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Guided Play: a Pedagogical Approach to Teaching

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GUIDED PLAY

A PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH TO TEACHING

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"*You can teach what you know but you can only reproduce what you are."* is a saying I heard once. I want to always remember to be a Light for Jesus so that wherever I am and whatever I am doing, others can see Him in me. Remembering to stop and listen, to play, to sing, to be silly, to dance, to hug, to cry, to hold, and to be *there* for those that I love and those that need love is my greatest desire.

It is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be declared righteous.

Romans 2:3

Abstract

Guided play is the midpoint between direct instruction and free play. It provides a learning goal with teacher scaffolding which allows children to control their learning (Weisberg, et al., 2013). Guided play learning experiences combine child-directed play with a focus on learning targets set forth by an adult. Guided play enhances the discovery and achievement of learning goals by allowing children to explore in an uninhibited setting. Guided play promotes critical social and emotional skills that are necessary for child development such as problem-solving abilities. Guided play is shown to increase mathematical performance, especially in young students. Literacy is another area that benefits from play. Children in guided play often use higher forms of language than normal (Lewis, Boucher, Lupton, & Watson, 2000).

Children learn best when they are in active, engaged, constructive and interactive environments. Identifying ways that guided play benefits children's social and emotional skills, mathematic skills, literacy skills, and how technology fits into play is essential to children's development and growth. There are many benefits of guided play and this research will support the pedagogy of guided play.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

A Case for Play

There is a knock on the door and a child's voice asks, "Do you want to come out and play? We are playing frontier survivors and making special potions to heal people." An eager child grabs her shoes and heads out the door. Only moments before this knock, this child was glued to an iPad watching a video of someone *else* playing some random online video game. Looking outside one wonders, 'where are all the other children that fill these homes on all these Cul-de-Sac neighborhoods?' Are they at camps, sports practice, daycare, or are they like the child mentioned above- engrossed in playing on technology? If the research is so strong noting the importance of play in developing self-regulation, promoting language, cognition, social competence, and creativity in children, why then, do children currently do so little of it at home and school? How is the lack of imaginative and social play impacting children's social and emotional growth and development? What is effect of guided play versus free play on child's academic growth and development?

I believe one reason play has taken a backseat may be the adults' idea that play is not learning and there is no time for play in school or home today. Is the belief that children need to be in structured learning environments and activities in order to excel academically and athletically warranted? Trying to keep up with the latest trends or pedagogy in teaching and parenting can be all together taxing and quite often not what is best for children. It is said that much confusion around the definition of play is related to the fact that the term *play i*n child development literature is often used to label most forms of child's social and nonsocial behaviors, regardless of whether or not it is true play. (Pellegrini, 2009)

Over the last 5 years I have seen changes in education including the pressures teachers have with the increased focus on data-driven instruction and standardized testing results. Teaching the curriculum with fidelity can often times be stressful knowing that the students may need something different from you any given day. I personally have been the recipient of hand-me-down blocks, dress-up mirrors, and discovery tables as the need for these items are no longer being used in the primary grades. When I hear teachers having to justify how an art project accompanies a reading/writing sample, I began to wonder where the joy of teaching and the fun of learning has gone for both teachers and students. Benjamin Franklin's quote, "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn." is still one of the most powerful and highly used quotes in the educational community today. However, the pressures of data-driven curriculum and Common Core Standards (CCS) are making the true form of engagement non-existent for most students and teachers today.

Children learn best when they are in active, engaged, constructive and interactive environments (Chi, 2009) and when the content is interesting and meaningful to them (Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, Berk, and Singer, 2009). Allowing the needs and interests of the child to take precedent by providing feedback and direction to the learning goal helps ensure that the child is an active participant in learning and keeps them engaged in the process (Weisberg, Hirsh-Pasek, and Golinkoff, 2013). Ashiabi (2007) states that educational programs that promote playful pedagogy tend to reduce stress in the classroom while developing a strong community, instilling pride, joy, and self-confidence for all learners.

Research has shown the importance play has on children's social, emotional, and cognitive growth and its' impact throughout their lives. The benefits of play are evident, yet the current trends in curriculum and pedagogy eliminate most forms of play in the classroom today (Fisher, 1992). Parents put pressure on schools to provide challenging, rigorous, and competitive learning environments for their children. School districts are under pressure to have high performing schools and purchase rigorous curricula that support common core standards. The schools often place high demands on teachers to perform beyond student's capabilities. Due to this competitive component, parents also put pressure on their children at younger ages, demonstrated by the mass of children signed up for music lessons, sport clubs, language classes, and various other academic classes. McKee (2011) wrote that children are over structured and often over stimulated as their days are filled with busyness. This running to and from each night also puts stress on the family dynamics. Families aren't eating supper together most nights and opting for a fast food drive through. There are fewer meaningful conversations between family members, and intentionality in building relationships is difficult. When parents try to keep pace with what society deems as purposeful parenting and learning, the results are less time for 'family time'.

A 2007 study done by the Associated Press surveyed 1, 280 young people and asked the question, "What makes you happy?" The number one answer was spending time with family at 73%. When parents and teachers invest in children and take the time to interact and allow for times of play and togetherness, it makes children feel loved and secure emotionally. Kids crave relationships with their family, friends, teachers, and peers and play allows many opportunities of social emotional growth to form. If we don't

slow down and recognize the human desire to be loved, understood, and valued, children will look for validation, comfort, and acceptance from sources like media and their less than stellar peers (McKee, 2011).

One of the best ways to grow a child's social and emotional development is to consider the concept of intentionality. Being intentional in building relations with children is crucial and essential, yet it is often quite difficult as the minutes in our days seem to fly by. One way to be intentional about developing strong relationships with children is through play. Spending time reading with your child, playing dress-up, coloring, building Legos, playing with playdough, or building a fort are ways in which parents can be intentional in building beneficial social and emotional skills in children. Fisher (1992) explained that allowing children to lead in play and conversation helps develop strong communication skills and self-regulation abilities. These skills will be necessary in school and imperative to becoming a successful member of society. Teachers can help develop children's communication skills and self-regulation by using guided play opportunities to engage children in meaningful conversations that allow them to grow socially and emotionally. Guided play is the combination of free play and direct instruction with teacher scaffolding to reach a set target goal developed by the teacher.

Dr. Rachel E. White (2012) asserted that children must enjoy the activity or it is not considered play. Play must be intrinsically motivating. Play is process orientated and the means are more important than the ends. Play is spontaneous and voluntary. Children must be physically and/or mentally involved in the activity (White, 2012). My research will be to uncover the importance of play in the classroom and specifically, how Guided Play can affect social emotional and academic learning for children.

CHAPTER II: LITERTURE REVIEW

Effects of Guided Play on Learning and Development of Children

Guided Play

Psychologist Len Vygotsky (2004) dramatically stated that "The entire future of humanity will be attained through the creative imagination…" (pp. 87–88). The special value of play is that it represents a context where freedom becomes possible.

Direct instruction occurs when the teacher plays an active role in delivering and implementing the curriculum to meet the needs of the students. Students are often passive recipients in the learning process. On the other hand, free play occurs when the student has free reign over what is being learned and how it is being learned. Teachers are then often the passive providers of the learning (Weisberg, Hirsh-Pasek, and Golinkoff, 2013).

Guided play lies midway between direct instruction and free play. It provides a learning goal with teacher scaffolding which allows children to control their learning (Weisberg, et al., 2013).

Two important words to be discussed are curriculum and pedagogy. Curriculum is what is being taught and pedagogy is the study of teaching methods and the ways in which learning goals may be achieved (Peel, 2017). Content can be taught in a variety of ways depending on any given day or need of student and subject. Teachers continually need to be flexible and skillful in order to meet the needs of diverse learners. However, the growing concern is that most curriculum is moving toward content-focused learning, especially in math and reading. This move pits two pedagogies against each other: Should classrooms teach using direct instruction methods only or allow for free play? The idea

that a classroom cannot operate with both sets of pedagogies warrants attention (Weisberg, et al. 2013).

Guided play is composed of learning experiences that combine child-directed play with a focus on learning outcomes set forth by an adult. Thus, guided play is composed of two key elements: child autonomy and adult guidance. Letting children explore and manipulate their surrounding fosters social and self-regulatory skills, but in order for true growth to occur, pedagogy is needed to encourage development in knowledge and critical-thinking skills (Weisberg, Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, Kittredge, & Klahr 2016).

Guided play can take two forms adult-led and child-led. In adult-led play, adults create the setting to focus on specific learning goals while the child has the ability to explore the setting while meeting learning target objectives. In the other form of guided play, child-led, the child directs the setting and manipulates the environment as seen fit while the adult watches for opportunities to engage the child in questioning to reach the learning target. With adult scaffolding, the purpose is to direct the child toward the pedagogical goal without surpassing the child's autonomy (Weisberg, et al. 2016).

