

# Role of play in early childhood article review

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Jill Englebright, an assistant professor of early childhood education at Virginia Commonwealth University, has devoted her article to one of the timeliest issues in the contemporary system of education. It has been said a lot that Play has already forced out old academic system of education, proving that actually Play is much more effective in both learning and developing skills and knowledge. To prove this point Jill has meticulously investigated Play as an integral part of education.

First Jill is stating several descriptions and explanations of Play, given by many scholars. Generally, Play can be identified as a type of activity, where children participate with enthusiasm alone or with other children.

Undoubtedly, play is first and foremost important to develop such skills as creativity and social competence; it enhances language and thinking skills and at the same time develops wider imagination. Through Play a child comes to understand both physical and social worlds, at the same time using non-verbal communication as another type of contact with other children. Generally, through Play children manage to adapt, understand and communicate to each other.

With regard to Play as a type of cognitive development, Jill is expressing two points of view. Piaget claims that Play is a means of entertaining children, as it only allows children to practice skills they have already learnt. At the same time, according to the theory of Vygotsky, Play does enhance cognitive development. Irrespective of the actual role of Play, it is obvious that is playing an important role in the early childhood classroom.

Play can be both indoor and outdoor, and, according to Jill, it is essential to use both of them. At the same time, it is important to underline that outdoor classes should not replace the indoor ones, on the contrary, they should be an extension of the indoor classroom, and should develop both motor and social skills. It has been proved that outdoor environment helps to enhance all the areas of development: problem-solving, creative thinking, social competence, language use, etc.

In her article Jill Englebright also pays attention to five types of Play by Parten. According to Parten, children may get involved into various types of Play, depending on circumstances. These types are: onlooker behavior, when a child is watching the Play; solitary independent, when a child is playing by himself; parallel, playing in the middle of the group, at the same time being occupied with his own activity; associative, when children communicate with each other, but at the same time do not play the same not being involved in the same Play; and the last one is cooperative, when children are involved in the same Play. Actually, much time should be devoted to Play, as short plays make children abandon when they have only started to get involved. As a result, a child may lose interest and it may develop some negative attitude to Play in general.

It is important to underline the role of a teacher during Play: a teacher provides indoor and outdoor play environments, maintains safety, develops rules, selects appropriate materials, and other aspects. Moreover, it is important for teacher to observe children playing to facilitate appropriate

social interactions and motor behaviors. It is important to let children decide on what they want to play and let them choose their roles within the Play.

Social play permits children to include other in their play; it is teaching children to interact with each other. Cognitive play involves thinking and reasoning process; during this play a child is using logic, information, he is finding solutions to some problems, and at the same time learns new information. Actually, through both types of play a child is learning new, however the main difference is the means of learning – either by himself (through cognitive development) or by means of interaction with others (social development).

The article itself is very important and sheds light on an essential means of activity in the classroom – Play. Not only does Jill give a general overview of what Play is, but she is actually giving very bright and vivid examples as well, so that the reader comes to understand and analyze the role of Play himself. As for me, the article is very useful especially for young specialists, who do not have some experience in this very field. I like Jill paying considerable attention to outdoor classes, as I am convinced that it is important to develop child's motor skills as well. Generally, the article is very informative, and its examples make it easier to analyze.

## References

Englebright, Jill Fox. " Back-to-Basics: Play in Early Childhood." Early Childhood News . 22 Nov. 2010. [http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article\\_view.aspx?ArticleID=240](http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=240)