



# The Importance of Play

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**“Through play children learn what no one  
can teach them.”**

- Lawrence Frank





What is play?



# Types of Play

- According to NAEYC
- Four Types of Play:
  - Sensory/manipulative/object play/ and physical play
  - Constructive Play
  - Dramatic or Symbolic Play
  - Games with Rules



# Stages of Play

In the early years, children go through the stages of :

\* **Passive on looker**

\* **Solitary player - plays by her/himself**

\* **Parallel play - plays *beside* another player**

\* **Associative play - play in a group with similar resources, but no shared goals or roles**

\* **Cooperative play - team play with specific roles with shared**

**input**

**goals and**



# Types of Play:

- Sensory/manipulative/object play and physical play





# Types of Play

- Constructive Play





# Types of Play:

- Dramatic or Symbolic Play





# Types of Play:

- Games with rules







# Play:

- Stimulates the senses
- Develops fine and gross motor skills
- Guides decision making
- Enhances imagination
- Promotes social skills and language



# Play

## Play Based Learning is:

- \* **child-centered** – the needs; interests; abilities of the students; learning styles are reflected in the program; setting up of the environment, with a wide variety of resources for selection and choice making, enabling each to learn in their own way achieving the outcomes, as well as, their own unique milestones
- \* **student/peer initiated** – they take the lead and choose what/how/with what will they play
- \* **teacher guided/supported/scaffolded:**
  - hands on
  - hands above
  - hands off



# Play:

- Play is so important that the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights has recognized it as a right for every child.
- During play children increase their knowledge and understanding of self, others, and the physical world around them.
- Research on cognitive development and the brain show us that young children learn by constructing knowledge or wiring the brain in a more physical and interactive way, involving all of the senses.





## Play:

- Toys are tools for the future. Children play with toys in an unstructured manner in order to create and actively engage in their physical environment to build knowledge.
- Play contributes to all domains of development: cognitive, physical, and psychological.



# High Quality Play

- In high quality play children are truly engaged
- Complex play benefits children in developing **executive functions**
- High level play leads to **self-regulation**
- Studies have found that the quality of play is associated with social and linguistic competence.



# High Quality Play

Consists of:

- Lengthy play periods
- Plenty of realistic props
- Unstructured, open-ended materials
- Interesting books
- Various role playing
- Observation of children's interests and abilities



# Benefits of High Quality Play

- Longer interactions among children
- High levels of involvement
- More cooperation
- Support Self Regulation
- Strengthened ability to visualize situations
- Gain confidence through self control



# Gains in Social Emotional Activities

- More empathy
- Better ability to take on the perspective of others
- Better control of impulsive actions
- Better emotional and social adjustment
- More innovation
- More imaginativeness
- Longer attention spans



# Gains in Cognitive- Creative Activities

- Better verbalization
- Richer Vocabulary
- Better problem solving strategies
- Higher language comprehension
- Better ability to take on the perspective of another
- Higher intellectual competence
- Better peer cooperation



# Guiding Children's Learning

- Scaffolding – Lev Vygotsky
- Teacher provides varying levels of support to help children stretch to learn new concepts, skills and understandings that are challenging but achievable.
- As children work to master a new skill or acquire a new understanding the teacher pulls back on the level of support she offers.