The Sobel and Sommerville (2010) study further explained the two forms of guided play with two examples. In the first example children were given a machine with colored lights and buttons and were told to push the buttons to activate the colored lights. Some of the children played with the box first trying on their own to activate the colored lights. Only when the children grew frustrated did they look to the experimenter for help. This was called the discovery condition. Other children initially looked to the experimenter for help and guidance about how to activate the colored buttons. This was called the confirmation condition. The children in this study learned more in the

discovery condition of exploration because they were able to learn more about the box by exploring cause and effect elements. Even though the children evidentially grew weary and looked to the adult for guidance, the activity was able to hold their attention longer and they were more engaged in the overall learning process. This suggests that active discovery allows children to benefit more from adult teaching (Schwartz, Chase, Oppezzo, & Chin, 2011).

Moreover, research by Weisberg, Kittredge, Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, & Klahr, 2015, indicated that guided play may enhance the discovery and achieve the learning goal by allowing the child to explore in an uninhibited setting where adults can scaffold questions and hint at other possible ways to uncover the learning target. Therefore, the examples of guided play suggested a positive alternative to direct instruction when there is a learning goal in mind. Kittredge, et al. showed that a combination of children's self-directed play and adult scaffolding created a powerful pedagogical approach for learning in children. Thus, guided play combined the best of both elements of free play and direct instruction.

Stages of Development of Social Play

Mildred Parten (1932) researched these stages of play: onlooker play, solitary play, parallel play, associative play, cooperative play, and onlooker play.

Onlooker Play

Onlooker play occurs when children watch other children playing but make no attempt to join in. The child is alert to the actions of the other children and learn something new while watching which causes them to alter their future play actions. An example of onlooker play would be: the child that sits on the playground bench watching

other children engage in activities or the child that watches others build or create something. Onlooker play starts at birth.

Solitary Play

Solitary play occurs when a child plays alone or when in a group they play with their own toys by themselves. They do not attempt to get close to others or interact with them. Solitary play builds valuable skills in independence and self- regulation and should be encouraged. Some examples of solitary play are playing with blocks, coloring, puzzles, etc. Solitary play typically appears between birth to two years of age.

Parallel Play

Parallel play occurs when children mimic the play activities of others. Children continue to play on their own, but are physically next to other children and may be playing with similar toys. An example of parallel play would be building blocks, playing dress-up, using play-dough, etc. Parallel play usually appears between two and a half to three and a half years of age.

Associative Play

Associative play occurs when children truly begin to verbally and physically engage with other children during play. The children share toys and materials, but still follow their own play initiative. Some examples of associative play include playing on the playground equipment, shooting baskets, jumping rope, etc. Associative play begins around three to four and a half years of age.

Cooperative Play

Parten (1932) claimed that cooperative play is the highest cognitive level of social play and occurs when children play in groups and everyone cooperated to achieve a common goal. It involves negotiations and suggestions by children. The children need to learn to take turns and work out their conflicts in order to continue play. Some examples of cooperative play would be: dramatic play themes (playing house, doctor, etc.), board games, kick ball, building a tall tower of blocks together, etc. Cooperative play typically appears around six years of age.

Parten (1932) found that children followed a developmental progression through each of the stages of social play mentioned above and that providing children with rich play opportunities fosters the development of cognitive, social, and emotional development.

Play and Social Emotional Development

Relating successfully with others is a critical social emotional component in child development (Ladd, Price, & Hart, 1990). The development of positive peer relationships in the early years of childhood has been linked to successful kindergarten experiences, as well as academic success throughout elementary grades and high school (Ladd, et al, 1990). Fisher (1992) indicated that a body of evidence shows the effectiveness of play, especially sociodramatic play, in promoting problem-solving abilities in children. The repeated interpersonal interactions in play are important experiences that impact children's social emotional development.

Pepler and Ross (1981) distinguish two types of problem solvers- convergent and divergent. Convergent problem solving is completed using a single correct method while divergent problem solving has multiple solutions. Pepler and Ross (1981) considered the

two types of problem solving (divergent and convergent). Two types of experiences were provided that allowed children to play with convergent materials (i.e. puzzle solving materials) or divergent materials (blocks). The study included 64 children from three daycares in Ontario. The children were equally divided by sex and age, were English-speaking and generally middle class. Five sets of play materials were used. The materials consisted of 19 cm thick foam cut animal pieces. The children were divided into four groups: (a) play with convergent materials, (b) play with divergent materials, (c) observe convergent activity, and (d) observe divergent activity. All children were seen individually for three ten-minute sessions conducted on separate days within a five-day period. The results comparison of the effects of play with convergent and divergent materials suggested that the effects of convergent play experiences were very specific, whereas the divergent play experiences transferred more generally (Pepler and Ross, 1981). Results also illustrated that the limited context of convergent play experiences produced learning effects that were limited to solving similar convergent problems. Divergent material groups appeared to transfer ideas easier and were flexible and unique in their responses. The findings in this study showed that both convergent and divergent play has an effect on developing problem- solving abilities.

How does problem-solving relate to social and emotional development? Gupta (2009) found that children who were able to be flexible in their thinking were able to self -regulate their impulses, emotions, attention and form positive peer relationships. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of development emphasized that the child uses language to act on and control nonverbal systems. Therefore, engaging in sociodramatic play facilitated children’s development in cognitive, social, and language skills, which in turn

contributed significantly to the growth of self-regulatory capabilities. Pretend play, in particular, has been suggested to hold an important role in the development of social perspective taking skills (Wyver and Spence, 1999). Vygotsky argued that, for the young child, "...play is the source of development and creates the zone of proximal development." (Vygotsky, 1933/1967, p.16). The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is the difference between what a learner can do without the help of others and what they can do with help. This concept was introduced by Lev Vygotsky in his last years of life.

Weisberg, et.al (2016) further contended that when social emotional development (SED) activities were incorporated into the curriculum, they were more likely to have lasting effects. Students who interacted and related with characters in books through role-playing, learned imperative real-life coping and response strategies for positive peer relations. Sociodramatic play comes in the form of game-based learning such as: therapeutic board games and circle time. These games of real questioning and answering helped form strong cultural bonds through language and problem-solving opportunities (Vygotsky,1978).

Play and Math

Muscle memory allows us to learn mathematical concepts and store facts in our brain for easy retrieval when they are needed. A protein called brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) is essential for growth and maintenance of brain cells (Gordon, Burke, Watson, and Panskepp, 2003). Studies have shown that the increase in this protein during play and exploration could help the development of mathematical performance in young students.

Some ways that children develop strong mathematical muscle memory is through the use and play of blocks. The idea of children using blocks to increase mathematical development goes back more than 150 years (Tepylo, Moss, and Stephenson, 2015). What better way to explore and gain those essential early math skills than with block manipulation. Some of the mathematical benefits are the development of motor skills, classification ability, imagination, spatial reasoning, and mathematical language (Wolfgang, et al, 2001). In block play children often count, compare heights and volumes, transform, compose, and decompose geometric shapes (Tepylo et al, 2016).

A rigorous block program was developed by Carol Stephenson in her kindergarten classroom of 18 children. The use of blocks was not merely for free play choice time, but rather used in a purposeful guided play program (Tepylo et al, 2016). The children were given a 40-50-minute structured building time filled with reasoning and various mathematical skill development each day. Guided block play was talked about in circle time, in individual interactions with the students, and in established classroom norms (Tepylo et al, 2016). Stephenson noticed that by November most children were building with great independence in a collaborative manner and she was able to add blocks to enrich the math curriculum and heighten student engagement and mastery of skills. A growing body of research evidence has indicated that a rigorous well-planned block play program like the one explained, provides strong results for all children (Verdine et al, 2014).

A qualitative study investigated block play and how it influenced the development of mathematical skills. The study consisted of interviews with two boys aged six and seven. The boys both came from families with limited economic means and neither boy

attended preschool. The boys were allowed to free play with the blocks for two hours to explore and become familiar with the block pieces before the study began.

The children's first task was to fill various outlined shapes with the correct shape block in order to fill the shape while staying within the outline. The children were given four sets of blocks to choose from in order to complete the task. The researcher guided and scaffolded the children's choice of blocks throughout the investigation while allowing for them to freely manipulate the blocks. The children were video-taped so that the researcher could analyze their processing and observe potential mathematical action taking place (Park, Chae, & Boyd, 2008). The three mathematical areas that were noted included: categorizing according to geometric shape, composing and decomposing, and rotation and reflection of the block shapes.

The investigators found that children were able to learn complex mathematical concepts through the play and manipulation of blocks. In guided block play, teachers were able to further enrich mathematics by questioning, scaffolding, and modeling with the students to enhance muscle memory for future math development (Park, et al., 2008).

The following study was conducted to prove that guided play would show improved understanding of the standard features of geometric shapes more than free play or direct instruction. The participates were 60, predominantly Caucasian, four and five-year old children from upper middle-class families. The children were divided into three focus groups: guided play, direct instruction, and free play.

Four geometric shapes were chosen (triangle, rectangle, pentagon, and hexagon), as two shapes were familiar and two less familiar to the children. Two typical and two

atypical examples of each shape were created and displayed on laminated cards. Small, medium, and large wax-covered sticks were used to construct shapes.

