



Play

WHY IS PLAY SO IMPORTANT?

“Children learn about the world through play” (Sherkow, 2004)

- Play helps children learn about themselves, their emotions and their relationships
- It helps children master skills they need to function as an adult
- Play can be a means of communication
- A child’s main occupation is to play!

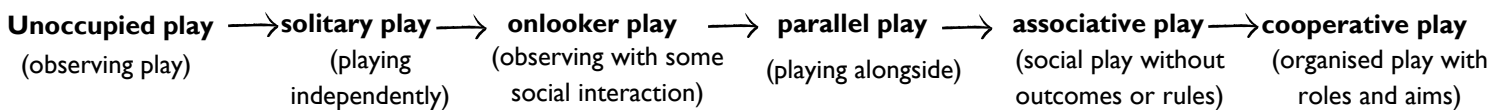


WHAT CAN PLAY LOOK LIKE?

There are many theories to describe how play develops in children and the different stages and ages of play. What is important is knowing play can look different for everyone. Some people engage in only a couple of play schemas while others engage in many - there is no right or wrong way to play!

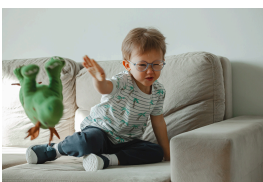
PLAY STAGES

How play may develop and what it may look like (according to Parten, 1932):



PLAY SCHEMAS

Play schemas are natural urges of repeated actions and behaviours used to explore the world:



TRAJECTORY

How does this object (or I) move through space?



ENVELOPING

How can I cover this object (or me) completely?



TRANSFORMING

How can I make this object different?



ENCLOSING

How can I make a border around these objects (or me)?



ROTATIONAL

How does this object (or I) roll and spin?



CONNECTION

How do these objects join or pull apart?



ORIENTATION

How can I view the world differently?



POSITIONING

How can I arrange or group these objects?



TRANSPORTING

How can I move these objects?





Activity Ideas

What do you notice about your child's play skills and preferences? How can you join in your child's play?

Messy Play

Using sensorymotor skills to explore and engage.

Exploratory, Scientific Play

Imaginative Play

Also known as pretend play or symbolic play where objects represent other things (e.g. a block is a phone) and stories and emotions are acted out.

Rough and Tumble Play

'Play fighting' involving climbing, crawling, wrestling to explore and connect.

Functional Play

Using toys for intended purposes.

Constructive Play

Using toys and loose parts to build something.

Games with Rules

Games of chance or games that require skill to achieve a goal.

GAMES TO PLAY

- drawing in shaving foam
- finding toys in rice or pasta
- slime
- water play
- drawing in the sand
- using the senses to explore an object (is it hot/cold/heavy/soft/bright/colourful etc.)
- how many things can you find that are ____ (chose a colour/shape/texture)?
- cooking
- bicarb and vinegar volcanoes
- explore nature
- colour reactions, mixing food colouring in cups of water

- dress ups
- role play
- pretend to be in a library/school/restaurant and take on different roles
- play with dolls, dress them, feed them etc.
- singing
- dance parties

- pool noodle fights
- jumping into crashmats
- trampolines
- push-o-wars on soft surface kneeling (kneel opposite and place hands together in a high-10 to try and push the other player over)
- push-o-war on soft surface crawling (assume a crawling position side by side then using your hip and shoulder try and push the other player over)

- cause and effect toys (e.g. jack-in-a-box, light up toys)
- musical instruments
- practical toys such as cleaning and gardening sets.
- sports
- throwing/catching/kicking a ball

- Duplo
- Lego
- building blocks
- flower connectors
- obstacle courses
- art and craft
- puzzles
- Connetix
- Suction toys

- Uno
- snakes and ladders
- snap
- guess who
- go fish
- Spot it
- Jenga
- duck-duck-goose
- tag
- hide-and-seek

