

Importance of play in childcare



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Kindergarten and play have been equivalent since the beginning of Kindergarten. Play in Kindergarten has been happening well over a century ago. We know fast forward to the current century and philosophical battles are happening today. The question is, is there too much play in kindergarten or not enough play. Today's teachers are feeling the pressures from their principals and state boards that they need to focus on academic goals. And because the academic goals are so much and it takes time to teach the students, that they are unable to let the children have as much playtime as in the past. There are several benefits to play based Kindergarten, these benefits include the enhancement of cognitive learning, social and emotional regulation with the help of social interactions and a sense of self-worth. Some major benefits of play are helping with fine and gross motor skills, health and the quality of life for the young children. " Consequently, play should be viewed as a valuable classroom activity that enables children to develop a wide variety of social and academic skills." (Copple and Bredekamp, 2009)

The year of 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was created to make public schools more accountable for the American education system. The act was aimed at improving learning opportunities for all children from the grade of Kindergarten to the 12 grades. The pressures of this act has young children sitting at their desks and working on worksheets instead of playing. Young children are forced to take test and be able to pass the state mandated test to be able to advance into the first grade. The emphasis of playtime disappearing, and more class work started to appear in the 1980 and continues today. This is called pushdown curriculum. Pushdown

practices are traditionally not encountered by children until first grade or later in the students' academic years. This involves long periods of whole class instruction, written instruction out of workbook work and teachers giving out letter grades to the students. Several teachers have stressed that children are

being hurried into functioning in ways that do not match their natural modes of learning. Since this pressure to meet the academic standards, will not go away. It is important to incorporate play and learning together. The kindergarten classroom should be a playful room with the focus on learning. Teachers will engage in guided learning with rich and experiential activities.

Teachers have reported that they are spending more time performing teacher directed instruction. Then letting the children have natural play time.

With the most emphases on literacy and math skills, testing and test preparation than letting children have free time to play.

Some teachers have found out that students that have come from a play based Preschool are behind academically than a student that has come from an academically preschool. Since the focuses is on academics it is important to focus on academics. Teachers have stressed that once January hits, that they need to start prepping the students for the first grade. This can be done by cutting back and eventually cutting out nap time for the students. Since the student will not be getting nap time in the first grade, the teacher is preparing them for no naps and letting the students read book or go on the computer. Also, cutting back on play time and working more on doing paper

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and pencil activities. Several of today's curriculum and standards are designed

to teach and this leaves very little room for free play. Teacher's feel frustrated because every moment is dedicated to teaching and children learning academics. The times of devoting time to making fun crafts and having longer center times and outdoor play time is gone. The Students have specials and they can run and jump in PE and do crafts in their art class. I feel it is important that children are able to play, if play time is not able to fit in to the schedule of the day, the teacher can incorporate play in to learning activities. The following are some examples of incorporating play in to learning activities.

Language- language and literacy can be supported through play when children are drawing and acting out what they have just put on paper. For example, when children are reading a book to their partners they are able to talk about what they just read and then they are able to write about the book. When the students are writing they are able to draw pictures and label the pictures. The students are able to get drawing and reading done at the same time.

Math- having puzzles and toys will stimulate critical thinking and will help the student's with problem solving skills. Mathematic thinking involves the development of logical-mathematical knowledge. For instance, you can use <https://assignbuster.com/importance-of-play-in-childcare/>

clean up time as a way for students to count and sort out manipulative and have the put the manipulatives in to the correct bin. This teaches the child one to one correspondences, it also encourages the children to put the items back in the bin in sets of two. If the students have a set of blocks that belong to one bin and another set of small manipulative bears that belong in another

bin. This type of activity will help them build on their sorting skills. Research by Bremer (1995) says that “ play contributes to cognitive growth, aids social and emotional development, and is essential to physical development.” She defines cognitive abilities as “ include identifying, classifying, sequencing, observing, discriminating, making predictions, drawing conclusions, comparing and determining cause and effect relationships.” For instance, having children in a play environment will help stimulate science learning. For an example, the children can use a thermometer and carry it from inside the classroom to outside of the classroom, going back and forth. The children will be able to see the temperature gage drop and then raise. Children get excited about

being able to go outside and see the weather. They can compare the weather from when they arrived at school and what the weather is right now. Having investigative tools such as magnets and magnifying glasses makes the children want to investigate what they can see and what items will stick to a magnet.

Social Studies in the classroom is very important, it is the relationship between humans and ecology. It includes economics, history, geography and

multiculturalism. The classroom should have dress up clothes, that the children can try on and play different roles. Having prop boxes with community based themes provides additional knowledge about the world around them. Music can be used to commemorate and celebrate holidays. " Researchers have suggested that play enables developments in the prefrontal cortexes of mammals, including humans." (Pettis, Pettis, and Himmler 2014) Block play is one of the most important parts of a kindergarten

classroom. The block center not only engages constructive play it also engages in practice play and symbolic play. Block play also helps the children with geometry and physics. By the children having this background knowledge this will help them have a better understanding of math when they reach the first grade. Research was conducted by Wolfgang, Stannard, and Jones (2001). " Who found that children who engaged in high-level block play also achieved higher grades on math tests in high school." Having a home center in the classroom will support dramatic play, which occurs when the child uses

symbolism to pretend. Dramatic play allows the student to control the play. The student has the freedom to try and experiment. In this type of play it is the child who decides the direction of play. I understand that the No Child Left Behind Act does play a role in the amount of time the class gets to play. But I feel that children at this age need to play. Physical play is essential to a child's growth and mind set. It is important to encourage any type of play with in the classroom setting.

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