



Bright People Who Love to Play and Have Something to Say About it!

It is a happy talent to know how to play.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson, philosopher, poet, essayist

Play gives children a chance to practice what they are learning....They have to play with what they know to be true in order to find out more, and then they can use what they learn in new forms of play.

--Fred Rogers of Mister Rogers' Neighborhood

It is becoming increasingly clear through research on the brain, as well as in other areas of study, **that childhood needs play**. Play acts as a forward feed mechanism into courageous, creative, rigorous thinking in adulthood.

--Tina Bruce, Professor, London Metropolitan University

When kids play, *they remember*. They may not be aware they are learning, but they sure are aware they are having fun. When you have a good belly laugh with your siblings or parents or friends, that stays with you. And the great thing is that it comes so naturally...if we only let it.

--Rebecca Krook, play facilitator for kids with disabilities

Play is a major avenue for learning to manage anxiety. It gives the child a safe space where she can experiment at will, suspending the rules and constraints of physical and social reality. In play, the child becomes master rather than subject... Play allows the child to transcend passivity and to become the active doer of what happens around her.

--Alicia F. Lieberman, author, *The Emotional Life of the Toddler*



Necessity may be the mother of invention, but play is certainly the father.

--Roger von Oech, President, Creative Think

Play for young children is not recreation activity... It is not leisure-time activity nor escape activity.... Play is thinking time for young children. It is language time. Problem-solving time. It is memory time, planning time, investigating time. It is organization-of-ideas time, when the young child uses his mind and body and his social skills and all his powers in response to the stimuli he has met.

--James L. Hymes, Jr., child development specialist, author

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 Buscaglia, author, educator

Humanity has advanced, when it has advanced, not because it has been sober, responsible, and cautious, but because it has been playful, rebellious, and immature.

--Tom Robbins, author

Play permits the child to resolve in symbolic form unsolved problems of the past and to cope directly or symbolically with present concerns. It is also his most significant tool for preparing himself for the future and its tasks.

--Bruno Bettelheim, child psychologist

You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation.

--Plato, Greek philosopher



Close observation of children at play suggests that they find out about the world in the same way as scientists find out about new phenomena and test new ideas. Young children may not be able to verbalize new ideas forming in their heads, but they may still apply similar processes to scientists. During this exploration, all the senses are used to observe and draw conclusions about objects and events through simple, if crude, scientific investigations.

--Judith Roden, Lecturer, Canterbury Christ Church
University College

Man is most nearly himself when he achieves the seriousness of a child at play.

--Heraclitus, Greek philosopher

Work consists of whatever a body is obliged to do. Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do.

--Mark Twain, author

Adults who criticise teachers for allowing children to play are unaware that play is the principal means of learning in early childhood. It is the way through which children reconcile their inner lives with external reality. In play, children gradually develop concepts of causal relationships, the power to discriminate, to make judgements, to analyse and synthesise, to imagine and to formulate. Children become absorbed in their play and the satisfaction of bringing it to a satisfactory conclusion fixes habits of concentration which can be transferred to other learning.'

--BASS Early Years Advisory Team

To maintain its status as a play activity, it is necessary for the activity to remain player-centered, i.e. initiated, paced and stylized by the child.

--Joan Ershler, Waisman Early Childhood Program



It's not so much what children learn through play, but what they *won't* learn if we don't give them the chance to play. Many functional skills like literacy and arithmetic can be learned either through play or through instruction—the issue is the amount of stress on the child. However, many coping skills like compassion, self-regulation, self-confidence, the habit of active engagement, and the motivation to learn and be literate cannot be instructed. They can only be learned through self-directed experience (i.e. play).

--Susan J. Oliver, Playing for Keeps

The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect but by the play instinct acting from inner necessity. The creative mind plays with the objects it loves.

--Carl Jung, Psychologist

Play builds the kind of free-and-easy, try-it-out, do-it-yourself character that our future needs. We must become more self-conscious and more explicit in our praise and reinforcement as children use unstructured play materials: “That’s good. You use your own ideas....” “That’s good. You did it your way....” “That’s good. You thought it all out yourself.”

--James L. Hymes, Jr., child development specialist, author

For the main characteristic of play – whether of child or adult – is not its content but its mode. Play is an approach to action, not a form of activity.

--Jerome Bruner, psychologist, professor

Play is the purist, the most spiritual, product of man at this stage, and it is at once the prefiguration and imitation of the total human life,--of the inner, secret, natural life in man and in all things. It produces, therefore, joy, freedom, satisfaction, repose within and without, peace with the world. The springs of all good rest within it and go out from it.

--Freidrich Froebel (Father of modern kindergarten)



The activities that are the easiest, cheapest, and most fun to do—such as singing, playing games, reading, storytelling, and just talking and listening—are also the best for child development.”

--Professor Jerome Singer, Yale University

Play is the highest expression of human development in childhood, for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child's soul.

--Friedrich Froebel
“Father” of modern kindergarten

It is in playing, and perhaps only in playing, that the child is free to be creative.

--D.W. Winnicott

All play means something. It goes beyond the confines of purely physical or purely biological activity. It is a *significant* function—that is to say, there is some sense to it.

