

# The Importance of Play

## in Early Childhood Education

By Joshua Barr

## What is Play?

### Defining Play

Play is simply enjoyment. When we enjoy something we do it for longer, we want to know more and our understanding of it grows naturally.

-Play is learning.

Play is enhanced through a prepared environment that changes & evolves.

-Play is the building blocks for life long skills.

"Play is the work of the child"

Maria Montessori



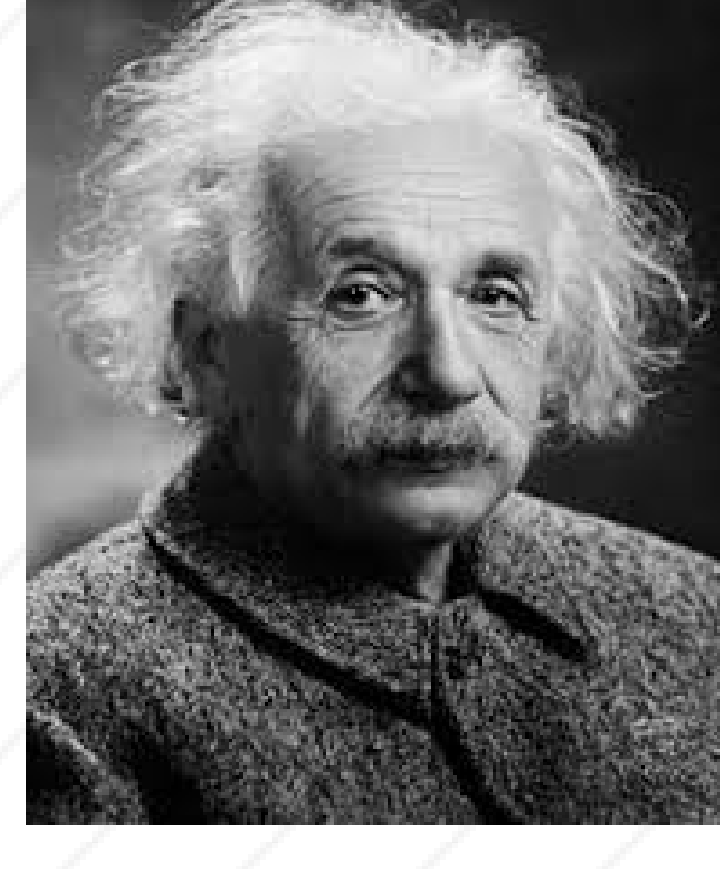
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### Why Play is a Necessity

Play isn't just making learning fun. True play is necessary. You can teach children to solve a problem but you can't teach them to be problem solvers. You can teach children to create (make) something but you can't teach them to be creative. Only through play can children develop the most important skills for life.

"Play is the highest form of research"

Albert Einstein



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### The Work vs Play Myth

The belief that work and play are separate actions has spread through ECE due to three main reasons;

1. Academic push down from politicians.
2. Parents thinking that their children need to learn traditional academics to succeed and get into a good primary school.
3. Teachers who don't know or haven't studied DAP (Developmentally Appropriate Practice)

"The opposite of play is not work. It's depression."

Brian Sutton-Smith



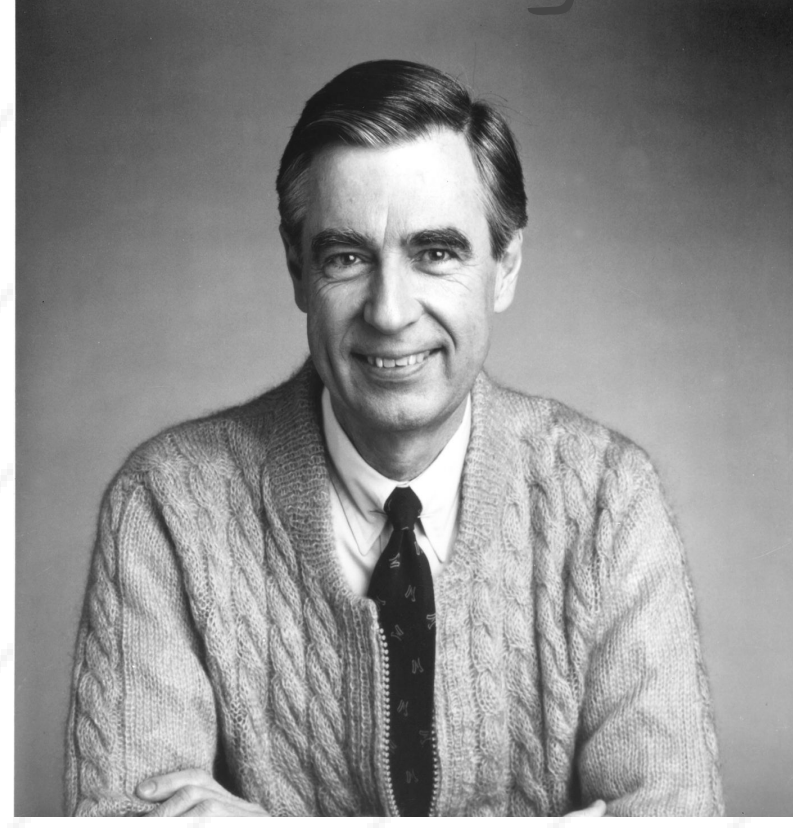
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### Play is the Natural Way to Learn

Young children are naturally wired to learn from birth. They observe, wonder, hypothesize, explore and create. We don't teach toddlers how to walk and yet they naturally get up and fall down until they move one leg in front of the other. The adult watches them, supports them and offer encouragement.

"Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning"

Fred Rogers



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## What Play is Not!

Play is not just designing 'fun' whole group games/activities to teach academic content!

Play is not just letting kids run free in an unprepared, poorly designed environment!

"It is paradoxical that many educators and parents still differentiate between a time for learning and a time for play without seeing the vital connection between them."

-Leo F. Buscaglia

Play is not teacher directed but rather teacher supported.

Play is not a break for the teacher but rather our busiest time, observing, learning and collaborating with children

## The Importance of Play isn't Just an Opinion but Rather a Well Researched Fact.



Sight



Hearing



Touch



Speak

"Children need the freedom to appreciate the infinite resources, of their **hands**, their **eyes**, and their **ears**, the resources of forms, materials, sounds and colours... Our task is to help children **communicate** with the world using all their potential strengths and languages..."

-Loris Malaguzzi (Reggio Emilia)

Read

Learn

Reflect

Play

**Learn about the importance of play and the vast amounts of research on what it is, how to implement it and its many benefits.**