

Foundation Phase: Talking Point

Outdoor Risky Play and Schema Development in the Early Years Part One

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Key words: Risky play; outdoors; affordance theory; loose parts; schemas

In a 2-part series of articles for Early Years Wales' Foundation Phase Talking Point, Dr. Amanda Thomas and Pavla Boulton, from the University of South Wales, Newport explore outdoor risky play and schema development in the Early Years. In this smalltalk issue the first article looks at the importance of outdoor risky play and sensory experience, affordance theory, loose parts theory and why these are important to schema development.

At the end of the article you will find 'work group supervision' (Louis, 2021) or reflective questions that can be used to support you and your team to apply your 'professional knowledge and

experience' (Louis, 2021, p.75) to your reading and observations, maybe as part of reflective journaling and supervision work or as part of your staff meetings.

We know from our own childhood experiences, and those that we observe in early years practice, children are drawn to risky play. Sandseter (2007) suggests that children are drawn to activities such as climbing, jumping from heights, sliding fast, and balancing precariously, because these experiences allow children to explore the limits of their abilities and they learn to assess and manage the risks involved (Christensen & Mikkelsen, 2008).

	Risk	Sub-categories
A: Great heights	Danger of injury from falling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climbing • Jumping from still or flexible surfaces • Balancing on high objects • Hanging/swinging at great heights
B: High speed	Uncontrolled speed and pace that can lead to collision with something (or someone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swinging at high speed • Sliding and sledging at high speed • Running uncontrollably at high speed • Bicycling at high speed • Skating and skiing at high speed
C: Dangerous tools	Can lead to injuries and wounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cutting tools: Knives, saws, axes • Strangling tools: Ropes, etc.
D: Dangerous elements	Where children can fall into or from something	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cliffs • Deep water or icy water • Fire pits
E: Rough-and-tumble	Where the children can harm each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrestling • Fencing with sticks, etc. • Play fighting
F: Disappear/get lost	Where the children can disappear from the supervision of adults, get lost alone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go exploring alone • Playing alone in unfamiliar environments

Table I. Categories and sub-categories of risky play (revised from Sandseter, 2007a, b).

According to Ball (2004), sustaining minor injuries is a universal part of childhood through which children learn the consequences of their behaviour and understand their competencies and limitations. This ability to assess risk and weigh up the benefits against possible undesirable outcomes is an important life skill (Boyer, 2006).



The outdoor environment has the capacity to stimulate the senses significantly more than an indoor learning environment (Carson, 1956) and when senses are heightened learning is magnified and learning experiences are retained for longer (Clarke, 2006). We become much more immersed in that experience, and we can make more sense of the world around us.

This type of outdoor play can 'afford' children amazing opportunities to develop their brains, their thinking patterns and actions or SCHEMAS as well as their self-efficacy, which helps them to construct patterns of thinking and understanding of how the world works. These affordances are predicated on what we as practitioners provide within an enabling environment through the materials, resources, and loose parts in our setting.