--Johan Huizinga, cultural historian

Play can miniaturize a part of the complex world children experience, reduce it to understandable dimensions, manipulate it, and help them understand how it works.

--Professor Jerome Singer, Yale University

Today’s young children are controlled by the expectations, schedules, whims, and rules of adults. Play is the only time they can take control of their world.

--Sheila G. Flaxman



Playing reduces stress, improves life, and increases creativity. Who doesn't want that?

--Stevanne Auerbach, Dr. Toy

The children, through play, can pace themselves appropriately, make choices and develop self confidence. Through play, children can try and try again until they succeed or decide when to elicit help, when to give up, or when to modify plans and intentions without feeling that these attempts have been a failure. Children, through play are unraveling the world at their own pace, savoring new experiences as they unfold, reconstructing and revising them. Essentially the child is in control. This active exploration, this involvement and the sense of ownership of the activity and experience enables the child to feel sustained and satisfied.

--Heaslip (1994)

Be aware of wonder. Live a balanced life - learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.

--Robert Fulghum, author

Be glad of life because it gives you a chance to love and to work and to play and to look up at stars.

--Henry Vandyke, poet, clergyman, educator

I played with an idea, and grew willful; tossed it into the air; transformed it; let it escaped and recaptured it; made it iridescent with fancy, and winged it with paradox.

--Oscar Wilde, playwright, novelist



Behold the child, by nature's kindly law,
Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw:
Some livelier plaything gives his youth delight,
A little louder, but as empty quite:
Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his riper stage,
And beads and prayer-books are the toys of age:
Pleased with this bauble still, as that before;
Till tired he sleeps, and life's poor play is o'er.

--Alexander Pope, English poet

If you want creative workers, give them enough time to play.

--John Cleese, English actor, writer

In every real man a child is hidden that wants to play.

--Friedrich Nietzsche, philosopher, poet

One's age should be tranquil, as childhood should be playful. Hard work at either extremity of life seems out of place. At midday the sun may burn, and men labor under it; but the morning and evening should be alike calm and cheerful.

--Thomas Arnold, educator

Play is work that you enjoy doing for nothing.

--Evan Esar, humorist

The true object of all human life is play. Earth is a task garden; heaven is a playground.

--G. K. Chesterton, essayist, novelist, poet



If you came and you found a strange man... teaching your kids to punch each other, or trying to sell them all kinds of products, you'd kick him right out of the house, but here you are; you come in and the TV is on, and you don't think twice about it.

--Professor Jerome Singer, Yale University

The human need to play is a powerful one. When we ignore it, we feel there is something missing in our lives.

--Leo Buscaglia, author, educator

There often seems to be a playfulness to wise people, as if either their equanimity has as its source this playfulness or the playfulness flows from the equanimity; and they can persuade other people who are in a state of agitation to calm down and manage a smile.

--Edward Hoagland, novelist, essayist, nature writer

Without this playing with fantasy, no creative work has ever yet come to birth. The debt we to the play of imagination is incalculable.

--Carl Gustav Jung, psychologist, psychiatrist

Work and play are words used to describe the same thing under differing conditions.

--Mark Twain, novelist, journalist, river pilot

The world is a playground, and life is pushing my swing.

--Natty Nats



Play keeps us vital and alive. It gives us an enthusiasm for life that is irreplaceable. Without it, life just doesn't taste good.

--Lucia Capocchione, art therapist, author

If you aren't playing well, the game isn't as much fun. When that happens I tell myself just to go out and play as I did when I was a kid.

--Thomas J. Watson, Sr., industrialist, founder of IBM

We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.

-- George Bernard Shaw, playwright

A quality early years curriculum will be conducive to play. It will need adults who are trained to work with young children and who are informed about how children learn to play, and how children learn in a community together.'

--Tina Bruce, Professor, London Metropolitan University

Play is the child's main business in life; through play he learns the skills to survive and finds some pattern in the confusing world into which he was born.'

--Lee (1977)

Play acts as an integrating mechanism which enables children to draw on past experiences, represent them in different ways, make connections, explore possibilities, and create a sense of meaning....It integrates cognitive processes and skills which assist in learning. Some of these develop spontaneously, others have to be learnt consciously in order to make learning more efficient. We would all like children to become successful learners.'

--Bennett *et al.* (1996)



Play is like a reservoir full of water. The deeper the reservoir, the more water can be stored in it, and used during times of drought.

--Tina Bruce, Professor, London Metropolitan University

Play is essential to the life of the universe.

--Robert Jackson and Dermot Killingley, *Listening to Hindus*

Play is an essential part of every child's life and vital to their development. It is the way children explore the world around them and develop and practise skills. It is essential for physical, emotional and spiritual growth, for intellectual and educational development, and for acquiring social and behavioural skills. Play is a generic term applied to a wide range of activities and behaviours that are satisfying to the child, creative for the child, and freely chosen by the child. Children play on their own and with others. Their play may be boisterous and energetic or quiet and contemplative, light-hearted or very serious.

--Hampshire County Council and the Early Years
Development and Childcare Partnership