

# The POWER of PLAY

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Past...

How did you **play** as a child?

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# 5 Things to Know About Play

(From The National Association for the Education of Young Children)

1

**Children learn through play.** Children learn and develop cognitive skills, physical abilities, new vocabulary, social skills and literacy skills.

2

**Play is healthy.** Play helps children grow and counteracts obesity issues facing many children today.

3

**Play reduces stress.** Play is joyful and provides an outlet for anxiety and stress.

4

**Play is more than meets the eye.** Play is simple and complex. There are many types of play: symbolic, sociodramatic, functional, and games with rules—to name just a few.

5

**Play and learning go hand-in hand.** They are not separate activities. They are intertwined. Think about them as a science lecture with a lab. Play is the child's lab.

PLAY GIVES  
CHILDREN  
A CHANCE  
TO PRACTICE WHAT  
THEY ARE  
LEARNING.  
-MR. ROGERS

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# The Benefits of Play

- Physical
- Cognitive
- Social
- Emotional



# Physical

- Physically fit and healthy
  - Building stronger muscles
  - Improving bone density
  - Improving heart and lung function
  - Preventing obesity, diabetes, and high cholesterol
- Learning reflexes and motor control
- Developing gross and fine motor skills
- Increasing flexibility and balancing skills

# Cognitive

- Affects neural development
- Develops language and reasoning skills
- Encourages autonomous thinking and problem solving
- Develops executive functioning skills
- Develops manipulative skills, judgment and reasoning
- Stimulates imagination and creativity

# Social

- Life lessons
- Interacting with others
- Learning social norms and independence, social roles and cultural rules
- Gaining important relationship skills
- Developing appropriate cooperation skills
- Developing a child's "theory of mind"

# Emotional

- Building self-confidence and esteem
  - Developing a sense of accomplishment that leads to higher self-esteem
  - Developing skills such as conflict resolution and imaginative dramatic play
- Experimenting with various emotions
  - Expressing emotions and learning to cope with fears and scary experiences
- Releasing emotions
  - Therapeutic for children who are emotionally distressed (ex. abuse, family disruptions, natural disaster, war, etc.)
  - “Play out” their experiences including trauma

"You can **DISCOVER**  
more about a  
**person** in an *hour*  
of **play** than in a  
*year*  
of **conversation.**"

*Plato*

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# Why Play?

- Play is a child's natural language.
  - “Birds fly, fish swim, and children play.” ~Garry Landreth
  - “And talk.” ~Anne Stewart
- Play is universal.
- Play is a child's language and toys are a child's words.

# Introducing Andrew

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# Play in the Therapeutic Process

- Play helps establish the therapeutic relationship and more.
- Play is the means and ends to resolving internal conflicts.
- Play allows the safe projection of internal conflicts onto toys.
- Play allows children to organize, control, and master their experience.

# What is Play Therapy?

- Play Therapy is a modality.
- A method for approaching children on their level.
- A means for building a therapeutic relationship.
- A cluster of approaches that use play.
- Play therapy is an intervention and an attitude!

# APT Definition of Play Therapy

“The systematic use of a theoretical model to establish an interpersonal process wherein trained play therapists use the therapeutic powers of play to help clients prevent or resolve psychosocial difficulties and achieve optimal growth and development.”

# Play Therapy Works!

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# Types of Play Therapy

## Non-directive

- The child leads.
- The therapist tracks, reflects, sets limits, and gives language.
- Therapist notices themes.

## Directive

- The therapist leads.
- The therapist directs the structure and activities of the session.
- Example: Feelings Wheel

# Child-Centered Play Therapy

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# Under the Playful Umbrella

- Art-based interventions
- Music-based interventions
  - [Belly Breathe](#)
- Theraplay
- Sandtray
- Family play therapy
- Filial therapy
- Animal-Assisted play therapy
- Bibliotherapy
- Movement-based interventions



Present...

Let's **PLAY** together!

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# Playroom

- Safe, warm inviting play room: This is a place for children.
- Location with little distractions
- 12 feet by 15 feet (150-200 square feet)
- Vinyl tile squares preferred flooring
- Windows should be covered for privacy
- Child-sized furniture should be selected
- Ideal amenities: Easel, chalkboard, sink



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I tried to teach my child with books;  
He gave me only puzzled looks.  
I tried to teach my child with words;  
They passed him by often unheard.

Despairingly, I turned aside;  
“How shall I teach this child?” I cried.  
Into my hands he put the key;  
“**COME,**” he said, “**PLAY WITH ME!**”

Future...

“We don’t stop **playing** because we grow old;  
we grow old because we stop **playing**.”

~ George Bernard Shaw

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**INVEST IN THE FUTURE**  
INVEST IN CREATIVITY  
**INVEST IN HEALTH**  
INVEST IN COMMUNITIES  
**INVEST IN RESILIENCE**  
INVEST IN FRIENDSHIPS  
**INVEST IN COURAGE**  
INVEST IN CONFIDENCE  
INVEST IN TEAMWORK  
INVEST IN CHARACTER  
**INVEST IN HAPPINESS**  
**INVEST IN PLAY**

Investinplay.org.uk

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# Questions



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