**The Play Work Principles**

These principles establish the professional and ethical framework for Play work and as such must be regarded as a whole.

They describe what is unique about play and Play work and provide the Play work perspective for working with children and young people.

They are based on the recognition that children and young people’s capacity for positive development will be enhanced if given access to the broadest range of environments and play opportunities.

1. All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity and is fundamental to the healthy development and well being of individuals and communities.
2. Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.
3. The prime focus and essence of Play work is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.
4. For Play workers, the play process takes precedence and Play workers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult led agencies.
5. The role of the Play worker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.
6. The Play workers response to children and young people playing is based on a sound and up to date knowledge of the play process and reflective practice.
7. Play workers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young people’s play on the Play worker.
8. Play workers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All Play workers intervention must balance risk with developmental benefit and well being of children.