



Play Therapy News

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Why is Play So Important?

The essential role of play in healthy human development and learning has been widely researched and documented. Despite this vital information, play is quickly vanishing from educational settings, which may have dire costs for us all.

At an early age, there is a great emphasis on school achievement with most of kid's time spent focusing on mastering academic skills—play is viewed as a waste of time. Long-term research clearly dispels the assumption that, the earlier one starts teaching academic skills, the better the results. But we are seeing Kindergartens

that replace free play, discovery, art, music and 'learning to *enjoy* learning' with lengthy lessons and standardized testing. What folks may not know is that unstructured play is full of children's original ideas and a rich, complex use of language; it builds competence in many domains. This deeper experiential learning benefits children for a lifetime, as it naturally instructs them in problem-solving and social-negotiation skills. They learn the powerful lessons of following their own creative ideas to a successful conclusion. According to a report from the Alliance for Children (2009), research shows that

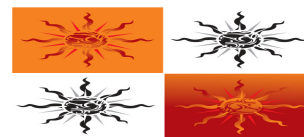


"Who has time to play these days? Life is pretty darned serious. But play is essential for both kids and grown-ups to stay healthy, creative and productive."

- Stuart Brown, Psychiatrist and author of "Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination and Invigorates the Soul"

creative free play improves social and language skills, increases empathy and imagination and renders a better ability to understand "what others mean."

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10 Reasons Play Can Make You Healthy, Happy and Productive

1. Play has been scientifically proven to be good for the brain.
2. Play teaches us to use our imaginations.
3. Rough-and-tumble play teaches us how to cooperate and play fair.
4. Play helps us learn to be friends.
5. Sometimes the best way to learn a complicated subject is to play with it.
6. Kids do better academically when they have recess.
7. Physical play delays mental decline into old age.
8. A little play can help solve big problems.
9. Playing at work is not just useful; it's essential.
10. When we get play right, all areas of our lives go better.

- U.S. News & World Report (2009).

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Dedicated to the Art of Healing
Children and Families through the
Power of Play



Summertime!
In summer, the song sings itself



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In fact, research compared 50 play-based with 50 early-learning centers. Surprisingly by age 10, the children who had played in school excelled over the others in reading, math, social and emotional skills, as well as creativity, intelligence and a sense of "industry."

What are the long-term repercussions of the loss of play for children due to drastic changes in early education? Consider if these damaging ideas were delivered into pre-school and the birth-to-three programs. Moreover, it is predicted that the ability to be creative will be vital in the future economy where there will be a growing demand for products related to right-brained sorts of abilities that free play can build. Humans may not achieve their full capabilities if creativity is impeded in childhood. It is possible that the US may not prosper without an imaginative labor force to carry them into the contemporary future.

Resource Corner

A hurried lifestyle and a heavy academic, as well as extracurricular, load is taking its toll on our children; balance is needed!

A report from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) states that free and unstructured play is healthy and *essential* for helping our children to reach those developmental milestones and in helping to manage their stress. For more, go to:

<http://www.aap.org/pressroom/play-public.htm>

The report defends play and is in response to forces threatening free play and unscheduled time, such as changes in family structure, the competitive college-admissions process and federal educational policies that have led to reduced recess, creative arts and physical education in many of our school systems.