



Kindergarten Individual Development Survey
Every Illinois Child Ready for Kindergarten

Play as a Method of Instruction

Breakout Session 3 –
B3 Continuity Conference
AA #3021

When was the last time you PLAYED?

Turn and talk!



Play as a method of instruction

- ◆ Define Play
- ◆ Understand play as a method of instruction for positive student outcomes
- ◆ Learn how to organize child-initiated and guided play
- ◆ Plan for the teacher's intentional role in facilitating play

Definition of Play

- ◆ When children follow their own ideas, in their own way, for their own reasons
- ◆ Opportunity to take risks, try on new roles, ideas, feelings
- ◆ Intrinsically motivated, their choice
- ◆ Results in pleasurable feelings

Purposeful Play: A Teacher's Guide to Igniting Deep & Joyful Learning Across the Day (2016)
by Mraz, Porcelli and Tyler



Value of Play

- ◆ Develops executive function skills
 - Self regulation
 - Working memory
 - Cognitive flexibility
- * Contributes to creativity

Executive Function

- Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University

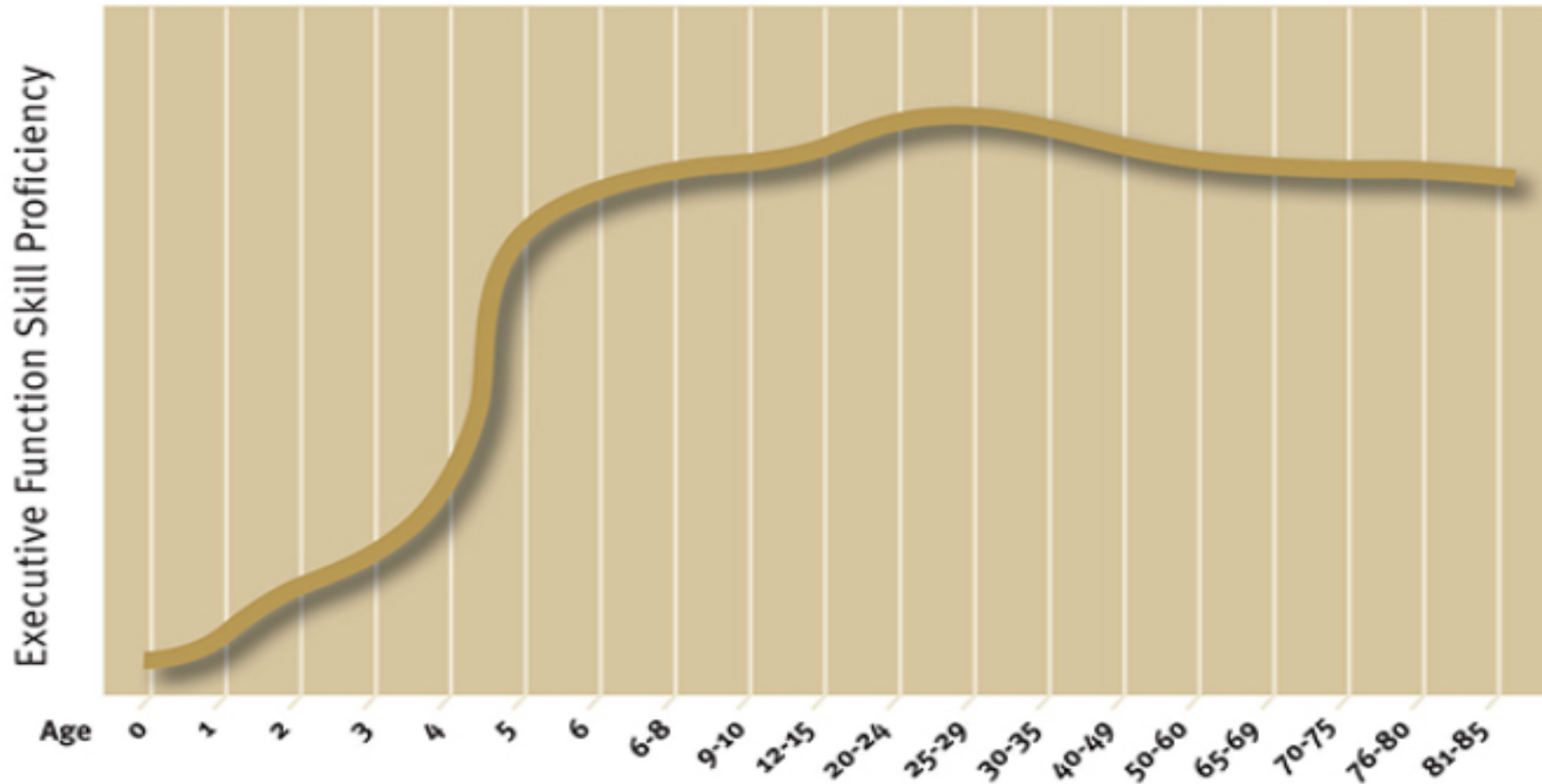
Diamond
(2013)

