



To Play or not to Play?

That is the question

Prepared by: Kim McGrath
Preschool Education 2 day Workshop
Competency 5
2009-2010

What is play?



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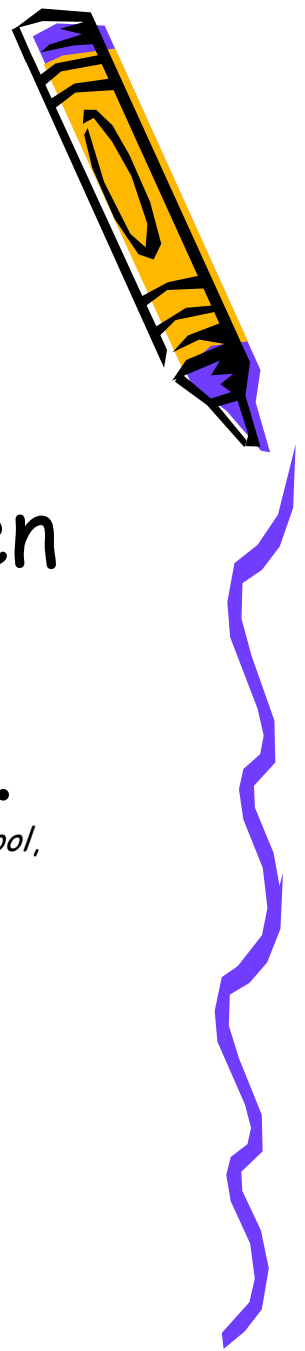
Definition of Play

Activities that are freely chosen
and directed by children and
arise from intrinsic motivation.

(Edward Miller and Joan Almon, *Crisis in the Kindergarten: Why children Need to Play in School*, college Park, MD: Alliance for Childhood, 2009).



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*What are children developing
while at play?*



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Benefits of Play



- Psychomotor Development
- Social Development
- Emotional Development
- Language Development
- Cognitive Development

"Young children learn the most important things not by being told, but by constructing knowledge for themselves in interaction with the physical world and with other children-and the way they do this is by playing".

(Jones, E., & Reynolds, G. (1992). The play's the thing: Teacher's roles in children's play, pg. 1.)



True or False?

*Play is play.
As long as the children appear to be
engaged with something, it is
contributing to their overall
development.*



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Forms of Play



- Types of Play

Large-motor play

Small-motor play

Mastery play

Rules-based play

Construction play

Make-believe play

Symbolic play

Language play

Playing with the arts

Sensory play

Rough and Tumble play

Risk-taking play

Edward, Millar & Joan, Almon. Crisis in the kindergarten: Why children need to play in school, College Park, MD: Alliance for Childhood, 2009

