

Psycholudics – Key Terminology

Affect	<p>Affect is the emotional material, mood or mask that people display.</p> <p>The affect may be 'real' or 'false'; in playing, children may play with affect as part of their emotional development.</p>
Annihilation	<p>Play annihilation is the end of the play for the child at that time.</p> <p>This may be a simple end to the game or a dramatic destruction of the model or sandcastle they have spent the last hour carefully constructing. Annihilation will occur when the play frame has no more meaning for the child, when the child has got whatever they were looking for from the play experience. Adults working with children can often misunderstand this. Workers can be dismayed when a piece of art, instead of being mounted and displayed on the wall, is painted and thrown in the bin. Annihilation is about the child taking their choice in the play to a natural conclusion.</p>
Authenticity	<p>Being honest and open with children and other members of the staff team.</p> <p>Being honest about one's own feelings and vulnerabilities.</p> <p>Children need to be offered honesty and truthfulness in the responses from the adults around them if they are to best make sense of their world.</p>
Child's evaluation of the return	<p>The child's evaluation of the return may produce a response that extends the play, reduces or ends it or is neutral. Again, the likely choice by the child and the intent of the play cannot be known by the adult. The child may choose to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Respond to the play return – and so continue or broaden the theme of the play; play flow is established▪ Annihilate or end the play cycle – the process has produced what was necessary▪ Repeat the original play cue – to see what happens
Containment	<p>Holding the play for the child till they are able to return to the playing form.</p> <p>The support that workers can give to children in play should include the ability to hold or 'contain' the play. It is about supporting a child through their initial tentative play cues, giving back a return to help the play on its way. It may also be about holding the frame while the child is away from the play (or when the play ends for the day)</p> <p>Containment should also be about helping children who may be at risk of harming themselves or others.</p> <p>Our professional containment is a crucial element of our working practice.</p>

<p>Dysplay</p>	<p>When the play cues are laden with anxiety.</p> <p>The urgent, frantic play cues offered by children who are unable to complete the play cycle effectively.</p> <p>Children denied choice will be inhibited in their play, the cycle will be incomplete. The play drive will try to compensate with cues that are more urgent or aberrant, perhaps causing conflict with the environment around the child (these anxious cues are called <i>dysplay</i>).</p>
<p>Integrity of intervention</p>	<p>Where the worker is aware of the interventions they may need to make in a play session in order to make them as playful as possible.</p> <p>The adult may be involved in disputed or conflicting frames – and may be called on to make judgements effecting the play frames of several children, or may need to remind a child of the risks taken when crossing boundaries. Where possible, the worker should aim to offer a response that is playful rather than controlling or prescriptive.</p>
<p>Levels of intervention</p>	<p>i) Play maintenance:</p> <p>The play is self-contained – no intervention is necessary, the worker observes the activity</p> <p>ii) Simple involvement:</p> <p>The adult acts as a resource for the play – this may be subtle, as in making a tool available for use, or more overt when responding to a request from children</p> <p>iii) Medial intervention:</p> <p>At the request of the child, the adult becomes involved in the play – such as by offering alternatives from which the child chooses, or by initiating a game then withdrawing</p> <p>iv) Complex intervention:</p> <p>There is a direct and extended overlap between playing children and the adult – the adult may need to take on a role in the play, or act as a partner to the playing child</p>
<p>Levels of intervention</p>	<p>These four levels of intervention are <i>ludocentric</i> (play-centred) in their intent. There will, of course, be times when the duty of care requires workers to behave in a non-ludocentric manner, for example when a child is in imminent danger of seriously harming themselves or others. Professional judgements on when to make such a non-ludocentric intervention will be informed by the worker’s level of understanding of how their play plays through them as adults and on their knowledge of the child/ren and the contexts and their instant risk assessment.</p>
<p>Ludic</p>	<p>Playful</p>
<p>Ludic third</p>	<p>The ludic process reflects the interplay of three subjectivities: the subjectivity of the child, of the adult, and of the ludic third. The ludic third is a creation of the first player and the second player, and at the same time, the players are created by the ludic third (After Ogden). The</p>

worker is aware of the ludic third when they are *self-witnessing*.

Ludido, see play drive

Ludocentric Play centred

Ludogogic Of, pertaining to, or characteristic of a *ludogogue* or *ludogogy*

Having the office or character of a ludogogue; that is, a person who arrives at insight in play and playing by virtue of self-witnessing and reflection

Ludogogue An adult attendant to the child at play; a person who arrives at insight in play and playing by virtue of self-witnessing and reflection

A playing participant

A play leader, usually adult – in the sense that the commencing interpretation or analysis of any play expressions from the child/children is played through the adults first. The 'leading' is not of the play of the child, except when invited to do so, or where a 'role' requires the adult to do so, for example, in the ludic third (discussed later in this paper). The leading is of the adult's own material as the basis for analysis. The 'This-is-how-it-plays-through-me' self-witnessing paradigm.