Table 1

Executive functions (EFs) are important to just about every aspect of life

Aspects of life	The ways in which EFs are relevant to that aspect of life	References
Mental health	EFs are impaired in many mental disorders, including:	
	- Addictions	Baler & Volkow 2006
	- Attention deficit hyperactivity (ADHD)	Diamond 2005 , Lui & Tannock 2007
	- Conduct disorder	Fairchild et al. 2009
	- Depression	Taylor-Tavares et al. 2007
	- Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)	Penadés et al. 2007
	- Schizophrenia	Barch 2005
Physical health	Poorer EFs are associated with obesity, overeating, substance abuse, and poor treatment adherence	Crescioni et al. 2011 , Miller et al. 2011 , Riggs et al. 2010
Quality of life	People with better EFs enjoy a better quality of life	Brown & Landgraf 2010 , Davis et al. 2010
School readiness	EFs are more important for school readiness than are IQ or entry-level reading or math	Blair & Razza 2007 , Morrison et al. 2010
School success	EFs predict both math and reading competence throughout the school years	Borella et al. 2010 , Duncan et al. 2007 , Gathercole et al. 2004
Job success	Poor EFs lead to poor productivity and difficulty finding and keeping a job	Bailey 2007
Marital harmony	A partner with poor EFs can be more difficult to get along with, less dependable, and/or more likely to act on impulse	Eakin et al. 2004
Public safety	Poor EFs lead to social problems (including crime, reckless behavior, violence, and emotional outbursts)	Broidy et al. 2003 , Denson et al. 2011

Executive Function Skills Build Into the Early Adult Years



Tests measuring different forms of executive function skills indicate that they begin to develop shortly after birth, with the ages 3 to 6 a window of opportunity for dramatic growth in these skills. Development continues throughout adolescence and early adulthood.

[Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University](#)

5 STAGES OF MATURE MAKE BELIEVE PLAY

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First Scripts	No plan, no roles, limited language, plays with objects as objects, short time frame
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roles with Actions	No plan, roles emerge from action, creates stereotypic scenarios, language describes action, plays with objects as props, plays for a few minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roles with Rules and Beginning Scenarios	Plans roles and actions, uses language for roles and actions, needs props for roles, 10-15 minutes of play, plays familiar scripts fully
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mature Roles	Plans scenarios and plans evolve, multiple roles interact, symbolic props &/or invents props, uses role speech, 60 minutes of play, series of coordinated scenarios with “problems” that evolve over time with emotional aspects
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dramatization, Multiple Roles and Director’s Play	Plans elaborate scenarios, can play more than role at a time, can use pretend rather than actual prop, scenarios last over several days, book language as well as role speech, series of coordinated scenarios than can change based on player

