



THE WAY TO PLAY

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'In play a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behaviour. In play it is though he were ahead taller than himself'

Lev Vygotsky

INTRODUCTION



Play is an essential part of children’s lives and is vital to their development. The importance of play in contributing to the health and well-being of children, extending through childhood and beyond, is universally acknowledged. As an essential ingredient to the social, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional development of children, play provides a mechanism for them to explore the world around them, develop and practice skills.

This resource has been developed to inspire you to provide and create playful opportunities for children in your care. The resource is divided into five sections. Each section provides an overview of play along with some ideas of things that you can do to support it.

The school section builds on PlayBoards work within schools and provides some ideas and considerations for play in schools.

The outdoor play section looks at play in the outdoors. This section provides some ideas of things to do in the outdoors whether that is your front yard, the local park or your local forest.

The parents section looks at play for parents. This section provides some ideas for parents to play with their children.

The practitioners section looks at play for those working with children. This section provides some ideas and considerations when supporting and facilitating play.

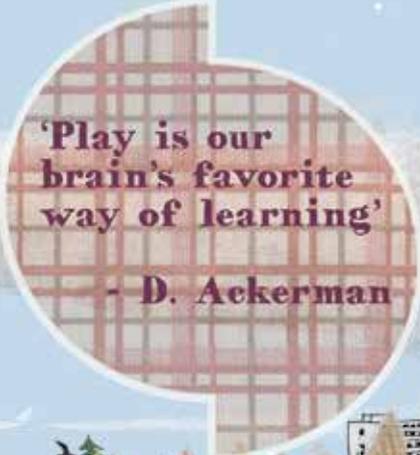
The final section provides a wide range of materials including a list of ideas of things to make and do along with supplementary reading based on some of the material referred to in the other sections.

Play can make a real difference to children's lives. If you reflect on your own experiences of playing as a child, what can you remember? Think about what you did and where you were. What did you play? Who did you play with? The chances are that you will remember some activities better than others like playing in the stream or out in the park. Perhaps you remember special times like the summer holidays; some memories may be adventurous and exciting or calming and solitary.

Play is what children do in their own time, for their own reasons. When playing, children choose what to do, how to do it and who to do it with. Play takes many forms; doing nothing in particular; doing lots; being boisterous; showing off; being contemplative; being thwarted; overcoming difficulties. Through play, children explore the world and learn to take responsibility for their own choices.

Play supports children to move through each stage of their development naturally, allowing them to make friends, come to terms with difficulties, follow their instincts, think and learn from others.

Play can be sociable or solitary, play can help children to climb, swing, gallop and chase. It can help them to try things out, test boundaries, develop confidence, ride a bike, explore and experiment. -



**'Play is our
brain's favorite
way of learning'**

- D. Ackerman