In the guided play focus group children were taught in an exploratory manner the definitional properties of each shape. The experimenter helped the students discover each shape's distinguishing features through questioning and encouraged them to touch and trace each shape card. The students were then asked to construct two new shapes from the wax-covered sticks and describe how these new shapes were similar to the laminated shape cards. The process was repeated for each shape (Fisher, Hirsh-Pasek, Newcombe, & Golinkoff, 2013). The direct instruction focus group differed because the experimenter manipulated the shapes while talking about each shape's characteristics while the children passively listened. Lastly, the free play focus group children were given seven minutes to play with the shape cards and six minutes to play with the wax-covered sticks in any way they chose. Each group was then introduced to a game in which they sorted *real shapes* from *fake shapes* into two boxes based on what they had just learned about the various characteristics of the four geometric shapes (Fisher et al., 2013).

One week later 51 children returned to perform the shape sorting task again. Biologist and statistician Ronald Fisher's measure analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine the impact of pedagogy on child's shape definitional learning and whether or not shape category played a part on child's shape learning (Fisher et al., 2013).

Children in the guided play focus group showed greater improvement in definitional learning of shapes, as well as, acceptance of typical and atypical shapes. Their learning was robust and showed no decline in the retest a week later. Children in

the direct instruction focus group showed understanding of definition of shapes, but lacked the extract of underlying geometric principals. (Fisher et al., 2013). Children in the free play focus group failed to understand key concepts of geometrical understanding when left to choose how they would manipulate the shape material. (Fisher et al., 2013).

This research highlights the important elements of guided play as it relates to mathematics. The appropriate scaffolding through inquiry and engagement with materials helped to foster geometric shape learning. Guided play contributed to children's self-efficacy as learners as they participated and engaged in lessons that were focused on current learning goals (Weisberg, et al., 2013).

Play and Literacy

A growing body of research indicates that play is important for social and emotional growth and it helps promote language and literacy learning. However, when it comes to teaching literacy, the methodology changes because agencies like the National Reading Panel 2000 and National Early Literacy Panel 2008 advocates for literacy instruction founded on scientifically based reading research strategies. Scientifically based reading research calls for explicit, systematic, and direct instruction for teaching early literacy skills. Guided play is not explicit, systematic, or direct instruction (Han, Moore, Vukelich, and Buell, 2010).

Han, et al (2010), discovered that children at play use higher forms of language than normal and that the most complicated grammatical and pragmatic forms of language first appeared in play activity. When children learned through play, it stimulated their language development. In order to increase a child's reading comprehension, a wide vocabulary is imperative if the child is to develop a strong literacy.

The following study included 49 four and five-year-old children (26 male and 23 female) from a Head Start program in a mid-Atlantic state. These children were at the highest risk among the low-income children in the Head Start program. More than 60 percent of the children were English Language Learners (ESL) (Han, Moore, Vukelich, and Buell, 2010). The study tested two vocabulary teaching protocols: Explicit Instructional Vocabulary Protocol (EIVP) and shortened EIVP and a play session (EIVP + Play).

A list of the *First Thousand Words for Children's Beginning Reading* (Spache,1974) was used and cross referenced with Dolch sight words to complete the word list for this study. Sixteen words were chosen for each unit's theme, four words to be explicitly taught each week, for a total of sixty-four words over the course of the study. The 49 children were divided into two groups and received either EIVP or EIVP + Play twice weekly in thirty-minute tutoring sessions over the course of four months (Han, Moore, Vukelich, and Buell, 2010). The lesson format consisted of reading through each storybook and searching for one of the exact vocabulary words on the list and then recording the storybook page where the word appeared and secured an adult definition of the word. Next, the teacher would write a child friendly definition of the word using words already known to the children. The lesson differed in that the EIVP + Play group acted out the word with dramatic play or using manipulatives.

The students were tested over a three-month period using the following assessments: Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III (PPVT) Individual Growth and Development Indicators, Picture Naming, and curriculum-based measurement (CBM) tools to monitor the effectiveness of the instructional method in helping children learn

vocabulary. The study found that more than 60 percent of the children in the EIVP + Play intervention moved from being assessed as at-risk to scoring within age-level averages after just four months of intervention. The EIVP + Play also proved a more powerful intervention for growing an expressive vocabulary (Han, Moore, Vukelich, and Buell, 2010). The study proved that the combination of science-based reading strategies delivered in a play-based format was responsible for the gains.

Neuman and Roskos (1993) found a growing body of research indicating that connecting literacy and children's play can prove beneficial in developing strong reading, writing, and comprehension skills. Researchers have also studied the use of dramatic play and noted that acting out stories helped children understand setting, character, and plot elements.

Guided play helped improve children's language development by incorporating elements of social and emotional interaction with peers and adults. The key adults were active in scaffolding and developing learning targets, but children were allowed to initiate the learning process (Weisberg, Zosh, Hirsh-Pasek, and Golinkoff, 2013).

Play and Technology

A 2010 study conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation, including more than 2,000 young people aged 8-18 from across the country, found a huge increase in media use among young people largely due to mobile and online use (Rideout, Foehr, and Roberts, 2010). Children today spend more than 7 ½ hours a day watching television, playing video games, listening to music online, using social media websites, and texting friends. This amount does *not* include using the computer at school or for homework. More than 84% of families now have Internet access at home and more than 33% of

children have Internet access in their bedrooms. Youth who spend more time with media report lower grades and lower levels of personal contentment. The study's survey noted that of the high percentage users, 47% received fair to poor grades at school, 60% are often bored, 33% get into more trouble, and 32% are often sad or unhappy. Of the children surveyed, 33% are using computers at school or for homework (Rideout, Foehr, and Roberts, 2010).

Edward (2010) asserted that effectively integrating technology into play-based learning pedagogy can prove to be problematic as teachers find it difficult to incorporate the use of technology in meaningful child-driven methods. His study focused on a new concept called, 'web-mapping' examined the use of technology with classroom curriculum. Web-mapping presented as a web with converged play (play with items like iPad, watching a movie, or commercial toy) and traditional play (craft, role play, outdoor play) making up the sections of the map. The participants were 20 early childhood teachers from a lower to middle class school district. Each teacher chose two students through operational construct sampling thus totaling 40 students in the study. During the implementation of web-mapping, the teachers observed, planned, and implanted play-based learning experiences for their students (Edward, 2010). Edward (2010) concluded that the teachers identified five main influences of the web-mapping concepts on curriculum. They were: promotion of children's interest, promotion of visual aid for observing children's play interest, promotion of teacher planned play-based experiences, promotion of intentional teaching, and web-mapping aligns children's digital experiences and knowledge with play-based learning experiences.

This study found that web-mapping helped the teacher integrate technology, digital media, and popular culture into a play-based learning experience for the children. The teachers were able to learn more about their student's background, become more accepting of the child's interests, and incorporate technology into their curriculum in a scaffolded guided approach. This concept of web-mapping proved to be a productive method for addressing children's traditional and converged play activities and influenced teacher's curriculum practice related to play-based learning and the use of technology (Edward, 2010).

Over a decade of research has documented the effect of appropriate use of technology in educational settings. Many research studies provided compelling evidence that technology use can have a major, positive impact on children's social, emotional, language, and cognitive development if done with adult guidance and support (Rideout, Foehr, and Roberts, 2010).

Teacher's Role and Strategies Regarding Play

Teacher's play an important role in a child's academic career and help shape their social and emotional growth. However, expectations for teacher directed academic instruction have left little time for play (Ashiabi, 2007). Kagan (1990) identified three obstacles that hinder play in the classroom today. They are: attitudinal, structural, and functional. Attitudinal barriers are associated with how teachers value play and their role in encouraging child's play. Structural barriers come in the form of curricula, time, space, and expectations. Finally, functional obstacles are linked with attitudinal obstacles where teachers' beliefs and practices influence whether play is used to promote learning and development.

Hadley (2002) noted that guided play can take on two forms called *inside the flow* and *outside the flow*. Inside the flow occurs when the teacher acts as a participant and is engaged and included in the play. Outside the flow occurs when teachers ask questions and direct reflective thinking related to what the child is doing. Teachers are observers, recorders, managers, facilitators, mediators, and participants in play. In guided play, teachers must be continuously adapting their actions in response to the child's activity during play (Ashiabi, 2007). As children engage in play, they develop social and emotional skills that are paramount to their success in school. As teachers observe children in guided play, they are able to gain information needed to further enhance skills development.

Some of the strategies that teachers can use to enhance children's development through play include the use of curriculum objectives incorporated into play. This inclusion will allow the teacher to determine if the child is making gains in various areas through analysis of observations and anecdotal notes. The use of prompts in a play experience further promotes the use of imagination and real-world concept knowledge (Ashiabi, 2007). In guided play situations, the teacher is able to help foster prosocial behaviors. By scaffolding interactions amongst students who may be shy, quiet, have a learning disability, or various racial backgrounds, the teacher develops a strong sense of inclusion and classroom community building skills (Ashiabi, 2007). However, without schools and staff recognizing the importance of play, teachers may find it increasingly difficult to justify its place in the classroom (Kagan, 1990).

