



THE VALUE OF PLAY

PLAY-BASED LEARNING FOR P-3 STUDENTS

Presented by
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Presenters



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Reminders and Overview



THE OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING

- Provides direction and support to inform Statewide policies and programs related to best practices across PreK to Grade 3.
- Support LEAs in the provision of high-quality prekindergarten programming
- Guidance for Voluntary Registered Nursery Schools and Kindergartens
- Support early learning providers, school districts, and families
- Remains current with review of research to inform policies and practices related to early childhood education
- Administers and monitors State-Administered Prekindergarten to over 650 districts, 6,000 3-year-old students and 116,000 four-year old students

LEADERSHIP



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Learning Outcomes

- Explore research trends
- Examine the New York State Standards
- Examine characteristics of play-based learning
- Evaluate the continuum for play-based learning
- Identify challenges and how to overcome
- Incorporate play-based learning in grades Prekindergarten - 3rd grade



The Science of Play

“You can discover more about a child in one hour of play than you can in one year of conversation.”

-Plato



**When you think of “play” in the
classroom, what immediately comes to
your mind?**

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What is Play?

“Play is the work of childhood”

– Jean Piaget

“Play gives children a chance to practice what they are learning.”

– Mr. Fred Rogers

“Play is a way to establish new connections; it primes the cortex for the development of the neural pathways that create our physical, social-emotional, and cognitive capabilities. So, the more often children are in a play state, the more new brain circuits form and build their skills. Playing literally wires the brain for the skills we use our whole lifetime — physical agility, social confidence, emotional regulation, creativity, and resilience. As adults, time spent in a play state increases our resilience — it activates neural pathways in the brain that mitigate the effects of stress.”

- National Institute for Play

What Does the Research Say?



The Research and the Why of Play-Based Learning

Children learn best when they are engaged in play.

Play is a vehicle for learning and social development.

Play helps children to make connections.

Play allows children to learn, practice, and master skills.

Play provides a Zone of Proximal Development.

Play is a powerful instructional tool.

The Research and the Why of Play-Based Learning

Mitigates
toxic
stress

Supports
healthy
development
and acquisition
of content and
learning new
skills

Benefits differ
across contexts
and cultures

(2018) The power of play: A pediatric role in enhancing development in young children. *Pediatrics*, 142(3).

