# Play-based Learning



Just like a smile, play is the innate, universal language for children.

#### Learning through play - EYLF

Play provides opportunities for children to learn as they *discover*, *create*, *improvise* and *imagine*. When children play with other children they create social groups, test out ideas, challenge each other's thinking and *build new understandings*. Play provides a supportive environment where children can ask questions, solve problems and engage in critical thinking. Play can expand children's thinking and *enhance their desire to know and to learn*. In these ways play can *promote positive dispositions towards learning*. Children's immersion in their play illustrates how play enables them to simply enjoy being.

Early childhood educators take on many roles in play with children and use a range of strategies

to support learning. They engage in sustained *shared conversations* with children to extend their thinking. They provide a balance between *child led*, *child initiated and educator supported* learning. They create *learning environments* that encourage children to explore, solve problems, create and construct. Educators interact with babies and children to build attachment. They use routines and play experiences to do this. They also recognise *spontaneous teachable moments* as they occur, and use them to build on children's learning. Early childhood educators work with young children to *promote and model positive ways to relate to others*. They actively support the *inclusion* of all children in play, help children to recognise when play is unfair and offer constructive ways to build a *caring, fair and inclusive learning community*.



"...is more usefully conceived as a spectrum, with free play at one end and teacher-guided, playful learning at the other. In between are a variety of methods either entirely based on play, or incorporating elements of it." - Kate Noble, 2019.

free play

environment, resources relationships, questioning, community, collaboration teacher guided

- Based on the child's interest & strengths.
- Unhurried periods of <u>time.</u>
- Inviting, natural
   <u>spaces & resources.</u>

## Intentional: deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful

#### Observing/collecting information

- What do I know about this child, including:
- current knowledge skills and abilities - strengths and interests - culture?
- How is information gathered on children? Is there evidence of this?
- How does the information add value to outcomes for the children?
- How do liensure that my observations are meaningful and more than just a description of what children are doing or have done?
- How can Lensure that the information is relevant to individual children and reflects the whole child?
- Where is the information that I collect documented?
- What formats do I use? Do they capture the essential information?

#### Reflecting/evaluating

- How effective, meaningful and relevant were the: - observations and analysis - responsive and intentional teaching - planned program?
- · How do my reflections give a picture of the whole child?
- How do they inform practice changes?
- . How is the evaluation more than sharing how the
- children did or didn't enjoy the experience?



#### Implementing

How will I use the curriculum to support children's learning and wellbeing, including routines, transitions, interactions, indoor and outdoor environments, group projects and investigations?

- Do I ensure program learning opportunities by using all aspects of the day?
- Is this visible?
- How does it reflect play-based learning?
- How does it allow for children's agency and choices?
  How is it visible in the learning spaces so that children can
- engage with it?

#### Are there any gaps?

- What do I need in order to improve?
  Where are the clear links
- throughout the cycle?

Analysing learning

What does the information tell me about what and how the child is learning?

- Where can this be found in my documentation?
- Do I address the 'what', 'why' and 'how' children are learning it?
- How does this link to the Approved Learning Frameworks?

#### Planning

What are my intentions for furthering learning and development? What strategies and experiences will I provide?

- · When do I plan?
- How do I plan?
- Is the planning visible?
- Is it responsive to the children's interests, abilities and strengths?
- How do I design and plan learning experiences and learning environments?
- How are the resources decided upon?

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## When you are planning - think *bolistic;*

- Physical development
- Social development
- Emotional development
- Spiritual development
- Cognitive aspects
- Connect with the nature



## children's learning is integrated and interconnected.

### Luv's Dinosaur Discovery Learning Journey

- Building positive partnership with family relationships/community
- Small world play social / language
- Puzzles cognitive / fine motor
- Transitions gross motor
- Walk the dinosaur Music & Movement
- Vooks storybook Literacy / ICT
- Sorting/ Counting /Measuring dinosaurs - Numeracy
- How did dinosaurs become extinct? -Science / hypothesis
- Dinosaur footprint Creative arts
- Drawings dinosaur shadows Science
- Comparing similarities and differences between dinosaurs / animals - numeracy
- Incursion / Excursion community engagement









### What about the academics?



Play creates a brain that has increased 'flexibility and improved potential for learning later in life' (Lester & Russell, 2008, p.9).

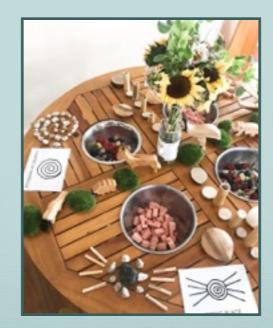
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### Play-based learning should be...

- Child-led
- Meaningful
- Unhurried
- Authentic
- Holistic
- Hands-on
- Incidental
- Strengths
- Interests
- Intentional
- Fun!

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"Scientists have recently determined that it takes approximately 400 repetitions to create a new synapse in the brain - unless it is done with PLAY, in which case, it takes between 10-20 repetitions."

Ohioaeve Ohio Associa

Dr. Karyn Pu