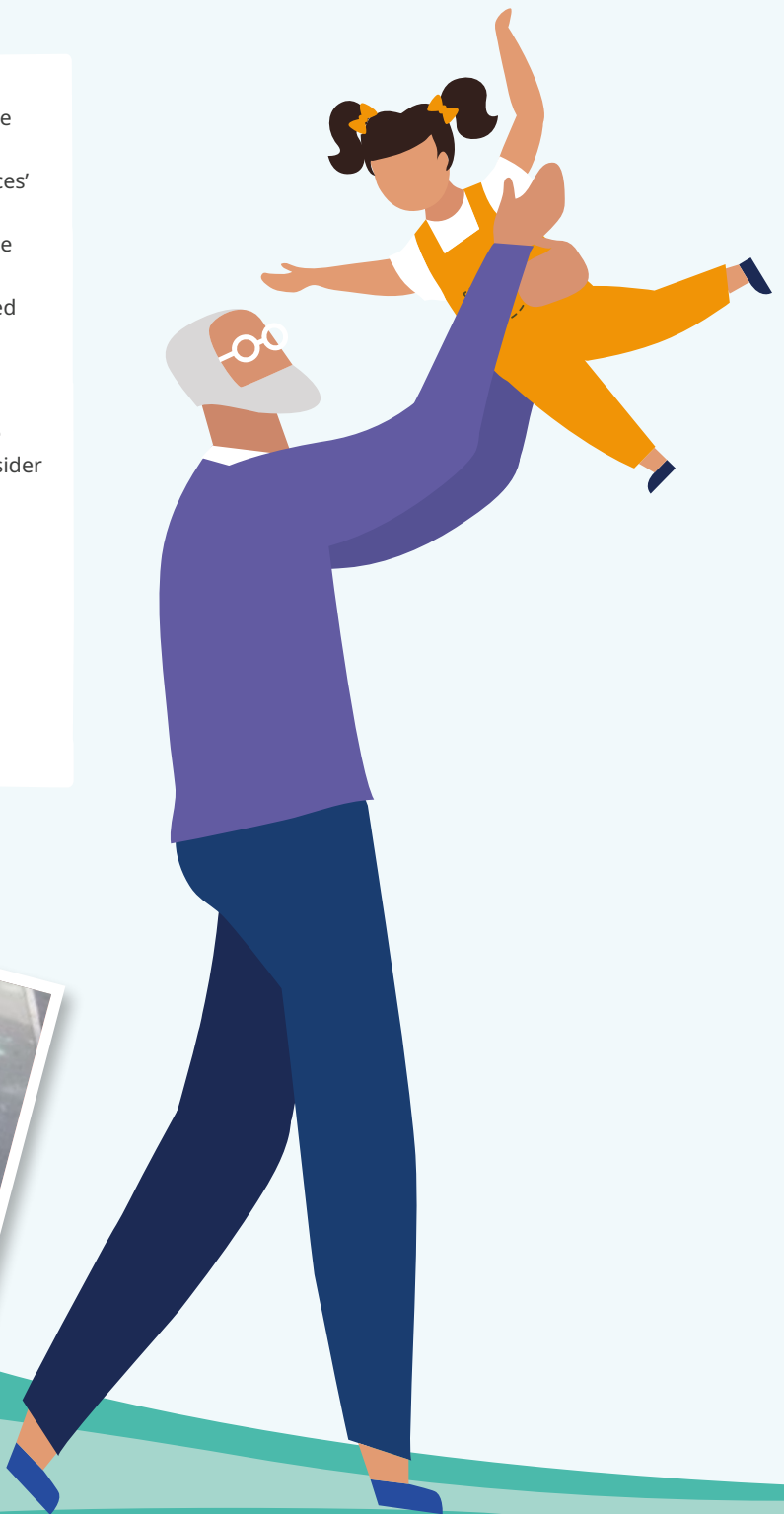
Materials found in the outdoors such as sand, water and large play equipment can afford children lots of diverse ways to construct their knowledge and understanding. The 'affordances' of an object or space are all the things it has the 'potential to do or be.' Children learn more deeply when they represent the same concept by using different media', (Forman 1994, P.41). This is related to children's 'schemas' where they choose varied materials to represent their schema or threads of thought (Nutbrown, 2011).

It is important for early years practitioners to understand the importance of affordance theory because it guides us to consider the types and variety of materials, we provide for children to access, it helps us to understand 'why' we need to provide a range of resources and materials which can support:

- Childrens holistic development
- Different types of play as well as stages of play
- Enabling environments, indoors & outdoors, to suit the stage of development of the child

Risky play brings with it many benefits which include positive effects on health and physical development, self-assessment of risk and self-efficacy and allowing children to engage in managed risk means that they are less likely to seek out greater risks in a more dangerous situation later in their development (Brock et al, 2014).

American psychologist James J. Gibson (1979) suggested that environments and objects within them have values and meanings that are unique to the person perceiving them. When children play in a space or with an object, they experience it in a unique way. Rather than its intended purpose, they may view it in terms of its 'affordances.'





