Learning through play

Play is one of the main ways in which children learn and develop. It helps to build self-worth by giving a child a sense of his or her own abilities and to feel good about themselves. Because it’s fun, children often become very absorbed in what they are doing.

Play is very important to a child’s development, it is an integral part of a child’s Early Years Foundation Stage and supports their learning journey too. Young children can develop many skills through the power of play. They may develop their language skills, emotions, creativity and social skills.

Play helps to nurture imagination and give a child a sense of adventure. Through this, they can learn essential skills such as problem solving, working with others, sharing and much more.

In turn, this helps them develop the ability to concentrate. Providing children with a range of playthings will help them learn in a number of ways:

- Sand and water play can be an early introduction to science and math, e.g. learning that water is fluid, not solid, and that it can be measured in different sized containers.
- Playing with dough or clay, drawing and painting pictures, dressing up, playing with dolls can encourage creativity, imagination and expression of feelings.
- Building blocks, jigsaws and shape sorters can help with recognizing different shapes and sizes, putting things in order and developing logic.
- Playing ball games, dancing, running, climbing all help to develop body movement, strength, flexibility and co-ordination skills.
- Games help with turn taking, sharing and mixing with others.
- Singing, playing simple music instruments help to develop rhythm, listening and hearing.

It’s important that learning is fun at this age. It needs to be about doing things with them that they like. They might find unusual ways of doing things - for a toddler, building blocks aren’t just for making towers, and paint can be used without a brush! Show them how things work, but if they want to experiment, let them.

Children learn through all their senses

(Continued on page 4)
Are you a family child care provider looking for a Parent Aware approved curriculum? Enter our drawing for a complete Creative Curriculum Kit for Family Child Care. This kit contains everything you need to implement the curriculum right away. To see more about what is included in the kit, go to https://shop.teachingstrategies.com/collections/family-child-care/products/the-creative-curriculum-for-family-child-care-3rd-edition-with-daily-resources.

To enter send your information to Annette Borman at 763-783-4711 or aborman@accap.org by Friday, January 24, 2020. The winner will be announced January 27, 2020.

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I’m a Little Snowman

Tune: I’m a Little Teapot

I’m a little snowman short and fat.
Here are my buttons, here is my hat.
When the sun comes out, I can’t play.
I just slowly melt away!
Join us for a Professional Learning Community meeting for a conversation about building Relationships with Families

Tuesday, February 18, 2020
6:30-8:30pm
Blaine Human Service Center
1201 89th Ave NE, Room 395
Blaine MN 55434

Please RSVP to:
Annette Borman
aborman@accap.org
763-783-4711

Thursday, February 20, 2020
6:30-8:30pm
Jerry’s Food Store
2nd Floor Meeting Room
7760 Hargis Parkway,
Woodbury MN 55129

If you need an interpreter, please contact us seven (7) days before the event.

Professional Learning Community meetings are not Develop approved training events. These meetings are an opportunity to learn with, and from, your fellow early childhood educators about various topics. This learning opportunity may sometimes be supported by guest speakers. Participants will receive a letter confirming their attendance. Please check with your licensor regarding whether they will accept this letter towards your annual training requirements.

Watch for an email from Annette in early February for more details!

What Happens When You Refer a Child Through Help Me Grow

If you have concerns about a young child’s development, you should discuss your concerns with the child’s parents and urge them to talk to their child’s healthcare provider. You or the parents can use Help Me Grow to refer the child for help. A referral is a powerful tool to connect a child to services as early as possible, to help him/her learn and grow.

http://helpmegrowmn.org/HMG/HelpfulRes/Articles/WhatHappensReferChild/index.html

Online Newsletter Highlight

Check out the resources from Community Playthings, including a weekly blog and large collection of articles. There are also free resources that you can order.

https://www.communityplaythings.com/resources/blog
through taste, touch, vision, hearing and smelling. They will watch those around them and copy lan-
guage and behavior.

Don’t push your child too hard. Children develop in their own ways and in their own time. Try not to
compare them to other children. You can also encourage reading, by reading to and with them. Look at
the pictures together; this will help younger children make sense of the words.

It's also good to talk to them a lot, about everyday things while you are cooking or cleaning. This will
give you a chance to teach them how things work and they will be able to ask you questions. Get ready
for lots of “why’s?”

**Setting the scene**

Anyone who spends any amount of time with young children understands that providing them with
opportunities for play provides so much more than a few minutes or hours of ‘fun’. Play also allows
children to relax, let off steam, develop social skills such as concentration and co-operation, encour-
gages the development of the imagination, develops motor skills and teaches self expression.

Sarah Owen, founder of ‘Pyjama Drama’ – drama, music, movement and play for pre-school children
says, ‘*Many children seem to be born with a natural ability to play, but some children find it more diffi-
cult and need to ‘learn’ how to play well and this is where parents can make a big difference. Whilst it is
very important that children play with their peers and are given opportunities for unstructured play,
children who also play with a loved adult can benefit greatly – the benefits of having fun together can-
not be underestimated!*’

Adults have a role within play by making time and space available with the relevant resources. Think
about creating play ideas that help support and extend learning and development.

