



PLAY BASED LEARNING

FOR

PREKINDERGARTEN STUDENTS



Presented by
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for Navigating Pre-K Day
May 2, 2024



Presenters



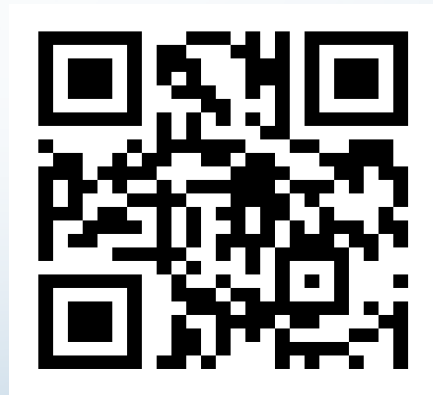
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The Value of Play Webinar



Learning Outcomes

- Explore research trends
- Examine the New York State Standards
- Examine characteristics of play-based learning
- Evaluate the continuum for play-based learning
- Identify challenges and how to overcome
- Incorporate play-based learning in Prekindergarten



“You can discover more about a child in one hour of play than you can in one year of conversation.”

-Plato




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When you think of "play" in the classroom, what immediately comes to your mind?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.



What Does the Research Say?



The Research and the Why of Play-Based Learning

Children learn best when they are engaged in play.

Play is a vehicle for learning and social development.

Play helps children to make connections.

Play allows children to learn, practice, and master skills.

Play provides a Zone of Proximal Development.

Play is a powerful instructional tool.

The Research and the Why of Play-Based Learning

Mitigates
toxic
stress

Supports
healthy
development
and acquisition
of content and
learning new
skills

Benefits differ
across contexts
and cultures

Skills for Today & Tomorrow

Knowledge, Skills & Competencies for a New Era

**Critical
Thinking**

Analysis

**Problem
Solving**

**Self-
management**

**Active
Learning**

**Top skills and skills groups rising
into prominence by 2025**

Source: World Economic Forum: Future of Jobs Report 2020



Summary of the Benefits of Play-Based Learning



Nurtures the imagination



Promotes creativity & problem solving



Foundation for literacy



Speech development



Cognitive processing




Self-awareness



Self-regulation

What do the NYS PreK Standards say about Play-Based Learning?



RESOURCE GUIDES FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS:

THE PREKINDERGARTEN EARLY LEARNING
STANDARDS

Domain 1: Approaches to Learning

- Play and Engagement in Learning
- Creativity and Imagination
- Curiosity and Initiative
- Persistence

PLAY

Understanding the Value of Play from
Birth Through 3rd Grade:

Supporting a Strong Foundation for the New York State Learning Standards



Guidance from

New York State Head Start Collaboration Office

New York State Association for the Education
of Young Children

New York State Education Department



Play

Play Brief



- Supports foundation for the NYS Learning Standards
- Describes the role and value of play
- Identifies strategies to strengthen play in the educational environment

A Look at Quality Prekindergarten Environments



<https://www.nysed.gov/video/introducing-early-learning-video-series>



Characteristics of Purposeful Play

Characteristics of Purposeful Playful Learning

What does it look like when children learn through play?



Joyful

What is it?

- Pleasure, enjoyment, motivation, thrilling



How does it support learning?

- Joy is often linked with interest or motivation
- Emotions are integral to neural networks responsible for learning
- Joy is associated with increased dopamine levels linked to enhanced memory, attention, mental shifting, creativity, and motivation

Meaningful

What is it?

- Connected to a child's feelings and thoughts

How does it support learning?

- Helps children make sense of the world around them
- Process the things they have seen and heard
- Builds upon child's current understanding



Actively Engaging

What is it?

- Immersed, lose oneself in, engrossed, discovery-based, self-directed, hands-on, or can be cerebral

How does it support learning?

- Increases brain activation
- Provides memories that aid in retrieving information
- Results in deeper understanding
- Improves students' performance
- Decreases failure rates



Iterative

What is it?

- Involves repetition
repeating → tweaking → improving

How does it support learning?

- Allows for mistakes, which leads to improvement
- Challenges or validates assumptions
- Avoids jumping to conclusions
- Allows for reflection
- Open to improvements



Socially Interactive

What is it?

- Meaningful dialogue among learners

How does it support learning?

- Increases critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Deepens communication and articulation skills
- Builds deeper understanding
- Builds relationships
- Learning to negotiate
- Helps to see other's perspectives/ways of thinking

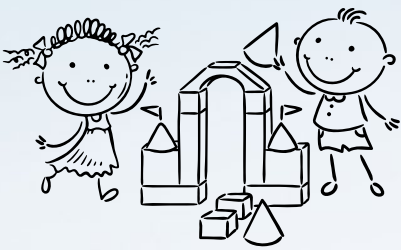


Turn and Talk

What are some characteristics of playful learning that you see on a regular basis within the classrooms at your school?

What are some characteristics you would like to see more of within your classrooms?