The types of resources we often need to provide are termed Loose Parts. Loose parts are materials which can be moved around, designed, redesigned, and tinkered with (Nicholson, 1971).

Loose parts are exactly what it says on the tin - they are not fixed and can be used for many things to be determined by the child in their own unique way. They are a crucial element of children's play in the outdoors and objects such as drainpipes, tyres, bricks, wheels, buckets, sticks, and pallets, are all stimuli for creative ideas. These can be used for making patterns, carrying, and transporting objects, covering objects as well as people, turning things, joining things together and can indicate how a child's brain interprets the world.

We know that tensions exist between what the Early Years practitioner would like to provide and their feelings of accountability (Sandseter, 2009). Health and safety regulations can sometimes be overwhelming and Early Years practitioners can feel a dissonance between what they feel is appropriate to teach and what they feel 'compelled' to teach (Rose & Rogers, 2012), creating an anxiety and fear in terms of what to allow children to do and use. Some regulations suggest the removal of objects such as 'dangerous' sticks, large wooden structures, and tyres,

which would otherwise afford opportunities for construction (Johnson, 2013), and development of schemas linked to transporting and enveloping, by creating 'undisturbed hiding places for play' (Boulton and Thomas, 2021a). Often practitioners are unaware that their beliefs do not match their actions (Bennett, Wood and Rogers, 1997 cited in Bilton and Waters, 2017). But the theory of loose parts is about more than the materials and the objects, it is a theory about democracy, where these opportunities are identified as essential chances for children to develop creativity, independence, and self-governance (Cobb-Moore & Miller, 2007; Moser & Martinsen, 2010).

Nicholson proposed that loose parts were 'all the things that satisfy one's curiosity and give us the pleasure that results from discovery and invention' (1971, p.30). Nicholson further proposed that in any environment the amount of discovery or creativity a child gets, is causally linked to the varied materials made available within it. The introduction of loose parts into children's play affords significant opportunities for holistic development but particularly cognitive development.

Affordance Theory + Loose parts = Schematic development in young children

In part 2 of the article Pavla Boulton and Amanda Thomas will go on to explore definitions of schema, schema development in the Foundation phase and Curriculum for Wales 2022 and why it is important for early years practitioners, in the non-maintained and the maintained sectors, to recognise and develop schemas.

Ideas for 'work group supervision' (Louis, 2021) and reflective questions

Journal/ draw/ record your initial reactions to the article and give examples of ideas you felt comfortable with and ideas that you felt uncomfortable with. Journal/ draw/ record your thoughts about this article and explore what makes you think this way

- What images and observations could you use from your practice to illustrate your thoughts?
- What other reading have you explored that could illustrate your thoughts? What have the children been exploring and have you recognised any schematic patterns of behaviour?
- What risky play have you supported in your setting? How could you enrich this risky play?
- What new ideas did you meet in the article? What ideas will you explore further?

Use 'work group supervision' (Louis, 2021), as part of your team meetings or time with a mentor, tutor or colleague to share your reflections, observations and learning.

Resources and further professional learning opportunities:

You can find ideas and supporting materials in the Schema development Toolkit (Thomas, 2019): <https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/4be12be2-3180-4619-963d-b62c4f252423/Toolkit%20supporting%20schemas.pdf> which will provide all the guidance needed to plan your provision using schema development as a core focus in your practice.

A full list of references used in this article can be found: <https://www.earlyyears.wales/en/foundation-phase>

Join us at the Early Years Wales Foundation Phase Excellence Network events to continue your exploration of outdoor play and schemas.

We would like to hear from early years practitioners and settings so that we can develop case studies about schema development. Please contact sarahw@earlyyears.wales for more information.

