The importance of learning through play in the early years…. and beyond!

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THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

Why does play matter?

'*Play takes many forms Everyone knows 'play' when they see it – on streets, in villages, on playgrounds, in classrooms. People from every culture, economic background and community engage in play from their earliest years. Yet play can be hard to define.' - UNICEF*

Play is meaningful
Children play to make sense of the world around them, and to find meaning in an experience by connecting it to something already known. Through play, children express and expand their understanding of their experiences.

Play is joyful
Look at children – or adults – playing, often smiling and laughing. Of course, play may have its frustrations and challenges (Who gets the first turn? Why can't I make this block building stay up?), but the overall feeling is one of enjoyment, motivation, thrill and pleasure.

Play is actively engaging
Watch children playing, and you will usually see that they become deeply involved, often combining physical, mental and verbal engagement.

Play is iterative
Play and learning are not static. Children play to practice skills, try out possibilities, revise hypotheses and discover new challenges, leading to deeper learning.

Play is socially interactive
Play allows children to communicate ideas, to understand others through social interaction, paving the way to build deeper understanding and more powerful relationships.

Play in action: pre-school

Portman
CHURCH STREET FAMILY HUB

"...my children love coming here, they get to communicate with other children, they experience learning through play. There's a sense of welcome and warmth from everyone. I feel safe whenever I talk to the staff about any worries."

ParentChild+
Equal Possibilities From The Start

ParentChild+ graduates are 50% more likely to be prepared for kindergarten than their peers.

ParentChild+ graduates scored 2.5x higher on social-emotional skills than their peers.

ParentChild+ graduates enter school performing 10 months above their chronological age.

ParentChild+ participants have 30% higher graduation rates than their underserved peers.

The home environment and the community are where young children spend the larger, if not the largest, part of their early lives, interacting with parents, siblings, extended family members, and neighbours. These interactions and relationships have a significant influence over how children understand and experience the world around them - UNICEF

Play in action: Community adventure Play for school age children

What does it do?

- Self-directed
- Encourages creativity
- Imaginative
- Connection with outdoors

Who does it reach?

- Higher proportion of girls attend our local play sites than most youth and sports providers
- Attracts high numbers of global majority families and children
- Reaches high proportion of low-income families
- Has been designed to be inclusive for disabled children

The games library – what difference does it make?

Increased Self-Esteem and Confidence:
As players take on roles and overcome challenges, they experience a sense of accomplishment. Success in the game can boost self-esteem and confidence in real life.

Improved Social Skills:
Engaging in D&D encourages interaction with others, fostering teamwork, communication, and cooperation. Players learn to collaborate, negotiate, and build relationships with fellow adventurers.

Expressive Outlet:
D&D provides a creative space where players can express themselves freely. Through their characters, they explore emotions, experiences, and personal narratives.

Assertiveness Practice:
Role-playing allows individuals to practice assertiveness—speaking up, making decisions, and advocating for themselves. This skill can transfer to real-world situations.

Interactive Reading Experience:
The game fuses literacy and orality, promoting creative writing skills. It's a functional and motivating game based around reading that can inspire a joy for reading

Improved Impulse Control and Turn-Taking:
In D&D, players take turns, plan actions, and consider consequences. This helps develop impulse control and patience.

Enhanced Creative Thinking and Problem-Solving:
Crafting stories, inventing solutions, and adapting to unexpected situations in the game stimulate creative thinking and problem-solving abilities.

Empathy Development:
Players immerse themselves in fictional worlds, understanding characters' motivations and feelings. This empathy extends to real-life interactions.

Moral Reasoning:
D&D presents ethical dilemmas, allowing players to explore complex moral choices. Regular play can improve moral reasoning.

Practical Education:
Mathematics: Die rolling, adding/subtracting modifiers, and probability theory. **Science**: Ecology, weather, and climate of different terrains AND many other subjects

Tabletop role playing

A tabletop role-playing game is a journey of collective imagination and storytelling, where players bring fictional characters to life. Through the use of plastic miniatures and maps, they transport themselves to a vibrant fantasy world, making impactful choices and weaving an immersive experience under the guidance of a Game Master (GM).

In these captivating games, players gather around a table. The GM serves as the referee and storyteller, skillfully describing the game world, non-player characters, and challenges that the player characters face. The GM sets the stage for the adventure and provides the framework for the players to interact and make decisions.

The gameplay typically revolves around a set of rules and mechanics, which vary depending on the game system being played. One of the most popular and well-known games is Dungeons and Dragons (**D&D**). These rules govern actions such as combat, skill checks, and character progression. These games use dice rolls to introduce an element of chance into the game.

These games are now widely popular to be played online through a platform called Virtual Table-Top, such as Roll20.