



Charity No. 702616

Worcester
PLAY
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Why Play?

Studies show that children who are play deprived may display behaviours ranging from being unable to mix socially, through varying forms of antisocial behaviour. Conditions such as ADHD may be linked, in part, to a lack of freely chosen play experience, through to the most extreme cases where play deprivation has even led to mental illness and a retardation of brain development. One cited study is that of children in the orphanages in Rumania, in the 1980's, where as a result of no play experience and little human contact, the children went into an almost catatonic like state.

Play Types- Devised by Bob Hughes, published in full in 'A Playworker's Taxonomy of Play Types' (PLAYLINK, second edition 2002). Available from PlayEducation, 13 Castelhythe, Ely, Cambs CB7 4BU

- **Rough and Tumble Play** – close encounter play which is less to do with fighting and more to do with touching, tickling, gauging relative strength. Discovering physical flexibility and the exhilaration of display.
- **Socio-dramatic Play** – the enactment of real and potential experiences of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature.
- **Social Play** – play during which the rules and criteria for social engagement and interaction can be revealed, explored and amended.
- **Creative Play** – play which allows a new response, the transformation of information, awareness of new connections, with an element of surprise.
- **Communication Play** – play using words, nuances or gestures for example, mime, jokes, play acting, mickey taking, singing, debate, poetry.
- **Dramatic Play** – play which dramatizes events in which the child is not a direct participator.
- **Symbolic Play** – play which allows control, gradual exploration and increased understanding without the risk of being out of one's depth.
- **Deep Play** – play which allows the child to encounter risky or even potentially life threatening experiences, to assess risk, develop survival skills and conquer fear
- **Exploratory Play** – play to access factual information consisting of manipulative behaviours such as handling, throwing, banging or mouthing objects.
- **Fantasy Play** – play which rearranges the world in the child's way, a way which is unlikely to occur.
- **Imaginative Play** – play where the conventional rules, which govern the physical world, do not apply.
- **Locomotor Play** – movement in any or every direction for its own sake.
- **Mastery** – control of the physical and affective ingredients of the environment.
- **Object Play** – play which uses infinite and interesting sequences of hand-eye manipulations and movements.
- **Role Play** – play exploring ways of being, although not normally of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature.
- **Recapitulative Play** – play that allows the child to explore ancestry, history, rituals, stories, rhymes, fire and darkness. Enables children to access play of earlier human evolutionary stages.

Loose parts.

Have you ever noticed that if you leave old junk lying around, kids will almost inevitably play with it? Whether it be old cardboard boxes, wooden pallets, pieces of wood, old tires, bits of rope or string, kids will use their imagination and ingenuity to make something. This may make your garden look like a junk yard sometimes, but the experience for the kids is invaluable and it will keep them occupied for hours. Don't try and direct the kids in their play, just let them get on with it.

Nicholson, S., "How Not To Cheat Children: The Theory of Loose Parts", Landscape Architecture 1971

Play cues and play frames.

This theory draws an imaginary frame around the area that the child or children are playing in. This frame is the child's play space and as such should be left to the child, unless you are given a cue to join in. This may be as obvious as a straight request to join in or maybe something more oblique...you may be asked a question or for help. What ever the situation, the adult is only there to facilitate the play and not direct it. So once you have fulfilled the child's need for you to be there, look for the cue to move away. Be aware that the child may still want you involved in the activity. **Perry Else. Adventure Playgrounds; a perfect frame for play. 2003.**

Edge of Chaos.

When children play they tend to play in a slightly chaotic way. What this theory shows is that children play best when they are on the 'edge of chaos'. On one side of this 'edge of chaos' is the state of *ordered* play, where the child may be *directed* or *organised* in the way that they play. On the other side of the 'edge of chaos' is complete *chaos*, where children find it difficult to play, possibly as a result of bullying, lack of boundaries or real fear for their own safety. **Arthur Battram and Wendy Russell 2002.**