You may also be interested in:

'The Lost Words Project' at the University of South Wales, Newport, *smalltalk*, (spring 2020), pg 18 – 20

<https://www.earlyyears.wales/en/news/blog-schemas>

Don't forget

Early Years Wales members can download back issues of *smalltalk* for free: [earlyyears.wales/shop](https://www.earlyyears.wales/shop)



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Mae'r erthygl hon wedi'i thynnu o rifyn hydref 2021 o gylchgraw smalltalk - cylchgraw aelodaeth Blyneddodd Cymru Cymru

I lawrwytho a darllen y rifyn yn llawn ewch i:

earlyyears.wales/cy/shop. Fel arall, beth am ddod yn aelod AM

DDIM a derbyn eich copi wedi'i bostio'n uniongyrchol at eich drws.

Am mwy o wybodaeth am ddod yn aelod ac i gofrestru ewch i:

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Damcaniaeth 'Affordance' + Darnau Rhydd = Datblygiad sgmateg mewn plant ifanc

Yn rhan 2 o'r erthygl, bydd Pavla Boulton ac Amanda Thomas yn trafod diffinïadau o sgeina, datblygiad sgeina yn y cyfnod Sylfaen a Chwricwilm Gymru 2022 a pham ei bod yn bwysig bod ymarferwyr blynyddoedd gymar, yn y sectorau nas cynhelir ar sectorau sy'n cael eu cynnal, yn cydnabod ac yn datblygu sgeinau.

Syniadau ar gyfer 'arolygu gwaith grŵp' (Louis, 2021) a syniadau myfyrgar

Ysgrifennwch / tynwch lun / recordiwch eich sylwadau cyntaf ar yr erthygl hon a rhwch enghreifftiau o syniadau roeddech chi'n teimlo'n gyfforddus â nhw a rhai roeddech chi'n anghyfforddus â nhw. Ysgrifennwch / tynwch lun / recordiwch eich syniadau ynghylch yr erthygl hon a thrafodwch beth sy'n gwneud i chi feddwl hynny.

Adnoddau a chyfeioedd dysgu profesiynol pellach:

Gallwch ddod o hyd i syniadau a deunyddiau ategol yn y Pecyn Cymorth datblygu Sgeina (Thomas, 2019): [https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/4be12be2-3180-4619-963d-b62c4f252423/Tookit%20supporting%20sgeina%20a%20focws%20darparw%20gan%20ddefnyddio%20datblygiad%20sgeina%20fel%20ffocws%20craidd](https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/4be12be2-3180-4619-963d-b62c4f252423/Tookit%20supporting%20sgeina%20a%20focws%20darparw%20holl%20ganiawiau%20sydd%20eu%20hangen%20i%20gynllunio%20ch%20darparw%20gan%20ddefnyddio%20datblygiad%20sgeina%20fel%20ffocws%20craidd) yn eich ymarfer. Gellir gweld rhestr llawn o gyfeiriadau a ddefnyddir yn yr erthygl hon: www.earlyyears.wales/cy/cyfnod-sylfaen

Ymunwch â ni yn nigwyddiadau Rhwydwaith Rhagoriaeth Cyfnod Sylfaen Blynyddoedd Cymru i barhau â'ch archwiliad o chwarae awyr agored a sgeinau.

Hoffem glywed gan ymarferwyr a lleoliadau blynyddoedd gymar fel y gallw'n ddatblygu astudiaethau achos am ddatblygu sgeina. Cysylltwch â sarahw@earlyyears.wales i gael mwy o wybodaeth.

Efallai y byddwch chi hefyd â diddordeb mewn:

'The Lost Words Project' ym Mhrifysgol De Cymru, Casnewydd, *smalltalk*, (gwanwyn 2020), tud 18 – 20

<https://www.earlyyears.wales/en/news/blog-schemas>

A phaidiwch ag anghofio

Gall aelodau Blynyddoedd Cymru Cymru'n lawr lwytho ôl rhyfynau o smalltalk am ddim: <https://www.earlyyears.wales/cy/shop>