CHAPTER III: APPLICATION MATERIALS

Over the last 5 years I have seen the change in teaching primary grades transition from a time of exploration, creativity, social interaction, building, moving, creating, and self-expression to rigorous curriculum with high stakes testing. Primary age children are having to focus for long periods of time during whole group instruction, small group instruction, and independent rotations. Students are using fewer small motor skills such as coloring, drawing, gluing, painting, cutting, etc. as the rigorous curriculums are trending toward the use of technology to assess and gather data. Students have little time in the school day to develop social skills with their peers as the day tends to be structured around teacher driven lessons and technology use. Students are struggling with lack of attention because they are so heavily involved in instant information, rewards, answers, and achievement due to the use of technology.

With all the research and data that proves the importance of play, I chose to create a staff presentation on guided play and a family engagement event called, Block Party Play.

The staff presentation will allow me to highlight my research and help the staff see the importance of play in the classroom. The presentation will offer ideas and

resources to help get the staff excited, interested, and eager to incorporate play back into their daily classroom routine. The information will address the benefits that guided play has on children's social and emotional skills, creativity, language, math skills, and science. The research showing guided play verses free play will be essential in helping staff see how significant play is in elementary aged children when learning objectives and targets are taught in a discovery pedagogy. Scaffolding lessons so that the child is engaged and active in the learning is vital to guided play.

The family engagement event will help families come together for a night of learning more about play and the importance of play. Adults can guide children's learning experiences and use of blocks as the tools to support their development. Six different stations will be set up that focus on math, language, writing, and science. Parents will use guided play to help their child and direct them in discovery learning. Each station will have prompts that will help the parents interact with their child and enrich their learning experience. Parents will see how blocks can be a tool for learning math skills like counting and quantity, shapes, sizes, adding and subtracting, sorting, and patterns. Blocks are a tool for learning science skills like observation, comparison, guessing, experimenting, cause and effect, and weight. Blocks are a tool for developing language acquisition such as new words, letters and print, and storytelling. Small and large muscles skills are also improved by stacking, bending, and stretching. However, one of the biggest gains from the block play event comes in the development and enrichment of social and emotional skills. Children need opportunities to play with their family and friends. The parent night will also give children the opportunity to develop stronger relationships with their parents, teachers, and friends. Being able to solve

problems, recognize feelings, working together, and sharing helps the child gain self-control and good choice making skills. This event will be a night full of laughter and learning while building with blocks, but most importantly, intentional relationship building.

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Summary

Guided play has proven to be a highly motivating pedagogy and one that ensures children's active participation in their learning. With all the stress put on young learners today, guided play tends to reduce stress while developing a strong sense of classroom community. It also puts fun back into learning. Psychologist Len Vygotsky said it best when he claimed that humanity is hinged on the creative imagination (Vygotsky, 2004). Allowing children to be more creative and to teach them how to learn through discovery and experimentation is the key to becoming a life- long learner. Guided play allows for this discovery to take place as teachers scaffold carefully thought out objectives and allow children to control their learning (Weisberg, et al., 2013).

The studies of Sobel and Sommerville (2010) and Kittredge, Klahr, and Fisher (2013), found that providing children opportunities to explore various learning situation in an engaging uninhibited setting enhanced children learning. The use of scaffolding questions into children's experiences through a guided play approach held the child's attention longer and they were able to gain more wisdom through cause and effect than if the teacher would have directly told them what they were to learn. This type of learner

becomes a divergent problem solver and is able to solve problems in many ways and gains valuable skills in flexible thinking, attention, and perseverance.

The research proved guided play to be beneficial in developing a child's zone of proximal development (ZPD) as the learner was able to take chances, experiment, and guide their own learning. Children learning in a guided play pedagogy environment were able to gain social and emotional skills as well. Gopnick (2012) believed that through play children are able to use counterfactual reasoning skills which develop strong perspective skills. Children learn to share, solve problems, recognize the feelings of others, and work together to create positive outcomes.

The use of play has proven to increase Brain Derived Neurotrophic Factor, which is an important protein in your brain that allows mathematical concepts to be learned. Children who have rich play experiences, such as with the use of blocks, have shown to develop heighted mathematical performance (Gordon, Burke, Watson, and Panskepp, 2003). The study by Carol Stephenson showed how valuable guided play in a structured block program can be for students. The children gained independence in a collaborative manner and their engagement time in the activities was lengthened as they learned to count, compare heights and volumes, transform, compose and decompose geometric shapes. The use of teacher questioning further enriched the learning of complex mathematical concepts.

Another important area that gained growth through guided play was with literacy. Children in play environments and situations were found to develop higher forms of language through the use of vocabulary (Hirsh, 2003). The study conducted on children's growth of sight words and expressive vocabulary proved to be successful when the use of

play was incorporated into a science-based reading program. The children gained strong reading, writing, and comprehension skills as they interacted with peers and teachers in various dramatic play experiences.

The research I studied proved that guided play was successful in developing strong math, literacy, social and emotional skills, and relationships with peers and adults for children. The use of scaffolding during play promotes flexible thinking and enhances the child's Zone of Proximal Development which in turn strengths the child to become successful in all learning situations.

Professional Application

Children are born learners. Each day they learn new skills and build upon them as they grow. Teachers can guide children's learning experiences and support their development in academic areas and social and emotional areas by including opportunities for guided play. Enhancing rigorous research based curriculum by including experiences such as dramatic play and block play will strengthen the student's learning and engagement in all subjects. Teachers would also gain from guided play by gaining more opportunities to interact with their students in a flexible and fun manner. Much information can be attained when teachers allow children to lead in play opportunities. Taking the time to observe, communicate and listen to what the student is acting out,

building, creating, envisioning will reveal strengths and holes in the child's academic and social skills.

From my research, I have learned how important guided play is and how valuable it can be when teachers allow for it to take place in the classroom. Measurable gains in math and reading have been found through guided play and the engagement of children has proven to be successful. With all the use of technology and high stakes testing, children have little time to learn from their peers in an active manner. Incorporating play back into a child's school day develops strong social skills and self-regulation and allows for that child to child learning to take place.

The staff development PowerPoint will be presented to the primary teaching staff in my school. It will be used to inform and call attention to the benefits of guided play. Teachers will learn useful ways they can incorporate play into their daily routine to benefit their math and reading curricula. The PowerPoint also highlights the importance of block play and ways to set up a successful center within a classroom. The inclusion of the block play center is one I feel could easily be incorporated, as it offers a wealth of measurable reading, math, and social skills.

The family engagement night will offer an opportunity for families to come together and spend time in active guided play. Teachers will instruct parents ways to use blocks to engage their children in math, language, science, and writing activities. This time will allow the families to get to know each other better and be intentional in developing strong relationships. I feel strongly about building relationships and the best way to do that with children is through play.

Limitations of the Research

The research summary makes a strong statement for the benefits of play. This was helpful for me as I had much literature to comb through. However, most of the research tended to point to younger, preschool age children and the use of guided play. Teaching in an elementary school, I was hoping to have more research on older school aged students and the benefits play would have on their learning and social skills. In order for play to make an overwhelming come back in schools and be seen as something that is successful pedagogy, research based curricula need to incorporate play into their programs and tell us that it is beneficial.

Implications for Future Research

In order for school districts to embrace the idea of guided play, more research needs to be done using current data driven curricula. Teachers need time to incorporate play, but that often means that reading and/or math minutes from the day may be lost. So how are teachers supposed to get all the rigorous curricula covered when there seems to be never enough time in a day? Also, teachers need to understand that free play is different than guided play. Both forms of play have benefits, but children gain more understanding of skills and concepts when objectives are created and carefully scaffolded by the teacher. Play is not time for the teachers to catch up on lesson planning, grading, or collaboration, but rather it's an opportunity to come alongside the students and interact to ensure skills are be learned. In order for teachers to feel empowered to give themselves permission for times of guided play, play would need to be advocated by the district administration, the curriculum writers and the corporations they invest in.

Conclusion

Today as I walked past a kindergarten classroom, I wondered where the children were, as it was so quiet and mellow. As I peered into the room and looked around, I saw all the students hunched over hypnotized by luminous screens, trapped in their isolated utopias; This is the reality of our students. Children are spending more and more time engrossed in individual learning through technology instead of play and discovery alongside their family and peers. Play is learning as it contains all developmental tendencies in a condensed form and is itself a major source of development (Vygotsky, 1978). Guided play is supported and researched by many academic scholars and the benefits are endless. The future of our youth is under siege as we grow to be an antisocial independent people. Promoting opportunities for children to play both at home and school could not be more important than it is today. Children need play to enrich their academic experiences in order to become motivated, healthy, and build successful relationships in the 21st century.