Skills for Today & Tomorrow

Knowledge, Skills & Competencies for a New Era

**Critical
Thinking**

Analysis

**Problem
Solving**

**Self-
management**

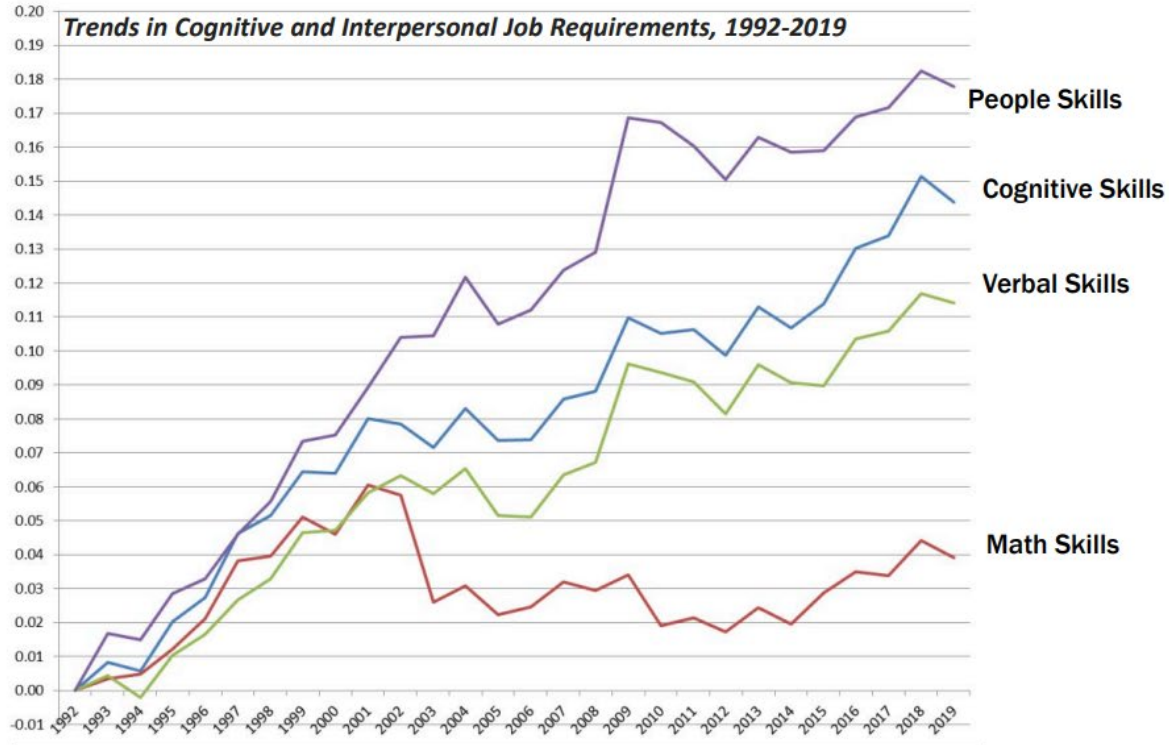
**Active
Learning**

**Top skills and skills groups rising
into prominence by 2025**

Source: World Economic Forum: Future of Jobs Report 2020



Knowledge, Skills & Competencies for a New Era



*Scaled to the mean in 1992

Handel, 2020, Figure III.8

“In order to prepare young people to do the jobs computers and technology cannot do, we must re-focus our education system around one objective:

Giving students the foundational skills in problem-solving and communication that computers don't have.”

Presented by Nonie K. Lesaux, PhD, August 17, 2023, NYSED Summer Institute - Lewandowski, 2022; Murnane & Levy, 2013; White House, 2022

https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/early-learning/n-lesaux-p3-institute_aug17-accessible.pdf

https://ibs.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/GLOBAL-DIVERGENCE-IN-THE-DE-ROUTINIZATION-OF-JOBS-IBS_WP_08-223.pdf

<https://www.thirdway.org/report/dancing-with-robots-human-skills-for-computerized-work>

Summary of the Benefits of Play-Based Learning



Nurtures the imagination



Promotes creativity & problem solving



Foundation for literacy



Speech development



Cognitive processing




Self-awareness



Self-regulation

NY State Learning Standards

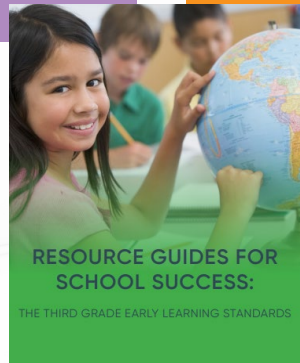
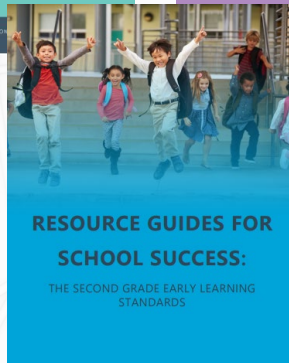
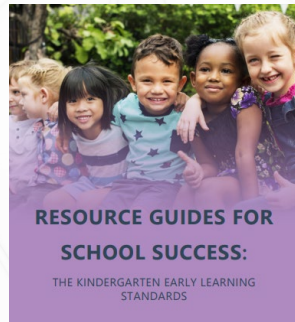


**RESOURCE GUIDES FOR
SCHOOL SUCCESS:**

KINDERGARTEN EARLY LEARNING
STANDARDS

Play-Based Learning and New York State PreK Standards

What do the New York State Prekindergarten Standards say about Play-Based Learning?



Introduction: NYS Next Generation Early Learning Standards

"In the early childhood classroom, developmentally appropriate practices create the conditions for learning that stimulate an active, joyful engagement in young children. Children's natural inclination to play represents an efficacious approach to learning in early childhood."

