



## Parachute Play





# Parachute Play

Brittany carries a package under her arm and approaches a few children, “Would you like to go outside? I have a parachute.”

Several children respond to the invitation by getting their coats and boots. The day is sunny and one of the few warm days following the long cold winter. A day that has the smell and feel of spring.

A growing group of eager children begin to gather at the door. Brittany asks a few more children, but these children seem more interested in pursuing experiences inside the playroom. The Dolphin Room educators make a quick calculation and agree that one educator will stay inside with those who are not yet ready to join the larger group outside.



“Mama put the popcorn kernels in the pot. She turned up the heat. Now the pot is getting hot. And then those popcorn kernels start to pop, pop, pop, pop...”

Brittany, Hadla, and Jennifer, educators from different playrooms, play the parachute game along with the children on the playground. All are welcome to join in. The educators introduce a song as they play. Repeating the song many times invites the children to sing along, too.

Soon all the children, from the novice to the most experienced, are singing and playing and laughing. Spring, after an Alberta winter, has an energy that inspires song in all of us!



## Curriculum Meaning Making

The following is a question—answer recap of a professional dialogue between educators about this story.

What inspired the parachute play? When, if ever, is participation limited?

Brittany explains, “I brought a parachute out because the playground was so dull at this time of the year. The sun was shining, but the ground was still frozen and the snow was so hard for the children to dig in.

“At first, the balls I brought out weren’t flying very high. Jenn, an early learning and child care educator from another playroom, offered other balls from the toddler room which worked much better for the popcorn song. It was great to have three educators in this game. As we educators worked together, more children could participate. All age groups work together in these games.

What policy and structures support educators to offer children choices for inside and outside play spaces?

Brittany reflects, “The community spirit here supports children to make choices in their daily experiences. We work together. Someone will stay in when children want to have more time inside. When children want to go outside, we work with one another to ensure adult–child ratios are maintained. We are flexible on field outings as well. Sometimes a small group of children from two different playrooms go out in the community, leaving small groups of children in the centre to do something that they would like to do. Being flexible is important to allow children to make choices for their daily experiences.”

## Curriculum Connections

Making links to holistic goals.

### Play and Playfulness

#### Imagination and Creativity

*Children develop dispositions for flexible and fluid thinking through*

- seeing people, places and things in new ways

*Children create imaginary scenarios in which they explore new possibilities and take possession of their world through*

- creating social spaces and shared narrative

#### Playful Exploration and Problem Solving

*Children learn about the properties of objects through*

- playfully exploring and investigating the properties of objects
- experimenting with action and reaction, cause and effect
- developing a vocabulary to describe similarities and differences, patterns and relationships

*Children learn to negotiate the complexities of joint enterprises through*

- negotiating rules of time, space, and roles

### Communication and Literacies

#### Communicative Practices

*Children form relationships through communicative practices by*

- becoming attuned to rhyme, rhythm, pitch, and tone
- practising and playing with sounds



*Children learn the conventions of their language through*

- growing in their understanding of vocabulary
- developing confidence in using vocabulary

*Children extend ideas and take actions using language*

- to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas
- to make friends, share materials, structure, negotiate, and create imaginary worlds

### **Multimodal literacies**

*Children explore a variety of sign systems through*

- becoming familiar with sign systems of language and music

*Multimodal meaning making through*

- engaging with the symbols and practices of music

## **Well-Being**

### **Emotional Health and Positive Self-Identities**

*Children develop a sense of self through*

- co-constructing their identities
- pursuing interests, passions and strengths

### **Belonging**

*Children build respectful and responsive relationships through*

- participating in group initiatives

### **Physical Health**

*Children explore body and movement through*

- participating in a variety of physical activities, indoors and out
- increasing bodily awareness, control, strength, agility, and large motor coordination

## **Curriculum Reflections**

### **Considering implications for further learning and practice.**

How does your conception of childhood and what it means to be a child influence your responses to the different identities children take on? **Think about** how children respond to people, places, materials, and events.