Characteristics of Purposeful Learning



There are five key attributes of purposeful learning. These include being joyful, meaningful, actively engaging, iterative, and socially interactive. For effective learning through play, it is essential that the activities provided to children embody these characteristics. While these traits may vary during play, children should encounter all of them over time for a well-rounded learning experience (Zosh, Hopkins, Jensen, Liu, Neale, Hirsh-Pasek, Solis, Whitebread, 2017).

Characteristic	What is it?	How does it support learning?
Joyful	Pleasure, Enjoyment, Motivation, Thrilling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linked with interest and motivation • Emotions are integral to neural networks responsible for learning • Joy increases dopamine levels which are linked to enhancing memory, attention, mental shifting, creativity, and motivation
Meaningful	Connected to a child's feelings and thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps children to make sense of the world around them • Process ideas and concepts they have seen and heard • Builds upon current understanding
Actively Engaging	Immersed, loose oneself in, engrossed, discovery-based, self-directed, hands-on, or can be cerebral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases brain activation • Provides memories that aid in retrieving information • Results in deeper understanding • Improves students' performance • Decreases failure rates
Iterative	Involves repetition repeating-tweaking-improving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for mistakes, which leads to improvement • Challenges or validates assumptions • Avoids jumping to conclusions • Allows for reflection • Open to improvements
Socially Interactive	Meaningful dialogue among learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases critical thinking and problem-solving skills • Deepens communication skills • Builds deeper understanding • Builds relationships • Practice negotiation skills • Helps to see other's perspectives/ways of thinking



Enabling students to engage in play-based learning involves a continuum that spans from free play to learning through games, with each form of play defined by the level of child involvement and adult participation. Free play is characterized by child-directed activities, whereas collaborative play involves both children and educators working together to develop play scenarios. As we move towards the right end of the continuum, the play becomes more structured and is directed primarily by educators (Pyle, Danniels, 2017).

Type	Description
Free Play	This is the most child directed type of play where children determine their own resources. Free play encourages self-regulation, independence, exploration, and self-motivated learning.
Inquiry Play	Children initiate the play while the teacher extends the play by integrating materials, incorporating standards, and following the lead of the students to expand on their interests.
Collaborative Play	Collaboratively, the teacher and students plan the setup of the play area and the materials to be utilized. The educator decides on the academic skills students will enhance through engaging in this form of play. The children take charge of the play within this established setting. This empowers children to lead their own play scenarios, while also providing the teacher with organic chances to incorporate academic skills into the play.
Playful Learning	The teacher guides academic outcomes, while children shape the storyline of play. Through structured activities, the teacher incorporates playful components that are engaging for students.
Learning Through Games	The educator directs both the process and the results of the activity, while the child adheres to the game's rules. This represents the most structured form of play-based learning and is often used to teach focused skills in literacy and math.

When you think of a high quality Prekindergarten environment what comes to your mind?

Jot down your key take aways.



When you think of a high quality Prekindergarten environment what comes to your mind?

Jot down your key take aways.





Types of Play

Types of Play



Free Play

- Child directed
- Children determine own resources
- Little to no educator involvement
- Encourages:
 - self-regulation
 - independence
 - self-motivated learning
 - exploration



Inquiry Play

- Child initiated
- Teacher integrates materials and incorporates standards
- Follow the lead of the students
- Expands on children's interests
- Example: Centers/Stations
 - Dramatic Play, Art, Blocks, Writing Center, Sensory Bin, Technology



Collaborative Play

- Teacher determines the standards
- Teacher and students work to develop the activity
- Children then direct the play within the created environment



Playful Learning

- Teacher guided
- Children explore to meet specific learning objectives set by teacher
- Supports learning of targeted academic skills in an engaging manner

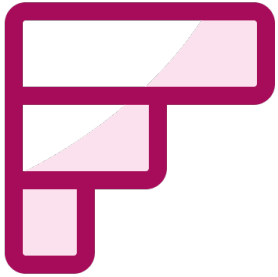


Learning Through Games

- Teacher directed
- Child follows the designed activity or rules of a game
- Engaging and motivating for children
- Used to teach focused skills in literacy & math skills
- Example: Letter match, word bingo, dice games



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**When you go into classrooms
what type of play do you see
the most?**

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.



Challenges and Solutions

Challenges and how to Overcome Them

Challenges	How to Overcome
Time	Adjust schedules Purposeful planning
Minimal equipment available	Careful review of available materials
Lack of training	Training for teachers and paraprofessionals in play-based instructional practices



Play-Based Learning in Prekindergarten

Play-Based Learning in Prekindergarten

CENTER-BASED APPROACH

What Centers Should I Have?

