22*

Playful Early Learning Environments: Classroom Resources

Note: The links provided are for reference only—to give you an idea of what each item is. You are not expected to purchase from those specific sellers. Please refer to the Educational Resource Catalogues available at your school when making purchases.

Physical Space Materials	*Scripted Materials*	*Unscripted Materials*
Place to hang chart paper (stand, whiteboard, etc.) Carpet/Foam squares etc. for Meeting Area Bins/baskets for play resources/storage Clipboards – class set Classroom library – supplemented by school library Paint centre (easel, tabletop, drying rack, etc.) Cooking & Baking Supplies Magnets Shelving for books Moveable shelving (high/medium/low)	Word/Letter/Sound wall Alphabet Sound Tubs (K/1) Magnetic Letters – 2 sets Letter stamps (K/1) Whiteboards – class set Pocket chart Letter Tiles Pattern Blocks Number Line Counters Unifix Cubes Cards – 12 sets Dice Dominoes Power of 10 cards – class set Magnetic Numbers Base Ten (Diens blocks) Rekenreks Attribute Blocks Cuisenaire Rods Scales and Weights Measuring Items	Playdough/Plasticine/Clay & Accessories Pacific Northwest Animals High Affordance Loose Parts: fabric, mirrors, peg people, shells, gems, wood pieces, etc. Multi-purpose dramatic wooden furniture & accessories (house centre, restaurant, market, hospital, etc. could be shared) Multicultural Dolls People/figurines High affordance dress up clothes: scarves, capes, pieces of fabric, etc. Wooden vehicles Train set Blocks – at least 3 of the following: Wooden Hollow Blocks Wooden Blocks Large Wooden Blocks Small Foam Blocks Tree Blocks Magnetic Blocks Cash Register & Money Lego Tweezers/Tongs/Eye Droppers/Magnifying Glasses Sand/Water Play
Optional: Rainbow table Document Camera/Ipad Light table Fish Tank	**Shared amongst classrooms (some in every room)** Board Games Puzzles Home Reading Books Decodable/Levelled Books	**Optional and shared amongst classrooms:** Feltboard and flannel stories Story Telling kits (LRC) Qualicum Culture Kits

Physical Space Materials

These materials are intended to help create welcoming, safe, accessible, and engaging ways for children to participate in learning and contribute to the classroom community.

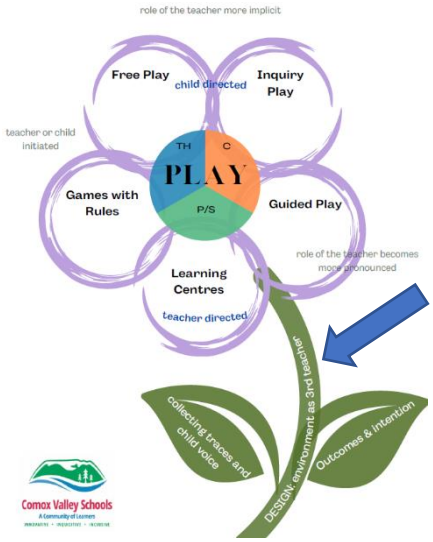
An aesthetically pleasing space is important because it is inviting, and materials that invite joyful engagement in rituals and routines contribute to children's well-being and belonging (BC Early Learning Framework p.69). Creating a space that can 'feel like home' fosters community and the desire to care for the space.

In addition, our classroom spaces communicate expectations. We want to communicate that this is a democratic space, and children are capable and competent to take care of it and use it to support their learning. It is a space where children have voice and their learning is represented in authentic ways, put on display in ways that invite celebration, wonder and reflection.

For example: the painting easel. How can children independently clean up this space? How can they access materials and tools independently? How are their creations displayed? Who are the artists? How are children allowed agency and competence so that the teacher is freed to facilitate and observe in other areas of the room as needed?

Finally, and importantly, orderly spaces allow for freedom of moment and responsive teaching moments as resources are thoughtfully placed and easily accessed.

What limits are placed on how children engage?
Who decides these limits?
Why are they put in place?
Questions for Critical Reflection; Engagement with Others and the World"; BC Early Learning Framework p.77



Physical Space Materials set the structure for your academic and unscripted resources. The physical environment places boundaries and opens pathways for movement and accessibility to materials in the room.

It helps set expectations. Therefore, it is often referred to as "The 3rd Teacher".

Scripted Materials

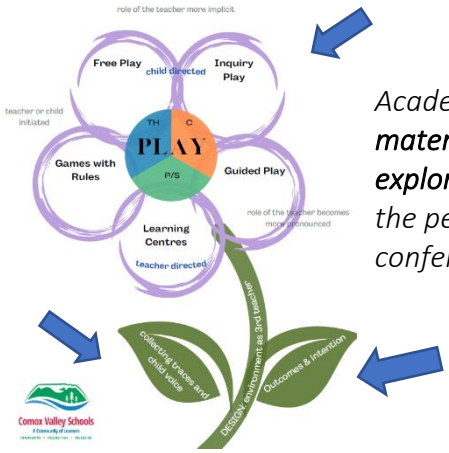
These materials are intended to address the strands of the curricular competencies and lead to outcomes based on learning intentions, goals, and emerging curriculum in the classroom.

"In the play-based classroom, rich learning experiences foster the development of confident numerate individuals who can apply mathematical thinking in everyday life with fluency and flexibility" (SD71 Numeracy Framework).

Additionally, "the variety of talk opportunities and experiences with stories, poems and manipulating letters and sounds, as well as expressing ideas in a variety of ways supports the development of confidence in reading and writing" (SD71 Literacy Framework)

Many of these materials are multi-purpose in nature and can be used both for open-ended exploration and direct instruction, with the goal of authentic tasks that eventually culminate in meaningful assessment and documentation of learning. They can be available for free play as exploration and inquiry, or used in whole group, small group or individual instruction.

"In what ways can children experiment with numbers, measurement, and form in meaningful contexts?
How is written language made part of the rhythm of the program?
How do I extend and deepen conversation with children?"
"Questions for Critical Reflection; Communication and Literacies"; BC Early Learning Framework p. 83



Academic materials address the strands of the curriculum. ***The materials are set out with intention and can be used for open-ended exploration for whole group, small group, or individual instruction*** *(all the petals in the image). Evidence of learning is gathered through conferences, observation and samples of the child's voice and thinking.*

Unscripted Materials

These resources allow children to investigate and experiment with materials in ways that are meaningful to them.

In the play-based classroom, emerging curriculum picks up on the leads that children provide during their playful investigations and collaborations, extending them through invitations and provocations that extend thinking. While playing, the children are encouraged to engage in sharing ideas, opinions and problem-solving together (SD71 Literacy Framework). These opportunities and materials can often make their way into curricular and core competencies.

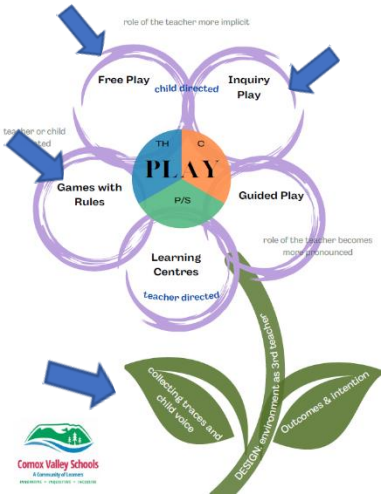
During this time the teacher responds to playful learning with informal conversation and observation of the child's engagement with others and materials. Because these are unscripted materials, they can be adapted to the environment that is available (i.e. You don't need house furniture to have a house corner; you don't need a water table to have water play).

NOTE: Unscripted materials can be supplemented with an invitation to families to contribute items, thus communicating the value and purpose of play to families.

> ***"In what ways can children engage with materials in unusual or surprising ways?***
> ***What materials invite transformation and inquiry?***
> ***How are materials presented?***
> ***Does this limit or invite experimentation and investigations?"***
>
> "Questions for Critical Reflection; Communication and Literacies"; BC Early Learning Framework p. 83

Unscripted materials invite inquiry, creativity, and collaboration.

The materials are set out with the intention that children will engage with them freely, with minimal teacher input. ***Free play or inquiry-based play with these materials can lead to new uses, experimentation, and rich opportunities for dramatic or constructive play—and may even extend into the creation of original games.***



Paying attention to the ways children use them allows the teacher to collect traces of learning and follow emerging curriculum.

Supporting Learning Through Observation

Observation and documentation are essential to pedagogy of play. Using the ***Notice-Recognize-Respond*** framework (Longworth Education), educators can intentionally engage with children's play to understand learning, inform planning, and communicate growth. This approach aligns with BC Curricular and Core Competencies, fostering formative assessment practices.

NOTICE

Educators begin by **noticing** children's play: the repeated actions, emerging schemas, social interactions, and engagement patterns. This involves careful, attentive observation to understand what the child is exploring, how they are interacting, and the skills or competencies being demonstrated.

RECOGNIZE

Next, educators **recognize** the learning within the play. This includes identifying strengths, emerging skills and connections to Curricular and Core Competencies.

RESPOND

Finally, educators **respond** by capturing and extending learning. This may include:

- Documentation – Learning Story Journals, Play Observation Sheets, Anecdotal Notes
- Formative Assessment – reflecting on observed competencies to inform next steps
- Responsive provocations – introducing materials, experiences, or questions to deepen inquiry
- Learning Updates/Sharing with Families – communicating children's growth, interests, and next steps in ways that honour agency and process

This cycle ensures that play is both observed and valued, providing evidence of learning while supporting responsive teaching. By noticing, recognizing, and responding, educators can create environments and experiences that are intentional, inclusive and aligned with the curriculum.

"Play lies at the heart of quality learning, and noticing, recognizing, and responding to children's play is central to intentional play pedagogy."
- Dr. Sarah Aiono

Supports for Teacher Implementation

Play Based Learning Observation Tool (P-BLOT)

In the spring of 2025, 10 District Staff Members were trained in the P-Blot.
If you are interested in support on your Pedagogy of Play journey, please connect with the Mentorship Lead Teacher to explore opportunities for collaboration with trained SD71 educators. (SD71 Teacher Mentorship Program)

The Play-Based Learning Observation Tool (P-BLOT) was developed by Dr. Sarah Aiono as part of her doctoral research at Massey University, New Zealand (Aiono, 2020). Designed to support educators in observing and refining their play-based teaching practices, the P-BLOT is grounded in evidence and crafted to enhance reflective teaching in diverse educational contexts.

The P-BLOT is designed to make the observation of play-based teaching practices intuitive, reflective, and impactful. Here's how the P-BLOT guides educators from observation to action, improving the quality of teaching and learning in play-based environments.

Observe: Capture the Practice

Using the P-BLOT, educators start by conducting focused observations of teaching practices within play-based learning environments. The tool offers a structured framework to guide observations, helping educators focus on key aspects such as interactions, facilitation strategies, and the environment's setup.

- Focuses on teacher interactions and strategies.
- Encourages attention to detail in play settings.
- Supports unbiased and evidence-based observations

Reflect: Analyse Your Observations

Once observations are collected, the P-BLOT facilitates reflective practice by prompting educators to analyse their findings. The tool provides a framework that help educators critically reflect on their teaching practices, identify strengths, and recognise areas for improvement.

- Promotes thoughtful analysis of teaching practices.
- Encourages reflective dialogue among educators.
- Links observation data to play-based pedagogy theories.

Enhance: Apply Insights to Improve Teaching

The final step is action. Based on reflections, educators are guided to make informed adjustments to their teaching practices. The P-BLOT supports this by offering suggestions for enhancing play-based learning pedagogy and aligning teaching strategies with observed insights.

- Provides actionable insights to improve practice.
- Encourages continuous improvement and adaptation.
- Empowers educators to enhance child learning outcomes.