- Play Levels

Level 1: Children use realistic props only

Imitate everyday actions

No imagination

Actions are repetitive

Order of actions is not important

Roles are determined by choice of props

Children do not label roles

No rules

No speech roles

Play is solitary or parallel

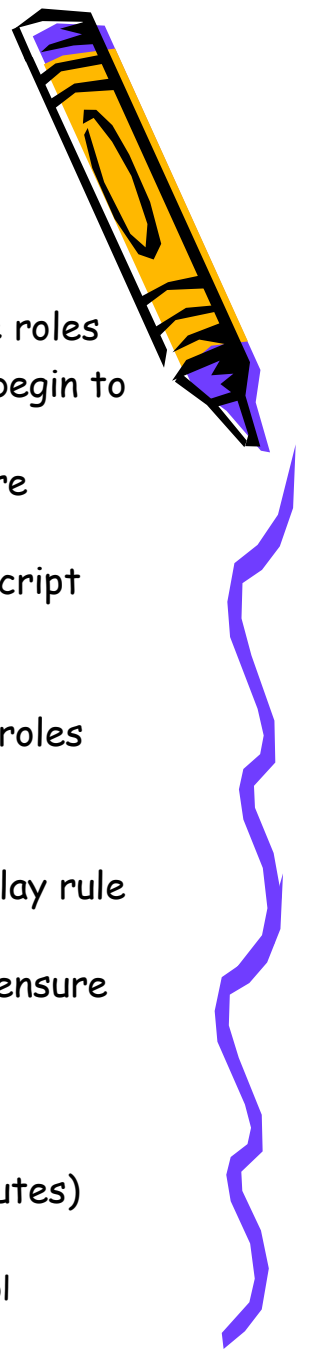
Play time is short

(Leong & Bedrova, E. (2009) Power Point Presentation. School Readiness and School Success: From Research to Policy and Practice. Hotel Chateau Laurier Quebec, Quebec City

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Play Levels



Level 2

- Play actions are combined in simple scripts
- Play scripts are familiar and are repeated
- Roles are labelled
- No speech roles
- No rules
- Children begin to interact during play (about props and actions)
- Interactions are short
- Play includes 2-3 children

Level 3

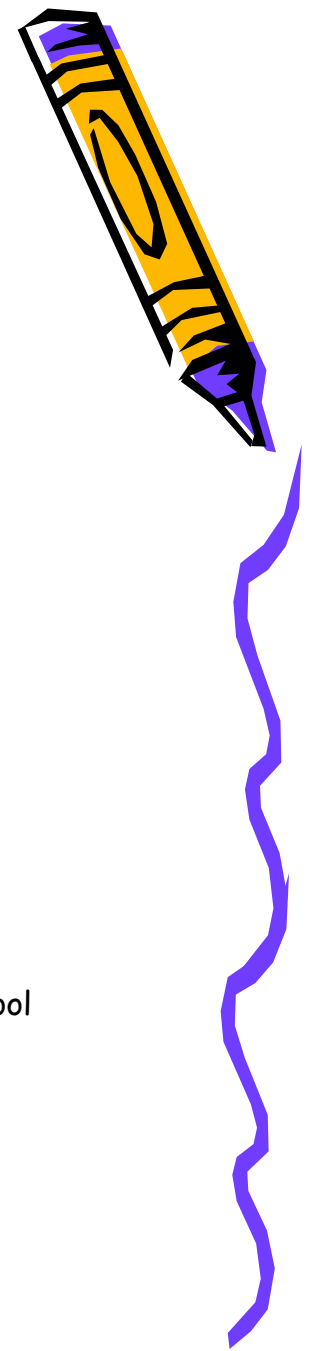
- Play actions are determined by the roles
- Relationships between the people begin to emerge in the play actions
- Play scripts become longer and more varied
- The sequence of play actions in a script reflects the sequence in real life
- Roles are determined prior to play
- Both speech roles and non-speech roles emerge
- Play rules emerge
- Children begin to conform to the play rule by inhibiting impulses
- Children supervise one another to ensure rules are being followed
- Props are determined by the roles
- Interactions increase
- Duration of play increases (40 minutes)



(Leong & Bedrova, E. (2009) Power Point Presentation. School Readiness and School Success: From Research to Policy and Practice. Hotel Chateau Laurier Quebec, Quebec City

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Play Levels



Level 4

Children organize the play episode prior to beginning: roles, play scenerio, props, make the props if needed

Relationships between people is the main focus of the play

Roles are well defined and sustained throughout the play

Play actions are consistent with roles

Role speech is used consistently

Play actions reflect real life

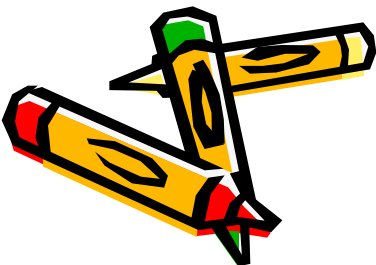
Play scripts are combined and modified using imagination

