

INVITATIONS FOR LEARNING

FROM DAN HODGINS

*What Do You
NOT see in a
program that supports
PLAY*

- calendars for teaching
- time out chairs
- flash cards
- timers for taking turns
- teacher crafts
- parties
- "letter" or "color" days
- lots of taking turns
- dittoes
- focus on performance

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Bringing Back Childhood

Have you noticed lately that children are being forced to be less child like? They have tons of homework, lots of tutoring, very little physical activity, less time to simply play in the mud and spend more than eight hours a day in a facility that tells them when they can go to the restroom.

The other day I was in a restaurant and overheard two women talking about the amount of time they were spending running their children around to "lessons". I was hoping they were talking about adolescents, but when I got up to leave, the children they were talking about were sitting at the table - smiling and fidgeting preschoolers.

When a preschool age child says, "I want to play the piano". He/she is not saying I want to take lessons they are saying I want to PLAY (pluck on keys to make sounds).

You can now enroll children in Preschool Boxing, Ballet, Violin, Soccer and of course Computers. Do you remember asking your neighborhood friends, "Who wants to play Hide and Seek?" No one sent you to a class to learn the rules. In the act of playing, you created your own set of rules and directions and they often changed, depending on who was "it".

A child who plays should be celebrated or commended. They are the happiest with whom they are.

***Play- deprived childhood** disrupts*

normal social and cognitive development in humans. Stuart Brown, MD

He and others believe that limiting free play in kids may result in a generation of anxious, or maladjusted adults.

Environments of PLAY:

- should allow children to play safely without undue verbal and physical restrictions
- include outdoors often
- have enough of the same materials
- match materials to children's growing development
- say, "it's okay to be messy"
- encourage pretend play
- use "real" props often
- should be child initiated and directed
- include curriculum designed by the child
- provide for "real" choices
- should be fun!