Types of Play

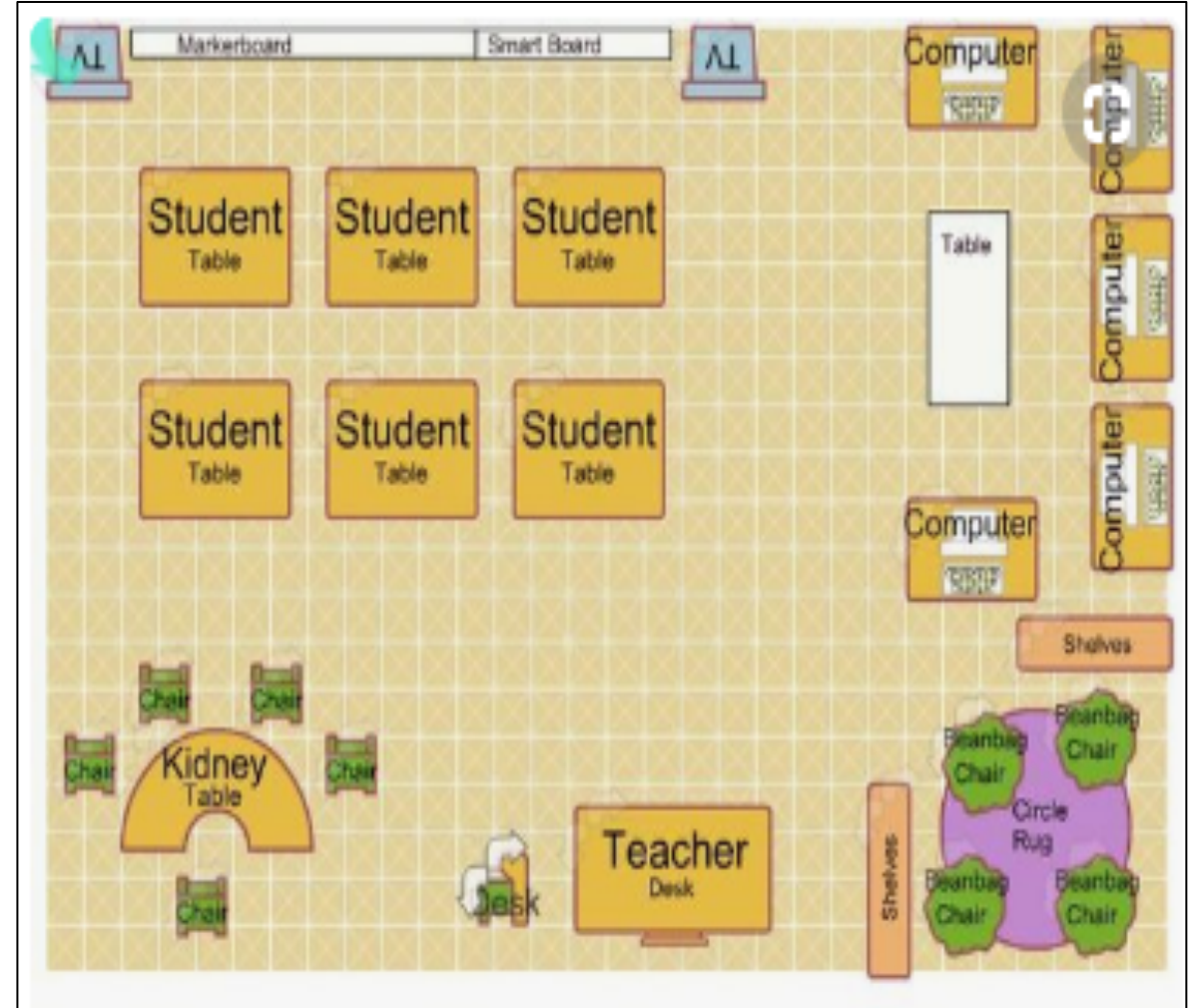
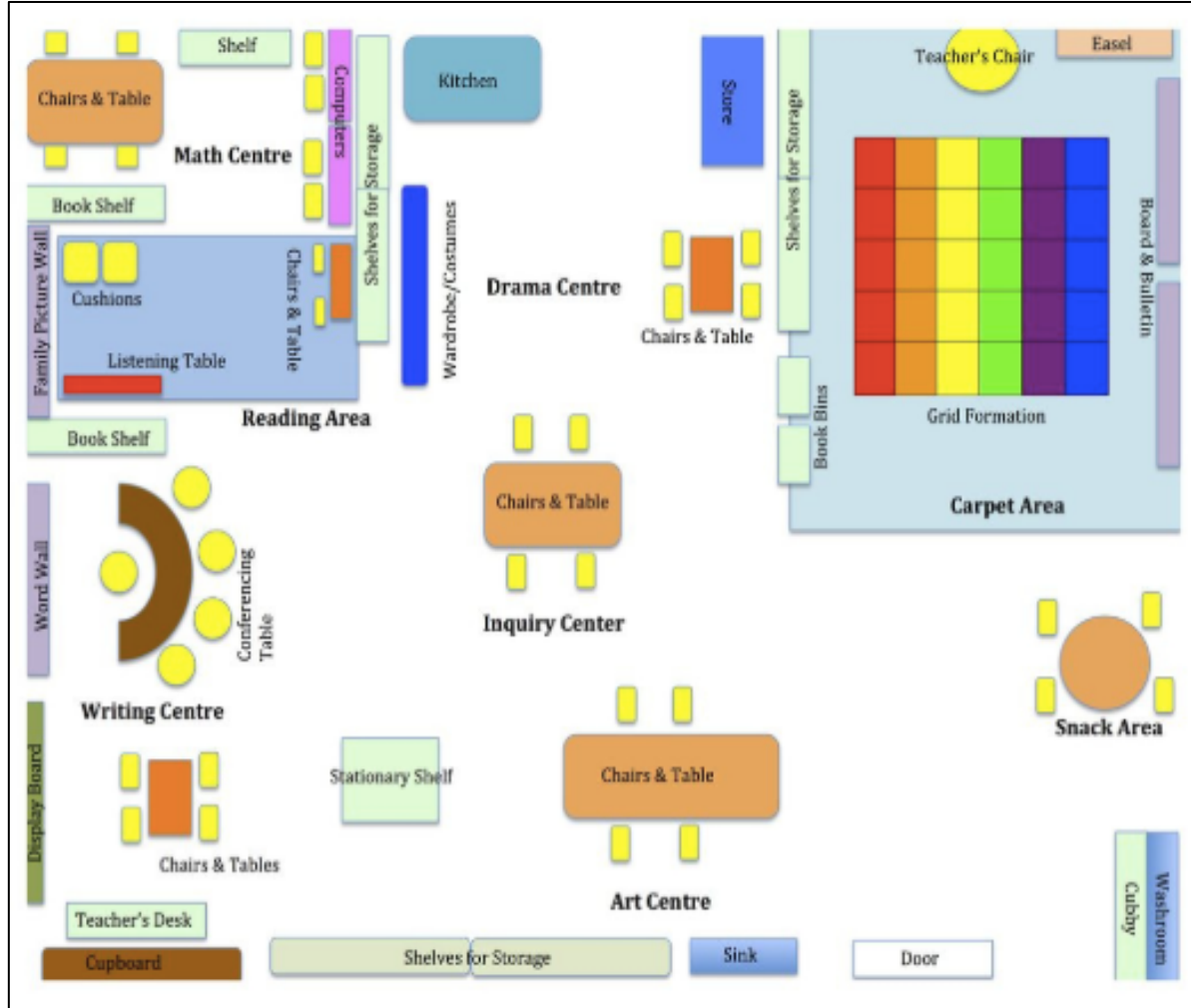
- ◆ Fantasy/Imaginative Play
- ◆ Constructive Play
- ◆ Games with Rules
- ◆ Exploration in the Arts
- ◆ Engaging in an Activity to Mastery
- ◆ Physical/Rough and Tumble Play

