

# Teaching and Learning

## Free Flow



The word free flow has been interpreted in many ways, causing many practitioners confusion. The Local Authority defines Free Flow as “Allowing for children to have the space and time to continue their thinking and play from area to area”.

This definition is overarching to many integral aspects of free flow that should be considered when reflecting on practice. These aspects include:

**Environment** – To consider experiences that can be transferable from not only indoors and outdoors, but from area to area and from one time to another.

**Child Initiated** – Allowing children to be able to self-select from a wide range of resources from area to area and to repeat and extend play over time.

**Adult Interactions** – Accepting that children need to use resources across the areas and for different purposes, following the lead of the child by joining their play and in engaging and extending the ideas and interest of the child.

What is important is that we take the time to consider the many aspects of free flow and agree a way in which we can offer children quality free flow opportunities.

## TASK

Consider why free flow play is important to children.

Discuss each of the points listed below and spend some time identifying the challenges they present and how they could be overcome.

- Do you provide opportunities for children to choose whether they want to play inside or outside throughout the day?
- Do you allow children to take toys and resources from area to area, including inside and out?
- Do you allow children to continue their ideas and extend their play from day to day, even if it conflicts with planned activities?

What other challenges have you identified associated with free flow play? How do other settings manage this issue? What changes could you make to your environment, your routine or your way of thinking, to resolve the problem?