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Education Bureau



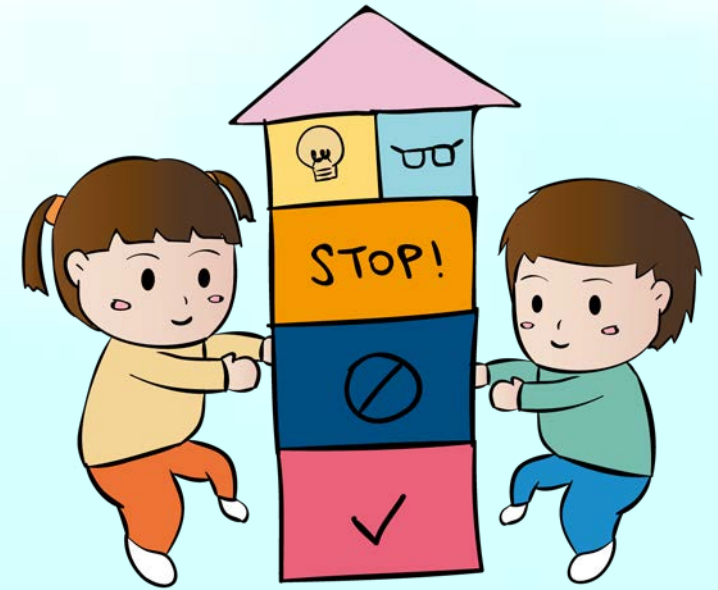
Faculty of Education
The University of Hong Kong
香港大學教育學院

Know about Free Play in Children

Dr. Lilian Chau

Faculty of Education,
The University of Hong Kong

18th January, 2020





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Before the talk starts...

Parents, please recall your childhood:

- Did you often play when you were a child?
- What did you usually play as a child?
- As a child, what was “free play” to you?

Know about Free Play in Children

- **Children**
 - Children aged 0-8 years old
- **Play**
 - What is play?
- **Free**
 - What does “free” mean?
 - What is free play?
- **Know**
 - What can children learn from play?



Importance of play

- **Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 31)**
- “The right of the child to rest and leisure, **to engage in play and recreational activities** appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts”
- “States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.”



Source:
<https://edu.unicef.org.hk/en/CRC-icon-poster>

Importance of play

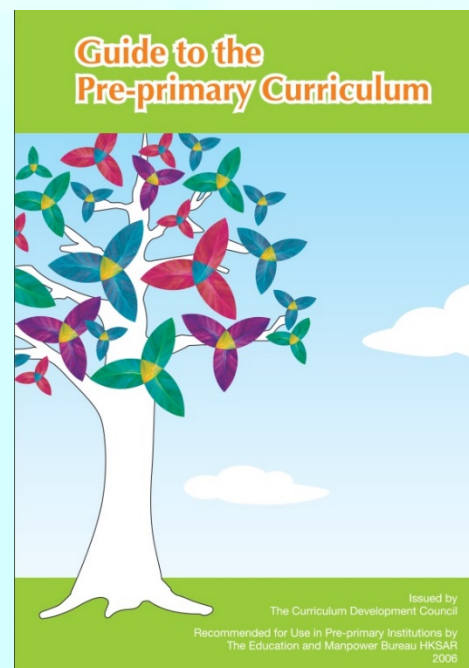
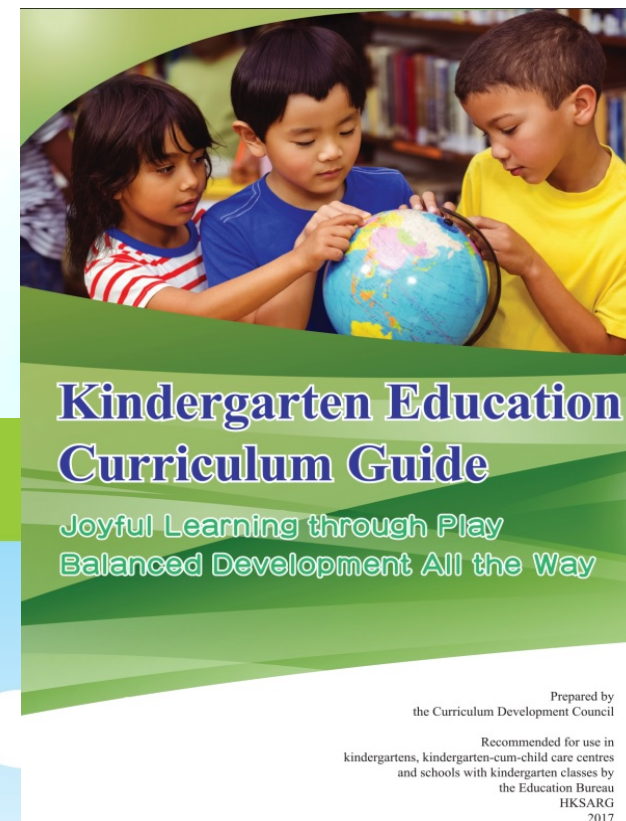
- Learning characteristics of children:
- Full of **curiosity**, and **active** in learning
- **Learning by doing**, enjoy using their senses to **explore** and understand new things
- Acquire new knowledge building on their prior experiences and skills
- →EDB advocates “**Free play**”