Play rules are respected throughout the duration of play

Duration of play is extended

The number of children participating increases

(Leong & Bedrova, E. (2009) Power Point Presentation. School Readiness and School Success: From Research to Policy and Practice. Hotel Chateau Laurier Quebec, Quebec City



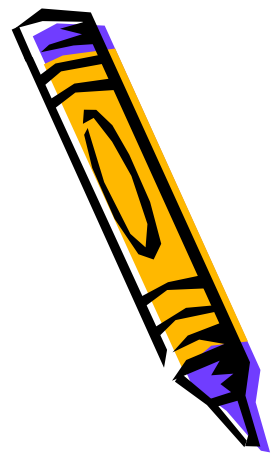
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True or False?

Children have been playing in daycare for the last 5 years. They are ready for more academic based learning.



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Play has changed drastically over the last 2 decades.

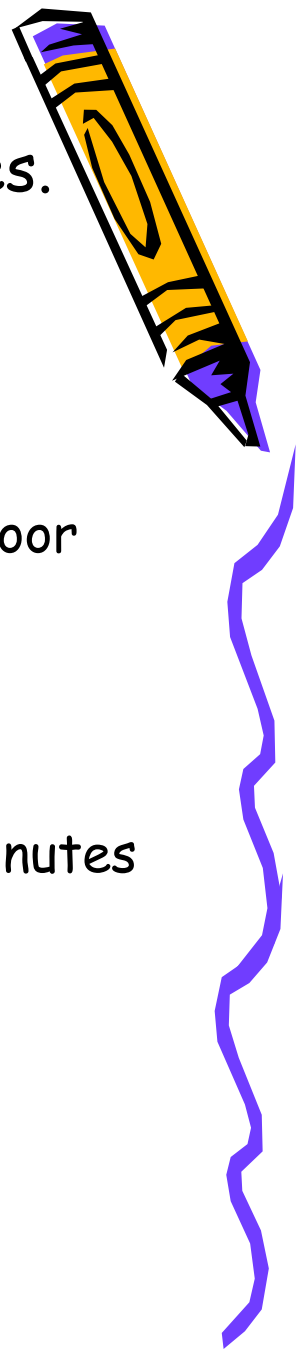
According to research:

- Children have lost 12 hours of free play a week.
- 8 hours of which was considered unstructured play and outdoor activities.
- The amount of time children spend in organized sports has doubled.
- The amount of time children spend in passive, "spectator activities" (not including television) has increased from 30 minutes to over 3 hours a week.

Elkind, D. (1990). *The Power of Play*. Cambridge: Da Capo Press.



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What are the consequences?

Adele Diamond and Deborah Leong have done extensive research on this issue and this is what they found.

"All that time children spent playing make-believe, helped in the development of an important cognitive skill called executive function."

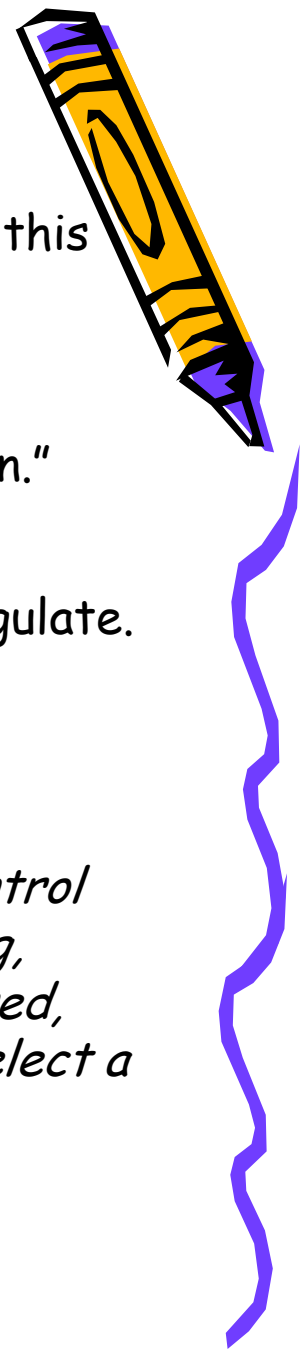
(Spiegel, A. Old Fashion Play Builds Serious Skills)

An important element of executive function is the ability to self-regulate.