# Using a Variety of Approaches

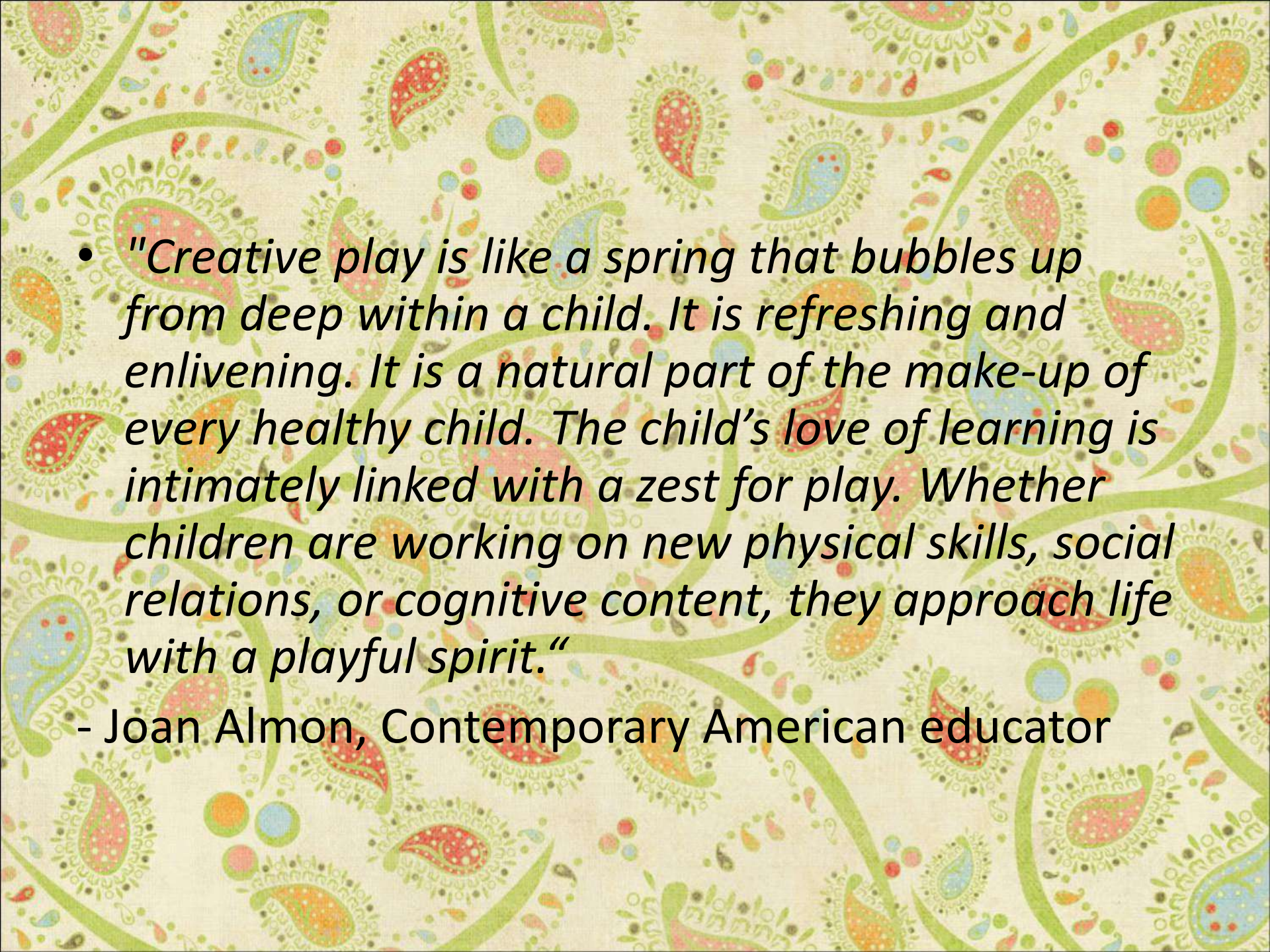
- Teachers have a variety of strategies ready and remain flexible and observant:
  - Encourage
  - Give specific feedback
  - Model
  - Create add or challenge
  - Give a clue or hint
  - Provide information
  - Give directions



# Developmentally Appropriate Practice

- DAP is an approach to early childhood education that means teachers meet individual children where they are and help them reach challenging but achievable goals that will support their development and learning.
- When teachers make decisions they keep in mind:
  - Age appropriateness
  - Individual Appropriateness
  - Social and Cultural Appropriateness



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- *"Creative play is like a spring that bubbles up from deep within a child. It is refreshing and enlivening. It is a natural part of the make-up of every healthy child. The child's love of learning is intimately linked with a zest for play. Whether children are working on new physical skills, social relations, or cognitive content, they approach life with a playful spirit."*

- Joan Almon, Contemporary American educator





# Video

- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-h4IHlqkcc&feature=youtube\\_gdata\\_player](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-h4IHlqkcc&feature=youtube_gdata_player)



# Resources

- Chopsticks and Counting Chips- Elena Bodrova and Deborah J. Leong
- Pretend Play Leads to Real Life Learning- Laura J. Cokler
- Developmentally Appropriate Practice and Play- National Association for the Education of Young People
- Block Building and Make- Believe for Every Child- Janis Strasser and Lisa Mufson Koeppel
- Teaching and Learning in the Kindergarten Year- Domenic F. Gullo
- Spotlight on Young Children and Play- Derry Koralek
- The Importance of Play- A conversation with Dr. Alison Gopnik
- Got Standards? Don't Give Up on Engaged Learning- Judy Harris Helm
- First Steps Toward Teaching the Reggio Way- Joanne Hendrick
- <http://usplaycoalition.clemson.edu>