

# Play and how it effects children



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The book *Einstein Never Used Flashcards: How Our Children Really Learn- and Why They Need to Play More and Memorize Less* is a book that emphasizes one goal, the fact that it is a better for children to play instead of spending so many hours memorizing. After years of research, child development experts have come to a clear conclusion. This conclusion is that play is the best way for our children to learn. This book takes on the challenge of explaining why children do learn better by playing and some ways to play and learn at the same time.

Throughout this book we see facts like children who are prematurely pushed into regimented academic instruction display less creativity and enthusiasm for learning in later years. Some more good facts are that children who memorize isolated facts early in life show no better long-term retention than their peers and the fact that children who learn through play also develop social and emotional skills, which are critical for long-term success.

Somewhere along the line, our culture has moved away from the normal way of life by stressing academic products and programs to our preschoolers. Dr. Kathy Hirsh-Pasek and Dr. Roberta Michnick Golinkoff came to a conclusion in this book and it is based on overwhelming scientific evidence from their own studies and the collective research results of child development experts. *Einstein Never Used Flash Cards* goes beyond killing the myths spread by the accelerated-learning industry. Within this book is a practical guide to introducing complex concepts through smart, simple, and loving play.

For every key area of a child's development, which included speech, reading, math, social skills, self-awareness, and intelligence, there is an

understanding of how a child's mind actually learns. The book then goes into a long sequence of some ways to

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play and keep your child ready for the future. The most interesting parts of the book dealt with the steps of child development. The incremental breakthroughs needed to recognize letters or count is described as the little victories they are. The authors even provide techniques to determine a child's progress. For example, they detail the different ways a child can count and what this reveals about their understanding of quantity and numbers.

From the book *Einstein Never Used Flashcards: How Our Children Really Learn- and Why They Need to Play More and Memorize Less*, comes the topic of play and the role of it within the education of children. The idea that play is beneficial to children is seen throughout this book and many others. Play does not only help when children are trying to learn, but it also is helpful in a therapeutic sense. Play is a way for children to express themselves however they wish but in a comfortable environment with their peers and that can be translated into an environment with their therapists (Campbell and Knoetze, 2010). There are three theoretical models that demonstrate the ideas that play is a useful tool in a therapeutic way. These models include the child-centered play therapy model from Gary Landreth, the psychoanalytic play model and Jungian play model.

The child-centered play therapy model is based on the idea that the child is "being", not "doing". The therapeutic key within this model is the idea that

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children self-actualize and will drive to do so (Axline, 1982). Children have a sense of self which comes from the child as a person and how they perceive the world around them. If the child is placed in a negative therapeutic environment their idea of self will change and they will not be comfortable. When play is introduced to this environment between the therapist and child, the child can feel more comfortable and will release more details that

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they otherwise would not be comfortable with revealing. The therapist may use a technique called repetitive symbolic play. This is when a type of play is introduced over a period of time in which the child begins to associate it with harmful experiences that now are being revealed in the present. This technique is very good at getting children to cope with their fears and understand problem solving. This model is used to help children with behavioral and emotional problems and has showed a very positive outcome to those it has been used to help. (Campbell and Knoetze, 2010)

Sigmund Freud is known as the person who created the idea of psychoanalytic therapy. He first started to use his psychoanalytic treatment on children in 1909. The goal of his work with children was to help them try to understand their feelings which would help them to understand their behavioral problems and why they act the way they do. Anna Freud, Sigmund's wife, took over the idea of play with the psychoanalytic theory. Anna's idea was to try to incorporate play as a way of treatment and to try to enhance the communication with the children. When play is introduced the therapist must interpret much of what is going on with the child. Play is used

only until the child gets comfortable with the therapist and then more traditional talking takes place (Esman, 1983). Play is only used to get the child to interpret their feelings in an easier way and help them to feel at ease with the new therapist they have met. (McCalla, 1994)

The next theory discussed will be Carl Jung's Jungian model. Carl Jung is also a psychoanalytical therapist who worked under Freud but left him to pursue his own ideas (McCalla, 1994). His major idea was about the personality, which Jung said had three parts. These three parts were the ego, the personal conscious and the collective

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unconscious. The collective unconscious was known as the self portion of the personality. The ego is what is used for thinking. When this theory is applied to children the self, at first, is the only part the child knows. Then from that sense of self comes the ego, this connection is known as the ego-self axis (Allan, 1980). This axis is crucial to the bond between the conscious and unconscious minds. If this bond is severed then the child can gain a sense of disattachment from the sense of self (Allan, 1980). Some form of symbolic attachment is thought to be needed help this axis to grow and thrive and this is the point when the idea of play is established. (McCalla, 1994)

When play is introduced into this type of therapy it is different from the others. The therapist is not leading the play now but observing what the child is naturally doing in their play. The therapist accepts whatever form of play the child likes. The therapist does interpret most of the information that the play is leading them to but does not tell the child what he or she is

thinking; instead they are used to help move the child forward into a more mature ego within the child. It is not the actual interpretation from the therapist that helps the child to gain knowledge about the situation but the actual creativity the child uses to show the therapist what they are feeling. The child is in full command of the session bringing them the freedom to move around and do what they want to express themselves the in a way that helps both the therapist and child understand. Playing with the therapist helps to give the child an opportunity to show the emotions they feel and to understand them which give them a sense of relief and help with their problems. (McCalla, 1994)

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Through these three methods the children who are given the ability to use these types of play therapy are often better of then when they began. They get the opportunity to learn from their own creativity, sense of self and maturing mind. In all three models they gain an understanding of themselves and their emotions not only from the therapist and their interpretation but their own mind, thoughts and expressions. These helpful ways of play therapy get these children with behavioral and emotional problems onto a better path that helps them understand their problems and move forward with a new outlook and understanding about what is wrong and how to control it.

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