(Spiegel, A. Old Fashion Play Builds Serious Skills)

Children with good self-regulation skills are able to:

Inhibit impulses and maintain self control: *Control anxiety, control temper when they do not get their way, stop and think before acting, paying attention despite distractions, staying on task even when bored, able to ignore the first strategy that comes into mind in order to select a second.*



Have good working memory: *Holding information in one's mind and being able to work with it, reflect on one's thinking, compare two strategies for the same situation, consider more than one perspective at the same time.*

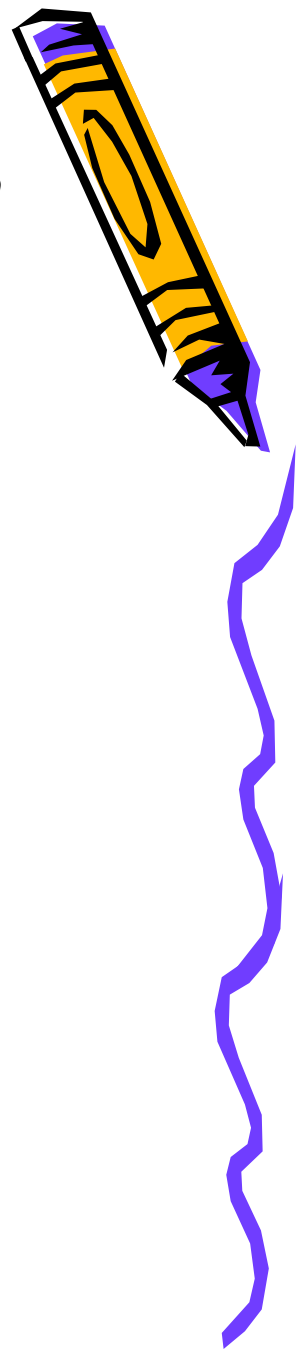
Have cognitive flexibility: *Adjusts thinking and actions to meet the demands of a situation, investing more efforts when confronted with a difficult task, use cognitive flexibility when multi-tasking.*

(Leong & Bedrova, E. (2009) Power Point Presentation. School Readiness and School Success: From Research to Policy and Practice. Hotel Chateau Laurier Quebec, Quebec City)

A study done in 2001, that replicated a self-regulation study done originally in 1940's, reported the following:

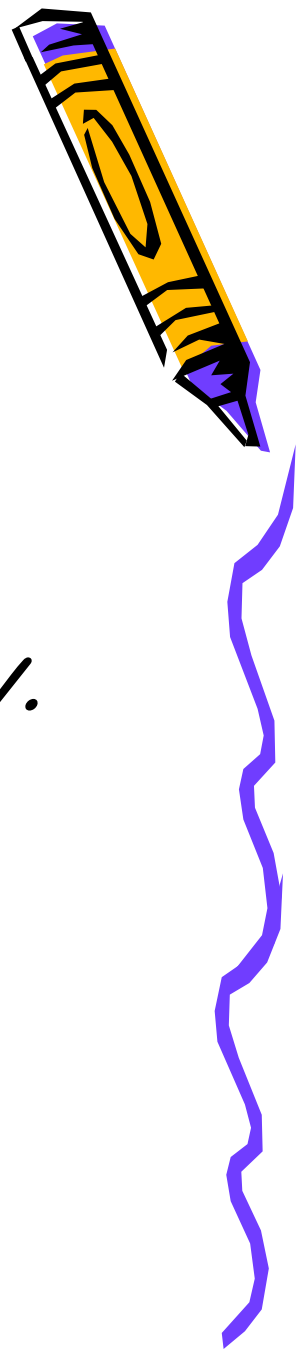
That today's 5 year- olds are functioning at the 3 year-olds level 60 years ago. Today's 7 years-olds are barely at the 1940's 5 year-olds level. (Spiegel, A. Old Fashion Play Builds Serious Skills)

Researchers report that good executive function is a better predictor of school success than a child's IQ. (Spiegel, A. Old Fashion Play Builds Serious Skills)



True or False?