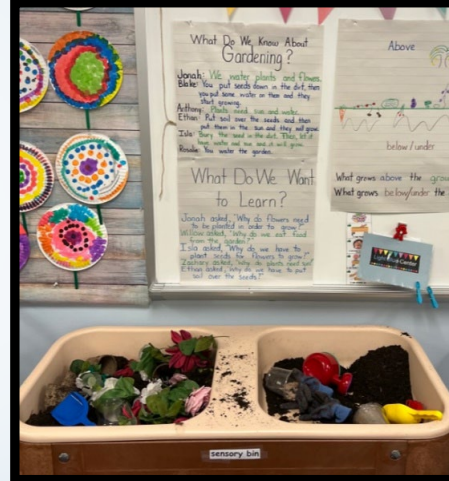
- Blocks and Construction
- Media / Technology
- Creative Arts
- Music / Movement
- Dramatic Play
- Sand and Water Play / Sensory
- Mathematics and Manipulatives
- Science and Nature
- Literacy (Language Arts, Reading/Writing, Library)



How to Incorporate Theme



How to Incorporate Theme



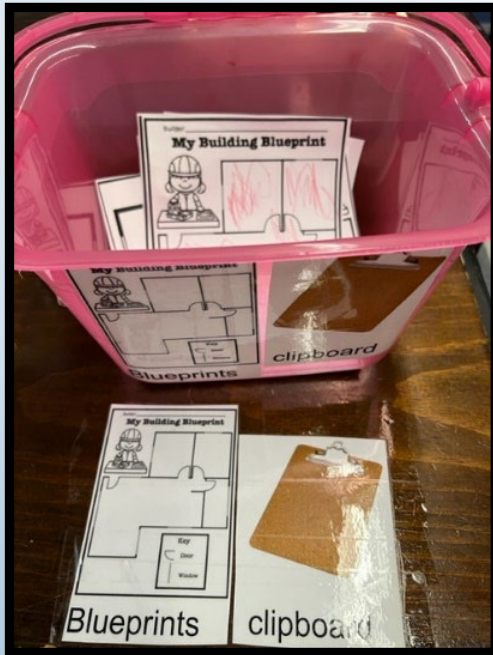
How to Promote Literacy Development

Mathematics/Manipulatives



How to Promote Literacy Development

Blocks and Construction



The Bakery

Dramatic Play:

- Transform dramatic play into a bakery by adding a bakery sign, an open/closed sign, and a menu board with picture cues
- Add bakery hats, aprons, oven mitts, cash register, and "money"
- "Place Your Order" sheets that correspond with picture cues on the menu board
- Add props: egg beaters, rolling pins, cookie pans, measuring cups and spoons, plastic eggs, empty cake boxes, spatulas, tongs, order pads, pencils, etc.

Sensory:

- Discovery table- use moldable sand and add cupcake pans, baking cups, colored rice for "sprinkles", decorative jewels, shreds of colored paper, colored buttons, and other decorations for cupcakes
- Soapy water and sponges in sensory table to allow students to "wash" all the bakery dishes and pans

Math/Manipulatives:

- Theme-related puzzles
- Matching games
- Muffin tin sorting
- Graph of favorite flavor of cookie, cake, or bagel
- Cookie jar number matching game
- Dough for rolling and cutting with scissors and cookie cutters

Music/Movement:

- Hot Bagel (played like hot potato)- gross motor, social skills
- Egg on spoon game- gross motor, balance, coordination
- Who stole the cookies from the cookie jar?-game,- recall, social skills
- Five Little Gingerbread song - counting, adding, subtracting
- Pat-a-Cake song/finger play

Creative Arts:

- Make chef hats
- Paint with pastry brushes- paints in muffin tins
- Make "cookies" with salt dough and decorate with jewels. Use in dramatic play area "bakery"
- Use cookie cutters with paint

Blocks:

- Add community workers to block area (baker, delivery person, mail carrier, etc.)
- Add appropriate vehicles and props
- Display non-fiction books of community buildings and architecture

Technology:

- Visit to a large-scale bakery with working machines to observe technology at work
- Show videos of machines at work in large-scale bakeries
 - Computer games featuring community workers
 - Community workers apps for tablets

Science:

- Bake muffins, bread, or pretzels with students
- Talk about recipe for salt dough used in creative arts project
 - Smell Guessing Game- have containers with different scents (vanilla, chocolate, spice, coffee, fruit)
- Taste test- sweet versus salty
- Taste different breads and chart results of favorite
- Learn about different grains and what each grows
- How yeast works experiment

Language/Literacy:

- Ask questions and record responses: Have you ever visited a bakery? What ingredients might a baker use?
- Bunny Cakes: R. Wells
- The Doorbell Rang: P. Hutchins
- What Happens at a Bakery: K. Pohl
- Mr. Cookie Baker: M. Wellington
- Pancakes for Breakfast: T. DePaola
- If You Give a Mouse a Cookie: L.J. Numeroff
- The Gingerbread Man (various versions)

Activity

- Pick a Theme
 - Weather
 - Clothes
 - Trees
 - Building
 - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
 - Community Helpers
 - Transportation
 - Feelings
 - Family
 - All about me
 - Forest
 - Farm
 - Arctic Animals
 - Space
- Identify play activities revolving around the theme that can be incorporated into each center.
 - *Keep in mind the characteristics and types of play
- Identify materials needed



Time
Is Up

Gallery Walk

1 Please find your seat 2 3 4 5

Questions?



THANK YOU!

Contact Us:



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www.nysed.gov/early-learning

Exit Survey



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