My dream…I walk past a kindergarten classroom and hear laughter and joy spilling out into the hall. I am drawn into the room and my excitement grows as I look around the room and see young minds captivated in various forms of guided play. There are children in the dramatic play center acting out a post office scene by writing letters, filling boxes, and delivering mail all while learning valuable reading, writing, math, and social skills. I see children in the block area learning about gravity, shapes, spatial awareness, measurement and symmetry as they build and construct various structures. I see the teacher interacting with the children by using questioning and scaffolding to build on new ideas and challenge existing ones. This is guided play and it is good.

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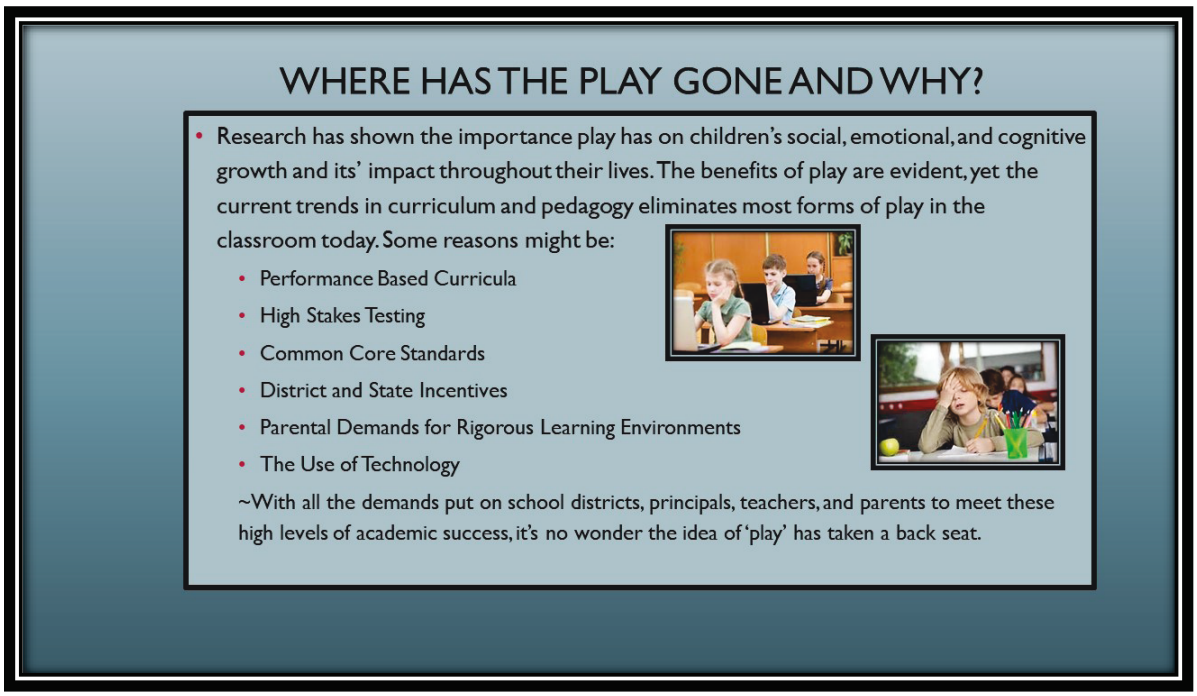
APPENDIX A

STAFF DEVELOPMENT PRESENTATION



FAMILIES AND PLAY?

(MINNESOTA CHILDREN'S MUSEUM, 2015)

Minnesota Children Museum Surveyed 1000 parents and asked questions about play

- **Parents know play benefits children…**
- **Most parents believe play helps children develop essential skills (rated No. 1 reason children should play)**
- **Most parents view child-directed play (as opposed to adult-led activities) as crucial to their child's development (87 percent agree)**
- **But families face a variety of pressures…**
- **Hectic family schedules, lack of nearby playmates and safety concerns when children are outdoors limit play time (top 3 reasons cited)**
- **Kids spend too much time with electronic devices (88% agree)**
- **Many parents worry children will "fall behind" if they don't take part in structured, adult-led activities (45% agree)**
- **Which means play time often gets crowded out…**
- **Children don't get enough time to play (70% agree)**
- **Parents played more when they were kids (82% agree)**
- **Parents want their children to spend more time in child-directed play (76% agree)**

BENEFITS OF PLAY

- Children learn best when they are in active, engaged, constructive and interactive environments (Chi, 2009) and when the content is interesting and meaningful to them (Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, Berk, and Singer, 2009).
- Ashiabi (2007) states that educational programs that promote playful pedagogy tend to reduce stress in the classroom while developing a strong community, instilling pride, joy, and self- confidence for all learners.
- Dr. Rachel E. White (2012) asserted that children must enjoy the activity or it is not play. Play must be intrinsically motivating. Play is process orientated and the means are more important than the ends. Play is spontaneous and voluntary. Children must be physically and/or mentally involved in the activity (White, 2012).
- Play allows children to use their imagination, to think 'outside the box' and use objects and materials in new and inventive manners.
- Play develops social and emotional skills by allowing the child to engage with others, to see dynamics of expressive language, and fosters community building in the class.
- It builds strong relationships and nurturing properties in families and schools.
- It relieves stress and is FUN!

WHAT IS GUIDED PLAY?

- **Guided play lies midway between direct instruction and free play. It provides a learning goal with teacher scaffolding which allows children to control their learning (Weisberg, et al., 2013).**
- **Guided play learning experiences combine child-directed play with a focus on learning targets set forth by an adult.**
- **Guided play enhances the discovery and achievement of learning goals by allowing children to explore in an uninhibited setting.**
- **Guided play promotes critical social and emotional skills that are necessary for child development such as problem-solving abilities.**
- **Guided play is shown to increase mathematical performance, especially in young students (Gordon, Burke, Watson, and Panskepp, 2003).**
- **Guided Play promotes literacy development. Children in guided play often use higher forms of language than normal (Bruner, 1982).**

~Children learn best when they are in active, engaged, constructive and interactive environments. Identifying ways that guided play benefits children's social and emotional skills, mathematic skills, literacy skills, and how technology fits into play is essential to children's development and growth.

WHY GUIDED PLAY?

Allowing the needs and interests of the child to take precedence and by giving feedback and direction to the learning goal helps ensure that the child is an active participant in their learning and keeps them engaged in the process (Weisberg, Hirsh-Pasek, and Golinkoff, 2013).

Allowing children to lead in play and conversation helps develop strong communication skills and self-regulation abilities. These skills will be not only necessary in school, but imperative to becoming successful members of society.

Psychologist Len Vygotsky (2004) dramatically stated that "The entire future of humanity will be attained through the creative imagination…" (pp. 87–88). The special value of play is that it represents a context where freedom becomes possible.

GUIDED PLAY FORMS

- **Discovery Condition**: The child directs the setting and manipulates the environment as seen fit while the adult watches for opportunities to engage the child in questioning to reach the set forth learning goal.
- **Confirmation Condition:** Adults create the setting to focus on specific learning goals and the child has the ability to explore the setting while achieving set out learning target.

~With adult scaffolding the purpose is to direct the child toward the pedagogical goal without surpassing the child's autonomy (Weisberg, et al. 2016).

GUIDED PLAY AND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- The development of positive peer relationships in the early years of childhood has been linked to successful kindergarten experiences, as well as academic success throughout elementary grades and high school (Ladd, Price, & Hart, 1990).
- Fisher (1992) indicated that there is a body of evidence showing the effectiveness of play, especially sociodramatic play, in promoting problem-solving abilities in children. The repeated interpersonal interactions in play like prosocial behavior or aggressive encounters are important experiences that impact children's social emotional development.

PARTEN (1932) STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL PLAY





Social levels of play	
Onlooker Play	Children watch other children play but make no attempt to join in.
Solitary	Children play alone
Parallel	Children play alongside other children with similar toys or materials with little interaction or influence on each other's play
Associative	Children take part in separate activities, but do exchange toys and comment on each other's behavior.
Cooperative	Children orient their activity toward a common goal
Cognitive levels of play	
Functional	Simple, repetitive motor movements with or without objects
Constructive	Creating or building something
Make-believe	Acting out everyday and imaginary roles
Games with rules	External rules guide play

TYPES OF PROBLEM SOLVERS

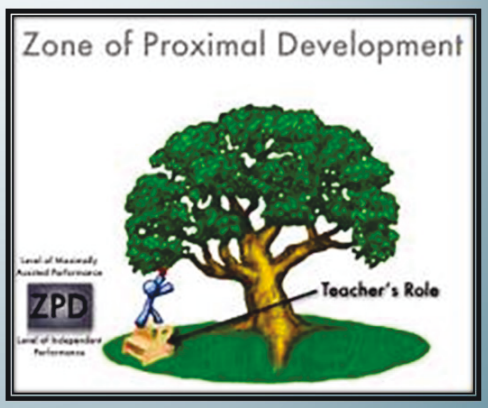
- Psychologists distinguish two types of problem solvers- **convergent and divergent**.
- **Convergent problem** solving can be done with a single correct way and **divergent problem** solving can take on multiple solutions.
- Pepler and Ross' (1981) study showed that children in the divergent problem solving group appeared to transfer ideas easier and were flexible and unique in their responses than those in a convergent problem solving group.

