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Play and Early Learning: Defining Play and Importance of Play

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- Children like to explore, discover and play and if they get the best environment, it will ensure proper cognitive, socio-emotional and physical development.
- During early childhood, every activity of children is attractive. The onlooker is surprised even when the baby experiences joy in just moving arms and legs and repeating with gurgling sounds. These are the beginnings of play and are most valuable for the lives of children everywhere.
- Communities create infant toys such as rattles, mobiles or hang bells within the child's movement sphere to enhance interest and creating connections with the physical environment. Self-propelling acts become infant play and are essential for the overall development of the child.



- As the child grows, the nature of play evolves and includes response to people, objects and willful acts of experimenting and exploring. The child may pull something, throw an object or push a block like a train. It is in such acts that children display their thoughts and imagination. Through play, the child experiences different emotions and learns about the world around.
- Play is universal and all of us agree that play in early childhood is children’s path to uncovering, discovering and learning about the secrets of the physical social world. During childhood, new skills are developed or learned through different play activities.

Defining Play

Play provides opportunity to explore, experiment and experience in non-threatening ways. Play, as described by Piaget, consists of responses repeated purely for functional pleasure.

Following are some definitions of play:

Joyful, spontaneous, and creative activity in which man finds his fullest expression.	Ross
Instinctive practice, without serious intent of activities that will later be essential to life.	Gross
A free, self-contained activity that has an inherent goal, that is initiated, and directed by intrinsic motivation, and that provides satisfaction from the activity of playing itself.	Stern
Resembles the unending activity of the flowing stream or the growing tree. Play is the work of the child.	Montessori
Any activity that is directed towards an end other than enjoyment cannot be rightly called play.	Hurlock
Following Are Some Definitions of Play	