

The Importance of Play

“Play is the foundation of learning, creativity, self-expression, and constructive problem-solving. It’s how children wrestle with life to make it meaningful.” Susan Linn Contemporary American psychiatrist

The Importance of Play in the Lives of Children:

Play is central to children’s learning and development. When children play, it gives them many opportunities to learn.

Key points

- **Play is key to children’s learning, development, confidence and wellbeing.**
- **Variety in play is important because it helps with all areas of children’s development.**
- **Unstructured play and structured play are the main types of play.**
- **As children grow, play changes.**

Skills that children build in play:

Motor Skills: large and small muscle development that includes;

- Reaching and Grasping for toys
- Crawling, Walking and Running
- Throwing and Kicking
- Tool use

Language and Literacy: forms of communication both verbal and nonverbal

- hear, practice, and learn language and emergent literacy
- practice using symbols and understanding symbolic relationships
- explore the use of symbols, and representations (both visual and code-based) to communicate messages in context

Social and Emotional Skills:

- Learning how to interact with others, compromise, and work together
- Especially in social and guided play, children learn self-regulation as they follow norms and pay attention while experiencing feelings such as anticipation or frustration. Play also teaches children how to set and change rules, and how to decide when to lead and when to follow.

Creativity:

- Play helps develop each child’s unique perspective and individual style of creative expression. Play expresses the child’s personal, unique responses to the environment. Play is a self-expressive activity that draws on the child’s powers of imagination.

Play Websites:

- <https://raisingchildren.net.au/newborns/play-learning/play-ideas/why-play-is-important>
- <https://www.encourageplay.com/>
- <https://learningthroughplay.com/>

Play Opportunities near IUB:

- <https://sycamorelandtrust.org/>
- <https://bloomington.in.gov/parks/trails/b-line-trail>
- <https://www.hoosierheightsbloomington.com/>
- <https://wonderlab.org/>
- <https://rhythmdiscoverycenter.org/>
- <https://discovernewfields.org/do-and-see/places-to-go/virginia-b-fairbanks-art-nature-park-100-acres>
- <https://www.childrensmuseum.org/>

16 Play Types

<p>Symbolic Play</p> <p>Using objects, or actions to represent other objects, actions, or ideas, e.g. using a cardboard tube like a telescope.</p>	<p>Rough and Tumble Play</p> <p>Discovering physical flexibility, generally friendly and positive.</p>	<p>Socio-Dramatic Play</p> <p>When children act out experiences, e.g. playing house</p>	<p>Creative Play</p> <p>Allows children to explore, try out new ideas and use their imagination.</p>
<p>Social Play</p> <p>Any social situation where it's expected that everyone will follow the set rules - like during a game</p>	<p>Communication Play</p> <p>Play using words, gestures e.g. charades, telling jokes, play acting, etc.</p>	<p>Dramatic Play</p> <p>Play where children figure out roles to play, assign them and then act them out.</p>	<p>Locomotor Play</p> <p>Movement for movement's sake, just because it's fun. Things like chase, tag, hide and seek and tree climbing</p>
<p>Imaginative Play</p> <p>play where the conventional rules, which govern the physical world, do not apply, like imagining you are a bee, or pretending you have wings.</p>	<p>Exploratory Play</p> <p>using senses of smell, touch and even taste to explore and discover the texture and function of things around them</p>	<p>Fantasy Play</p> <p>child's imagination gets to run wild and they get to play out things that are that are unlikely to occur, like being a pilot or driving a car.</p>	<p>Deep Play</p> <p>Play which allows the child to encounter risky experiences and conquer fear like heights, snakes, and creepy crawlies</p>
<p>Mastery Play</p> <p>control of the physical and affective ingredients of the environments, like digging holes or constructing shelters.</p>	<p>Object Play</p> <p>play which uses sequences of hand-eye manipulations and movements, like using a paintbrush.</p>	<p>Role Play</p> <p>play exploring ways of being, although not normally of an intense nature, like brushing with a broom, dialing with a telephone..</p>	<p>Recapitulative Play</p> <p>play that allows the child to explore ancestry, history, rituals, stories, rhymes, fire and darkness.</p>

Infographic created by www.encourageplay.com,

Play Type Information from Hughes, B. (2002.) A Playworker's Taxonomy of Play Types, 2nd edition, London: