

The 4th edition of NAEYC's position statement (2020) defines "developmentally appropriate practice" as *methods that promote each child's optimal development and learning through a strengths-based, play-based approach to joyful, engaged learning* (p.5). Yet recent shifts to virtual learning and single-minded emphasis on academic achievement have hampered some efforts to support play-based approaches. This collection of resources is designed to provide both evidence and examples of how effectively play may be used to facilitate learning, development, and connections across domains.

Convention on the Rights of the Child: General comment No. 17 on the Right of the Child to Rest, Leisure, Play, Recreational Activities, Cultural Life and the Arts (article 31)

<http://ipaworld.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/G1342828-3.pdf>

In February 2013 the General Comment on Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted. Read this historical document to appreciate how play and recreation are essential to the health and well-being of children and promote the development of creativity, imagination, self-confidence, and self-efficacy, as well as physical, social, cognitive, and emotional strength and skills. A video that summarizes key points of Article 31, is *This Is Me: Article 31 and a Child's Right to Play* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5tjRPWPhlFA>

How Play Helps Math Learning

<https://modules.ilabs.uw.edu/module/how-play-helps-math-learning/>

This 20-minute module from the I-LABS Outreach and Education talent pool at the University of Washington offers evidence-based insights to ways in which play supports math learning and spatial skills. The module includes narrated slides, a discussion guide, and a handout to support use of these materials with any audience.

Information for Parents: Play

<https://www.parentingcounts.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/information-for-parents-play.pdf> (English)

<https://www.parentingcounts.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/informacion-para-los-padres-el-juego.pdf> (Spanish)

This fact sheet highlights the role of play in brain development, identifies six different types of play, and offers suggestions for families.

Play in Early Childhood: The Role of Play in Any Setting

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/play-in-early-childhood-the-role-of-play-in-any-setting/>

The science of child development points to three core principles that can guide what society needs to do to help children and families thrive. These include: 1) supporting responsive relationships; 2) strengthening core life skills; and 3) reducing sources of stress. In this video, learn more about how play can support all three principles and foster children's resilience to hardship, and how the complex play interactions help build their brains.

Building Babies' Brains Through Play: Mini Parenting Master Class

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/building-babies-brains-through-play-mini-parenting-master-class/>

By engaging in playful serve and return with a child, you can literally help build stronger connections in the brain. Strong neural connections are the foundation for all of a child's future learning, behavior, and health. This Mini Parenting Master Class from UNICEF explains the importance of serve and return interactions like play and how easy they are to do, especially through practice!

Overview of Play: Its Uses and Importance in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education

https://journals.lww.com/iycjournal/Fulltext/2011/07000/Overview_of_Play_Its_Uses_and_Importance_in_Early.2.aspx

This article presents a review about the importance of play in early intervention, early childhood special education, and early childhood education and how play is regarded and used within these contexts.

Where Will Your Child's Imagination Go Today?

<https://positiveparentingnews.org/news-reports/where-will-your-childs-imagination-go-today/>

This article and video, in English and Spanish, summarize research on the learning benefits of pretend play.

Encouraging Independent Play for Toddlers and Preschoolers <https://lnkd.in/dxun-UP>

Parents have so little time during COVID, but helping children learn independent play skills can get them a few free minutes here and there. Rebecca Parlakian's new column for PBS Parents highlights strategies families can use to support their preschoolers' ability to play on their own. ZERO TO THREE

A Research-Based Case for Recess

https://www.playworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/US-play-coalition_Research-based-case-for-recess.pdf

The author offers research-based evidence to illustrate the importance of recess and how academic gains are supported by including daily opportunities for outdoor play.

Playful Math Instruction in the Context of Standards

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/jul2017/playful-math-instruction-standards>

This article provides several examples of engaging activities that show how to use standards, curricula, and assessments to support—not stifle—math learning through play. As the author writes, “Abundant research has demonstrated that young children enjoy learning math and can learn far more than was previously assumed—without a single flash card or worksheet.”

Talking It Up: Play, Language Development, and the Role of Adult Support

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1016058.pdf>

The authors review the research that supports the ways in which play helps children learn language. The research suggests that play benefits children's language development because it incorporates socially interactive and cognitive elements known to enhance language skills. Roles for adults in support of play are discussed.

Videos on Supporting Physical and Outdoor Play

<https://www.easternct.edu/center-for-early-childhood-education/physical-and-outdoor-play/index.html>

In 2010 the Center for Early Childhood Education reviewed over 100 studies to develop print and video resources for teachers and caregivers on the benefits of supporting children's physical and outdoor play. Enjoy this site with five videos and companion print resources that emerged from that research.

Fighting for Children's Right to Play <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IfmnS39aPtM>

Nancy Carlsson-Paige and Diane Levin, founders of Defending the Early Years, discuss the benefits of many and diverse opportunities for children to play.

How Much Physical Activity Do Children Need? <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/children/index.htm>

This website highlights the recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control for younger children (3-5) and school-aged children/adolescents (ages 6 through 17 years). The site includes information about the benefits of physical play and examples of how to build play into each day.

Two GUMDROPS About Play

In the first gumdrop, children share their thoughts on play. In the second, three generations share their views about play, creating an opportunity to consider how and why those views have changed.

- Children Speak about the Importance of Play <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sby38BbLZuY>
- Three Generations Talk About Play <https://youtu.be/8nKcIIAQQFs>

Natural Resources is a free, one-way listserv that is distributed monthly. Each issue features high quality, readily available, and free resources on a specific topic related to children from birth through Grade 3, their families, and the professionals who serve and support them. Resources in Spanish are highlighted. Natural Resources is compiled and distributed by Camille Catlett, and past issues are archived at <https://scriptnc.fpg.unc.edu/natural-resources-monthly-newsletter> To subscribe or unsubscribe, suggest resources, or get more information, please contact Camille Catlett at camille.catlett@unc.edu