The Practice Implementation Checklists (PIC) offer practical guidance on evidence-based teaching practices tailored for play-based primary school classrooms. Organised into four key areas, these checklists help teachers reflect on how they create and manage the physical and emotional learning environment, explore intentional teaching methods, and outline essential practices like planning, assessment, and communicating student progress within a play-based context.
(Source for above information: https://pblot.com/about-the-p-blot/)

Practice Implementation Checklists (PIC)

See next page for checklists or downloadable checklists can be found here: https://pblot.com/p-blot-resources/

Effective Teaching in a Primary Play-Based Classroom:
Practice Implementation Checklists (PIC)

Checklist 1: Setting Up a Play-Based Learning Environment

The Learning Space		
1.	Organise a variety of learning spaces for students to play, both inside and outside the classroom.	○ Emerging ○ Partly in Place ○ Established
2.	Arrange the learning environment to enable students to easily access loose parts for their play.	○ Emerging ○ Partly in Place ○ Established
Resourcing & Managing the Learning Environment		
3.	Identify and select loose parts that will support the Theory of Loose Parts.	○ Emerging ○ Partly in Place ○ Established
4.	Establish systems in the classroom that enable students to take responsibility for managing loose parts and reinforce the use of these systems when required.	○ Emerging ○ Partly in Place ○ Established
5.	Provide loose parts and resources, both inside and outside the classroom in response to schema identified in students' play.	○ Emerging ○ Partly in Place ○ Established
6.	Communicate clear expectations to students regarding the appropriate use of classroom resources.	○ Emerging ○ Partly in Place ○ Established
7.	Provide rule reminders and logical consequences when needed.	○ Emerging ○ Partly in Place ○ Established
8.	Use strategies to assist students to manage the noise, mess and transitions between activities effectively.	○ Emerging ○ Partly in Place ○ Established

Reference: Aiono, S., & McLaughlin, T. (2018). Practice Implementation Checklists (PIC). In S. Aiono & T. McLaughlin, *Play-based Learning Observation Tool Research Version 1.0 (P-BLOT 1.0): Manual and Supplemental Resources.* Unpublished instrument. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Massey University. Available at https://eyrl.nz/play-based-learning-pic/

Effective Teaching in a Primary Play-Based Classroom:
Practice Implementation Checklists (PIC)

Checklist 2: Timetabling and Teaching in a Play-Based Learning Environment

Understanding the New Zealand Curriculum		
1.	Identify the vision, values and principles of the New Zealand Curriculum in my students' play.	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established
2.	Identify which areas of the curriculum require adult-guided or explicit acts of teaching.	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established
3.	Identify which areas of the curriculum are suited to child-guided experiences with scaffolding from adults.	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established
Teaching through Play: Providing an Invitation		
4.	Implement play invitations that support the development of specific learning areas and key competencies of the NZC.	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established
5.	Implement play invitations that promote and support children's interests and preferences; their family's funds of knowledge and aspirations for their child, and community and cultural values.	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established
6.	Intentionally teach knowledge and/or skills needed by students to advance or extend the learning in their play.	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established
Timetabling Play		
7.	Provide a balance of adult-guided and child-guided learning experiences.	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established
8.	Establish and implement a flexible timetable through the school day.	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established

Reference: Aiono, S., & McLaughlin, T. (2018). Practice Implementation Checklists (PIC). In S. Aiono & T. McLaughlin, *Play-based Learning Observation Tool Research Version 1.0 (P-BLOT 1.0): Manual and Supplemental Resources.* Unpublished instrument. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Massey University. Available at https://eyrl.nz/play-based-learning-pic/

Effective Teaching in a Primary Play-Based Classroom:

Practice Implementation Checklists (PIC)

Longworth

Checklist 3: Teaching through Play

Noticing & Responding to the Curriculum in Students' Play		
1.	Use positive descriptive feedback to teach the **learning areas** and **key competencies** of in students' play.	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established
2.	Support students to extend and explore their own thinking and ideas in play using phrases such as "I wonder, maybe, have you thought about".	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established
3.	Identify which areas of the curriculum may require play invitations in order to promote further student exploration.	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established
Promoting Socio-Emotional Competencies and Problem-Solving		
4.	Use a variety of teaching resources to directly teach target **social** and **problem-solving skills.**	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established
5.	Intentionally teach specific **social skills** and/or problem-solving strategies through whole-class modelling, role-play and student-practices.	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established
6.	Use positive descriptive feedback when students are playing to reinforce target **social** and **emotional skill development.**	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established
7.	Regularly notice and respond to students' emotions using a variety of teaching strategies to support the development of students' **emotional literacy** and **self-regulation.**	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established

Reference: Aiono, S., & McLaughlin, T. (2018). Practice Implementation Checklists (PIC). In S. Aiono & T. McLaughlin, *Play-based Learning Observation Tool Research Version 1.0 (P-BLOT 1.0): Manual and Supplemental Resources.* Unpublished instrument. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Massey University. Available at https://eyrl.nz/play-based-learning-pic/

Effective Teaching in a Primary Play-Based Classroom:
Practice Implementation Checklists (PIC)

Promoting Learning through Play	
8. Identify features of socio-dramatic play and use a variety of strategies to support students' creativity and imagination in this play.	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established
9.. Encourage students to share their knowledge and expertise with their peers.	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established
10. Support students when mistakes occur or fail, promoting perseverance, risk-taking and flexible thought in students' play.	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established
11. Spend time in conversation with students, scaffolding vocabulary as required.	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established

Checklist 4: Assessing and Communicating Progress

Planning to Respond to Learning	
1. Collect and use observational data to inform my planning of play invitations that reflect clear links to the New Zealand Curriculum.	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established
2. Introduce play invitations in an engaging way, or by drawing students' attention to new resources with suggestions for their use.	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established
Assessing Progress of Learning	
3. Construct a variety of individual, group and whole-class narrative assessments with a focus on **key competencies** observed in the learning environment.	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established
4. Construct a variety of individual, group and whole-class narrative assessments with a focus on **learning areas** observed in the learning environment	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established

Reference: Aiono, S., & McLaughlin, T. (2018). Practice Implementation Checklists (PIC). In S. Aiono & T. McLaughlin, *Play-based Learning Observation Tool Research Version 1.0 (P-BLOT 1.0): Manual and Supplemental Resources.* Unpublished instrument. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Massey University. Available at https://eyrl.nz/play-based-learning-pic/

Effective Teaching in a Primary Play-Based Classroom:

Practice Implementation Checklists (PIC)

Communicating Progress of Learning	
5. Use narrative assessment to communicate my students' progress of learning through play to my parent community.	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established
6. Revisit student learning that has occurred through play by making learning stories visible and available to my students, enabling them to access these and review them at their own choosing.	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established
7. Establish regular and consistent communication with my parent community through a variety of means, including newsletters, blogs, class displays, face to face meetings.	◯ Emerging ◯ Partly in Place ◯ Established

I can identify the following areas of strength when implementing teaching through play practices in my classroom:

The 2- 3 priority areas for my future practice include:

-
-
-

Reference: Aiono, S., & McLaughlin, T. (2018). Practice Implementation Checklists (PIC). In S. Aiono & T. McLaughlin, *Play-based Learning Observation Tool Research Version 1.0 (P-BLOT 1.0): Manual and Supplemental Resources.* Unpublished instrument. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Massey University. Available at https://eyrl.nz/play-based-learning-pic/

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Appendix

Four Components of Quality Playful Learning Environments

Sourced from: "Learning Through Play at School –A Framework for Policy and Practice". Rachel Parker, Bo Stjerne Thomsen, & Amy Berry; in Frontiers in Education, v7, article 75; February 2022

Child Experience

How will the student experience this learning as playful?
The child's experience as a component is of equal importance to the other three.

We see the experience through students' eyes to understand what learning feels and looks like to them.

Children have the right to participate and be heard.
(UN Human Rights, 1989)
Children have the right to play and rest.
(UN Convention on Rights of the Child, 1990)
Children have a right to be recognized as capable.
(NAEYC, 2015)
Children need to make choices about their learning.
(Fullan and Langworthy, 2014)

Reflective Questions
Where and when is the child's voice heard?
Where and when do they have agency over the experience?
What about this activity can I release to the children to determine?

Teacher as Facilitator

The role of teacher shifts according to intention and type of play.
Thoughtfully designed learning experiences require effective facilitation to reach intended outcomes.

Skillful facilitation requires a blend of teacher-guided, student-led, and teacher-directed practices.

Teacher engages in:
monitoring
adjusting and responding
continuous assessment
emerging curriculum
scaffolding

Reflective Questions
What is the range of facilitation types provided?
How do I respond to individual needs?
How am I balancing guidance and open-ended inquiry?

Design: Environment as 3rd Teacher

Design brings together the intentions for learning and the experience of play.
Making use of all available resources to best achieve the intentions for the learning experience.

Includes:
classroom and a learning community
child's self-directed engagement with materials
teacher as an adaptive observer
meaningful and relevant provocations and invitations
emerging curriculum

Reflective Questions
How can children and teachers access a wide range of resources and physical learning environments both indoors and outdoors?
How do teachers engage in collaborative dialogue and critical reflection?

Outcomes and Documentation

Quality playful learning involves planning and intention.
We plan for the education of the whole child.

We value and pay attention to all developmental domains:
social
emotional
physical
cognitive
creative
assessment needs to be multi-modal:
intangibles need their own method of documentation

Reflective Questions
How are teachers supported to identify individual levels of development and targeted goals for learning?
Does reporting emphasize depth over breadth and value a range of learning outcomes?

Developing Science Literacy: BC Science Curriculum K-3 (Catherine Munro)

Nature of Science:

learn	find	explore	discover	question	look
wonder	observe	imagine	travel	adventure	science
curiosity	predict	test (out)	hypothesis	hypothesize	change
question	explain	investigate	experiment	explore	model
understand	communicate	participate	contribute	issues	theory/theories
collect(ing)	idea(s)	method	discuss		

Living Things:

	B.C. Curriculum	***More***
Names/Classification	vertebrates, invertebrates, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, insects, conifers, mosses, ferns, evergreens, deciduous, broadleaf	taxonomy, kingdoms, mollusks, arachnids, jellyfish, crustaceans, zooplankton
Needs	habitat, food chain, predator, prey, organisms, environment, conservation	bacteria, respiration, transportation, reproduction
Structural Features	exoskeleton, antennae, thorax, abdomen, whiskers, gills, sprout/seedling, leaf, stem, roots, trunk, branches, cones	endoskeleton, tentacles, organs, tissues, appendages, spores
Adaptions/Behaviour	metamorphosis, webbed-feet, beak, trunk, wings, talons, migration, hibernation, adaptation, nesting, protection, endangered, camouflage, pollination, germination	non-metamorphosis, mimicry, territorialism, dormancy, defense/protection (as a term, though the concept may be discussed), photosynthesis, fossilization

Matter:

BC Curriculum			**More**		
warming	cooling	bending	compound	substance	atom
stirring	mixing	solid	molecule	ionic	molecular
liquid	gas	observe	acid	homogeneous	heterogeneous
describe	physical change	materials	elements	periodic table	hydrogen
mix	melt	freeze	oxygen	helium	solutions
bend	colour	texture	solubility	acid	alkaline
flexibility	absorbency	hardness	catalyst	density	distill
lustre	waterproof	brittle	metal	ductile	oxidation
soft	translucent	opaque	salinity		
biodegradable	compostable	weathering			

Thermal Energy:

BC Curriculum	More
conduction convection radiation heat temperature transfer insulation thermometer boiling melting insulator heat source	kinetic energy potential energy kelvin Celsius thermal expansion absolute zero

Forces/Motion:

BC Curriculum	More		
gravity	displacement	distance	velocity
friction	acceleration	accelerate	deceleration
tension	speed	surface	equilibrium
applied force	elastic	torque	lever
push	electromagnet	thrust	momentum
pull	impulse	pressure	power
direction	kinetic energy	joule	newton
strength	watt	inertia	action/reaction
simple machine	resistance	kinetic friction	static friction
weight	air resistance (drag)	elastic (spring)	force
force of attraction			
mass			

Light/Sound:

	BC Curriculum	More
Sound	Pitch dynamics volume timbre (tone color) duration vibration sound wave medium low frequency continuous intermittent harmony melody form rhythm texture tonality articulation	Envelope (how the sound changes over time) audible inaudible amplitude noise acoustics linguistic
Light	luminance dull shiny opaque transparent translucent dark electromagnetic radiation ambient task glow accent and decorative glare gleam illumination sunlight glint beam spectrum radio waves microwaves infrared visible light ultraviolet X-rays and gamma rays light wave focal point	

Water:

BC Curriculum			More	
clouds	condensation	precipitation	fluid	transparent
erosion	ice	steam	transpiration	water storage
streams	lakes	oceans	infiltration	lagoon
rivers	liquid	rain water	cove	turbidity
cycle	surface runoff	ground water	channel	hydrology
pond	reservoir	waterfall	water soluble	watershed
puddle	sea	snow	aquifer	
brook	dam	pouring		
water				

Landforms/Ecosystems:

BC Curriculum			More		
biodiversity	habitat	community	hill	mountain	marsh
environment	biotic and abiotic factors		waterfall	plain	jungle
conservation	sustainability	ecology	canyon	waterfall	glacier
terrestrial	aquatic	marine	river	lake	isthmus
freshwater	salt marsh	river basin	archipelago	strait	gulf
community	biotic factors	abiotic factors	peninsula	butte	dunes
conservation	ecology	sustainability	cape	bay	island
pollution	climate	environment	system of lakes	volcano	desert
biosphere	vegetation	topography	forests	rainforest	grasslands
biome	depletion	regeneration	wetland	oceans	

