

# Learning Is Playful

In our first session we discussed our goals for successfully defining *Learning is Playful*.

## 1. Why Play is Important for all Ages:

“Children learn as they play. Most importantly, in play children learn how to learn.” -O. Fred Donaldson

Picture: <http://www.thestrong.org/about-play/play-school>

- Play builds community
- Develops social skills
- Develops physical skills
- Allows for practice of real life situations

## 2. Being a Playful Educator:

- Go with the flow:
  - Allow for flexibility in lesson plans and in daily schedule. Being a playful educator means responding to students needs and being willing to change course when needed.
  - Make room for teachable moments and fluidity that address the needs of the students in a playful way.
- Be messy:
  - Less concerned for the appearance of order in the classroom. Focus less on order and more on exploration.
- Noncompetitive play/games to build community

- Use games to build community in the classroom in order to develop trust, communication and collaboration.

### 3. Goal-Oriented Play:

- assessing process versus product
- multiple ways to find the solution
- deliberate lessons with room for flexibility and self-correcting

### What we've found so far:

Schools that value play: The Blue School <http://www.blueschool.org/values/>

Organization : [National Institute for Play](#)

**“The committee investigating Charles Whitman’s life and motives unanimously identified his lifelong lack of play as a key factor in his homicidal actions.”**

*Dr. Stuart Brown*

Websites:

<http://www.naeyc.org/play>

[http://www.education.nt.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0015/960/play-based\\_learning.pdf](http://www.education.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/960/play-based_learning.pdf)

Articles:

[http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article\\_view.aspx?ArticleID=453](http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=453)

[http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/9679\\_010979.pdf](http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/9679_010979.pdf)

A good beginning explanation of why play is important from the start: [Play in the Preschool Classroom: Its Socioemotional Significance and the Teacher's Role in Play](#)

This article has some really silly parts! [The Importance of Play for Adults](#)

Videos:

TED Talk: [Stuart Brown: Play is more than just fun](#)

2/25/14

#### 4. Examples

##### Our playful method...

##### What they learn...

Students in groups created their own literacy board game along with rules (following some specific learning goals and parameters) and presented it to their class. The class then played the games.	writing process paragraphs (sequencing, using signal words, thinking of audience and writing conventions, revising and editing), planning and organizational skills, spatial organization, collaboration
We tried to play a game of catch as a whole class. There were simple rules - you had to toss the ball to someone who had not yet received the ball, and you had to remember who had thrown to you and to whom you had thrown the ball - so that the whole class developed the pattern, which we tried to repeat without dropping the ball and while including everybody. The point was to do it successfully as a group - the focus was not on individual performance - everyone tried to make it work for everyone else so that as a group we celebrated our success...everyone loved doing this.	This required paying attention, seeing and following a pattern, allowed for some exercise and release of energy, was a group celebration, was fun and at times funny.
In order to learn about fractions students made their own paper cut out fraction "kits" This developed into a dice game which the	This develops a basic understanding of the size of fractions and equivalent fractions. It improves teamwork skills and is a way to

<p>kids have a blast with.</p>	<p>encourage noncompetitive gaming.</p>
<p>Spanish: Creating travel brochures where they build their own trips.</p>	<p>Goal: Allowing them to use new and old vocabulary, as well as, what they will need for their trip. Using clothing vocabulary (for packing), hotel and travel vocabulary (for reservations), weather vocabulary (for climate) Present tense and the near future to be able to express your plans</p>
<p>As part of the 1st graders study of their senses they followed a recipe to create slime. They focused on how the finished felt but they learned much more throughout the process.</p>	<p>This lesson allowed students to use measuring tools to execute the recipe. They practiced safety around hot cooking equipment. They further related the experience to their sense of touch by using descriptive words and exploring with their senses.</p>
<p>Spanish Baseball: Students are broken into 2 groups. In order to get on base, students have to answer the questions about a certain topic.</p>	<p>Learning goals include: reviewing the material on a certain topic, collaboration with team members, it encourages good sportsmanship while practicing the language in a fun way.</p>
<p>During the study of Market Street, students in the first grade changed their classroom into a restaurant and served customers.</p>	<p>Learning goals included: collaboration, literacy (reading menus, writing menus and orders), math (adding up total purchase and subtracting for change), social studies (research and development about how Market Street businesses work)</p>
<p>To close out our geometry unit the students solidified their knowledge of important math vocabulary by building their own 3D shapes using marshmallows and toothpicks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Students will build a 3D shape and identify its vertices and edges.</li> <li>· Students brainstorm both practical and imaginative uses for their shapes.</li> <li>· Students will draw out a building plan to help create their ideal structure.</li> <li>· Students will practice reading instructions and filling in the blanks of a worksheet.</li> </ul>
<p>The first graders worked together with the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Students will come up with a way to</li> </ul>

<p>Pre-K/Kindergarten to define what courage meant to them. Together they worked on skits and puppet shows to depict times they were courageous in their own lives.</p>	<p>visually represent a time they were courageous.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Students will practice working collaboratively with an emphasis on incorporating the input of others.</li> <li>· The students will put together all the elements of their skits and puppet shows for a performance that authentically represents courage.</li> </ul>
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<p>While learning about shapes, the PreK/K became shape detectives. They crafted their own “magnifying glasses” using a circle and a rectangle and then went around the room and found objects that matched shapes we were discussing including squares, triangles, circles and trapezoids</p>	<p>Students were able to apply skills of identifying shapes. They had to consider attributes that make a shape fit into a category. They had fun. They had to share one or two shapes they had found with partners allowing them a chance to verbally express their findings.</p>
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<p>During each season the PreK/K reads many books, talks about the temperature and ventures out into the woods, at least once, to find signs of each season. The children take at least one photograph of something that they feel represents the given season. Then, they describe what they have found.</p>	<p>Students are able to explore the seasons in a hands on manner. They have to use their observational skills to find signs of each season and then explain how the item or items found accurately demonstrate a particular season. They also have a chance to be photographer.</p>
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