



News release

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VISIT CHILDCARE EXPO FOR IDEAS FOR PLAY ON A BUDGET

Research shows that 82% of adults feel children's play has changed, with children playing outdoors less and with mass-produced plastic toys more.

Yet most adults' fondest childhood memories are of playing outdoors, making mud pies, building dens and jumping in puddles.

You can find out how to reintroduce children in your care to this 'lost' style of sensory play by attending a free 'Play on a Budget' workshop at Childcare Expo on 16th and 17th September.

Sue Gascoyne of Play to Z will lead workshops on Friday 16th September and Saturday 17th September entitled 'Let's Discover Sensory Play' and will provide a stimulating sensory environment for children, parents and practitioners to visit and enjoy.

An area of the exhibition will be set up with space for sand and water play, a storytelling area complete with a teepee for children and adults to experience, multicultural books, musical instruments and artefacts and treasure baskets.

There will also be opportunities to watch and reflect on children engaging in sensory-rich play and mini-training sessions to inspire and inform practitioners.

Research carried out by Play to Z^{*} found that 82% of adults feel that children's play has changed. Children are playing less outside and more with plastic and manufactured toys.

Meanwhile 68% of adults' most vivid childhood memories involve playing outdoors: making mud pies and rose petal perfume, building dens and jumping in puddles were just some of the recollections to emerge.

Other 'Play on a Budget' workshops at Childcare Expo aim to give practitioners ideas for early years activities that won't break the bank.

On Friday 16th September Wendy Whittaker-Large from Networks for Knowledge will explore how problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy can be developed using low-cost and no-cost resources.

Later on the same day Sarah Cressall from The Creation Station will demonstrate some low-cost creative activities including funky art badges, scrunchy bags, window art and printed banners to inspire imaginations on a budget.

On Saturday 17th September Wendy Whittaker-Large will lead a hands-on workshop that will allow participants time to create and build their own den from the free and found materials most of us have lying around.

Links will be made to the Early Years Foundation Stage and Wendy will explain how to support children building dens and their importance to creativity and wellbeing.

Childcare Expo takes place on Friday 16th and Saturday 17th September at the Ricoh Arena in Coventry. Admission is free to visitors.

* **Research findings** are taken from the Sensory Play Research project conducted in 2009 by Sue Gascoyne of Play to Z in collaboration with Anglia Ruskin University.