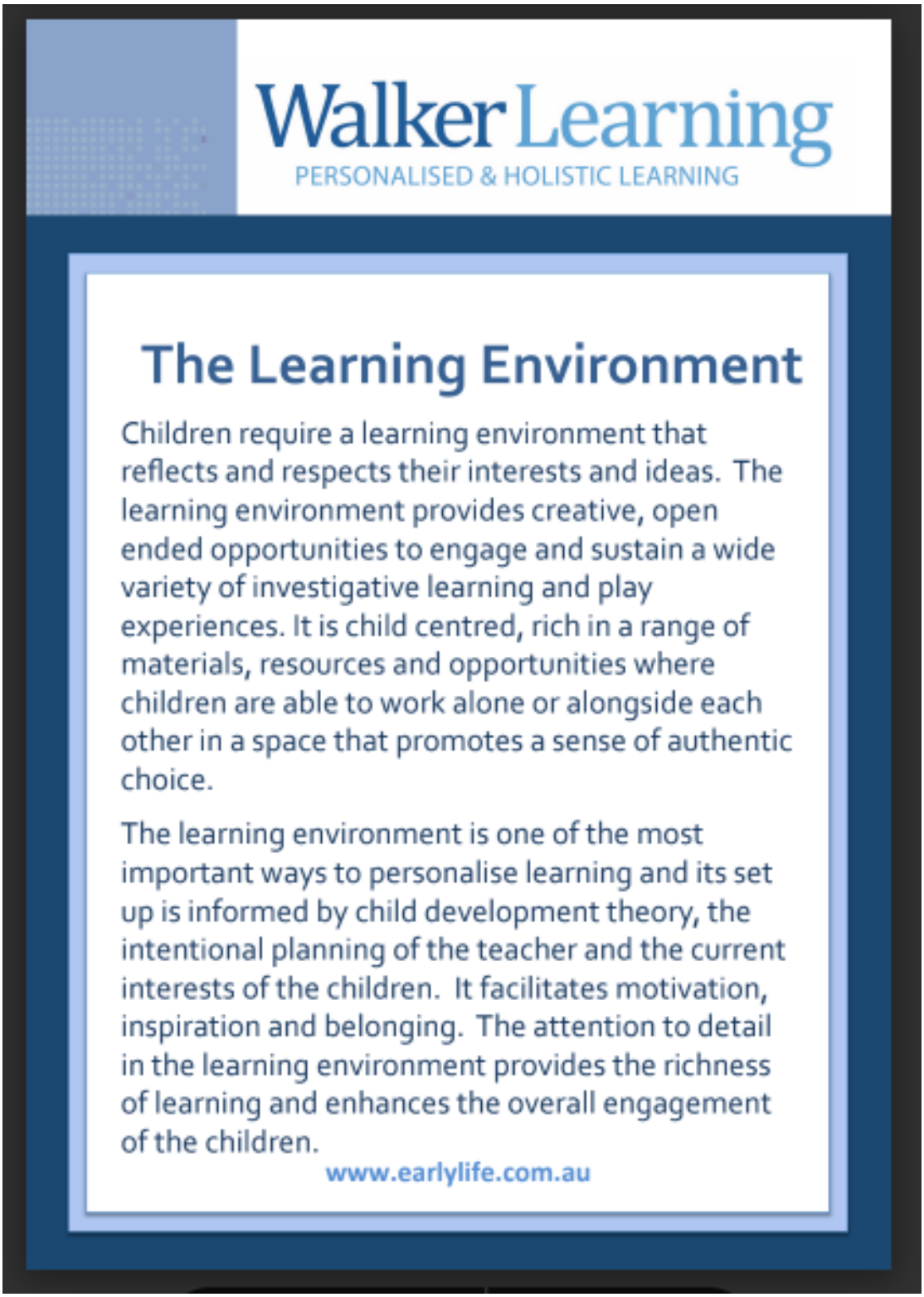
Patterns/Cycles (Sky/Seasons):

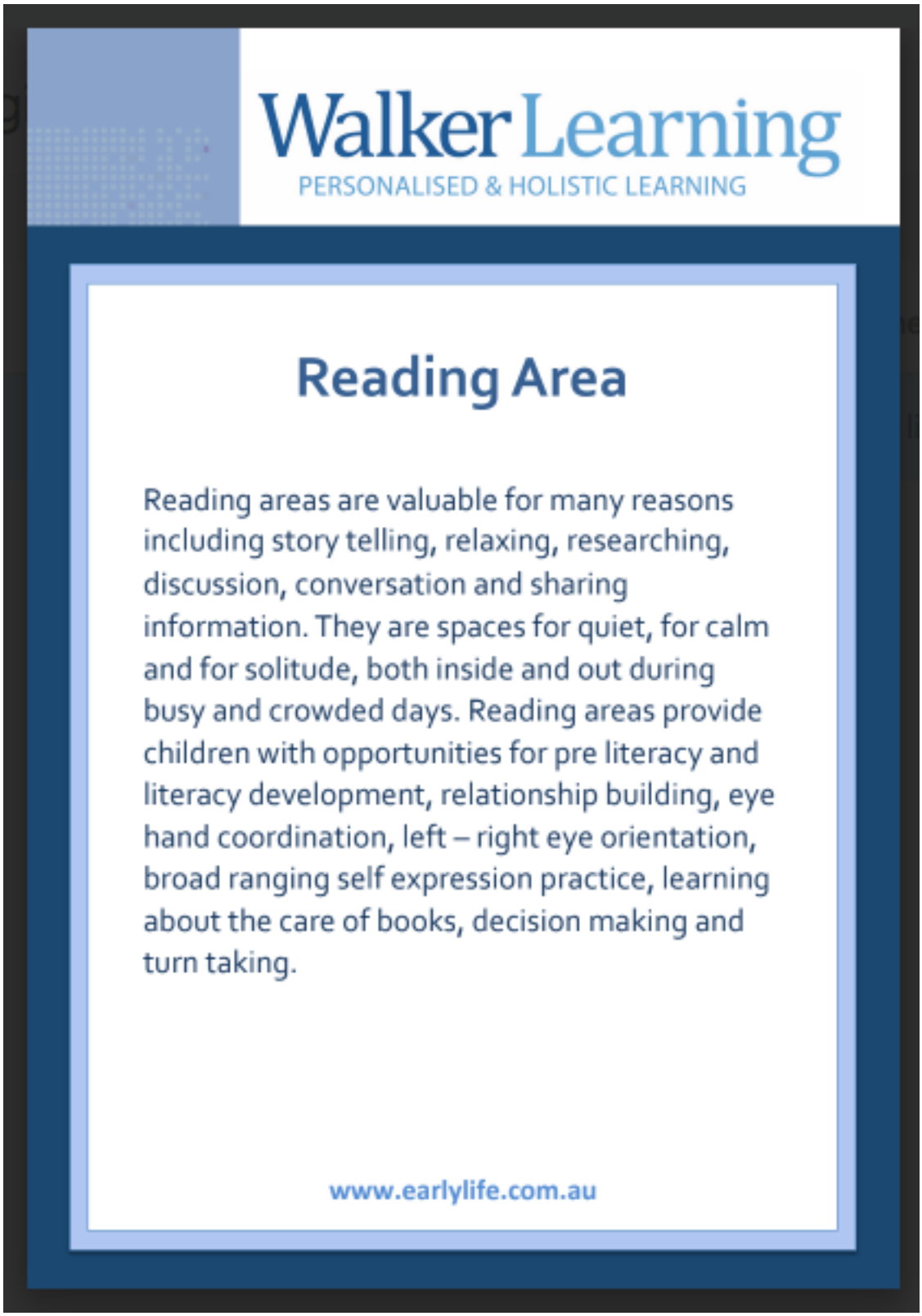
BC Curriculum							More
weather	seasons	clouds	day/night	growth	predict	time	bare
routine	again	turn	sun	moon	star	cloud	frost
sky	rain	wind	snow	storm	lightning	thunder	weather phenomena
weather	hot	cold	warm	cool	temperature	windy	temperature fluctuations
cloudy	clear	dark	light	shine	spring	summer	atmospheric conditions
fall (autumn)	winter	leaves	bloom	grow	change	freeze	recurring
melt	cold	warm	sunshine	snow	rain	bud	equinox
harvest	condensation		precipitation	wind	hurricane	tsunami	solstice
tornado	blustery	patterns	cycles	repeat	sequence	change	monsoon
cycle	life cycle	order					

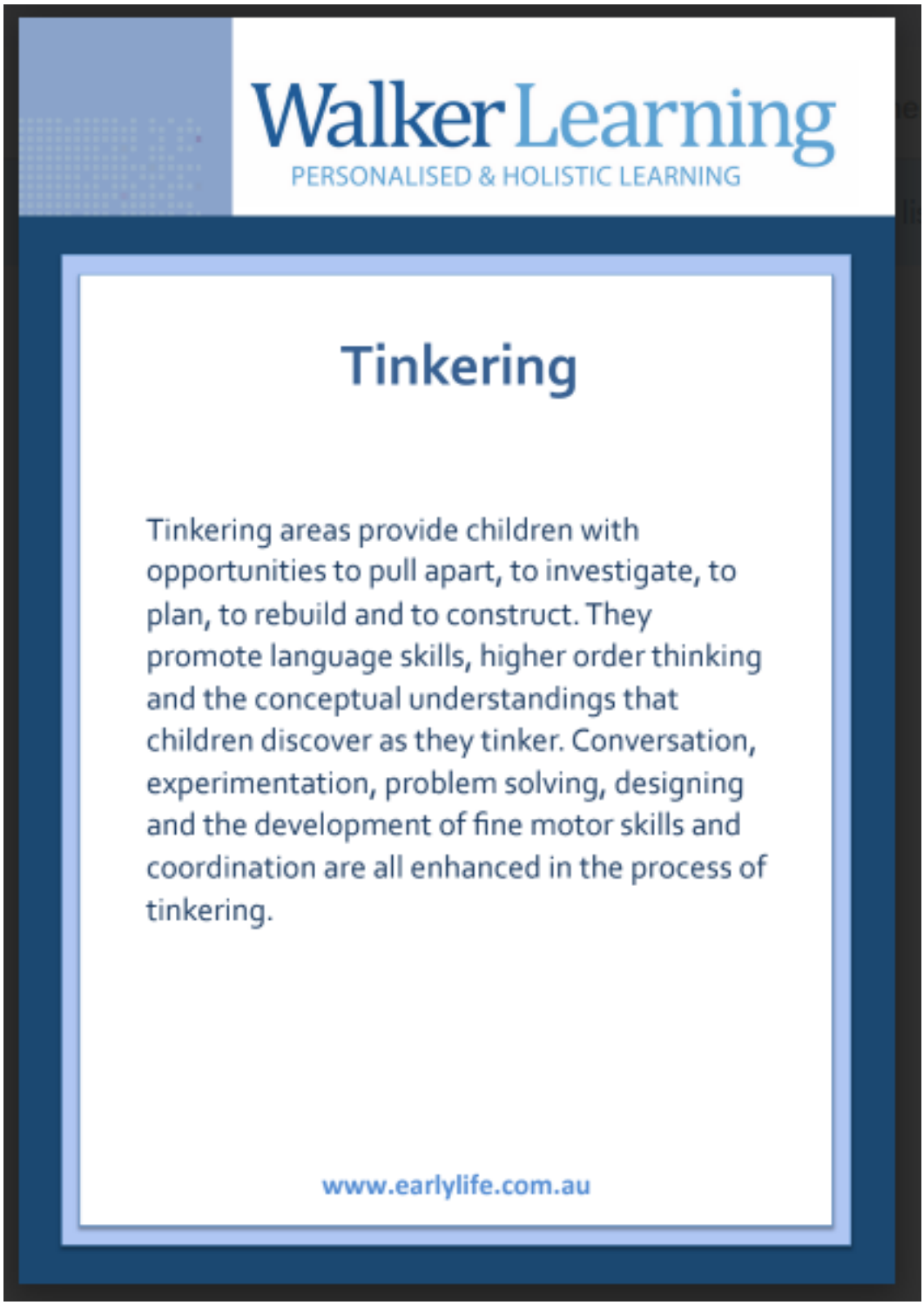
Space/Astronomy:

