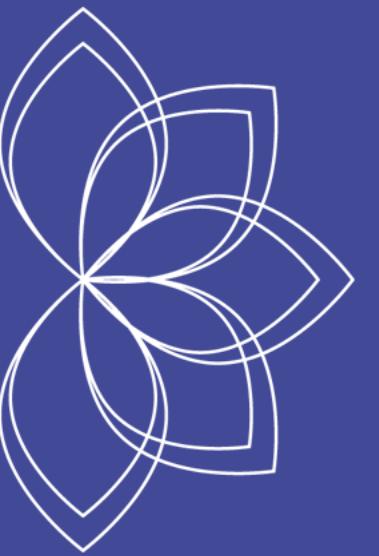




# The Importance of Play

Join our 'Importance of Play' Facebook Group for quick access to the materials used to make this presentation and for further inspiration:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/importanceofplay/>



# Contents

- Definition of play
- Types of play
- The role of the teacher
- What the research says



# What is play?

Play is the universal language of childhood. It is through play that children understand each other and make sense of the world around them.

Play is ...

Play is  
pleasurable,  
spontaneous,  
actively  
engaging and  
sustained.





Play is more focused on process than product

Play is self directed, self motivated and purposeful.





Play enables exploration and experience of things that interest, concern, scare or excite learners.



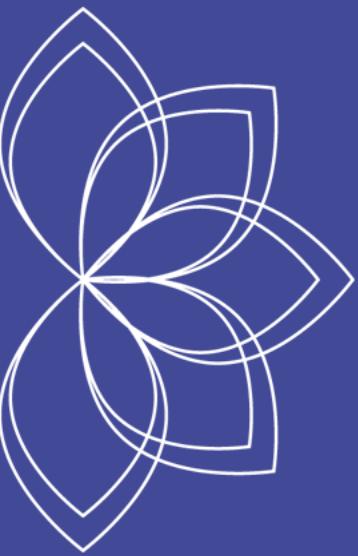
Play incorporates new ideas,  
learning and understandings.

A close-up photograph of a young girl with long brown hair, wearing a purple and white knitted hat and a red and blue patterned scarf. She is looking down and to her right, blowing a stream of bubbles from a purple bubble wand. Several bubbles are visible in the air around her, reflecting light.

Play enables the use  
of previously  
developed skills and  
their growth.



Play can be initiated by  
an adult, a solitary child  
or in partnerships.



## Types of play

Play is a highly creative process, using body and mind; it is flexible and often free from externally imposed goals.

Types of play ...

Object play is manipulating objects such as clay, water and blocks





Social play, the enjoyment of the reaction of others, and imitation. An early example of this is peek-a-boo.

A photograph of three young children playing with gravel in a playground. A girl in a purple shirt and polka-dot skirt stands on the left, reaching for a yellow shovel. In the center, a girl in a striped shirt and green pants sits on the ground, holding a red bucket filled with gravel. To her right, a boy in a blue shirt and striped shorts sits on the ground, also interacting with the gravel. The background shows a wooden structure and some colorful bunting flags.

Sensorimotor play  
where objects  
provide sensory  
enjoyment



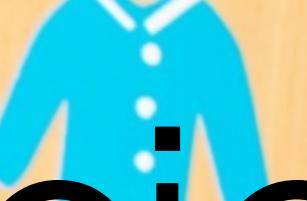
Physical play

A close-up photograph of two young boys laughing and playing together. One boy, wearing a blue and red plaid shirt, is laughing heartily with his mouth wide open. The other boy, wearing a grey and yellow striped shirt, is also laughing and looking towards the camera. They are lying on a light-colored, textured surface, possibly a mat or carpet. The background is slightly blurred.

Physical play also includes running, jumping, skipping and rough-and-tumble.



Exploratory play



# Socio-dramatic play

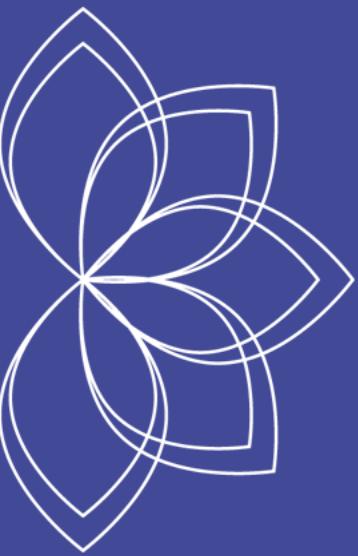




Outdoor Play



Virtual play such as games on computers and other devices



# Benefits of Play

- Children love to play, “anywhere there are children, there is play” ... because it is essential for the well being of children.

The benefits of play include ...

# Social development



# Physical development



# Emotional development





Brain  
development

A close-up photograph of a young girl with blonde hair, wearing a red and white striped beanie, a purple jacket with a small unicorn logo on the sleeve, and a teal hooded sweatshirt. She is sitting at a wooden table, focused on playing with colorful pieces of clay or plasticine. In front of her are several translucent containers holding different colors of the material. The background is blurred, showing an outdoor setting with warm sunlight.

# Cognitive development (thinking)

# Problem solving





Risk taking skills



Executive  
functioning skills



Opportunities  
to role play



Creativity



Research says ...

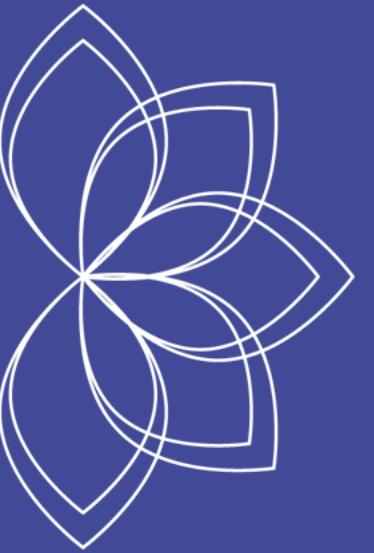
Research and evidence all point to the role of play in children's development and learning across cultures.



In fact research is clear, not allowing children to play is harmful to their development and learning.



The intellectual and cognitive benefits of playing have been well documented. Children who engage in quality play experiences are more likely to have well-developed memory skills, language development, and are able to regulate their behaviour, leading to enhanced school adjustment and academic learning.



## The role of the teacher ...

Many believe that it is impossible to disentangle children's play, learning and development.

Teachers establish a positive social and emotional environment where children are confident in their explorations and risk taking. They support social development and help children to regulate their behaviours.



Teachers understand the power of the environment and plan its use to maximise learning.



Teachers support children's intellectual development, knowing when to leave children to play uninterrupted and when to engage in intentional conversation, asking questions to extend children's learning.



“Play is the highest form of research.”  
Albert Einstein

“Children learn as they play. Most  
importantly, in play children learn how to  
learn.”  
O. Fred Donaldson

Through play, children learn to take turns, delay gratification, negotiate conflicts, solve problems, share goals, acquire flexibility, and live with disappointment. By allowing children to imagine walking in another person's shoes, imaginative play also seeds the development of empathy, a key ingredient for intellectual and social-emotional success.

Erika Christakis and Nicholas Christakis



Play is a  
fundamental right  
of all children.



• Play is an  
essential  
condition  
for all  
humans.

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