-Dr. Zoila Morell, Associate Professor

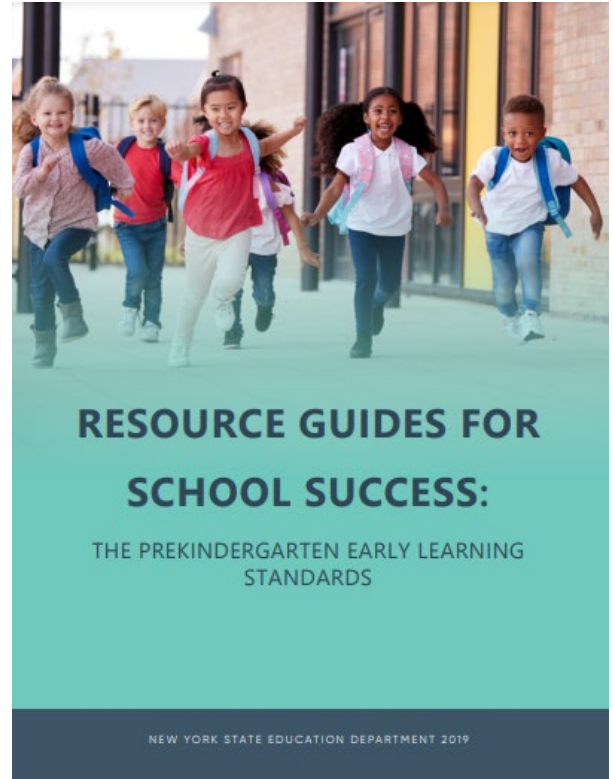
[Introduction to NYS Next Generation Early Learning Standards](#)



What do the New York State PreK Standards say about Play-Based Learning?

Domain 1: Approaches to Learning

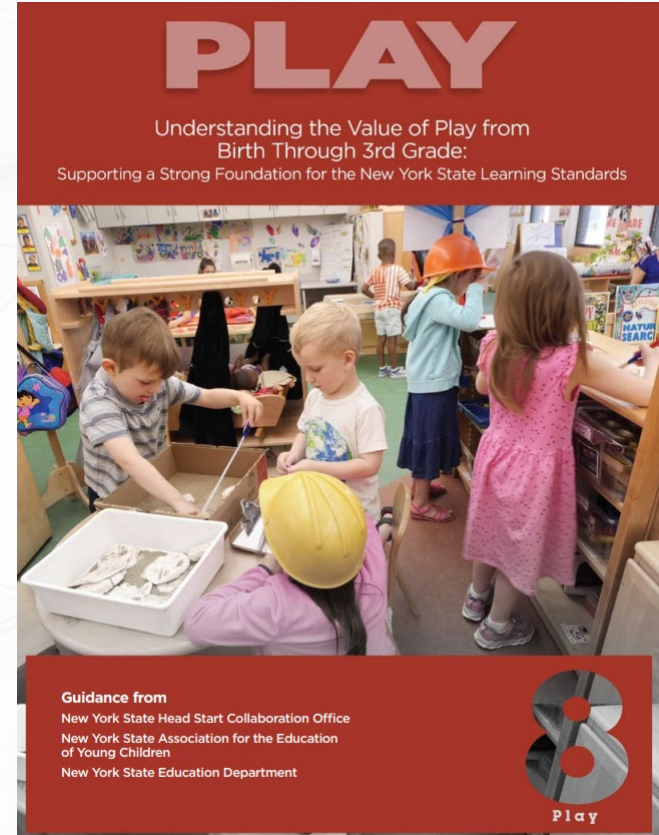
- Play and Engagement in Learning
- Creativity and Imagination
- Curiosity and Initiative
- Persistence



Guidance on Play

- Connections to later school success
- Stages of play
- Types of play
- Strategies to strengthen play

Developmentally Appropriate Practice Briefs



Play Brief

Guidance on Play



[Planning for High-Quality PreK Programs](#)

Characteristics of Purposeful Play



Characteristics of Purposeful Playful Learning

What does it look like when children learn through play?



Joyful

What is it?

- Pleasure, enjoyment, motivation, thrilling

How does it support learning?

- Joy is often linked with interest or motivation
- Emotions are integral to neural networks responsible for learning
- Joy is associated with increased dopamine levels linked to enhanced memory, attention, mental shifting, creativity and motivation



Meaningful

What is it?

- Connected to a child's feelings and thoughts

How does it support learning?

- Helps children make sense of the world around them
- Process the things they have seen and heard
- Builds upon child's current understanding



Actively Engaging

What is it?

- Immersed, lose oneself in, engrossed, discovery-based, self-directed, hands-on, or can be cerebral

How does it support learning?