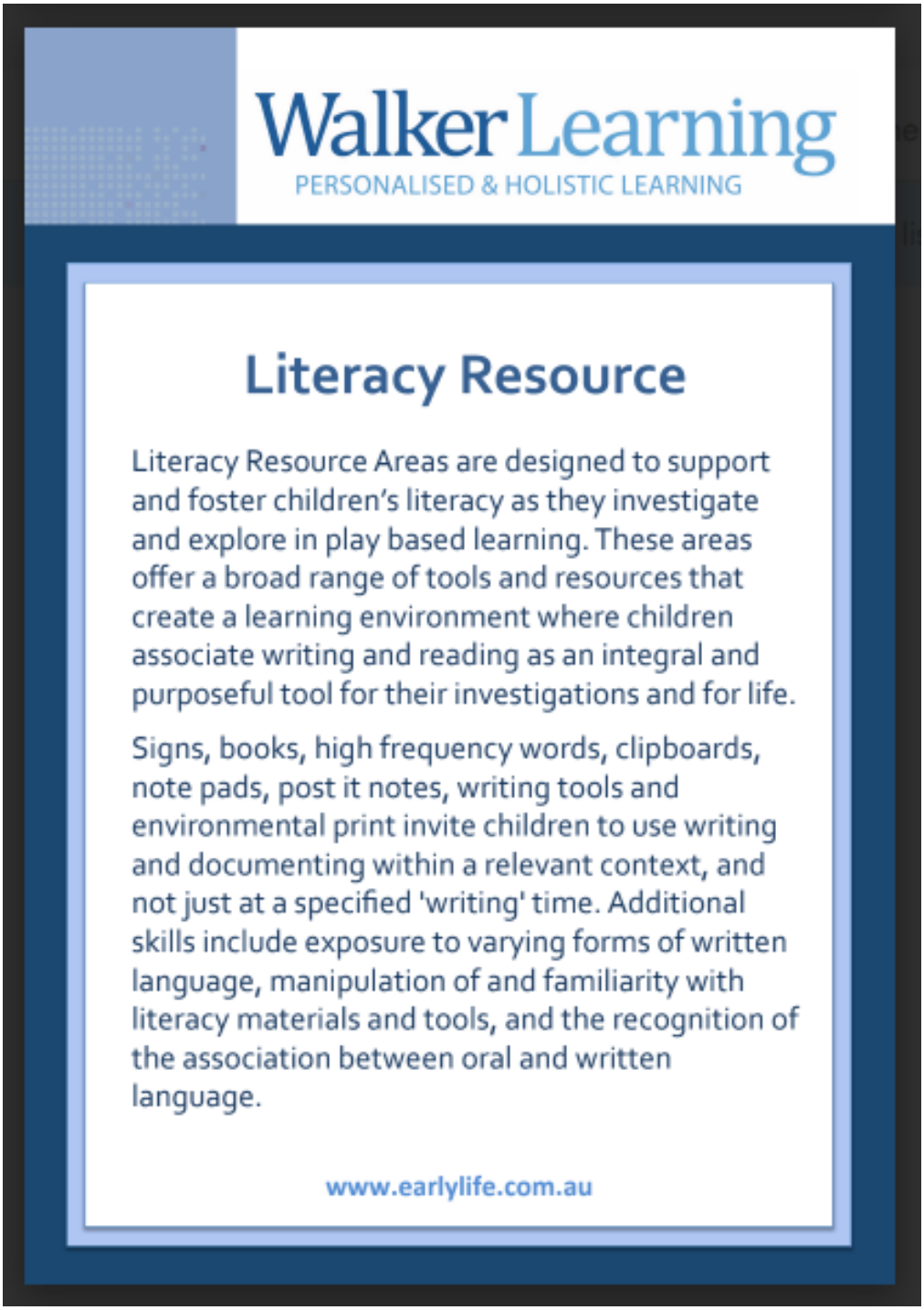
BC Curriculum						More	
space	sky	star	moon	sun	planet	stardust	galaxy
Earth	rocket	astronaut	telescope	space station	satellite	cosmos	supernova
gravity	orbit	launch	fly	float	space suit	black hole	constellation
solar system	Mercury	Venus	Mars	Jupiter	Saturn	nebula	astral
Uranus	Neptune	planet	round	spin	circle	comet	universe
travel	move	orbit	full moon	new moon	crescent	asteroid	dark matter
half-moon	crater	night	dark	light	shine	cosmonaut	big bang
shadow	phase/moon	phase	glow	reflect	eclipse	light-year	asteroid belt
sun	sunrise	sunset	day	night	shadow	milky way	
heat	bright	warm	time	change	energy		

