

## YOUR CHILD AND PLAY

We all know that children like to play. However, what we may not know is the importance of play in a child's life. It has been said that play is the natural presence of work for a child. Play is essential to every area of a child's growth and development.

### COGNITIVELY

Play enables children to know things about the world and to discover information essential to learning. Through play children learn basic concepts such as colors, counting, how to build things, and how to solve problems. Thinking and reasoning skills are at work every time a child engages in some type of play. Life tasks such as climbing stairs are first introduced to a child through play.

### SOCIALLY

Children learn to relate to one another, negotiate roles, obey rules, and most importantly, the satisfaction of belonging to a group. Learning how to gain friendships is one of the most rewarding outcomes of play.

### EMOTIONALLY

Play fulfills many needs, including a sense of accomplishment, successfully giving and receiving attention, and the need for self-esteem. Play brings to children other emotionally satisfying experiences, such as a sense of fairness, meaningful activity, and recognition. Through dramatic play children encounter a wide range of emotions, such as anger, fear, frustration, stress and will discover ways to cope with these feelings.

### PHYSICALLY

Play provides a means for energy to be put to use. It strengthens and refines small and large motor skills, and it builds stamina and strength. Sensory learning develops mostly through play. Play is significant to physical development in that without it the body could not grow and develop normally.

Seminole Community College  
Early Childhood Education  
100 Weldon Blvd.  
Sanford, FL 32773-6199



Our mission is to promote family involvement by providing information on topics of interest in early childhood education to the parent as the child's first and most important teacher.

# Learning Through Play



Sponsored by Seminole Community College and  
Funded in Part by the State of Florida,  
Agency for Workforce Innovation/  
Office of Early Learning

Seminole Community College  
Early Childhood Education  
100 Weldon Blvd., Sanford, FL 32773-6199  
407.708.2550; [wallerj@scc-fl.edu](mailto:wallerj@scc-fl.edu)

## Learning Through Play

Children have a strong, natural desire to investigate, explore, and make sense out of their world through play. The quality of play can be supported by home and school alike as we create appropriate learning environments and choose materials and equipment that maximize a child's play opportunities.

Many times when parents observe or visit their child's classroom, they think the children are "just playing." However, the way children learn best is through play. As children go around and explore all of the different centers, here are some of the skills they may acquire.

### Language Arts

(books and flannel boards)

- increases vocabulary growth
- develops listening skills
- develops reading readiness skills
- develops oral language skills
- encourages an interest in and respect for books
- develops an appreciation of good literature
- develops imagination
- increases attention span

### Science

- develops observation and discrimination skills
- develops respect for the environment

### Blocks and Building Materials

- provides practice with social skills
- develops gross and fine motor skills
- teaches mathematical concepts (shape, size, balance, counting)
- increases creativity and decision-making skills
- develops visual discrimination skills
- provides opportunity for role play
- increases communication skills and oral vocabulary

### Housekeeping and Dramatic Play

- provides an opportunity to role play home experiences
- increases social development and communication skills
- develops small and large muscle coordination
- develops self awareness
- develops visual discrimination skills

### Art

- provides opportunities for creativity and imagination
- develops small and large muscle skills
- develops color concepts
- provides a release of positive and negative feelings
- develops reading readiness skills
- develops pre-writing skills
- encourages an appreciation for the arts

### Sand and Water Play

- develops sense awareness
- develops concepts involving space, measurement, volume
- increases fine and gross motor skills
- provides opportunities for problem solving and creative thinking
- encourages children to think, reason, question, and experiment



### Manipulatives

(puzzles and other fine motor toys)

- develops small motor muscle coordination
- increases social development and communication skills
- fosters imagination
- teaches mathematical concepts (shapes, sizes, and counting)
- provides opportunities for problem solving

### Large Muscle and Outdoor Play

- develops large muscle coordination
- increases social development and communication skills
- provides opportunities for sharing
- provides opportunities for role play
- fosters safety awareness