

INFORMATION SHEET



Just 4 Tots FDC

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

What is it?

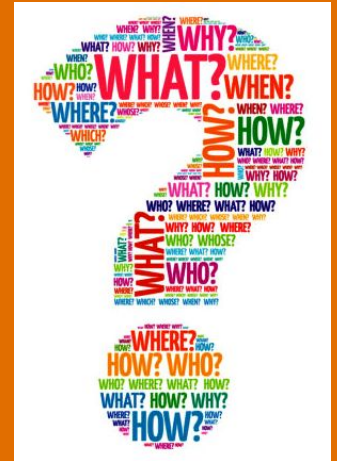
According to the Early Years Learning Framework, play-based learning is “a context for learning through which children organise and make sense of their social worlds, as they engage actively with people, objects and representations” (EYLF, p6). Simply put, learning through play gives children the opportunity to explore, discover and make sense of their world in a way that makes it interesting to them.

Play can be likened to scale that has different levels. On one end of the scale is “free play” – children playing without any adult intervention. They choose what to play with, who to play with, and how to play with equipment and peers. On the other end of the scale is playing with an objective in mind, for example when an educator sets up a dentist’s room to assist children who might be afraid of an upcoming dentist visit. In the middle is where educators observe a child’s interests, provide an environment that encourages the interest and TOGETHER make sense of the world around them without directly teaching.

Of course, we can all agree playing is fun! But more than that it provides babies, toddlers, and children from very early on, an opportunity to engage, interact with and make sense of the world around them (e.g., a baby will learn that banging two toys together makes a sound). However, educators know that play is much more than fun.

Play provides children the chance to learn develop holistically. Children’s development is generally divided into 5 areas: physical, language, cognitive, social, and emotional. However, learning doesn’t happen in each area independently. Cognitive skills such as pattern recognition, is not only important for number patterns. It is also an essential skill to see patterns in words (e.g., sat, pat etc).

“Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood”
(Fred Rogers)



Do you have a question?

If you have a question or would like more information about child development or early childhood education, please feel free to drop us an email at just4totsfdc@outlook.com and we will do our best to provide you with answers!

References

https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-02/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf

<https://childhood101.com/playful-learning/>

“Learning Through Play” (2018), Christine Robinson, Tracy Treasure, Dee O’Connor, Gerardine Heylon, Cathie Harrison, Samantha Wynne

Skills that can be learnt through play

Imagine a group of children are trying to build a tower. They begin by placing a small block on the bottom and use larger blocks as they go. They build the tower 4 or 5 blocks high; it becomes top heavy and collapses. The children laugh at the falling over but ask their educator to help them make their tower taller the next time.

The educator suggests thinking about why the tower fell over. She discusses the size and shapes of the blocks. He might describe one block as heavier than the other. The children begin to look at different ways of building and one child suggests using a big block on the bottom.

The teacher steps back and gives the children time and space to rebuild their tower. This time, the tower gets much taller as they balance the blocks in order of size. They call the teacher over who praises them for working together and solving the problem.

SKILLS DEVELOPED THROUGH PLAY



In this one activity, the children have developed the following skills:

Cognitive Skills: problem solving, hypothesising, persistence, patterns, sizing, trial and error, cause and effect, creativity, shape recognition

Physical Skills: Fine motor skills are developed as they pick up and place the blocks carefully so as not to knock over the tower, spatial awareness as they are aware of the space required for their tower

Social Skills: negotiation, cooperation, teamwork, collaboration

Emotional Skills: managing frustration when their goal didn't quite get there and sense of achievement as they reach their goal

Language Skills: listening to each other, communicating, discussing how to move forward, vocabulary development such as heavy, light

All this from *playing* with blocks.

This is just one of many examples from a typical day at an early childhood education service. As children grow and learn, these skills form the cornerstone of future success not only at school but into the future as they grow to be balanced, successful in all they do as adults.

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