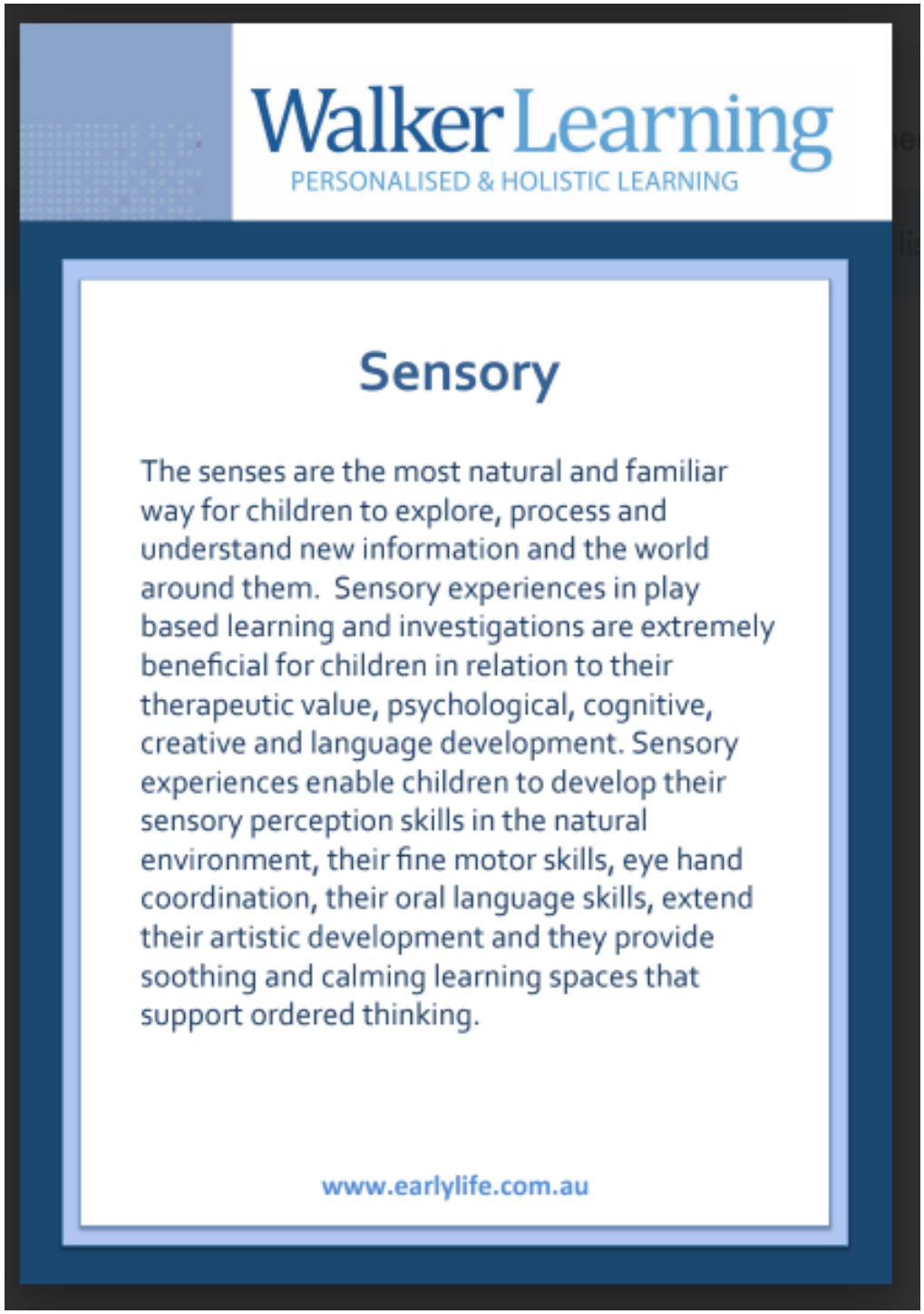
Walker Learning: Learning Environment

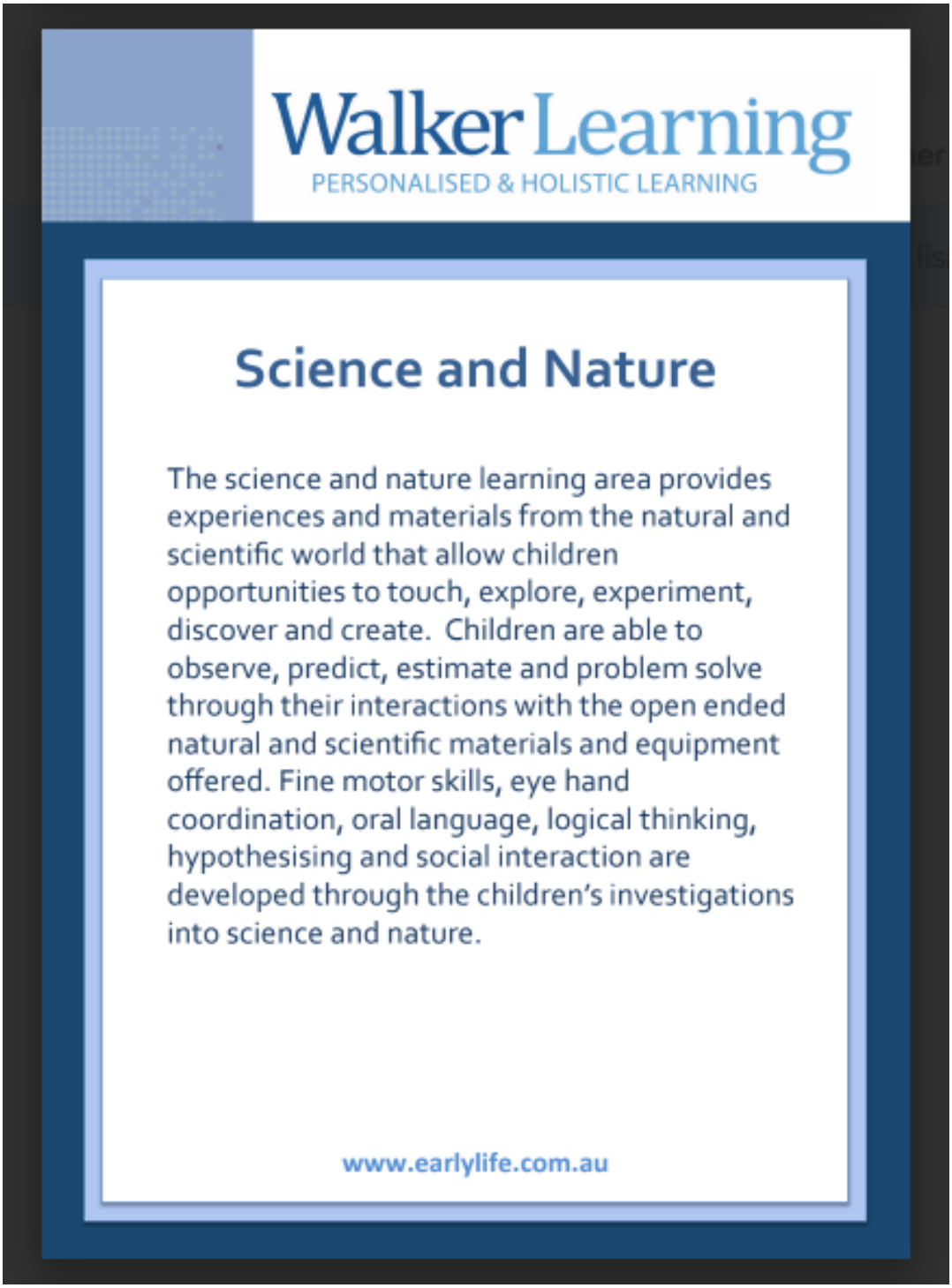


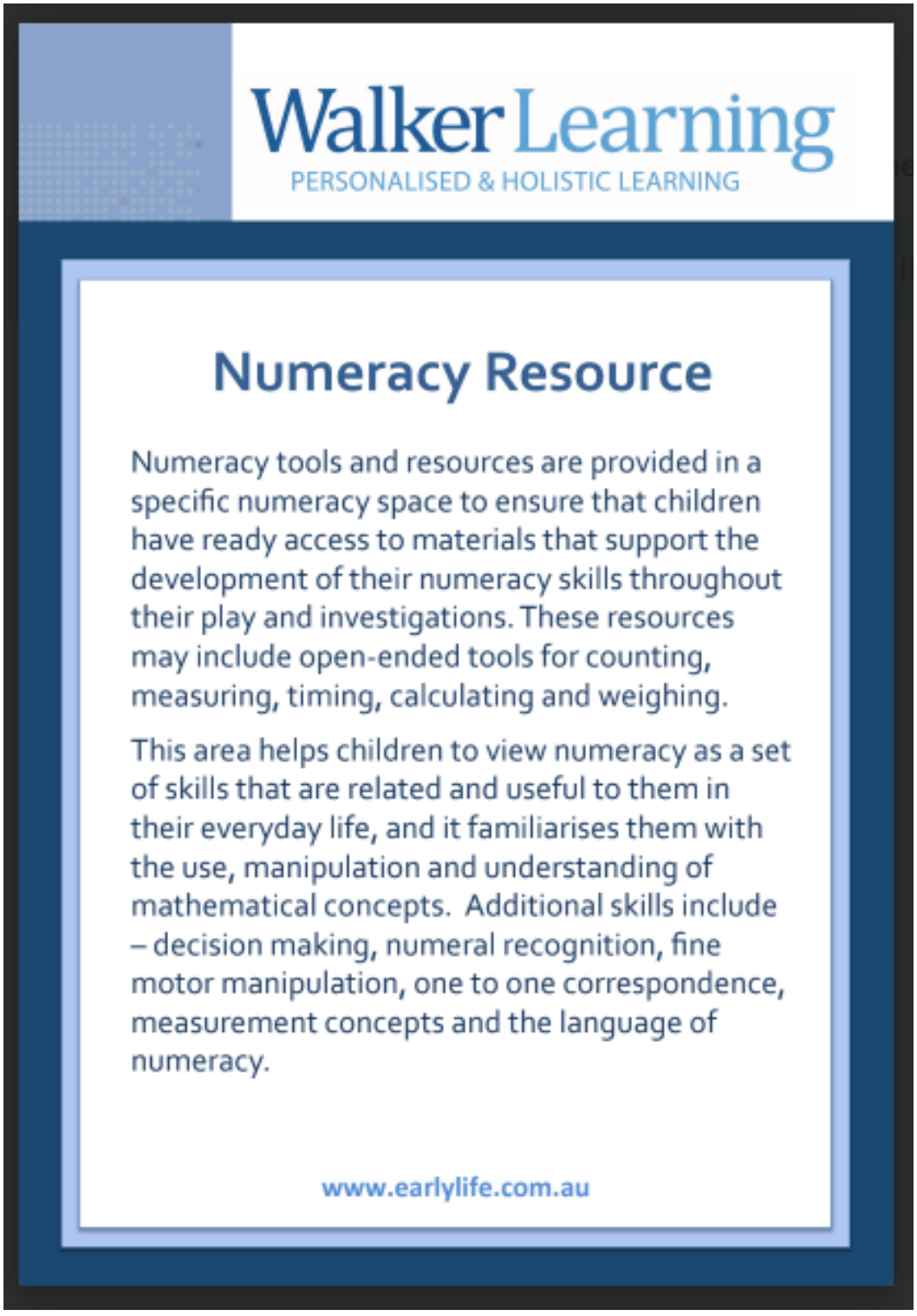

Walker Learning
PERSONALISED & HOLISTIC LEARNING
Reading Area
Reading areas are valuable for many reasons including story telling, relaxing, researching, discussion, conversation and sharing information. They are spaces for quiet, for calm and for solitude, both inside and out during busy and crowded days. Reading areas provide children with opportunities for pre literacy and literacy development, relationship building, eye hand coordination, left – right eye orientation, broad ranging self expression practice, learning about the care of books, decision making and turn taking.
www.earlylife.com.au

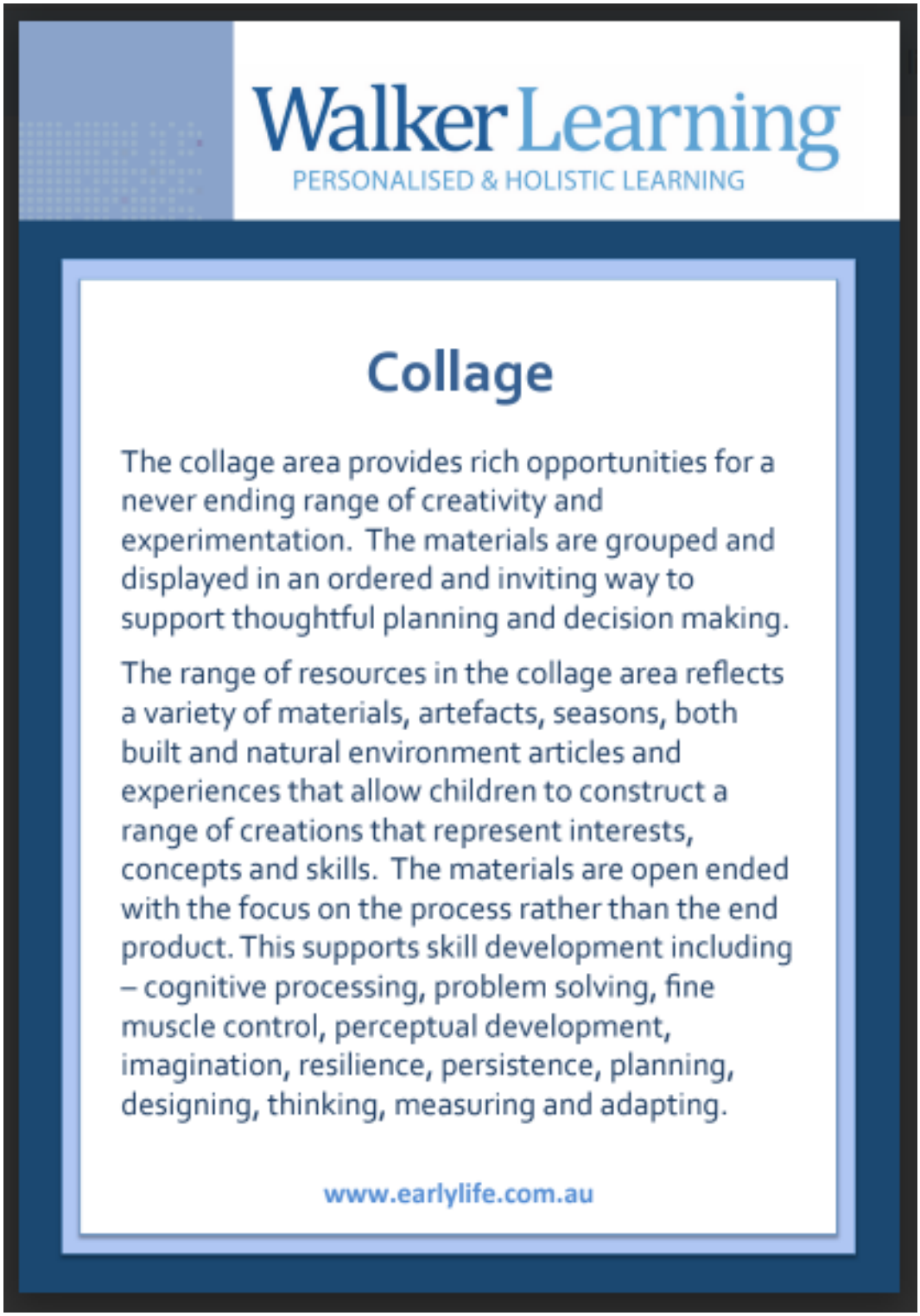

Walker Learning
PERSONALISED & HOLISTIC LEARNING
Tinkering
Tinkering areas provide children with opportunities to pull apart, to investigate, to plan, to rebuild and to construct. They promote language skills, higher order thinking and the conceptual understandings that children discover as they tinker. Conversation, experimentation, problem solving, designing and the development of fine motor skills and coordination are all enhanced in the process of tinkering.
www.earlylife.com.au

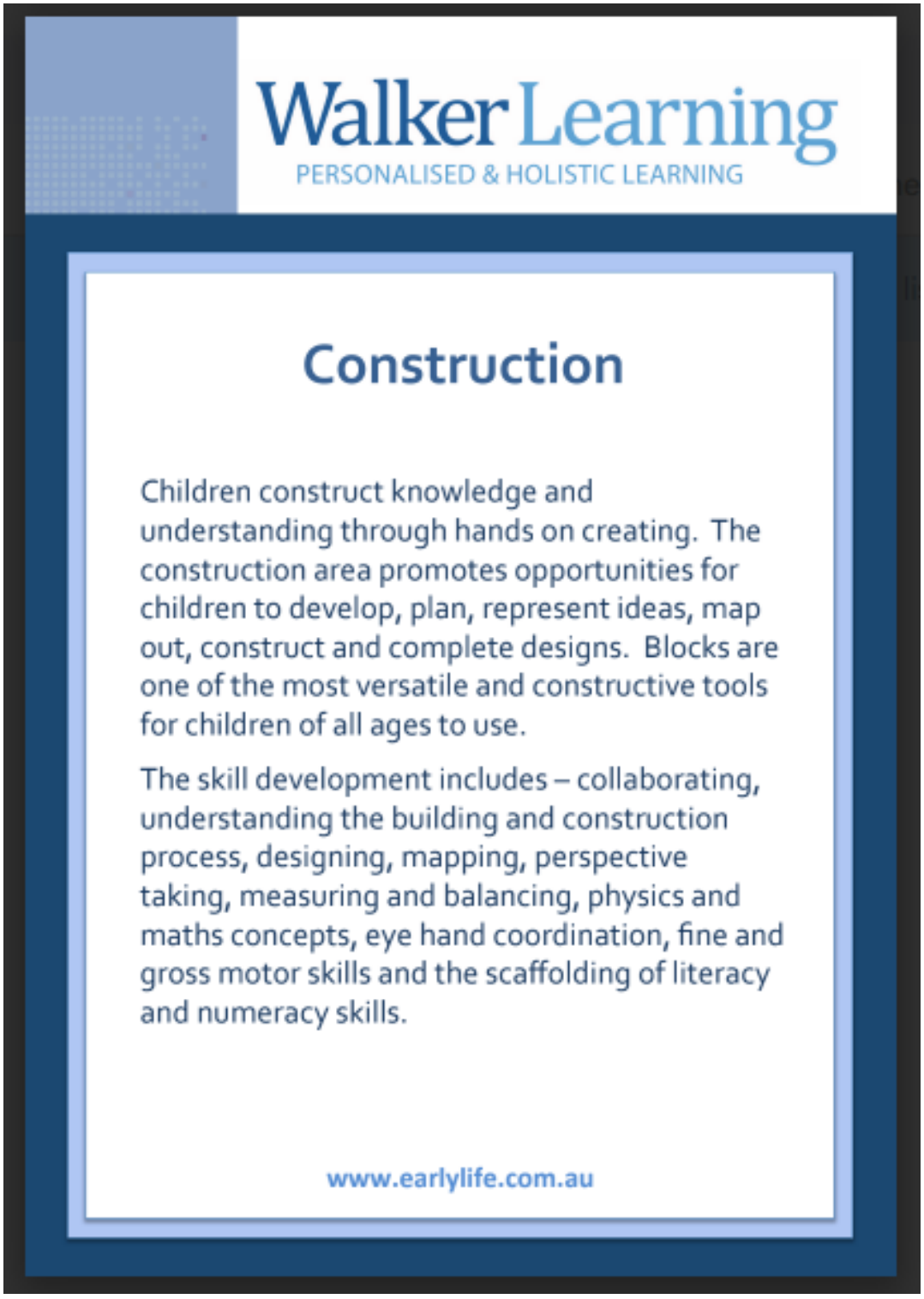

Walker Learning
PERSONALISED & HOLISTIC LEARNING
Literacy Resource
Literacy Resource Areas are designed to support and foster children's literacy as they investigate and explore in play based learning. These areas offer a broad range of tools and resources that create a learning environment where children associate writing and reading as an integral and purposeful tool for their investigations and for life.
Signs, books, high frequency words, clipboards, note pads, post it notes, writing tools and environmental print invite children to use writing and documenting within a relevant context, and not just at a specified 'writing' time. Additional skills include exposure to varying forms of written language, manipulation of and familiarity with literacy materials and tools, and the recognition of the association between oral and written language.
www.earlylife.com.au