- Pa ddelweddau a sylwadau alllech chi eu defnyddio o'ch ymarfer i egluro eich sylwadau.
 - Beth arall ydych chi wedi'i ddarllen a allai egluro eich syniadau? Beth mae'r plant wedi bod yn ei archwilio ac a ydych chi wedi canfod unrhyw batrymanu sgmateg yn eu hymddygiad?
 - Pa chwarae mentrus ydych chi wedi'i gefnogi yn eich lleoliad? Sut alllech chi gyfoethog'r chwarae mentrus hwn?
 - Pa syniadau newydd ddaethoch chi ar eu traws yn yr erthygl? Pa syniadau fyddwch chi'n eu trafod ymhellach?
- Defnyddiwch 'arolygiaeth grŵp gwaith' (Louis, 2021), cyfarfoddd tîm neu amser gyda mentor, tîwtor neu gydweithiwr i drafod eich syniadau ar hyn rydych chi wedi'i weld a'i ddysgu.



Maer mathau o adnoddau rydyn ni angen eu darparu'n cael eu galw'n Ddarau Rhydd. Darau rhydd yw adnoddau y gellir eu symud o gwmpas, eu dylunio, eu hail ddyllunio a chwarae â nhw (Nicholson, 1971).

Mae eu henw'n disgrifio darau rhydd i'r dim - dydyn nhw ddim yn sefydlog ac mae plant yn gallu eu defnyddio ar gyfer llawer iawn o bethau yn eu ffyrdd unigryw eu hunain. Mae'n nhw'n rhan hanfodol o chwarae plant yn yr awyr agored ac mae pob peth fel peipiau draeniau, telerau, briciau, olwynion, bwcedi, ffyn a phaledi yn annog syniadau creadigol. Gellir eu defnyddio i wneud patrymau, cario a chludo pethau, gorchuddio pethau yn ogystal â phobl, troi pethau, uno pethau gyda'i gilydd ac maen nhw'n gallu dangos sut y mae ymennydd plentyn yn dehonglir byd.

Rydyn ni'n gwychbod fod yna densynau rhwng beth hoffatr ymarferdd Blynyddoedd Cynnar eu darparu a'u syniad o atebolrwydd (Sandseter, 2009). Gall rheoliadau Iechyd a Diogelwch fod yn llethol weithiau gydag ymarferwyr Blynyddoedd Cynnar yn teimlo anghydfod rhwng yr hyn y maen nhw'n ei deimlo sy'n addas i'w ddysgu a'r hyn y maen nhw'n ei deimlo y maen nhw'n cael eu 'gortoddi' i ddydysgu (Rose & Rogers, 2012), sy'n codi pryder ac ofn o ran beth i ganiatáu plant i'w wneud a'u defnyddio. Mae rhai rheoliadau'n awgrymu cael gwared ar bethau 'perygus' fel ffyn,

pethau pren mawr a theiers a fyddai, fel arall yn rhoi cyfleoedd i adeiladu (Johnson, 2013), a datblygu sgemâu yn gysylltiedig â chludiant ac amgáu, trwy greu 'manau cudd' i chwarae heb neb yn amharu' (Boulton a Thomas, 2021a). Yn aml, nid yw ymarferwyr yn sylweddoli nad yw'r hyn y maen nhw'n ei gredu ynddo yn cyd-fynd â'r hyn y maen nhw'n ei wneud (Bennett, Wood a Rogers, 1997 dyfyniwyd yn Bilton a Waters, 2017). Ond mae damcaniaeth darau rhydd ynghylch mwy na deunyddiau a gwrthrychau, mae'n ddamcaniaeth ynghylch democrataeth, lle mae cyfleoedd yn cael eu gweld fel cyfle unigryw i blant datblygu creadigedd, amibyniaeth a hunan reolaeth (Cobb-Moore & Miller, 2007; Moser & Martinsen, 2010).