- Increases brain activation
- Provides memories that aid in retrieving information
- Results in deeper understanding
- Improves students' performance
- Decreases failure rates



Iterative

What is it?

- Involves repetition
repeating → tweaking → improving

How does it support learning?

- Allows for mistakes, which leads to improvement
- Challenges or validates assumptions
- Avoids jumping to conclusions
- Allows for reflection
- Open to improvements



Socially Interactive

What is it?

- Meaningful dialogue among learners

How does it support learning?

- Increases critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Deepens communication and articulation skills
- Builds deeper understanding
- Builds relationships
- Learning to negotiate
- Helps to see other's perspectives/ways of thinking



Types of Play



The Continuum for Play-Based Learning

Types of Play



Free Play

- Child directed
- Children determine own resources
- Little to no educator involvement
- Encourages:
 - self-regulation
 - independence
 - self-motivated learning
 - exploration



Inquiry Play

- Child initiated
- Teacher integrates materials and incorporates standards
- Follow the lead of the students
- Expands on children's interests
- Example: Centers/Stations
 - Dramatic Play, Art, Blocks, Writing Center, Sensory Bin, Technology



Collaborative Play

- Teacher determines the standards
- Teacher and students work to develop the activity
- Children then direct the play within the created environment



Playful Learning

- Teacher guided
- Children explore to meet specific learning objectives set by teacher
- Supports learning of targeted academic skills in an engaging manner



Learning Through Games

- Teacher directed
- Child follows the designed activity or rules of a game
- Engaging and motivating for children
- Used to teach focused skills in literacy & math skills
- Example: Letter match, word bingo, dice games



The Continuum for Play-Based Learning

Types of Play



Challenges and Solutions



Challenges and how to Overcome Them

Challenges	How to Overcome
Time	Adjust schedules Purposeful planning
Minimal equipment available	Careful review of available materials
Lack of training	Training for teachers and paraprofessionals in play-based instructional practices

Play-Based Learning in Prekindergarten



Play-Based Learning in Prekindergarten

CENTER-BASED APPROACH

What Centers Should I Have?

- Blocks and Construction
- Media / Technology
- Creative Arts
- Music / Movement
- Dramatic Play
- Sand and Water Play / Sensory
- Mathematics and Manipulatives
- Science and Nature
- Literacy (Language Arts, Reading/Writing, Library)

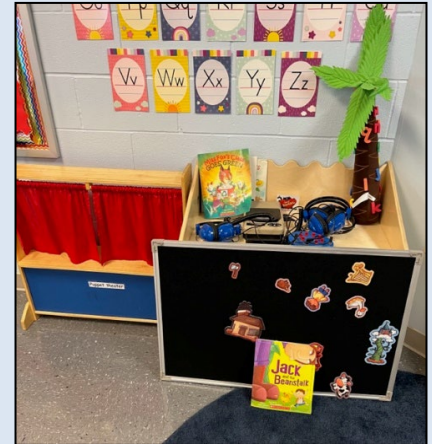
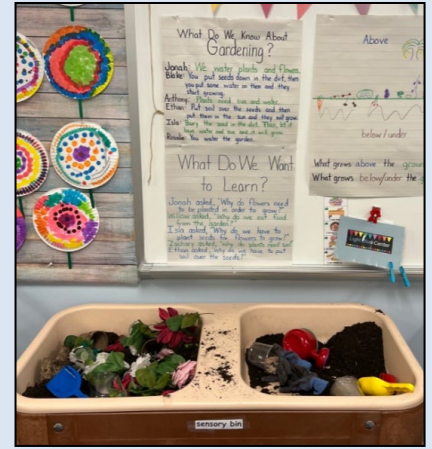