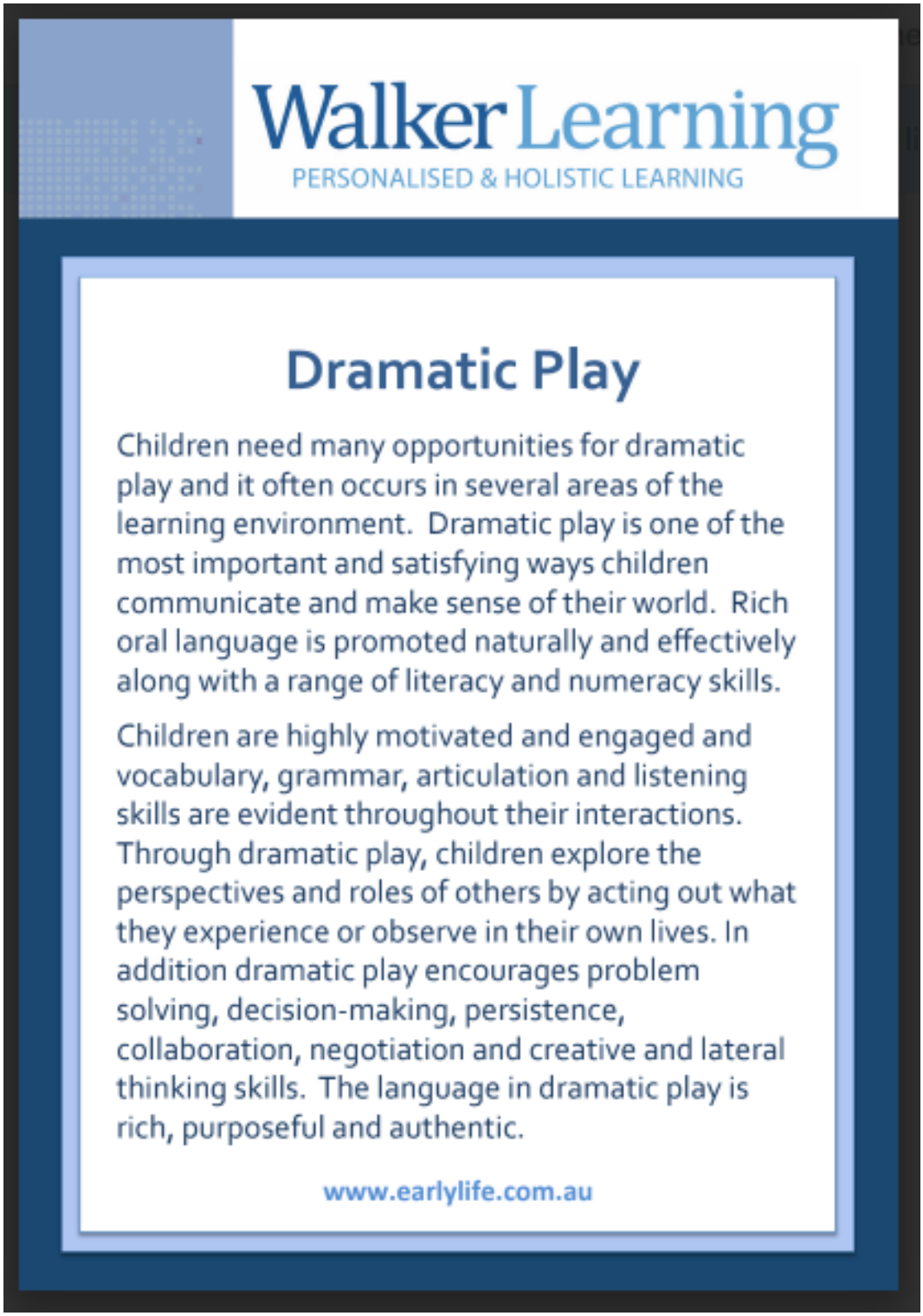

Walker Learning
PERSONALISED & HOLISTIC LEARNING
Sensory
The senses are the most natural and familiar way for children to explore, process and understand new information and the world around them. Sensory experiences in play based learning and investigations are extremely beneficial for children in relation to their therapeutic value, psychological, cognitive, creative and language development. Sensory experiences enable children to develop their sensory perception skills in the natural environment, their fine motor skills, eye hand coordination, their oral language skills, extend their artistic development and they provide soothing and calming learning spaces that support ordered thinking.
www.earlylife.com.au


Walker Learning
PERSONALISED & HOLISTIC LEARNING
Science and Nature
The science and nature learning area provides experiences and materials from the natural and scientific world that allow children opportunities to touch, explore, experiment, discover and create. Children are able to observe, predict, estimate and problem solve through their interactions with the open ended natural and scientific materials and equipment offered. Fine motor skills, eye hand coordination, oral language, logical thinking, hypothesising and social interaction are developed through the children's investigations into science and nature.
www.earlylife.com.au

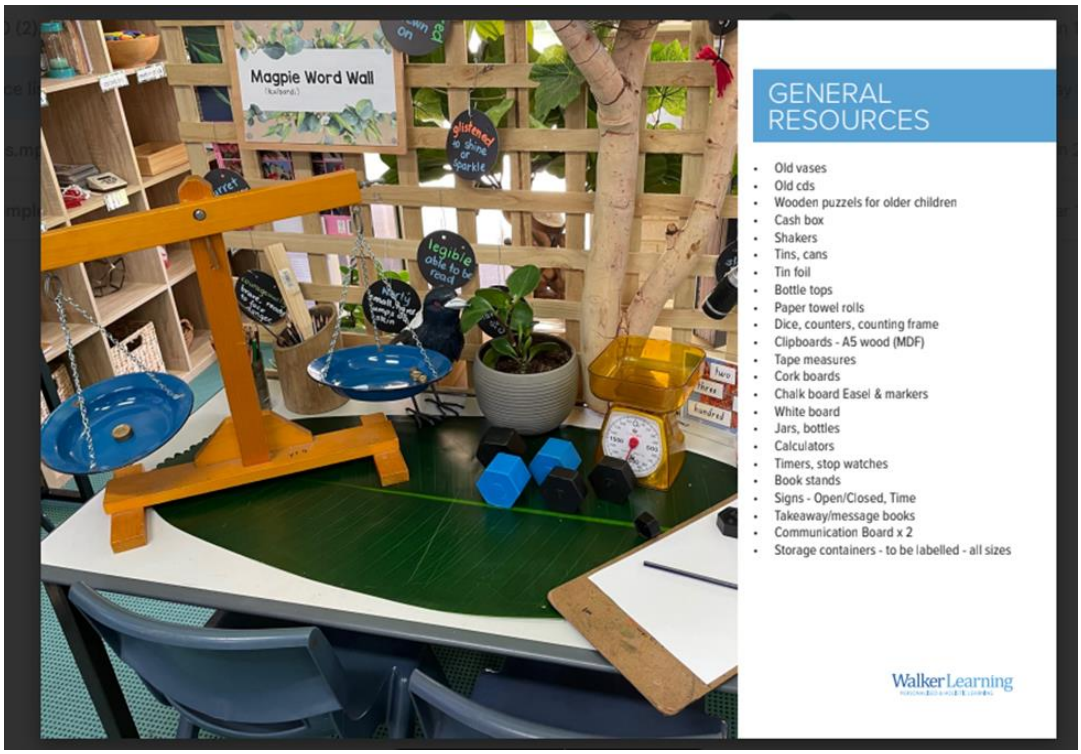

Walker Learning
PERSONALISED & HOLISTIC LEARNING
Numeracy Resource
Numeracy tools and resources are provided in a specific numeracy space to ensure that children have ready access to materials that support the development of their numeracy skills throughout their play and investigations. These resources may include open-ended tools for counting, measuring, timing, calculating and weighing.
This area helps children to view numeracy as a set of skills that are related and useful to them in their everyday life, and it familiarises them with the use, manipulation and understanding of mathematical concepts. Additional skills include – decision making, numeral recognition, fine motor manipulation, one to one correspondence, measurement concepts and the language of numeracy.
www.earlylife.com.au

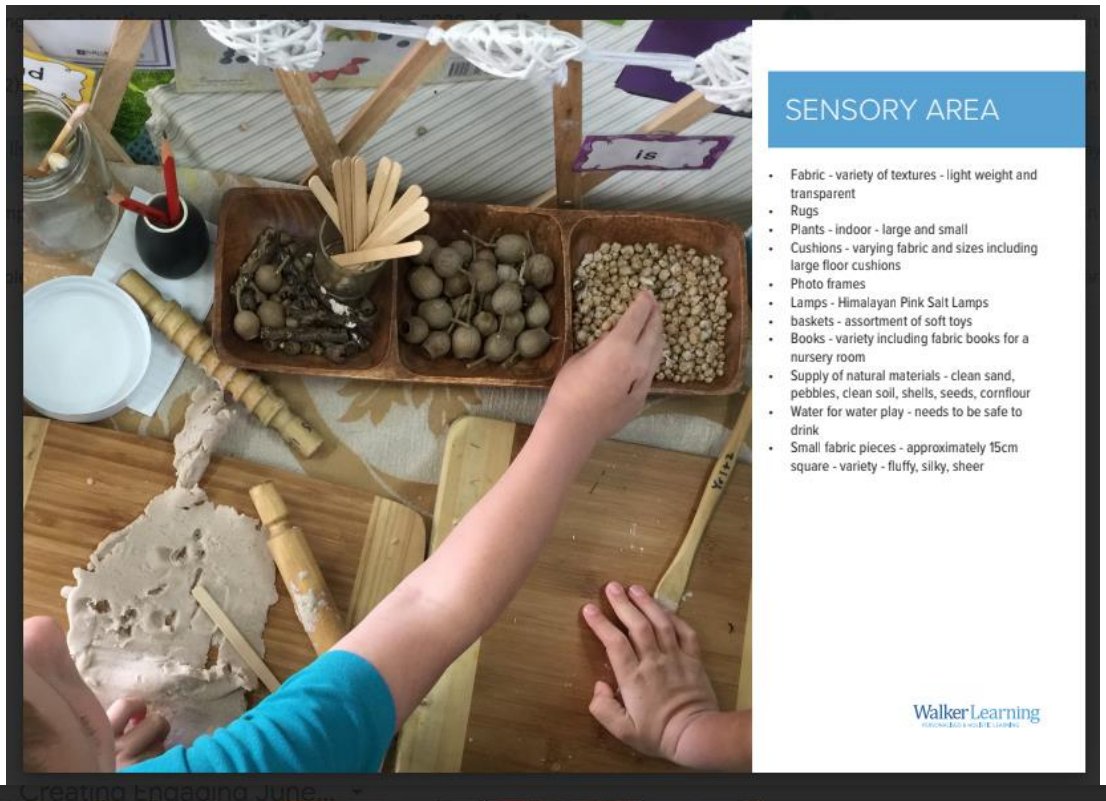

Walker Learning
PERSONALISED & HOLISTIC LEARNING
Collage
The collage area provides rich opportunities for a never ending range of creativity and experimentation. The materials are grouped and displayed in an ordered and inviting way to support thoughtful planning and decision making.
The range of resources in the collage area reflects a variety of materials, artefacts, seasons, both built and natural environment articles and experiences that allow children to construct a range of creations that represent interests, concepts and skills. The materials are open ended with the focus on the process rather than the end product. This supports skill development including – cognitive processing, problem solving, fine muscle control, perceptual development, imagination, resilience, persistence, planning, designing, thinking, measuring and adapting.
www.earlylife.com.au

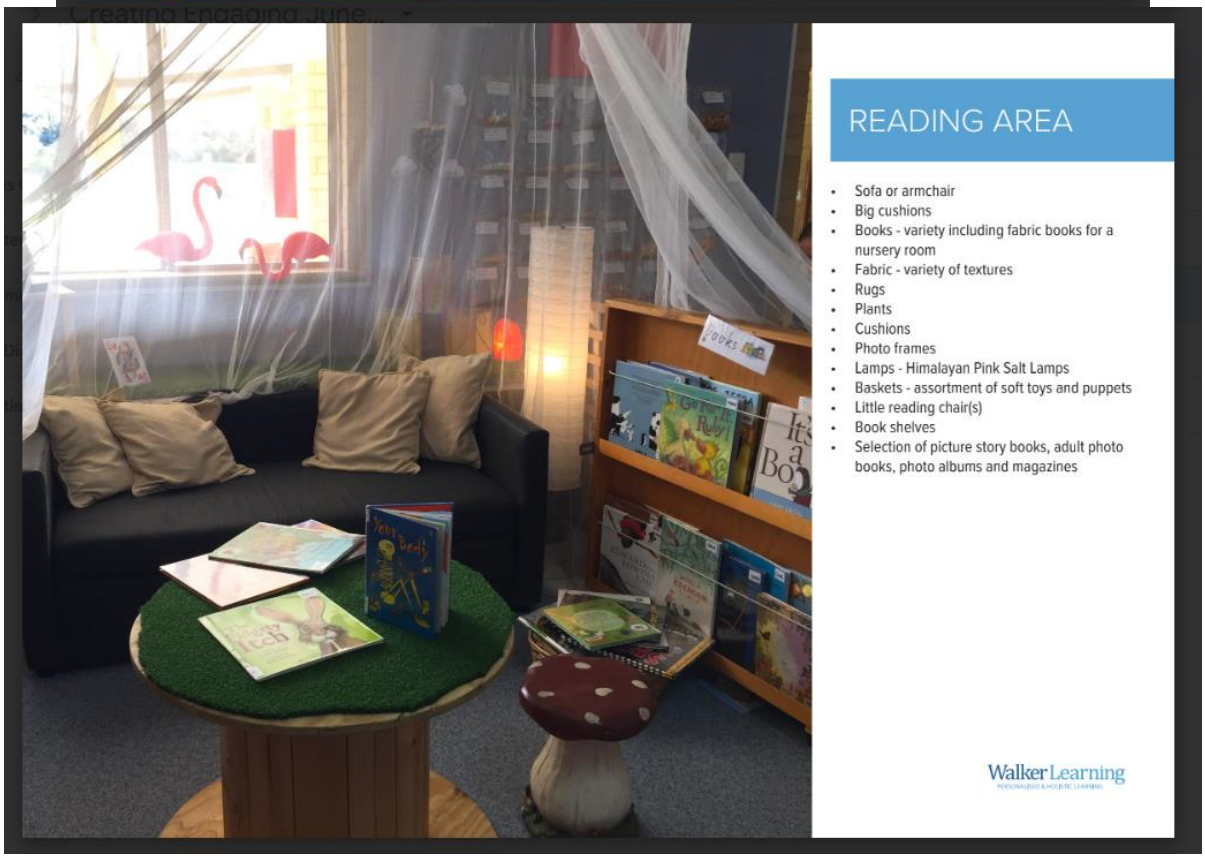

Walker Learning
PERSONALISED & HOLISTIC LEARNING
Construction
Children construct knowledge and understanding through hands on creating. The construction area promotes opportunities for children to develop, plan, represent ideas, map out, construct and complete designs. Blocks are one of the most versatile and constructive tools for children of all ages to use.
The skill development includes – collaborating, understanding the building and construction process, designing, mapping, perspective taking, measuring and balancing, physics and maths concepts, eye hand coordination, fine and gross motor skills and the scaffolding of literacy and numeracy skills.
www.earlylife.com.au