~Children who are able to be flexible in their thinking are able to self-regulate their impulses, emotions, attention and form positive peer relationships.

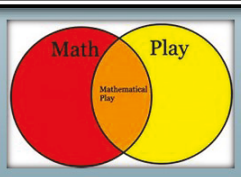
ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT (ZPD)

- The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is the difference between what a learner can do without the help of others and what they can do with help. This concept was introduced by Lev Vygotsky in his last years of life.
- Vygotsky argued that, for the young child, "...play is the source of development and creates the zone of proximal development."

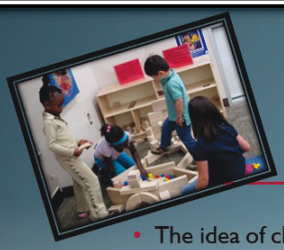
~Engaging in play facilitates children's development of cognitive, social, and language skills which in turn contribute significantly to the growth of self-regulatory capabilities



GUIDED PLAY AND MATH



- A protein called brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) is essential for growth and maintenance of brain cells. Studies have shown that the increase in this protein during play and exploration helps the development of mathematical performance in young students (Gordon, Burke, Watson, and Panskepp, 2003).
- Adult Scaffolding helps develop Proactive Control: Neural mechanisms in the brain's prefrontal cortex that use clues from the environment to help the brain figure out what might happen next (Weisberg, 2014).



BLOCK PLAY

- The idea of children using blocks to increase mathematical development goes back more than 150 years (Tepylo, Moss, and Stephenson, 2015). What better way to explore and gain those essential early math skills than with block manipulation? Some of the mathematical benefits are the development of motor skills, classification ability, imagination, spatial reasoning, and mathematical language (Hirsh 1996). In block play children often count, compare heights and volumes, transform, compose, and decompose geometric shapes (Tepylo et al, 2016).
- A growing body of research evidence has indicated that a rigorous well-planned block play program provides strong results for all children (Kersh, Casey, and Young, 2008).

WHAT CHILDREN LEARN THROUGH BLOCK PLAY

- **Mathematics**

-space-counting -length -shapes-patterns-depth-size-equal/unequal-width

-order-recognize sets or groups-height-number-shortest/longest-mapping

-fractions-tallest/shortest-symmetry-weight-estimate-quantity

-similarities/differences-classification-planning-measurement-volume/area-graphing

-one to one correspondence-part/whole

WHAT CHILDREN LEARN THROUGH BLOCK PLAY

- **Science**

-gravity-systems-interaction-planning-diversity-patterns-problem solving-weight-discovery-force

-balance-stability-observation-cause and effect-inductive thinking-experimentation-interdependence

-properties of matter-inclined plane-creative thinking

WHAT CHILDREN LEARN THROUGH BLOCK PLAY

- **Literacy and Writing**

planning of building

sketching ideas

reading picture directions and signs

modeling

discussion about functions of buildings

naming, labeling, and making up stories about buildings

exchange of ideas- sampling, predicting, confirming, and integrating

oral language

WHAT CHILDREN LEARN THROUGH BLOCK PLAY

- **Physical Development**

Small Muscle:	Large Muscle:
visual perception	body movement control
finger control	bending and squatting
hand-eye coordination	balance
controlled hand manipulation	

WHAT CHILDREN LEARN THROUGH BLOCK PLAY

- **Social Studies**

community

people and their work

mapping

role playing

interactions of people

WHAT CHILDREN LEARN THROUGH BLOCK PLAY

- **Social and Emotional**

cooperation

responsibility

self regulation

sharing

self-confidence

respect for others

problem solving

HOW TO SET UP A RIGOROUS BLOCK PLAY PROGRAM

- Having a block play area in your classroom is not only enjoyable but a valuable experience that promotes motor skills, classification ability, and imagination. A well planned block area contributes to early mathematical development including spatial reasoning, geometric shape knowledge, number sense, and problem solving (Wolfgang, et al., 2001).
- Block play areas also help children develop language and literacy skills (Tepylo, et al., 2015).

USE OF SPACE AND LOCATION

- Block Area Location:
  - **Should be large enough so that multiple children can build at the same time**
  - **Should be in an area that the building block progress can be kept up if need be**

    * Building and No Building Zones should be marked with signs
  - **Should be will organized with material placement and storage procedures**

    *Marked path to and from blocks so that access is easy and not intrusive to others

    *Use of pictures or outline of blocks on shelves to help with clean up

    *Label bins for accessories

    ~Taking the time to organize and label each shelf area will be beneficial in how children interact with the block area and how successful it is. Pre-teaching the children ways to use the materials and how to clean up correctly will also be important to the success of the block area.

EXAMPLE OF BLOCK CENTER LAYOUT

TYPES OF MATERIALS IN BLOCK CENTER

- **Materials:**
  - Blocks-

Visually and tacitly interesting blocks such as: wooden blocks that contain flat slats, flat cylinders, cubes, cylinders, prisms, and arches. These shapes allow the child to be more creative as they are less obvious in purpose (Tepylo, et al., 2015)

  - Accessories-

plastic animals
seasonal items
vehicles
various measuring tools
street signs
community helper figures
nature items such as : rock, branches, etc.

  - Books-

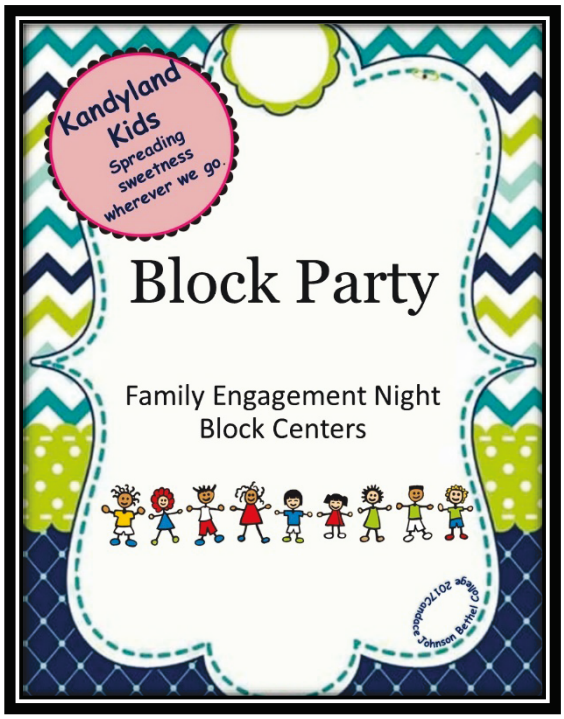
fiction and non-fiction
photo books of famous buildings and community buildings
I can build idea binder

WRITING AREA

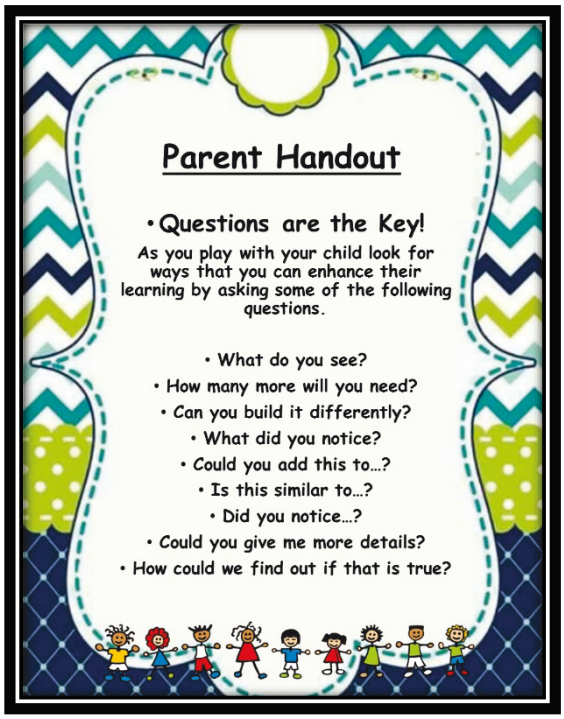
- Adding a writing and drafting area to the block center will help the children plan before they build. This important step allows them to visualize and plan out what they are wishing to build and develops spatial awareness. It allows the child to have a blueprint to read from as they create their block figures.The child can also look back to see if what they visualized and drew was how the finally product came out.
- Children can also use paper and tape to make spontaneous signs and labels or write a story about their build.

APPENDIX B

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT EVENT




Schedule
• 5:15-5:30 Registration and Sign in
• 5:30-5:45 Find your group color.
• 5:30-6:00- First Rotation
• 6:00-6:15- Second Rotation
• 6:16-6:30- Third Rotation
• 6:30-6:45- Fourth Rotation
• 6:45-7:00- Fifth Rotation
• 7:00-7:30- Free time in Large Block Area


Parent Handout
• Questions are the Key!
As you play with your child look for ways that you can enhance their learning by asking some of the following questions.
• What do you see?
• How many more will you need?
• Can you build it differently?
• What did you notice?
• Could you add this to…?
• Is this similar to…?
• Did you notice…?
• Could you give me more details?
• How could we find out if that is true?