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How to Incorporate Theme



How to Incorporate Theme



How to Promote Literacy Development

Mathematics / Manipulatives



Blocks and Construction

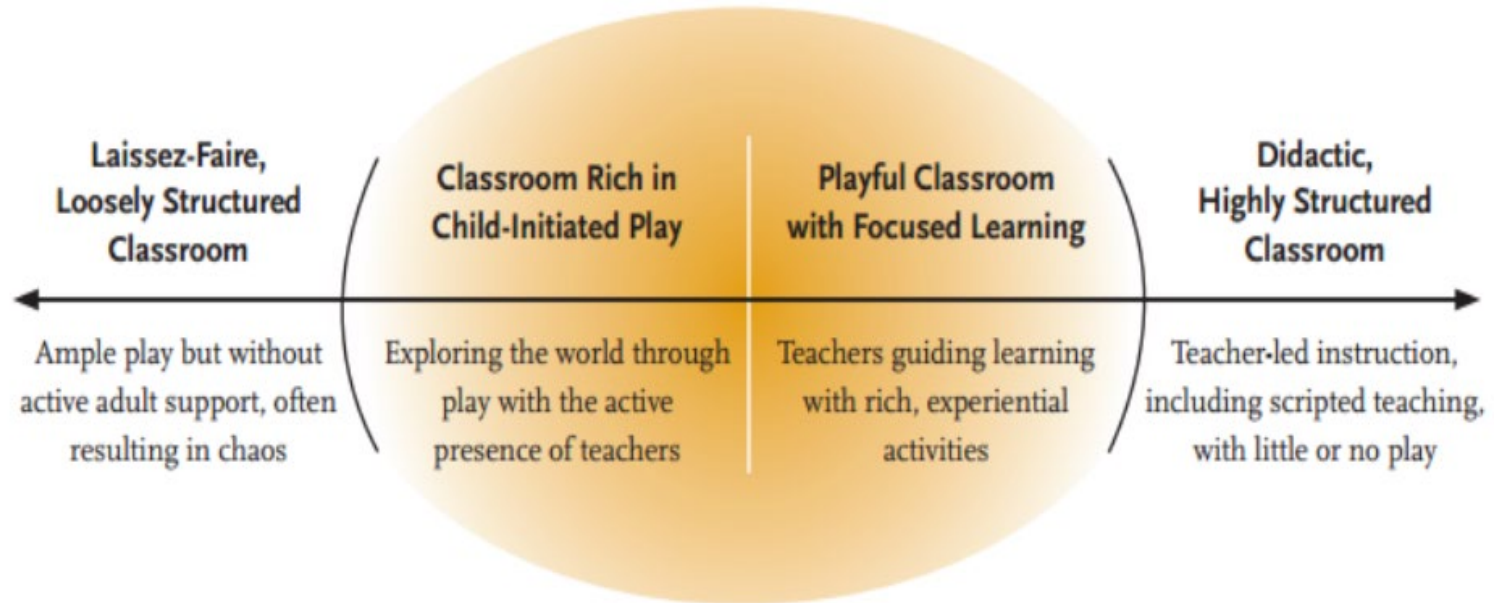


Play-Based Learning in Kindergarten & 1st Grade



Play-Based Learning in Kindergarten

THE KINDERGARTEN CONTINUUM



Play-Based Learning in Kindergarten & 1st Grade

“Children benefit from play and playful learning, from choosing their own activities, and from individual and small group pursuits rather than whole group ones.”

Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, Roberta Michnick Golinkoff, Laura E. Berk, and Dorothy G. Singer, *A Mandate for Playful Learning in Preschool: Presenting the Evidence* (Oxford University Press, 2009)



Play-Based Learning in 1st Grade



Play-Based Learning in 2nd & 3rd Grade



Play-Based Learning in 2nd & 3rd Grade

Children need:

- Autonomy
- Self-Directed Learning
- Time and Space
- Big Ideas
- Open Ended Questions