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What is play?

Characteristics of play:

- Intrinsic motivation
- Positive emotion
- Active engagement
- Focus on process rather than outcome
- With pretending/ simulation/ role playing element(s)
- No **externally** imposed rules



What is play?

Types of play:

Social play

- Solitary play
- Parallel play
- Associative play
- Cooperative play



What is play?

Types of play:

Cognitive play

- Functional play
- Constructive play
- Dramatic play
- Game-with-rules





What is play?

Types of play:

Social Cognitive	Solitary	Parallel	Associative	Cooperative
	Functional	Parallel-functional	Associative-functional	Cooperative-functional
Constructive	Solitary-constructive	Parallel-constructive	Associative-constructive	Cooperative-constructive
Dramatic	Solitary-dramatic	Parallel-dramatic	Associative-dramatic	Cooperative-dramatic
Game-with-rules	Solitary-game-with-rules	Parallel-game-with-rules	Associative-game-with-rules	Cooperative-game-with-rules

What is play?



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Types of play:

Development of play (Age)

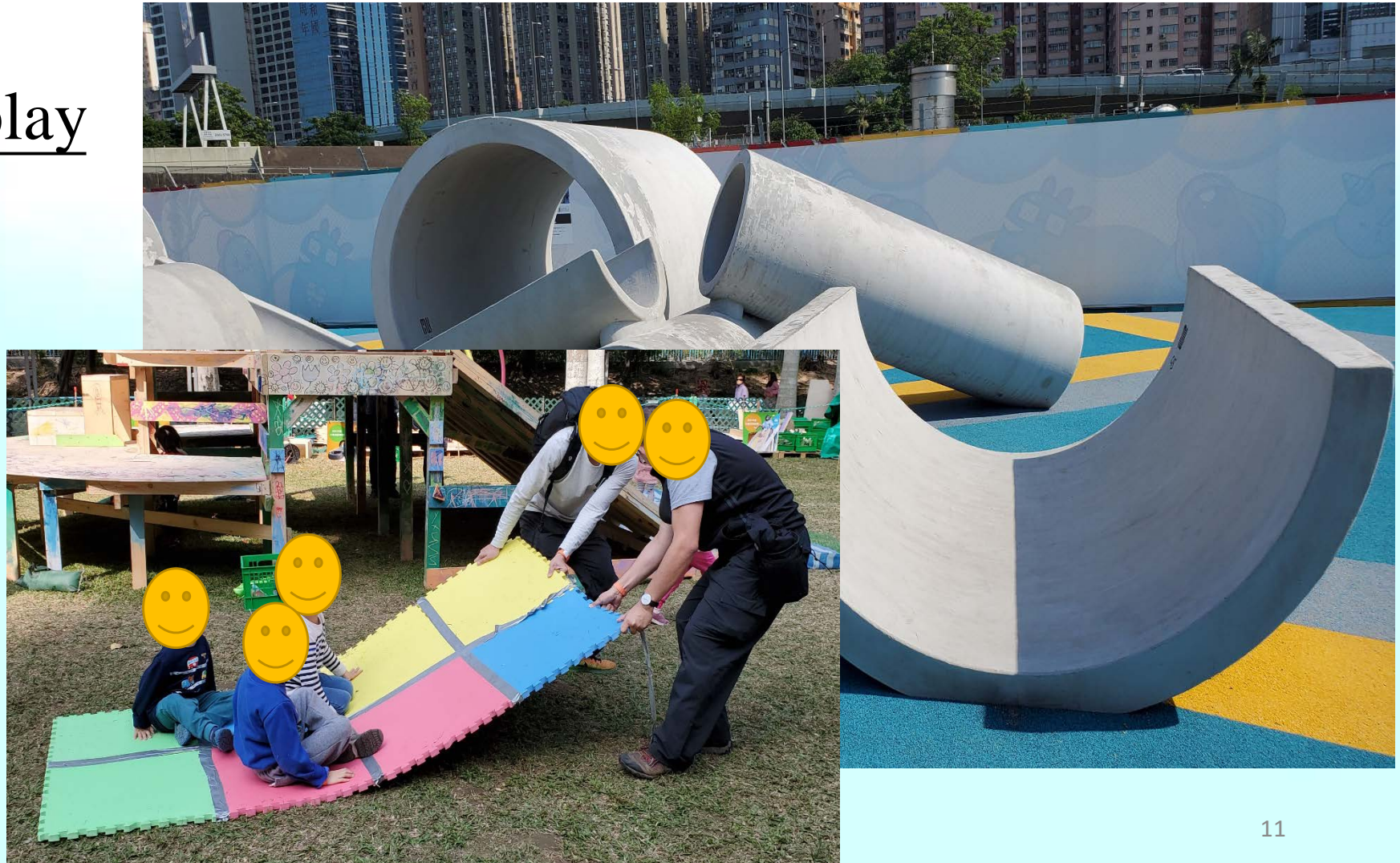
Functional		Constructive		Dramatic		Game-with-rules
Solitary		Parallel	Associative	Cooperative		
0 – 1 year old	1 – 2 years old	2 – 3 years old	3 – 4 years old	4 – 5 years old	5 – 6 years old	6 – 8 years old

What is play?

Types of play:

Physical/ Risky play

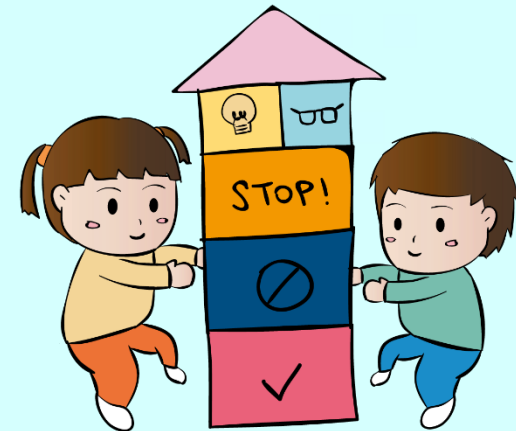
- Height
- Speed
- Tools
- Elements
- Rough-and-tumble
- Get-lost



What is play?

Think about...

- Do you think the activities about “mouth” and “hands” just now are games?
- Do you think your children will consider these as games?
- We tend to interpret the features and types of play from adults’ perspectives
- ☆Children’s perspectives☆



What is play?