Block Party Evaluation
1. Has your interest in encouraging block play with your child changed because of this event?
YES!
2. Did you learn how blocks can help with math, science, and language development?
YES!
3. Would like to attend another block party event?
YES!

Problem Solver

Can you use the blocks to help solve the various problems mentioned?

The Problem: The boy needs a bridge to get across the water so he can get his ball. Can you help him?

Draw your plan to solve it:
(Laminate and use dry eraser marker)

Did it turn out how you imagined?

(Laminate and use dry eraser marker)

Problem Solver

Can you use the blocks to help solve the various problems mentioned?

The Problem: The princess is stuck in a tower. Can you help her get down?

Draw your plan to solve it.

Did it turn out how you imagined?

(Laminate and use dry eraser marker)

Problem Solver

Can you use the blocks to help solve the various problems mentioned?

The Problem: The dog needs a place to go to get out of the rain. Can you help her?

Draw your plan to solve it.

Did it turn out how you imagined?

Problem Solver

Can you use the blocks to help solve the various problems mentioned?

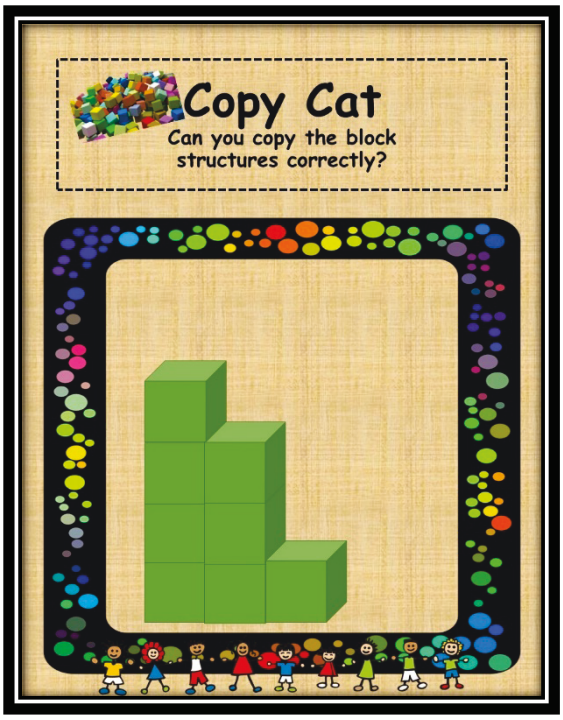
The Problem: The farmer needs a pen for his animals. Can you help him?

Draw you plan to solve it.

Did it turn out how you imagined?

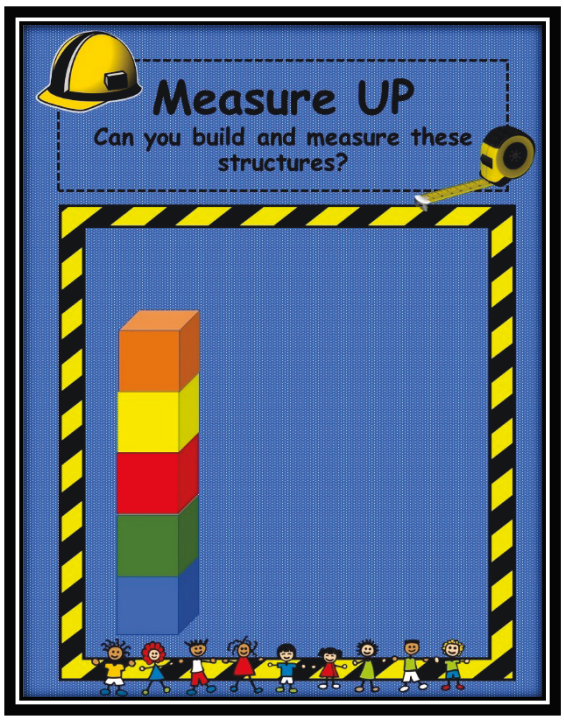
(Laminate and use dry eraser marker)

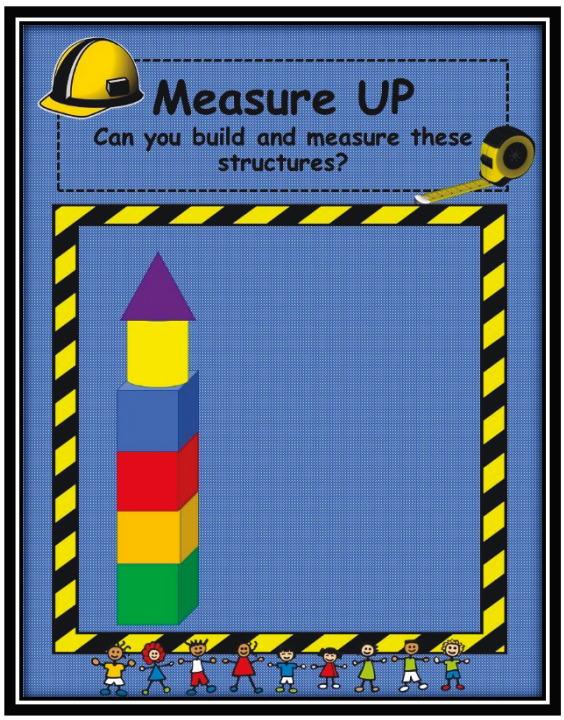

Copy Cat
Can you copy the block structures correctly?

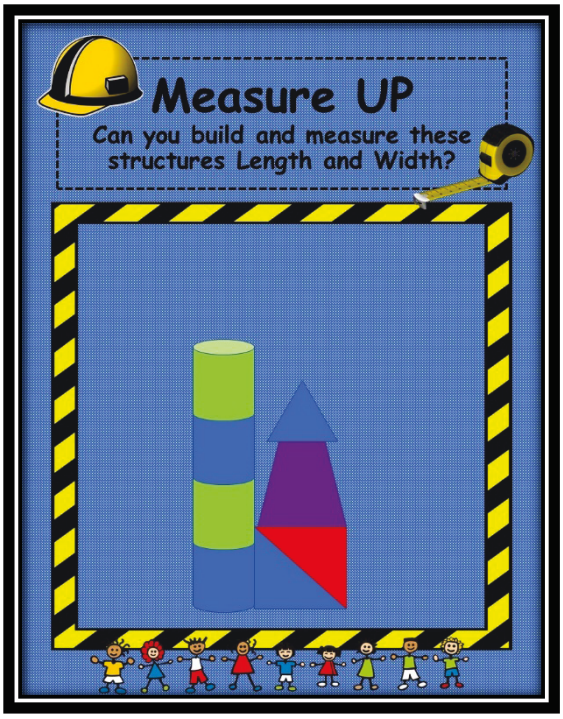

Copy Cat
Can you copy the block structures correctly?

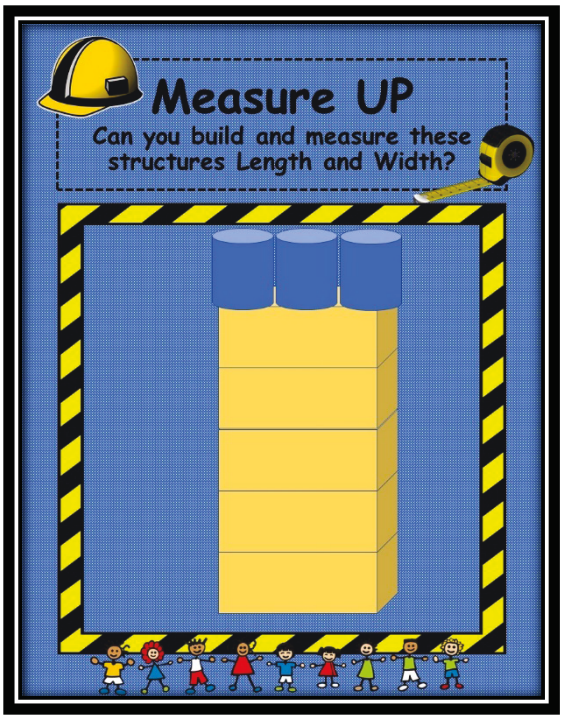

Copy Cat
Can you copy the block structures correctly?