Play-Based Learning in 2nd & 3rd Grade



Play-Based Learning in 2nd & 3rd Grade



Strategies for Administrators

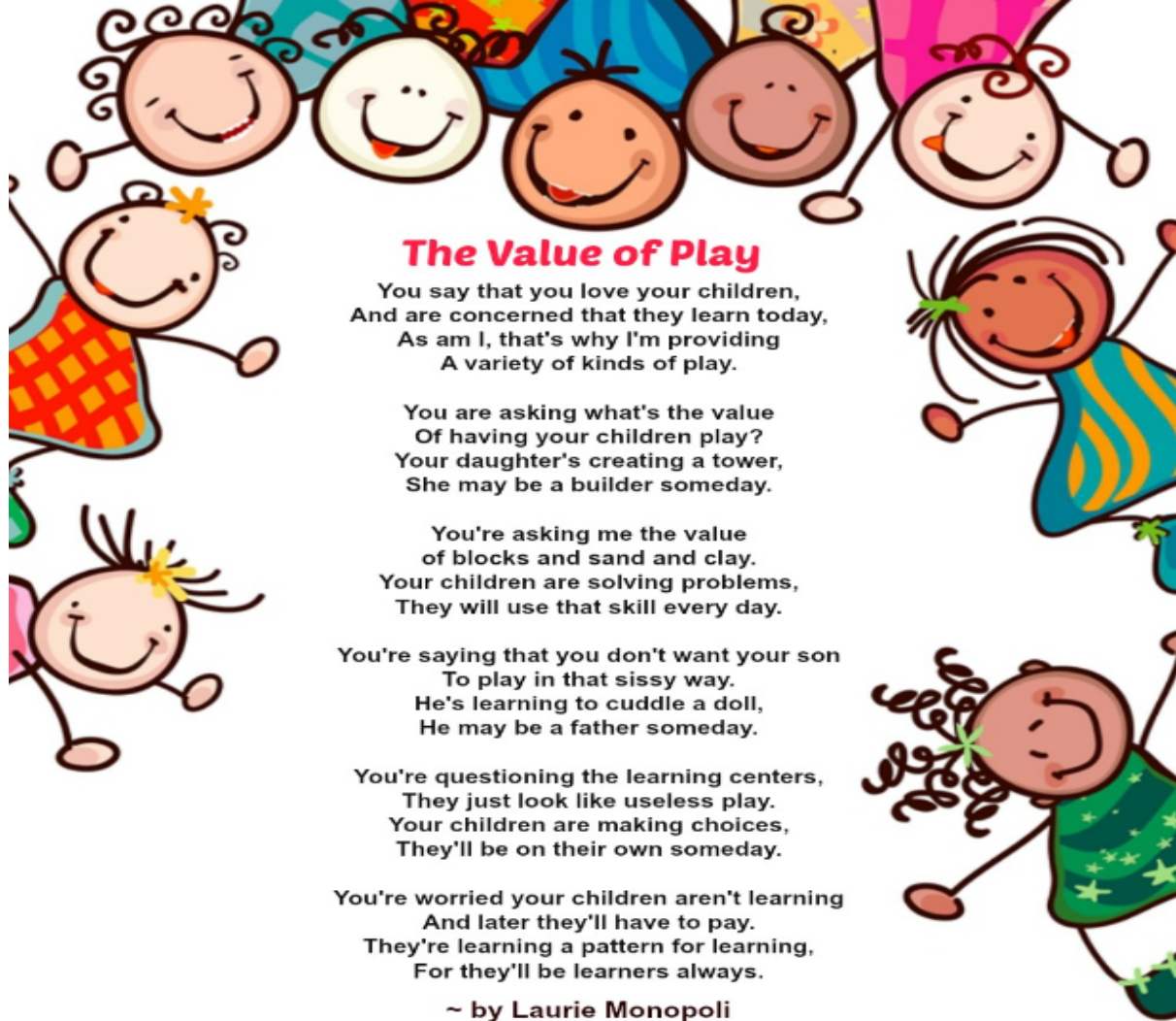
- Support the integration of play
- Provide professional learning experiences
- Inform families about the use and purpose of play
- Provide collaborative opportunities
- Provide age-appropriate materials and resources
- Engage and/or observe children in play experiences



Strategies for Teachers

- Set up distinct learning centers
- Incorporate current topic of study
- Encourage participation
- Integrate home languages
- Use many modalities of instruction
- Join in play and follow child's lead
- Rotate and provide materials
- Ask open-ended questions





The Value of Play

You say that you love your children,
And are concerned that they learn today,
As am I, that's why I'm providing
A variety of kinds of play.

You are asking what's the value
Of having your children play?
Your daughter's creating a tower,
She may be a builder someday.

You're asking me the value
Of blocks and sand and clay.
Your children are solving problems,
They will use that skill every day.

You're saying that you don't want your son
To play in that sissy way.
He's learning to cuddle a doll,
He may be a father someday.

You're questioning the learning centers,
They just look like useless play.
Your children are making choices,
They'll be on their own someday.

You're worried your children aren't learning
And later they'll have to pay.
They're learning a pattern for learning,
For they'll be learners always.

~ by Laurie Monopoli

Questions?



Play Based Webinar Survey



THANK YOU!

Contact Us:



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www.nysed.gov/early-learning

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