



Amanda Calloway

Supporting open-ended play and natural learning

Impact ...

- Enhanced problem-solving and critical thinking skills
- Increased concentration and engagement in play
- Improved confidence in self-directed learning
- Deeper understanding of cause and effect through experimentation
- Progressive development from experimental to purposeful play

Background

Meet Amanda, a childminder in North Wales who has thoughtfully developed her practice around child-led learning and natural play. Through careful reflection and ongoing professional development, she has adapted her home into a considered learning environment where children can explore freely through open-ended play.

What are they doing differently?

Amanda has implemented several innovative practices by:

- creating an environment filled with natural, sustainable, and recycled resources
- adopting a 'planning in the moment' approach that capitalises on teachable moments
- maintaining small cohorts to ensure deep engagement with each child
- using loose parts both indoors and outdoors for creative exploration
- reducing traditional toys in favour of open-ended materials
- building robust community networks to source sustainable resources
- incorporating dynamic risk assessments for different age groups

The setting operates with a child-led approach, where children have autonomy over their play and learning. Resources are carefully selected to promote problem-solving, creativity, and sustained engagement, with many items sourced through community donations and sustainable means.

“ Changing the way in which I work has not only been of benefit to the children but also myself and my own family. The calm and neutral environment which is our family home is conducive to a happy nurturing place where children can learn through play. ”