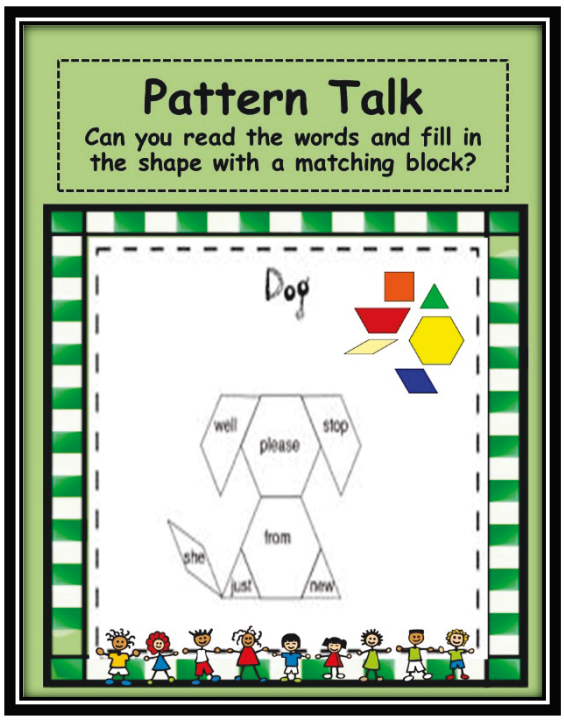

Copy Cat
Can you copy the block structures correctly?

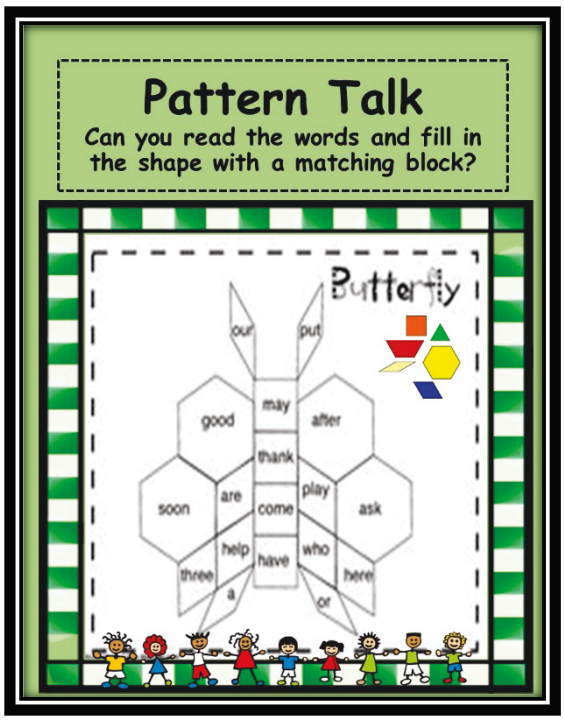

Measure UP
Can you build and measure these structures?

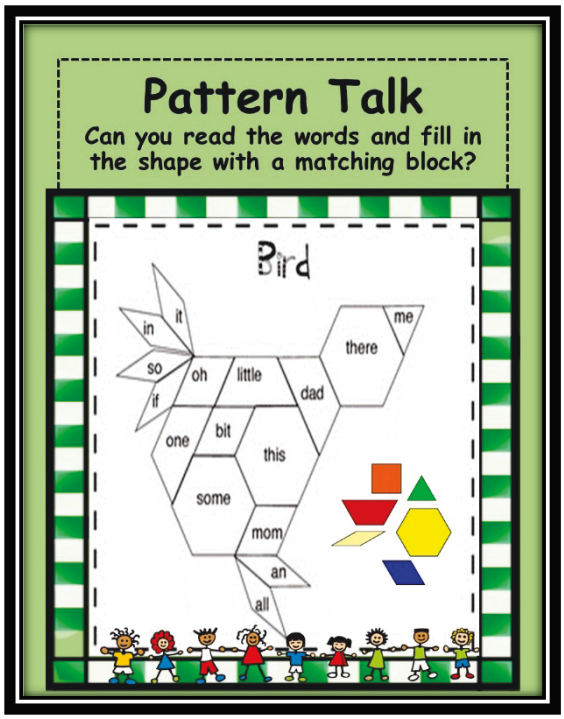

Measure UP
Can you build and measure these structures?

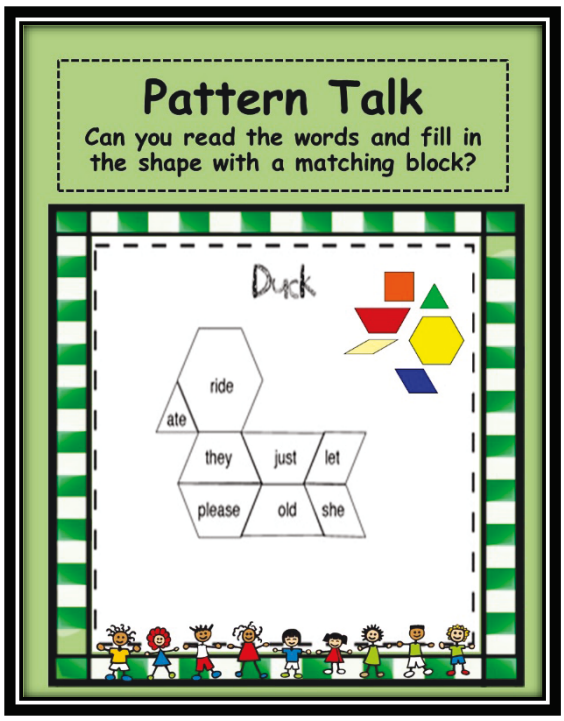

Measure UP
Can you build and measure these structures Length and Width?


Measure UP
Can you build and measure these structures Length and Width?


Pattern Talk
Can you read the words and fill in the shape with a matching block?
Dog
well
please
stop
from
she
just
new

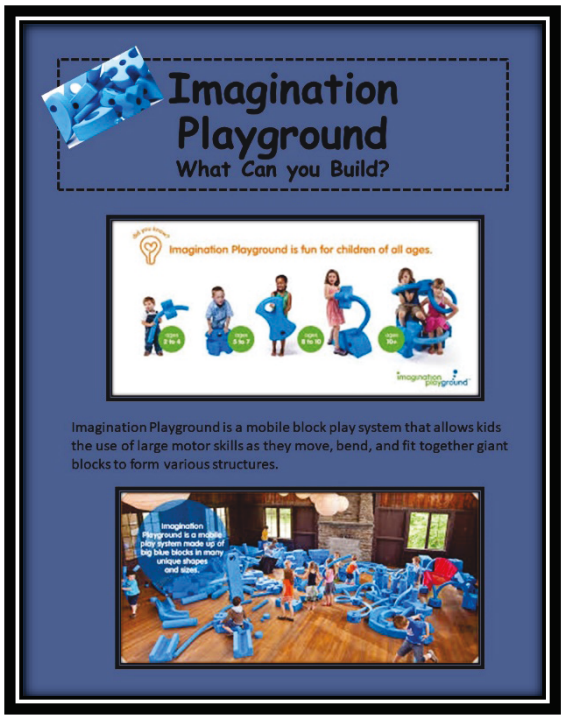

Pattern Talk
Can you read the words and fill in the shape with a matching block?
Butterfly
our
put
may
good
after
thank
soon
are
come
play
ask
help
have
who
three
here
a
or

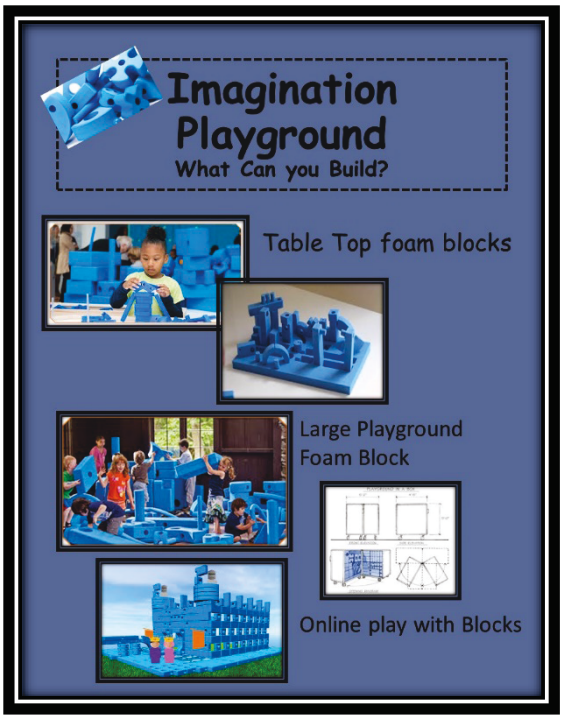

Pattern Talk
Can you read the words and fill in the shape with a matching block?
Bird
it
in
me
there
so
oh
little
dad
if
one
bit
this
some
mom
an
all


Pattern Talk
Can you read the words and fill in the shape with a matching block?
Duck
ride
ate
they
just
let
please
old
she


Can You Build It?
Draw a photo card and try your best to build what you see.
house
barn
school
SCHOOL
castle


bridge
tent
desk
bunkbed
wheel
doghouse


Imagination Playground
What Can you Build?
Imagination Playground is fun for children of all ages.
Imagination Playground is a mobile block play system that allows kids the use of large motor skills as they move, bend, and fit together giant blocks to form various structures.


Imagination Playground
What Can you Build?
Table Top foam blocks
Large Playground Foam Block
Online play with Blocks