[Sturrock, G. (2003) from Latin, *ludo* ('I play') + Greek, *ag gos* ('leader', from *agein*, 'to lead')]

Ludogogy The function, profession or practice of a *ludogogue*;

The study of the science and art of the *ludogogue* through *self-witnessing* and *reflection*; education and training in the practice of a ludogogue;

Metalude The metalude is the source point and beginning of the function of internalised gestalt formation within the play process. It describes the moment of daydreaming or reverie that sets out the intent of the play. The metalude is the 'unconsciously conscious' thought that precedes any playful act. It is formed in the internal world of the child from which *play cues* go into the external, physical world.

The term metalude also suggests the 'playfulness of play,' in that it crosses boundaries and motifs in microseconds.

Play cues The play cue is the signal the child gives that they want to play. This cue may be spoken, eye contact, a body signal or by the use of materials. The play cue comes from the thoughts of the child, their internal world, into the physical world in the expectation of getting a response. A child kicking a ball towards you is a play cue; you are expected to kick it back. Picking up a paintbrush, singing a song, and starting a conversation could all be play cues. Children invite participation by other children or adults in their play by communicating feelings, thoughts and intentions. And of course these cues may not always be positive in effect.

Play drive or impulse, Ludido The child's play drive or instinct which functions through an interplay with surrounding 'fields' to circulate through the metalude, The impulse

<p>to play will be affected by the child’s sense of identity and power (or lack of power), values, beliefs, level of thought and understanding, physical skill and ability. This drive to play is internal to the child and is manifested in the <i>play cue</i>.</p>	
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<p>Play flow</p>	<p>Play flow occurs when the frame has been established and the child becomes ‘lost’ in their play. Children at play are ‘alive in the moment’, with no concern for the past or future. The play may cover a number of topics in a few moments, with roles changing, ideas developing and concepts shifting, or it could be the single focus on a particular aspect. The play becomes self-regulated and the playworker if not actually playing with the child is largely outside of the <i>play frame</i>. Once entered into, this play flow can absorb the child or children for minutes to days at a time.</p>
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<p>Play frames</p>	<p>The frame is a material or non-material boundary that keeps the play intact.</p> <p>The child may then change the frame by including others, moving objects or adapting it in some other way to create a varied response that maintains the play flow.</p> <p>The play frame is chosen and initiated by the child and is the enclosure for their imaginal expression. It will be supported or contained by the physical boundaries of the available play space, but the frame is not dependant upon and may or may not synchronise with those boundaries.</p>
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<p>Play return</p>	<p>The play return is the response the child experiences as a result of the <i>play cue</i>.</p> <p>The play return will be found by the playing child from the environment or as initiated by another child or adult. It is what goes back to the child after they issue the play cue. The child will choose what to ‘play’ with. The return will usually come back from another child or adult; they will be playing together, though the child can also find a return from the environment around them. They may be digging for treasure in the sandpit; they may be hunting for insects in the bushes. If the child gets a positive response they may choose to extend and enhance that experience by issuing another cue; they will be playing and learning. If the child gets a negative response they may stop playing or try another play cue. Understanding this process helps the worker offer choices to the child to help them play.</p> <p>When the return is initiated by an adult, it should be made with an awareness of the child’s emotional state, cultural understanding, physical abilities and sense of power (as far as they can be known) and primarily the adult’s own cultural understanding and sense of power.</p>
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<p>Psycholudics</p>	<p>The study of the mind and psyche at play, describes the process of play as it happens.</p> <p>It proposes that play is essentially spiritually, ecologically and ontologically developmental.</p>
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Reflection – before and after play	<p>A regular review of the work practice, both before and after the session.</p> <p>This reflection also includes playworkers’ own behaviours and attitudes. It examines the themes and material that could not be predicted. Playworkers will form quick judgements about what to do in the play space. After the session, reflection will help with understanding the worker’s judgement at that time.</p>
Self-witnessing	<p>The analysis of the self in relation to a relationship with a playing child.</p> <p>Self-witnessing is where the worker reflects on their practice from the <i>witness position</i>.</p> <p>This witnessing issues from a position where the reactions of the playworker are the object of scrutiny.</p>
Witness position	<p>Where the worker is objectively (impartially) aware of their subjective relationship with another, the playing child.</p> <p>Subjectivity often relies on thoughts and feelings of a personal nature; children will naturally act subjectively in their play. Workers need to act objectively (but not authoritatively) in relation to this emotional content; workers therefore need to be aware of their own affect (their emotional mood or mask) and the impact of this material on their interactions and relationships. Therefore they need to ‘witness’ their own behaviour in the play space.</p>
