







BUILDING STRONG FAMILIES THROUGH PLAY

Part 1 – What is Play?


Play is defined as “engaging in activity for enjoyment and recreation rather than a serious or practical purpose”. Play is enjoyable, spontaneous, and child-driven. For many adults, play can appear to be without purpose, but it really is the **key to learning** as children are actively engaged, intrinsically motivated and often comfortable in the world of play.





Types of Play:

Learning about the Physical World:



Types of Play	Definitions	Examples
CREATIVE PLAY 	- Allows children to use their imagination and express their emotions, feelings, and ideas through different medium	-Painting -Playing with “loose parts” -Combining materials into a new form
EXPLORATORY PLAY 	- Explores an environment through their body (e.g., jumping and swinging) and their senses (touch, see, smell, hear and taste)	-Building sandcastle -Mouthing an object
MASTERY PLAY 	- Understands their relationship with the physical (limits, balance, respect, control, power) and affective ingredients (what impact does it have on them?) of the environments of the world around them	-Digging holes -Fire building -Blocking drains to create puddles
OBJECT PLAY 	- Uses sequences and combinations of hand-eye manipulations and movements to bring about new understanding of possibilities of everyday objects	-Playing with the objects in unexpected or unconventional ways -Making music with pots and pans

Learning about Self:



Types of Play	Definitions	Examples
COMMUNICATION PLAY 	- Uses words and nonverbal communication (e.g., gestures, hands, and body language) to play	-Singing -Rhyming -Charades -Pat-a-cake




DRAMATIC PLAY 	- Takes on a new role and act out that role	-Making plays, song and dance routines -Pretending to be famous
SOCIO-DRAMATIC PLAY 	- Involves acting out real and potential experiences of an intense personal, social, domestic, or interpersonal nature	-Playing house -Going to school
ROLE PLAY 	- Explores different ways of being, interpreting them from their own frame of reference	-Enacting adults – driving and talking on the phone
SOCIAL PLAY 	- Engages in social or interactive situation where everyone is expected to follow the set rules	-Board games -Conversations

Learning about Body and Limits:

Types of Play	Definitions	Examples
ROUGH AND TUMBLE PLAY 	- Experiences friendly and positive close encounters, social bonding, physical activities, and insights about self in relation to others	-Wrestling -Physical contact games
LOCOMOTOR PLAY 	- Involves movement play	-Chasing -Climbing -Jumping -Swinging -Hula-hooping

Learning about Humanity:

Types of Play	Definitions	Examples
DEEP PLAY 	- Encounters with risky experiences and thrills	-High tree climbing -Biking along parapet
FANTASY PLAY 	- Is driven by child's imagination and assess other realities	-Being a fire breathing dragon -Casting spells

IMAGINATIVE PLAY 	- Plays without limits of any conventional rules	-Being a tree -Eating invisible food
RECAPITULATIVE PLAY 	- Allows the child to explore ancestry, history, and earlier human evolution	-Rituals -Stories
SYMBOLIC PLAY 	- Uses objects or actions to represent other objects or actions.	-Using a banana as a telephone

(Hughes, 2006; Play Scotland, 2017)

Parent Resources:

Encourage Play: What is play? <https://www.encourageplay.com/teach-through-play>

Play Scotland: Play Types Toolkit <https://www.playscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/Play-Scotland-Play-Types-Toolkit-bringing-more-play-into-the-school-day.pdf>