
Play-based Learning

What is play-based learning?

Play-based learning is a way of teaching and learning appropriate for young children including primary aged children.

What does it look like?

Play is:

- Child-chosen
 - Children are free to choose among many possibilities, make the rules and control their own play.
 - Children engage in their interests so they have a natural motivation to learn; they learn the most from play that belongs to them.
- Created by the child
 - Children are frequently inventing new ideas, new constructions or doing something they have not tried before. They use many materials to build, create and talk about what they are doing.
 - They will use a word, a toy or a set of blocks to represent a real experience or a powerful feeling; they are developing creativity and thinking skills.
- Pretending
 - Children use their imaginations and pretend that the activities they are doing are real.
 - They use their imaginations to improvise, to think flexibly, and to explore new options.
 - Through pretend play, children develop the ability to use their imaginations to represent objects, people, and ideas.
 - Children frequently use play to make their first attempts at pretending to read and write; they act as if they are able readers and writers.
- Discovering
 - Children prefer to learn from the process or doing the activity rather than the outcome or product.
 - Children use play to work through their feelings in creative ways and to make sense of the world around them.
- Focused and Fun
 - Children prefer to be actively engaged with their minds and bodies.
 - Learning occurs where children are interacting with their surroundings and materials and cooperating with other children and adults.
 - Children enjoy being with others, solving problems, expressing their ideas and cooperating with other children in mutually satisfying projects

How can adults support children's play?

- Parents and/or caregivers can:
 - Provide opportunities where children can plan their own play and activities; solve problems both with materials and people; and pay attention to a project until it is done
 - Provide a safe environment with support and rules so that children can learn as much as possible

- Educators can:
 - Spend time listening to children's thinking and pose questions to deepen understanding and help put their new learnings into words.
 - Observe and support the child's interactions with the materials and others

For children, play is as natural as breathing-and as necessary. Mimi Brodsky Chenfield

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