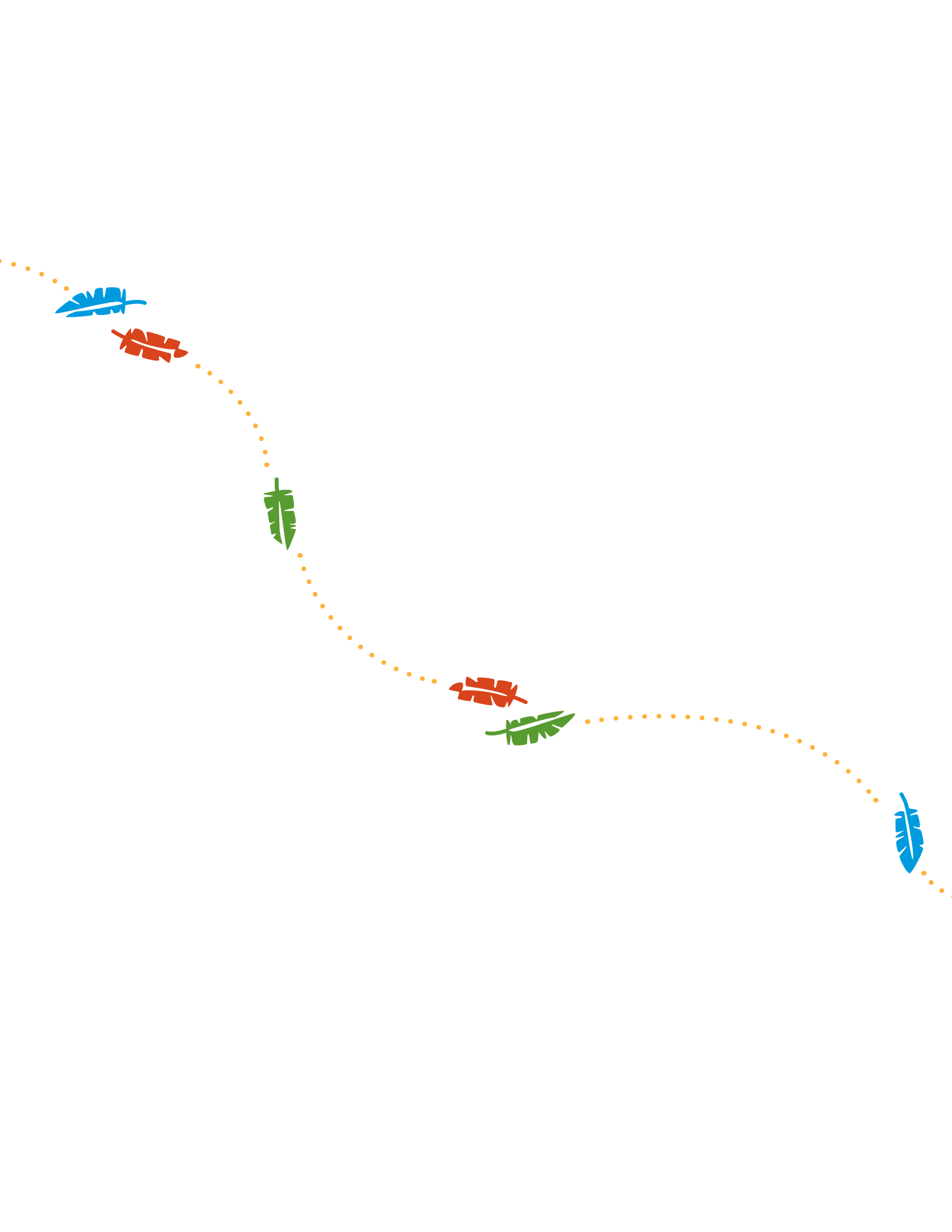
How does your centre build relationships of trust between people? **Think about** adult– child, adult–adult and child–child relationships. How does the environment encourage children to take initiative? **Think about** access to materials.

What experiences are provided at your centre to promote children's active engagement both indoors and out? How do you plan for age and physical capacities as well as for co-operative games. What playground songs do you encourage and model for children?

How do you provide ways for children to explore on their own, with peers, or with adults? **Think about** materials for indoor and outdoor experiences.

What role do you assume in outdoor experiences? Do you model active and engaged play outdoors? In what ways do you invite playful games and group initiatives?





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