Classroom Design: the WHY and the HOW

- ◆ The environment is more than physical set-up: it reflects the emotional atmosphere generated and the teaching decisions made.
- ◆ Reflects the needs of the students and is flexible to change throughout the week/month/ year.
- ◆ Contributes to building student autonomy and learning by discovery (Piaget and Reggio)

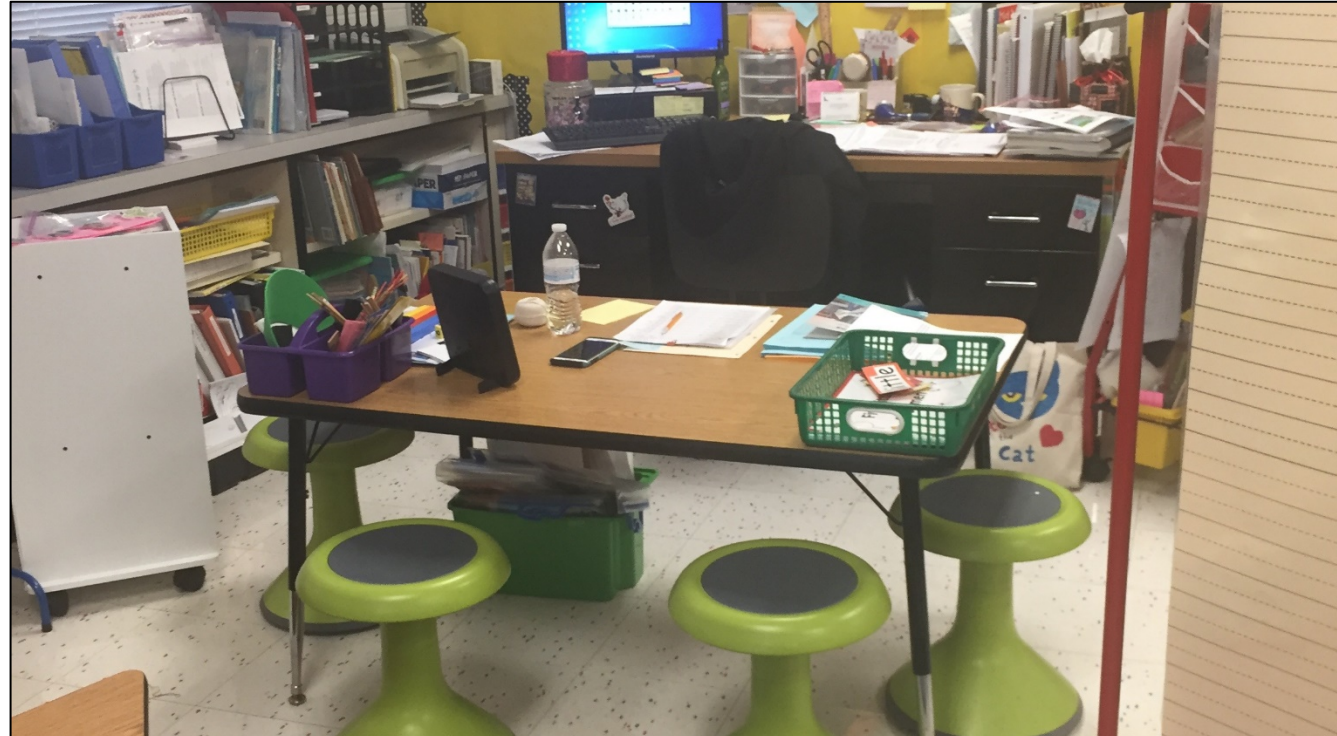


What do you notice?



Classroom Design

- ◆ **Whole Group** area: a place for community
 - can also be for moving in big way, building big structures
- ◆ **Small group** area: teacher-led
 - guided practice, conferencing
- ◆ **Independent** and small group work areas/learning centers
 - includes small, cozy, calming spaces,



