

THE POWER OF PLAY

How guided play creates meaningful learning in ECD classrooms

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Why is play so important in preschools?

- ★ Play is good for brain development. When a child is completely immersed in play they explore, experiment, repeat and master (learn) the world around them.
- ★ Guided play allows teachers to combine aspects of free play while carefully constraining the environment to reach mature dramatic play.

- ★ Research has proven that imaginary play is the only way to truly learn self-regulation - an essential skill for lifelong learning and success.

- ★ Playing is fun! Playing raises endorphins and decreases stress hormones making children more receptive to learning.

Guiding children to play has to be as intentional & systematic as teaching content-related skills without being adult directed.



Bringing play back into your classroom

- ★ Imaginary play is the most powerful way to impact a child's cognitive ability. Unlike other forms of play, imaginary or pretend play is person oriented and not material or object oriented. This encourages children to master mental tools. Incorporate imaginary play into your weekly lesson plans.
- ★ PRoPELS* is a tool for identifying the components of imaginary play. Use this tool to scaffold imaginary play for the little ones in your class. Join the Masterclass and receive FREE ready-to-use PRoPELS.
- ★ Keep a well stocked imaginary play cupboard with dress up clothes, props, choices of music, favourite story books and games.

*Developed by Deborah Leong and Elena Bodrova (2012)

PRoPELS

PRoPELS is an acronym for the six components of imaginary play:

P - Plan

R - Roles

P- Props

E - Extended time frame

L- Language

S -Scenario

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Top 5 Toys for Playful Learning

Use these open ended toys to ignite learning, imagination & cognitive development in your classroom. These toys are also great for developing fine motor skills, as well as soft skills such as creativity, problem solving, and more.

Play dough



TOP TIP: Use scented play dough in bright colours for additional sensory exploration.

Building blocks



TOP TIP: Collect a range of different building blocks such as Duplo, wooden blocks & jumbo blocks.

Felt toy sets



TOP TIP: Buy or make themed felt toy sets to encourage imagination, language & cognitive processing.

The ultimate power of play is in the relationship between a child & their teacher. You have a unique role to play in giving that a firm foundation for learning - and it all comes down to love & play.

- Lara Schoenfeld, OT & Play Advocate



Musical instruments

TOP TIP: Incorporate music & movement into your daily routine. Try playing classical music softly during quiet time or reading.



Cardboard box

TOP TIP: Nothing sparks imagination like a cardboard box. Include themed or open box construction in your weekly lesson plans.