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Thinking about Play: a new course

'Thinking about Play' is a new three-day course that aims to provide a foundation for understanding and developing a playwork approach to working with children in adult-organised play provision. The course explores how understandings of play can inform all aspects of organizational policies and practices.

Who is it for? The course is aimed at face-to-face playworkers, managers/providers, and also Quality in Play assessors and mentors. It runs over three full day sessions (9.30-3.00), with time between sessions for participants to reflect, observe and see how the theory might apply to practice.

What does it cover? The course uses the Manchester Circles model (Lester and Russell, 2002) that currently informs 'Quality in Play' as a basic structure, and sessions will explore the following themes:

- Session 1: An introduction to the Manchester Circles model and the playing child at the middle of play organizations.
- Session 2: 'The spaces between' – the second circle of the model and the production of space for play.
- Session 3: Cultivating the conditions to support playwork practice

What will it be like? The course explores academic theories from the perspective of what they might mean for playworkers and managers. There will be a number of practical activities that are designed to explore concepts and their application to practice, through the use of playwork stories.

Is it assessed? The course uses 'patchwork text', an approach to assessment that supports connecting theory and practice. Participants develop a number of 'patches' that consider a range of conceptual tools, and then 'stitch' these together with an overall reflective piece of writing. The patches form the basis for dialogue during the sessions, but participants have the option of choosing whether or not to submit these for formal assessment.

When will it run? Playwork London is planning to run a pilot programme in the autumn of 2010. If you wish to be considered for the pilot programme please contact us.

Who will be tutoring? The tutors for the pilot course will be Stuart Lester and Wendy Russell from University of Gloucestershire, who are developing the programme and course materials. Future courses will be tutored by Playwork London approved trainers.

How do I find out more? Contact John Fitzpatrick at Playwork London.