**Dramatic play aka role play**

Dramatic play is essential to a child’s social (or emotional) development and can play a large part in
their physical development too. Children make sense of the world in which they live by acting out situ-
ations before they happen and by copying what they see around them. Pretend (or dramatic) play con-
tributes to a child’s emotional development as they learn to see life from a different viewpoint and al-
lows them to ‘trial’ situations before they happen.

Most children are naturally imaginative and will happily talk away to someone on their toy phone or
drive the sofa to the shops, and this creativity should be actively encouraged! This type of play also de-
velops children’s imaginations which are closely linked to intellectual development.

**Outdoor play and exploration**

Encouraging your young child to explore outdoor play is extreme-
ly beneficial and necessary for their development. Outdoor play
helps them to learn lots about the everchanging environment and
gives them the opportunity to use their whole body and develop
their gross motor skills. It can meet their multi-sensory needs and
can give them a love for the outdoors. Whether it is messy play,
creative or role play, it is an essential part of learning.

[Froebel Trust](https://www.froebel-trust.org.uk) has produced an informative pamphlet talking
about outdoor play with lots of ideas and advice. [Click here to
download this.](https://www.froebel-trust.org.uk)
WINTER MATH GAME INSPIRED BY FROZEN

I had no clue what to name this game. After watching Frozen for the 15th time (and yes if you must know I still cry when Anna steps between Hans and Elsa), my daughter and I brainstormed some ideas. We thought about making a Sven craft, then some snowflakes but we already have so many snowflake crafts ... then this popped into my head. What if we used my daughter’s favorite movie EVER as inspiration for a gross motor math game? I wasn’t sure it would work but I knew we had to try. Well it did work and she loved it! Using your child’s interests is so important when doing educational activities at home. At school they won’t always get a chance to have such targeted ideas presented to them and at home it’s a great way to entice them to do something educational. How can they resist when it’s all about their favorite movie/book/character... etc....? Also worth noting is that this would be a FUN Frozen party game for birthday parties. I’d write names on the snowflakes and have the party goers retrieve their own and the birthday boy or girl grab the frozen heart in the middle.

This could easily be adapted to any theme – you just need a basic shape, some things for the numbers, and stuff to walk over. You’ll see.

**The Rules Of The Game:**

*Roll the die and retrieve the number snowflake you rolled without falling off the snowflake (you can decide what constitutes falling off the tape).
*Walk back to start and drop the snowflake.
*After they have retrieved a designated amount of the snowflakes (we did 3), they can go retrieve the frozen heart at the middle.

*If they step off the snowflake or step on any of the pom poms, they must start all over again.

**How To Set It Up**

Gather your materials. You will need painter’s tape, pom poms, snowflakes, a marker, and a die or two. You may also want a heart gem to make the center heart. The one we are using was a tree ornament my daughter created herself, but seemed perfect for this activity.

Start by making the number snowflakes; we were just doing 1-6 to match the number she rolled, but if you are playing with 2 dice and working on addition or subtraction, you’ll want all the possible sums/differences.

Pop the tape on your floor. I am too nervous to use this on my newly re-stained wood floors, so I stick to our living room carpet. My daughter even helped.

Now place the pom poms randomly. These are ice bombs and if you step on one you must return all the snowflakes you have earned and start again.

Place the numbered snowflakes on the tape.

Make a little snowflake to act as the starting point.

Play! Roll. Walk. Pick up the snowflake. Avoid those ice bombs!

Roll again and again until it’s time to gather the frozen heart in the middle. There are so many ways to play with this idea. I hope we’ve inspired you to create something for your kids!

This was the perfect game after a few sick days to just get up and move a little. By using something she is great at (numbers are her thing), mixed with something she is not... balance not so much her thing... I created a challenging but fun activity.

Source: [https://www.notimeforflashcards.com/2015/01/frozen-party-game.html](https://www.notimeforflashcards.com/2015/01/frozen-party-game.html)
HOW TO MAKE SNOWMAN CRAYONS

I am sure you have seen this or perhaps done this yourself. We made recycled crayons way back in the first few months of blogging and many times since, but here is a tutorial anyway.

Gather your materials. You will need some unwanted crayons, a silicone mold, and an oven.

Turn your oven on to 250. Ovens vary, if you haven’t done this before try 220 to start with and raise it if the crayons aren’t melting. I was in a time crunch (when am I not?) and so I went up to 250 and it was fine. The wax should not smoke at all.

Start by peeling your crayons. I really hate doing this, but luckily my daughter loves it, so I had a lot of peeled and partially peeled crayons on hand.

Break them and pop them in your mold.

Into the oven they go. Do not forget to place the mold on a cookie sheet. It’s much easier not to spill hot wax all over your oven this way.

I have done this probably 20 times and this was the first time I had to fish unmelted crayons out of the mix. I had some Disney Princess crayons that didn’t melt at all, check out my Instagram to see.

As soon as they are all melted, turn the oven off and let them cool.

Pop them out!

Source: https://www.notimeforflashcards.com/

Join us at the Maplewood Lakeshore Learning store for supper and networking….and maybe some shopping too!

Thursday, February 27, 2020
6:30pm-8:00pm
Lakeshore Learning
1721 Beam Ave.
Maplewood, MN 55109

RSVP to: Annette Borman by 2/24/2020