Children's perspectives:

- Happy, funny
- Exciting
- Pretense
- Initiated by children
- “I have a choice”
- Can decide my own rules
- Time spent with toys
- Time spent with peers/ friends
- **Without adults**

Children feel free
= Free play



1. I derive happiness and have fun when playing with you
2. I choose to play with you
3. When playing with you, I can choose how and what to play



Play in Kindergartens

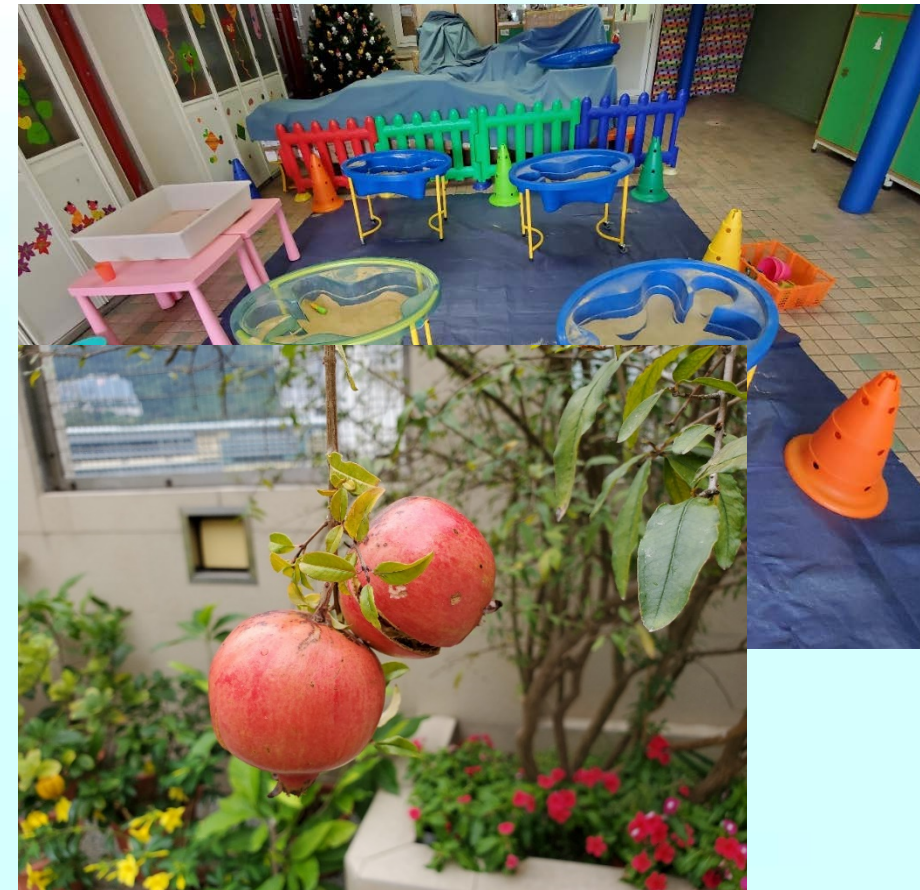
Do you have these questions in mind? ----

- What do my children **usually do** in the kindergartens?
- What are the **differences** between “free play” in kindergartens and “free play” at home?
- What can my children **learn** from “free play” in kindergartens?

Play in kindergartens

What are the differences between “free play” in kindergartens and “free play” at home?

