

Summer Independent Learning Task

Subject/Group	AAQ Extended Certificate in Early Childhood Development (Y11-Y12)
Topic	Unit 3: Children's Play and Learning
Timescale	3 HOURS
To be completed by	This work must be completed and handed in to your subject teacher on the first day of term.

Unit background context

Play is an important way in which children learn and develop. In this unit, you will learn about the types of play and the opportunities that should be made available to children at different ages and stages of development. You will consider why play is important and how it supports children's learning and development. You will explore the development of children's understanding and skill development and the role of the adult in supporting these.

Overview:

Before starting the BTEC AAQ Early Childhood Development course, you will complete an engaging project to help you understand how play and storytelling support early childhood development. You will research, plan, and create your own story sack, then reflect on how it can be used to promote development in children aged 0–5 years.

“Story Sacks: Supporting Early Literacy and Development”

Total Time Required: Approx. 3 hours

Task Breakdown:

Part 1: What is a Story Sack? (45 minutes)

Research & Write:

1. Research what a story sack is. Include:
 - What it usually contains.
 - Why they are used in early years settings.
 - How they support different areas of development (e.g. communication, language, social-emotional skills, fine motor skills, etc.).

2. Write a short explanation (300–400 words) summarising your findings. Include:

- At least 3 benefits of using story sacks.
- A real-life example or quote from a practitioner or setting.

Part 2: Design Your Story Sack (90 minutes)

Choose a children's book suitable for early years (0–5 years). It can be a classic (like *The Gruffalo*, *Dear Zoo*, *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*) or something more modern.

Create your story sack contents:

- The chosen book.
- At least 3 additional items to bring the story to life (these can be homemade or gathered items), such as:
 - Soft toys or puppets of characters.
 - A sensory item (e.g., textured material, sound object).
 - A game or activity related to the story.
 - A simple prop or costume.

Include:

- A creative label/tag for your story sack with the book title and age recommendation.
- A photo or drawing of your finished story sack.

Part 3: Explain & Reflect (45 minutes)

Write a short explanation (approx. 500 words) covering:

1. Why you chose the book and how it is suitable for the early years.
2. How each item in your story sack supports a different area of development (e.g., language, physical, personal/social/emotional).
3. How a practitioner might use your story sack during story time or small group activities.
4. A brief reflection on what you learned about child development through completing the task.

What to submit to your subject teacher:

- Written explanation from Part 1.
- Your story sack/photo of your story sack and a list of its contents.
- Written explanation and reflection from Part 3.

Learning Outcomes:

By completing this task, you will:

- Understand the purpose and value of story sacks in early years education.
- Gain insight into how play and storytelling support holistic child development.
- Begin developing creativity and critical thinking around planning activities for young children.

Make sure you have put your name on all sheets of paper and resources.

Learning Resources:

<https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/how-make-and-use-story-sack/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/play>

<https://www.betterstart.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Story-sack-tip-sheet.pdf>

<https://www.thegeniusofplay.org/genius/expert-advice/articles/unleashing-imagination-elevating-childrens-play-development-and-learning.aspx>

<https://www.pacey.org.uk/following-childrens-interests-and-supporting-their-play/>

How to make any story into a story sack:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bnln6Y2rlcA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dx2L5DTrG4w>