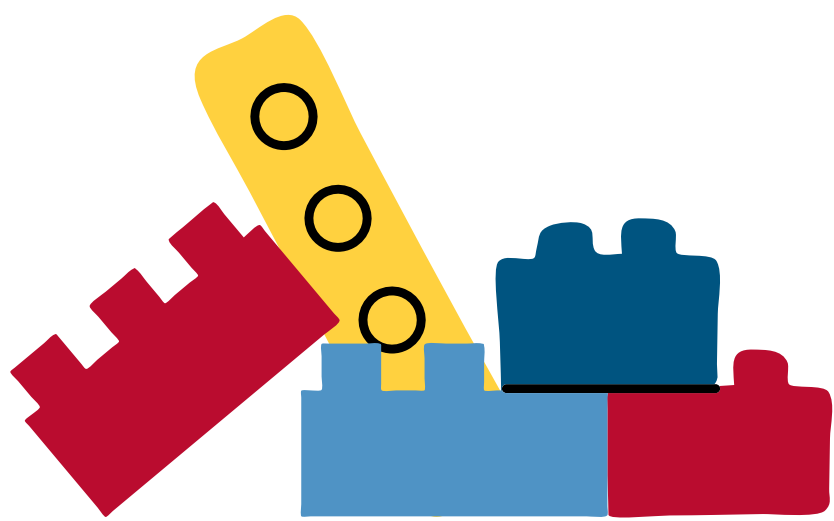


Why Play, Anyway?

Play is the lens through which children experience their world, and the world of others. Giving children the time, space, and permission they need to enjoy play has a hugely beneficial impact on their lives when it comes to their development, health and well-being. Play is such an important part of childhood that it has been recognized by the United Nations as a right of every child.

PLAY BUILDS IMAGINATION & CREATIVITY

Solitary play can be just as valuable as group play. It helps kids to prepare for social situations by providing a stronger sense of independence and promoting creativity. Children who choose to play alone at a playground can also learn social cues by observing other group interactions from afar.



PLAY FACILITATES GROUP INTERACTION

Group play is where kids are introduced to social roles and cultural norms. They develop the skills necessary to play cooperatively within group structures. It also gives them an opportunity to learn about self-control, test relationships and understand acceptable group behaviour., which are essential social skills.

PLAY REAPS EMOTIONAL & BEHAVIOURAL BENEFITS

Regular play can reduce anxiety, stress and irritability for children while boosting joy and self-esteem. It improves emotional flexibility, resilience and provides an increased ability to deal with change. Through play, children can confront life's challenges in a way that they can understand and process.

PLAY PROMOTES PHYSICAL FITNESS

Kids love to be active. Exercise helps to promote physically fit and healthy children. Play encourages this activity, giving kids the opportunity to sharpen reflexes, work on movement control, improve gross motor skills and develop greater balance. They also build strong muscles, improve bone-density and increase cardio-vascular function.

Encouraging active play can have positive far-reaching health effects.

PLAY FOSTERS COGNITIVE GROWTH

A variety of experts agree that play is essential for brain development. Free play positively affects neurological development by influencing how the circuits of the brain are wired.

Free play has a beneficial impact on confidence, intelligence and communication.



PLAY ENCOURAGES GREATER INDEPENDENCE

During play, children often mimic adults and create make-believe games. When a child does this, they're stretching their imagination. They create complex narratives around these roles and learn to think in abstract ways. This abstract thinking is the foundation for more advanced learning and problem solving.

INFORMATION GATHERED FROM THE AUSTRALIAN PARENTING WEBSITE