

Lesson Eight

Recreation (Play)



Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students learn the value of parents providing and participating in unstructured play with their young children. Students consider their own childhood in light of the subject of play.

Lesson Objectives

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- Distinguish between parent-directed play and child-directed play
- Understand the value of free play in early childhood

Lesson at a Glance

Activity	Materials	Preparation	Approximate Class Time
FOCUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Child Play</i> - slides 13-14 	Use slides 13 and 14: <i>Child Play</i>	10 minutes
LEARN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Importance of Play</i> article 	Print/photocopy <i>The Importance of Play</i> article for each student	25 minutes
REVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students' own paper to write on 	NA	10 minutes

Note: All student materials (worksheets, handouts, pretest/posttest) are located in the Student Materials folder.

National FACS Education Standards Supported: 12.1-12.3, 15.1-15.2

Parenting — Lesson Eight

Recreation (Play)

8

FOCUS: Types of Play

10 minutes

Purpose:

Students differentiate between parent-directed and child-directed types of play.

Materials:

- Slides 13-14: *Child Play*

Facilitation Steps:

1. Display slide 13 and discuss.
2. Display slide 14 and go through the examples of parent-directed play vs. child-directed play as a group.
3. Have students work with a partner and think of an example or two from their own childhood.
4. Call several students to write examples in the blank boxes.

SAMPLE

8

LEARN: The Importance of Play

25 minutes

Purpose:

Students learn about and reflect on the importance of play in a child's life.

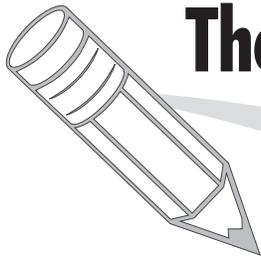
Materials:

- *The Importance of Play* article

Facilitation Steps:

1. Give each student a copy of article “The Importance of Play,” located in the Student Materials folder.
2. Have students read and discuss the article with a partner.
3. Questions for discussion: (Write on board while students are reading or before the class)
 - Do you agree with the article about the importance of play?
 - Have you seen the trend of less unstructured play time for kids, if so where?
 - What impact do you think the loss of play has on a child? Will it impact our future society? How?

SAMPLE



The Importance of Play

Name: _____

Class Period: _____

Courtney Braatz, M. Ed Family Education

The American Academy of Pediatrics has declared that play is necessary for healthy development because it contributes to the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children. Unstructured play develops the important skill of executive function, which is a critical cognitive skill that has a number of elements, including the ability to self regulate, control emotions and behavior, resist impulses, and develop self control and discipline.

Play is important in allowing time to practice private speech – children talk to themselves about what they’re going to do and how they’re going to do it. This kind of self regulating language helps children control themselves and police what they’re doing. The more structured the play, the less private speech happens, and as a result, children are no longer directing themselves, but they’re being directed externally. In the long run children who engage more readily in complex play are more likely to take on responsibility, willing to work independently and even assist others without prompting.

Play also provides a great opportunity for parents to be fully engaged with their children. Despite the benefits resulting from play, time for free play has been dramatically reduced for many children. A variety of factors contribute to this new trend, including a hurried lifestyle, changes in family structure, and increased awareness of and interest in school readiness activities and classes.

Play provides an opportunity for children to use creativity and develop their imagination, as well as their physical, cognitive, and emotional skills. Play is important to healthy brain development. At a very early age children engage and interact in the world around them through play. Play allows children to create and explore by taking on pretend roles and exploring in a safe environment and in a world they can master. This exploration allows a child to experience competence that will be implemented in real life situations. Undirected play facilitates learning how to work in groups, to resolve conflicts, to share, to negotiate, and to learn self-advocacy skills. The area of the brain that is used for decision making is engaged when children are engaged in self-directed play. Children lose some of these benefits and learning opportunities when structured, adult-led activities dominate a child’s time in the early years.

Playtime is also an opportunity for parents to observe their children or join with them in child-driven play. A child feels valued when given the full attention of a parent during play and parents can view the world from their child’s perspective as the child creates an imaginary world and interactions. This is especially helpful for parents of more introverted children who may gain a better understanding of their child’s frustrations and emotions. Quite simply, play provides parents a wonderful opportunity to connect completely with their children.

8

REVIEW: Journal about Play Experiences

10 minutes

Purpose:

Students reflect on their own childhood play activities and share ideas.

Materials:

- Students' own paper on which to journal.

Facilitation Steps:

1. Explain the activity: Have students journal about their childhood and what they liked to play, how they played, who or what they played with.
2. After 5 minutes ask for volunteers to share some ideas. Jot down any ideas on the board if it seems appropriate.

SAMPLE