Some play is better than no play.

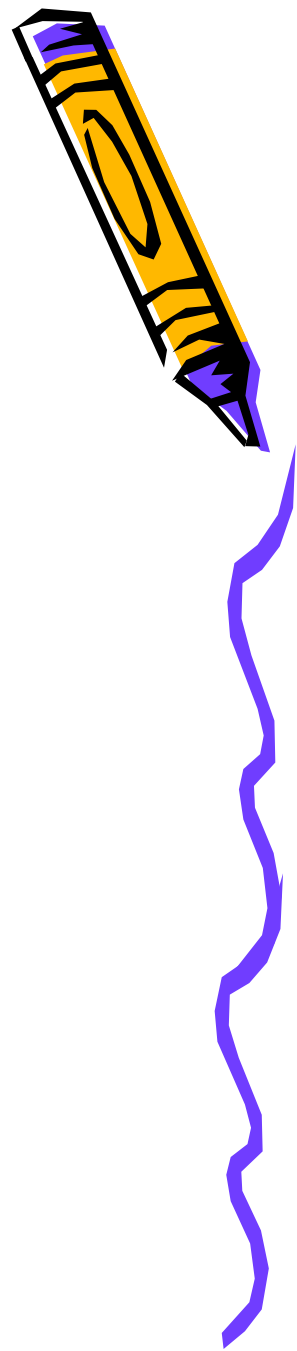


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According to the authors of *Crisis in the Kindergarten*, if the play period is too short, children cannot become deeply engaged in the play activity and as a result, will not gain from all the beneficial skills and abilities offered by complex play scenarios.

According to David Elkind, *The Power of Play*, if children are exposed to short periods of play over time, they develop what he refers to as, Intellectually Burned Syndrome. This occurs when a child's intense play experiences are continually interrupted by an adult. As a burned child learns quickly to avoid the fire, the interrupted child avoids becoming intellectually involved.

Edward Miller and Joan Almon (*Crisis in the Kindergarten*) state that a healthy play period for a playful 5 year old, is between 60-90 minutes. They also suggest that a 6 hour kindergarten program offer 3 play periods in the day, with at least one of the play periods, being outdoor.





True or False?

The earlier children learn to read and write, the better off they will be.



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The research states:

1-Appropriate literacy expectations for kindergarten, were outlined by the Bank Street College of Education in New York. It describes kindergarten children as being emergent readers and writers rather than early readers. In addition, children learn the pre- literacy skills through a playful approach (Edward Miller and Joan Almon, *Crisis in the Kindergarten: Why children Need to Play in School*, college Park, MD: Alliance for Childhood, 2009).

2-Roskos and Christie's research, *Play and Literacy in Early Childhood: Research from Multiple Perspectives* (2000), links play to children's ability to master academic content as literacy and numeracy (Edward Miller and Joan Almon, *Crisis in the Kindergarten: Why children Need to Play in School*, college Park, MD: Alliance for Childhood, 2009).

3- The authors of *A Mandate for Playful Learning in Preschool*, reported that children taught in a playful approach, almost always achieved more than children who were taught in a more direct teaching approach (Edward Miller & Joan Almon, *Crisis in the Kindergarten: Why children Need to Play in School*, college Park, MD: Alliance for Childhood, 2009)..



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*Our children play to learn.
But first...
they must learn to play.*



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Reference list

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Spiegel, A. *Old Fashion Play Builds Serious Skills*



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