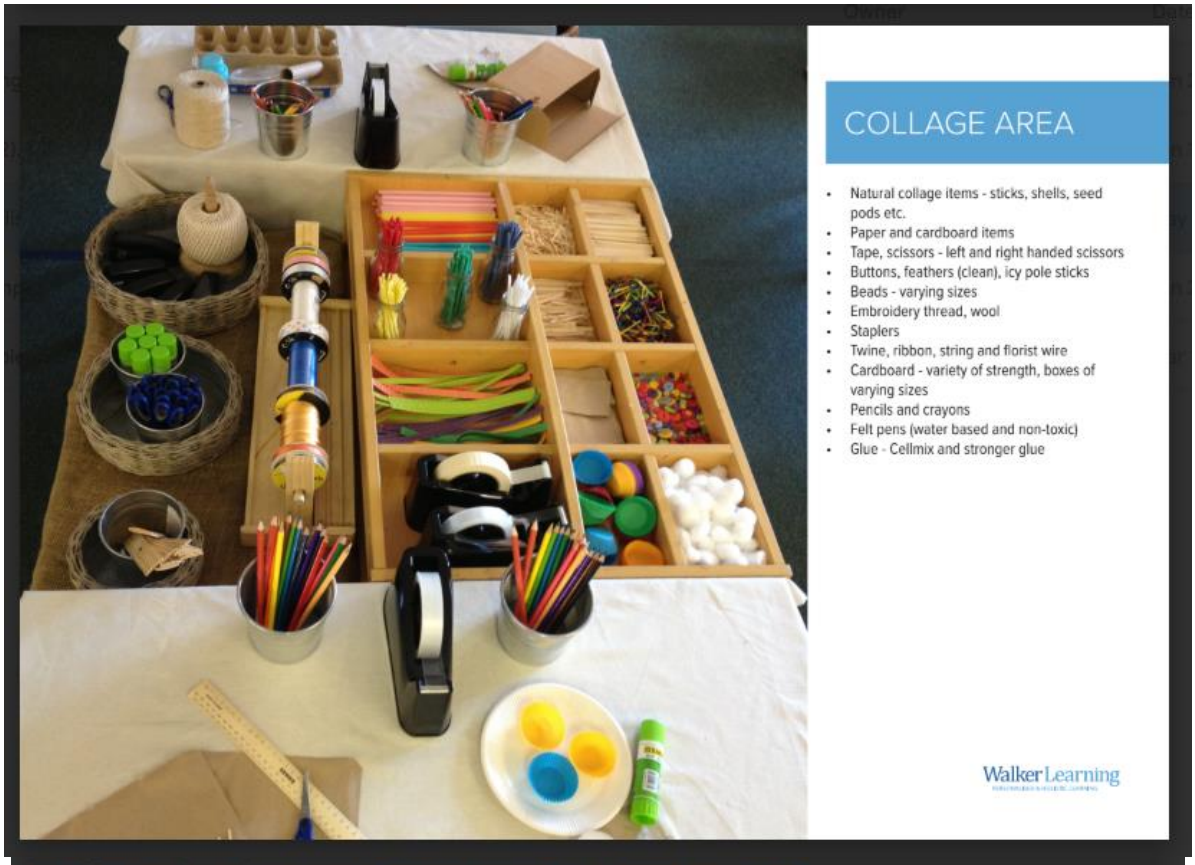

Walker Learning
PERSONALISED & HOLISTIC LEARNING
Dramatic Play
Children need many opportunities for dramatic play and it often occurs in several areas of the learning environment. Dramatic play is one of the most important and satisfying ways children communicate and make sense of their world. Rich oral language is promoted naturally and effectively along with a range of literacy and numeracy skills.
Children are highly motivated and engaged and vocabulary, grammar, articulation and listening skills are evident throughout their interactions. Through dramatic play, children explore the perspectives and roles of others by acting out what they experience or observe in their own lives. In addition dramatic play encourages problem solving, decision-making, persistence, collaboration, negotiation and creative and lateral thinking skills. The language in dramatic play is rich, purposeful and authentic.
www.earlylife.com.au

Walker Learning: Suggested Resource Lists




SENSORY AREA
Fabric - variety of textures - light weight and transparent
Rugs
Plants - indoor - large and small
Cushions - varying fabric and sizes including large floor cushions
Photo frames
Lamps - Himalayan Pink Salt Lamps
baskets - assortment of soft toys
Books - variety including fabric books for a nursery room
Supply of natural materials - clean sand, pebbles, clean soil, shells, seeds, cornflour
Water for water play - needs to be safe to drink
Small fabric pieces - approximately 15cm square - variety - fluffy, silky, sheer
Walker Learning

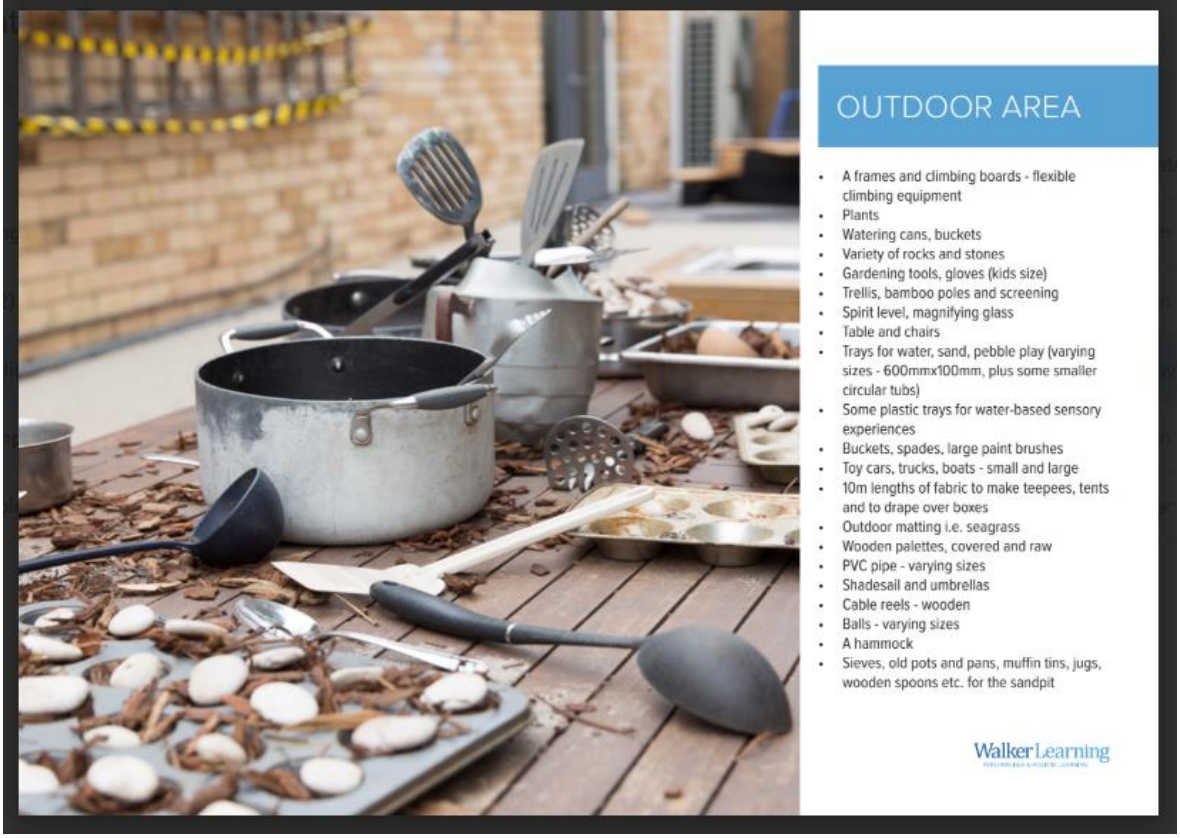

READING AREA
Sofa or armchair
Big cushions
Books - variety including fabric books for a nursery room
Fabric - variety of textures
Rugs
Plants
Cushions
Photo frames
Lamps - Himalayan Pink Salt Lamps
Baskets - assortment of soft toys and puppets
Little reading chair(s)
Book shelves
Selection of picture story books, adult photo books, photo albums and magazines
Walker Learning



COLLAGE AREA

- Natural collage items - sticks, shells, seed pods etc.
- Paper and cardboard items
- Tape, scissors - left and right handed scissors
- Buttons, feathers (clean), icy pole sticks
- Beads - varying sizes
- Embroidery thread, wool
- Staplers
- Twine, ribbon, string and florist wire
- Cardboard - variety of strength, boxes of varying sizes
- Pencils and crayons
- Felt pens (water based and non-toxic)
- Glue - Cellmix and stronger glue

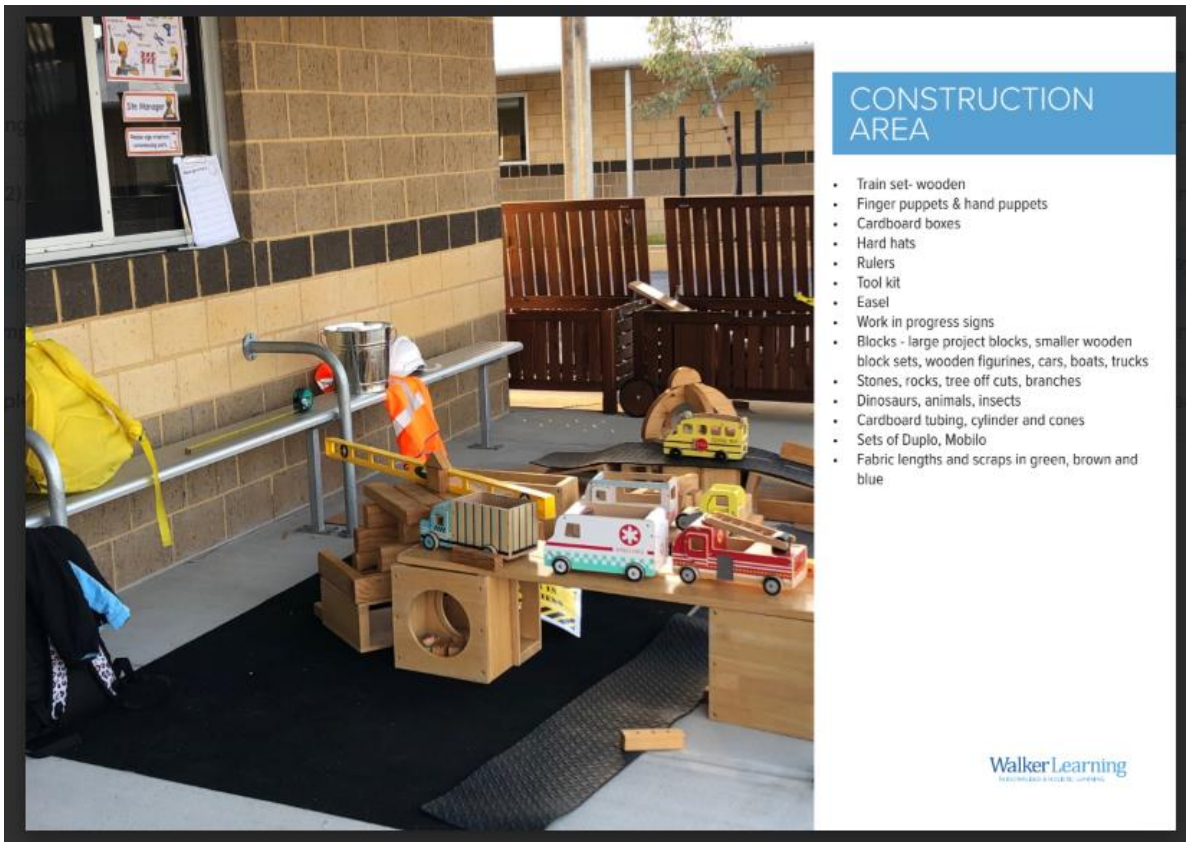
Walker Learning



OUTDOOR AREA

- A frames and climbing boards - flexible climbing equipment
- Plants
- Watering cans, buckets
- Variety of rocks and stones
- Gardening tools, gloves (kids size)
- Trellis, bamboo poles and screening
- Spirit level, magnifying glass
- Table and chairs
- Trays for water, sand, pebble play (varying sizes - 600mmx100mm, plus some smaller circular tubs)
- Some plastic trays for water-based sensory experiences
- Buckets, spades, large paint brushes
- Toy cars, trucks, boats - small and large
- 10m lengths of fabric to make teepees, tents and to drape over boxes
- Outdoor matting i.e. seagrass
- Wooden palettes, covered and raw
- PVC pipe - varying sizes
- Shadesail and umbrellas
- Cable reels - wooden
- Balls - varying sizes
- A hammock
- Sieves, old pots and pans, muffin tins, jugs, wooden spoons etc. for the sandpit