Mae Nicholson yn awgrymu mai darau rhydd yw'r 'holl bethau sy'n bodloni cywreirwydd rhywun ac yn rhoi i n'r plaser sy'n dod o ddarganfod a dyfeisio' (1971, t.30). Ymhellach, mae'n cynnig, fod cysylltiedig rhydd mewn unrhyw amgylchedd rhwng faint o ddarganfod a chreudigedd y mae plentyn yn ei gael a'r amrywiaeth o ddeunyddiau sydd ynddo. Mae cyflwyno darau rhydd i chwarae plant yn gyfle gwych ar gyfer datblygiad, yn enwedig datblygiad gwychyddol.



Mae llawer o fanteision i chwarae mentrus sy'n cynnwys effeithiau positif ar iechyd a datblygiad corfforol, hunan asesu risg a hunan effeithiolrwydd ac mae galluogi plant i gymryd risgiau ystyrion yn goiygu eu bod yn llai tebygol o gymryd risgiau peryglach mewn sefyllfaoedd peryglach yn ddiweddarach yn eu datblygiad (Brock et al, 2014).

Roedd James J. Gibson (1979), seicolegydd o America, yn awgrymu fod gan amgylcheddau a gwrthrychau ynddyn nhw werthoedd ac ystyron sy'n unigryw i'r person sy'n eu hystyried. Pan fydd plant yn chwarae mewn gofod neu gyda gwrthrych, maen nhw'n profi hynny mewn ffordd unigryw. Yn hytrach na'u gweld yn ôl y bwriad gwreiddioi, efallai eu bod yn eu gweld yn ôl eu 'affordances'.

Mae'r awyr agored yn gallu annog llawer mwy ar y synhwyrau na lleoliad dysgu o dan do (Carson, 1956) a phan mae'r synhwyrau wedi'u hogi, mae mwy'n cael ei ddysgu, ar profiadau wrth ddyysgu'n cael eu cadw am gyfnod hwy (Clarke, 2006). Rydyn ni'n cael ein trochi fwy yn y profiad ac yn gallu gwneud mwy o synwyr o'r byd o'n cwmpas.

Mae'r math hwn o chwarae yn yr awyr agored yn gallu rhoi rhai cyfleoedd rhyfeddol i blant ddatblygu eu hymennydd, eu patrymau meddwl a'u gweithrediadau neu SGEMLU yn ogystal â hunan- effeithiolrwydd, sy'n eu helpu i ddatblygu patrymau o feddwl ac o ddealltwriaeth o sut mae'r byd yn gweithio. Mae'r rhain yn dibynnu ar yr hyn rydyn ni fel ymarferwyr yn ei ddarparu mewn amgylchedd alluogi trwy'r defnyddiau, adnoddau a darnau rhydd yn ein lleoliadau.

Gall pethau yn yr awyr agored, megis tywod, dŵr ac offer chwarae mawr gyngig sawl ffordd i blant eu defnyddio i gryfhau eu gwymbodaeth a'u dealltwriaeth. 'Affordances' gwrthrych neu ofod yw'r holl bethau y mae ganddo'r 'potensial i wneud neu i fod', Mae plant yn dysgu'n fwy trwy'r pam maen nhw'n ystyried yr un cysniad trwy ddefnyddio gwahanol gyfrngau (Forman 1994, P.41). Mae hyn yn perthyn i sgeâu plant pan maen nhw'n dewis gwahanol bethau i ddangos eu sgeua neu eu llinyn meddwl.

Maen bwysig fod ymarferwyr blynyddoedd cynnar yn deall pwysigrwydd damcaniaeth 'affordance'. Mae'n ein harwain i ystyried y mathau a'r amrywiaethau o ddefnyddiau rydyn ni'n ein darparu ar gyfer plant, maen ein helpu i ddeall' pam' y dylen ni ddarparu amrywiaeth o adnoddau a deunyddiau sy'n

gallu cefnogi:

- Datblygiad hollistig plant
- Gwahanol fathau o chwarae yn ogystal â chyfnodau chwarae
- Amgylcheddau galluogi, y tu fewn a'r tu allan, addas ar gyfer cyfnod datblygiad y plentyn.