Teacher's Role in Play



Planner

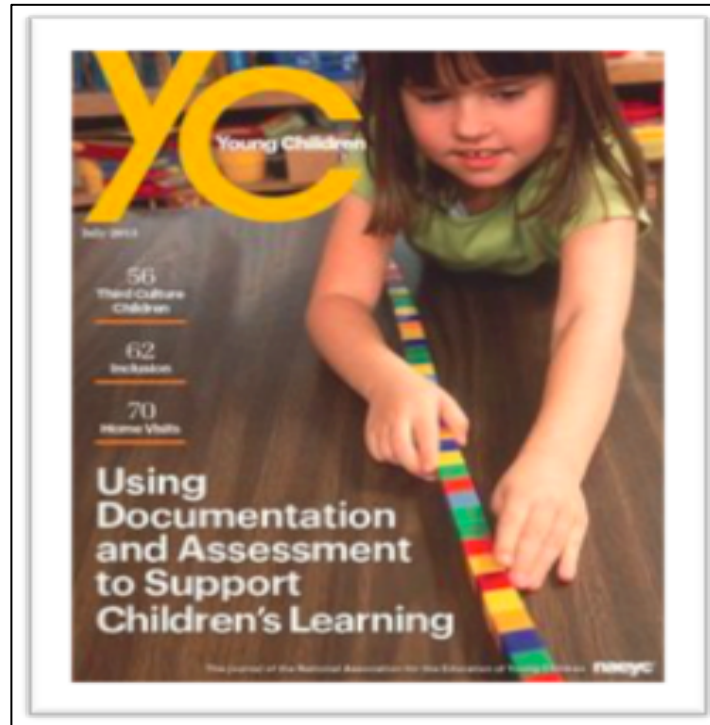
Scribe

Assessor

Player



Mediator



Teacher's Role in Play

The Teacher is AVAILABLE to scaffold learning and behavior

- ◆ Learns and cares about students' interests and lives outside of the classroom (1b, 2a, 3a)
- ◆ Models and facilitates respectful interactions and support between peers (2c)
- ◆ Seizes on a teachable moment (3e)
- ◆ Extends student vocabularies (3a)
- ◆ Uses a variety of questions (3b)
- ◆ Challenges students to explain their thinking (3c)

Teacher's Role: Planner

Thoughtful planning is an ongoing process of asking questions and making decisions.

The Power of Observation by Judy Jablon

- What is the learner's current knowledge and experience for the academic or social content?
- How are the centers are functioning?
- What do I want to find out about _____?
- When and where should I observe to get the information I need?
- How do I record what I observe?
- How do I organize the information I collect?

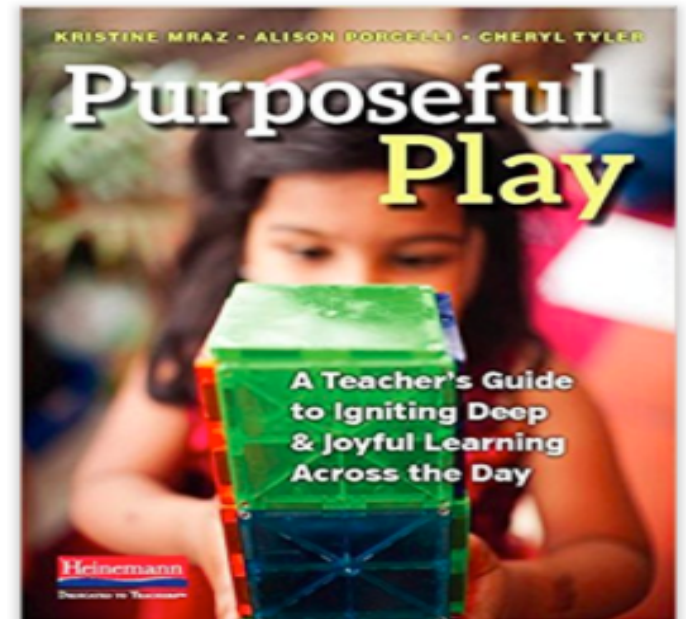
Teacher's Role in Centers

- ◆ Listen and respond to the child's lead
- ◆ Comment on what you see and wait for their response
- ◆ Take dictation
- ◆ Ask open-ended questions
- ◆ Use verbal cues and prompts to assist students.
- ◆ Break a task into small, more manageable tasks
- ◆ Model and demonstrate
- ◆ Expand on language and play
- ◆ Facilitate children helping and teaching each other
- ◆ Document and collect evidence

Why is Play Purposeful?

Students...

- Develop imagination
- Practice academic learning authentically
- Achieve at the farthest edge of their ZPD
- Learn to be flexible thinkers
- Develop core social skills
 - Empathy
 - Collaboration
 - Negotiation
- Develop communication skills



Language

Infusing vocabulary instruction in guided play fosters word learning for preschoolers, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

(Hassinger-das, 2017).



Math

Guided play is effective for fostering spatial skills—important in and of themselves and also tied to later mathematics success

(Hassinger-das, 2017)



Both/And Thinking

Teachers have both high expectations AND recognize that some children require additional assistance and resources to meet those expectations.

Children both construct their understanding AND benefit from instruction by more competent peers and adults.

Children benefit both from self-initiated spontaneous play AND from teacher-planned and -structured activities, projects and experiences.

Research on Play-based Kindergarten

- Children in play-based kindergartens have a double advantage over those who are denied play:
 - they end up equally good or better at reading
 - and other intellectual skills,
- and they are more likely to become well-adjusted healthy people.

• *Crisis in the Kindergarten: Why Children Need to Play in School, 2009*

Crisis in Kindergarten

(Miller and Almon, 2009)

THE KINDERGARTEN CONTINUUM