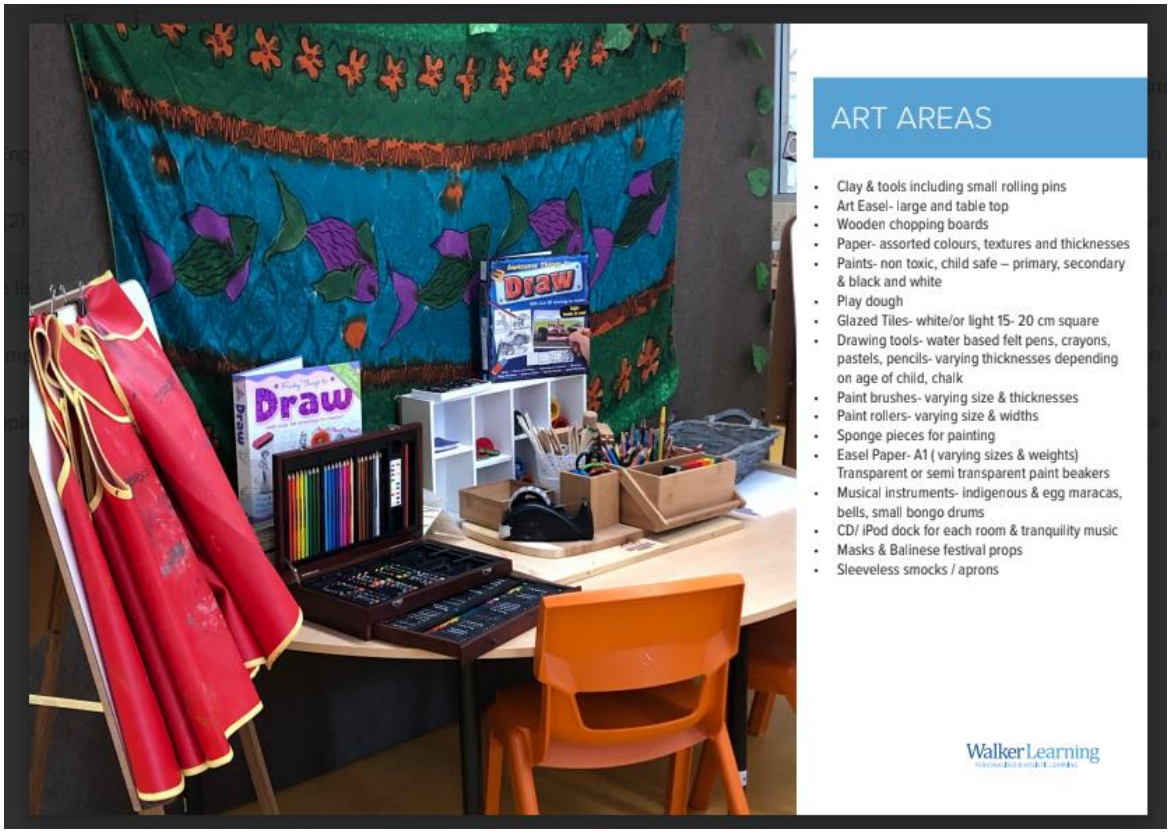
Walker Learning



CONSTRUCTION AREA

- Train set- wooden
- Finger puppets & hand puppets
- Cardboard boxes
- Hard hats
- Rulers
- Tool kit
- Easel
- Work in progress signs
- Blocks - large project blocks, smaller wooden block sets, wooden figurines, cars, boats, trucks
- Stones, rocks, tree off cuts, branches
- Dinosaurs, animals, insects
- Cardboard tubing, cylinder and cones
- Sets of Duplo, Mobilo
- Fabric lengths and scraps in green, brown and blue

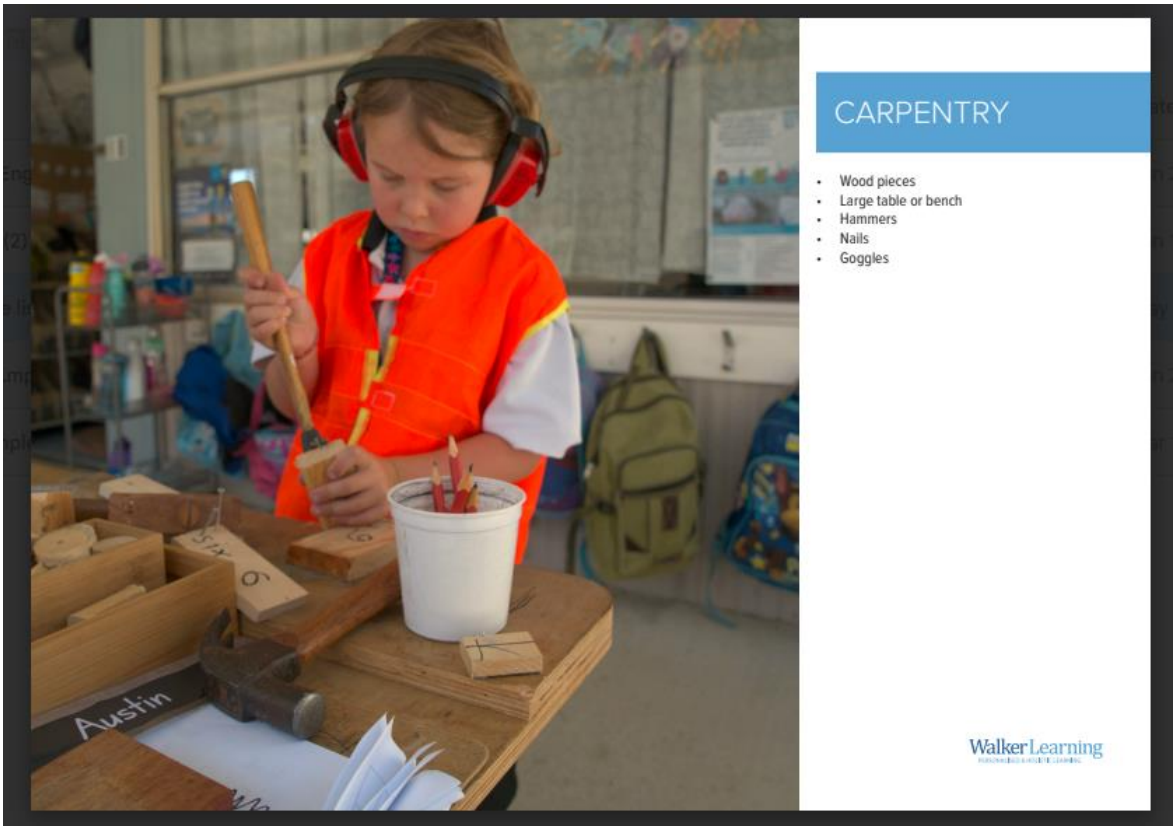
Walker Learning

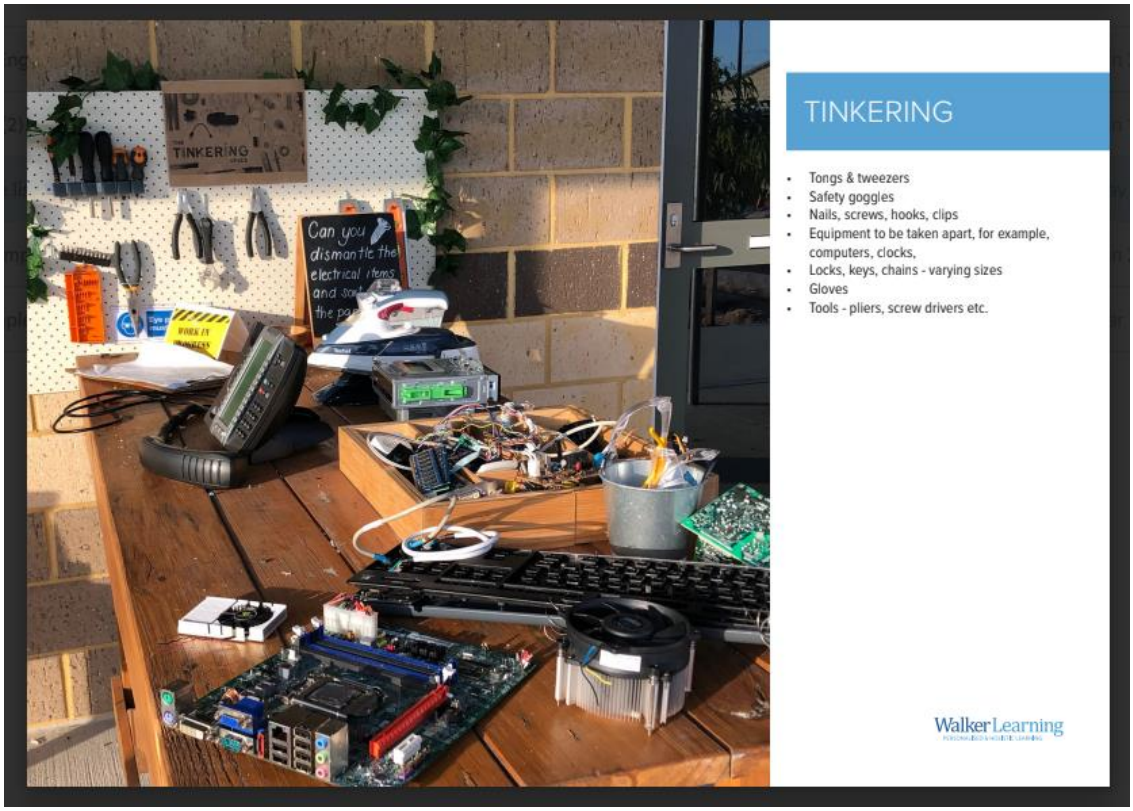


ART AREAS

- Clay & tools including small rolling pins
- Art Easel- large and table top
- Wooden chopping boards
- Paper- assorted colours, textures and thicknesses
- Paints- non toxic, child safe – primary, secondary & black and white
- Play dough
- Glazed Tiles- white/or light 15- 20 cm square
- Drawing tools- water based felt pens, crayons, pastels, pencils- varying thicknesses depending on age of child, chalk
- Paint brushes- varying size & thicknesses
- Paint rollers- varying size & widths
- Sponge pieces for painting
- Easel Paper- A1 (varying sizes & weights) Transparent or semi transparent paint beakers
- Musical instruments- indigenous & egg maracas, bells, small bongo drums
- CD/ iPod dock for each room & tranquility music
- Masks & Balinese festival props
- Sleeveless smocks / aprons

Walker Learning


Austin
CARPENTRY
Wood pieces
Large table or bench
Hammers
Nails
Goggles
Walker Learning


TINKERING
Can you dismantle the electrical items and
TINKERING
Tongs & tweezers
Safety goggles
Nails, screws, hooks, clips
Equipment to be taken apart, for example, computers, clocks,
Locks, keys, chains - varying sizes
Gloves
Tools - pliers, screw drivers etc.
Walker Learning


DRAMATIC PLAY
Phones
Replica money
Wooden fruit/veggies/food
Multi cultural dolls
Baskets
Place mats
Variety of local and other tableware
Table runner/cloth/place mats
Measuring cups, spoons
Timer, clock
Wooden chopping boards
Mortar & pestle
Pots and pans
Wooden spoons
Hats, bags, jewellery
Child size table, chairs, oven or Balinese cooking appliance etc.
Lamps - Himalayan Pink Salt Lamps
Rugs
Dress ups - real
Teapots, tea cups
Tea towels, oven mitts
Kitchen scales
Timers
Walker Learning