Yn ôl Ball (2004), mae dioddef mân
anafadau'n rhan o blentynod
pawb, dyma sut mae plant yn deall
canlyniadau eu hymddygiad ac yn
deall eu gallu, a deall hefyd derynau
a phwyso'r manteision yn erbyn
yr hyn a allai fod yn ganlyniadau
annerbyniol yn un o sgiliau pwysig
bywyd (Boyer, 2006).

Y Cyfnod Sylfaen: Pwnc Trafod Chwarae Mentrus yn yr Awyr Agored a Datblygu Sgemaŷu yn y Blynyddoedd Cynnar Rhan Un

Dr. Amanda Thomas a Pavla Boulton, Prifysgol De Cymru, Casnewydd.
Geiriau allweddol: Chwarae mentrus, yr awyr agored, damcaniaeth 'affordance', darnau rhydd, sgemaŷu

Mewn cyfres ddwy ran o erthygliau ar gyfer Pwnc Trafod Cyfnod Sylfaen Blynyddoedd Cynnar Cymru, mae Dr Amanda Thomas a Pavla Boulton, o Brifysgol De Cymru, Casnewydd, yn trafod chwarae mentrus yn yr awyr agored a datblygu sgemaŷu yn y Blynyddoedd Cynnar. Yn y rhifyn hwn o smaltalk, mae'r erthygl gyntaf yn ystyried pwsygrwydd chwarae mentrus yn yr awyr agored a phrofiadau synhwyrol, damcaniaeth 'affordance', damcaniaeth darnau rhydd a pham eu bod yn bwysig i ddatblygu sgemaŷu.

Ar ddiwedd yr erthygl, fe welwch 'arolygu gwaith grŵp' (Louis 2021) neu gwestyngau myfyrgar y gellir eu defnyddio i'ch cefnogi chi a'ch tim i ddefnyddio 'gwybodadaeth a phrofiad profesiynol' (Louis, 2021,

t.75) wrth ddarllen ac arsylwi, etallai fel rhan o gofnodi gwaith myfyrgar a gwaith arolygu neu fel rhan o'ch cyfarfoddydd staff. Fe wyddom o'n profiadau plentynodod ein hunain, ac o'r hyn rydyn ni'n ei weld mewn ymarfer blynyddoedd cynnar, fod plant yn cael eu denu at chwarae mentrus. Awgryma Sandseter (2007) fod plant yn cael eu denu at weithgareddau megis dringo, neidio o uchder, llythron'n gyflym a chadw cydbwysedd yn ansefydlog oherwydd bod y profiadau hyn yn eu galluogi i archwilio trefnau eu gallu a'u bod yn dysgu asesu a rheoli'r risgiau sydd ynghlwm (Christensen & Mikkelsen, 2008).

Is-gategorïau	Risg	A: Uchder mawr	B: Cyflymder mawr	C: Offer perygus	D: Effennau perygus	E: Chwarae'n wylt	F: Diflannu / mynd ar goll
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dringo • Neidio o wynebâu llonydd neu hbylg • Cadw cydbwysedd ar fannau uchel • Hongian / siglo ar fannau uchel 	Perygl o nived wrth ddisgyn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyflymder a freolus a allai arwain at drawo rhywbeth (neu rywun) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siglo'n gyflym iawn • Llythron a gyrru sied yn gyflym iawn • Rhedeg yn gyflym ac yn afreolaidd • Beicio'n gyflym iawn • Sgleirio a sgio'n gyflym iawn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer totri: Cyllili, lli, bwyell • Offer tagu: Rhaffau ayb. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clogwyni • Dwr dwfn neu rewllyd • Pyllau tân 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reslo • Ymladd gyda ffyn ayb • Chwarae ymladd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Llymnd i chwilio ar eu pen eu hunain • Chwarae ar eu pen eu hunain • Mynid i chwilio ar eu pen eu hunain • lleoedd diarth
<p>Table 1. Categoriâu ac is-gategoriâu o chwarae mentrus (adolygydd o Sandseter, 2007a, b).</p>							