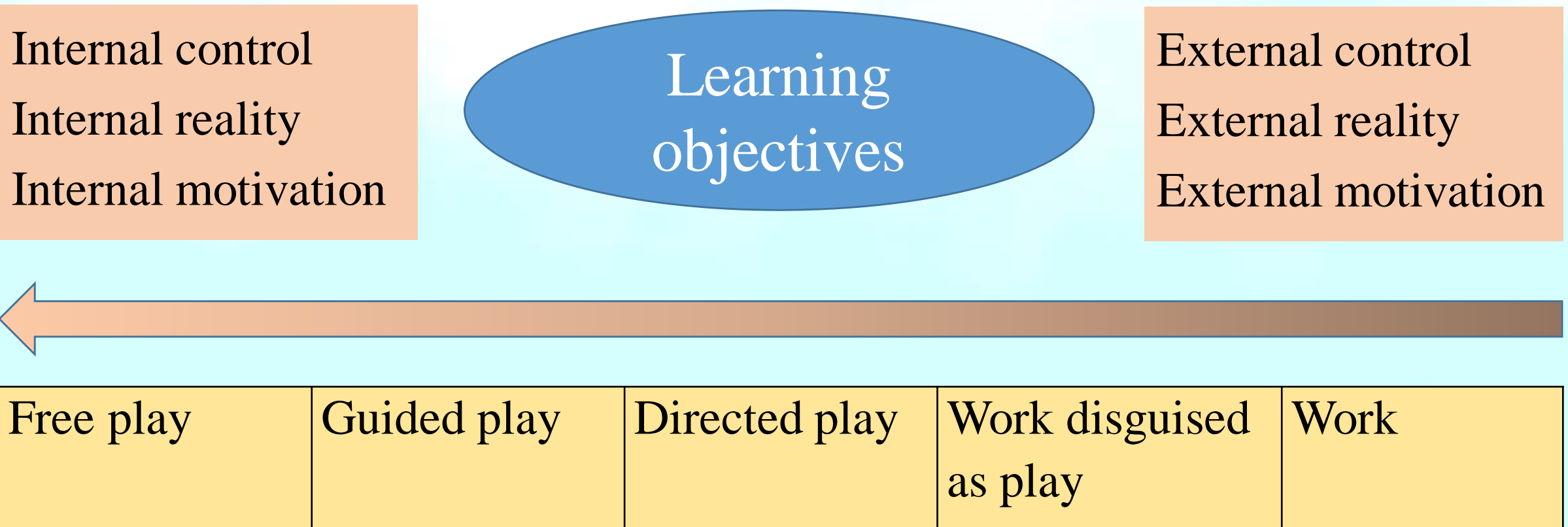
- Group life
- Individual differences among children
- Teachers
- Teaching plan and learning objectives
→ Learn (through play) systematically
- Quantity and variety of hardware resources





Play in kindergarten

Types of activity in kindergartens: Schema of play and learning





Play in kindergarten

Types of activity in kindergartens: Schema of play and learning (examples)

Group activities
Free choice among corner activities

Art and craft activities

Music and physical activities led by teachers

Competition among 3 groups of children to name words starting with the alphabet “A”

Penmanship homework/worksheets

Free play	Guided play	Directed play	Work disguised as play	Work
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Play in kindergartens

Definition of “Free play” in EDB curriculum guide

“Free play” is a behavioral activity evoked by the **intrinsic motivation** of children. It places emphasis on children’s autonomy and **free participation** and children are not limited by the rules or preset goals established by adults. During free play, children can **choose** their own tools, ways to play, playmates and activity area.

Half-day and full-day kindergartens should arrange **no less than 30 and 50 minutes every day** respectively for children to participate in free play. Free play can be carried out during free choice activities and physical activities.



Play in kindergartens

Example of content of activities and schedules in kindergartens:

Time for free play→

Example of Content of Activities and Schedules		
Content of Activities	Approximate Time Allocation (minutes)	
	Half-day	Full-day
Morning and Afternoon Assemblies / Whole-class or Whole-group Activities (health inspections, conversation and sharing of life experiences)	15-30	15-30
Learning Activities and Free Choice Corner Activities (e.g. play involving construction, creation, exploration, manipulation, social interaction and language)	75-95	110-145
Physical Activities, Music Activities and Art Activities	45-60	90-105
Toilet Time	20-30	40-60
Meals (tidying up, lunch time, snack time)	15-20	60-95
Afternoon Nap / Break	-	80-105
Tidying-up Activities and Getting Ready to Go Home (conclusion and sharing of the day's activities, conversation and nursery rhymes)	10-15	25-30

Play in kindergartens

Free play in kindergarten:

Dramatic play corner

Corner for
fine motor activities

Exploration/
Science corner

Reading
corner

Art and Craft
corner

Language/
Mathematics
corner





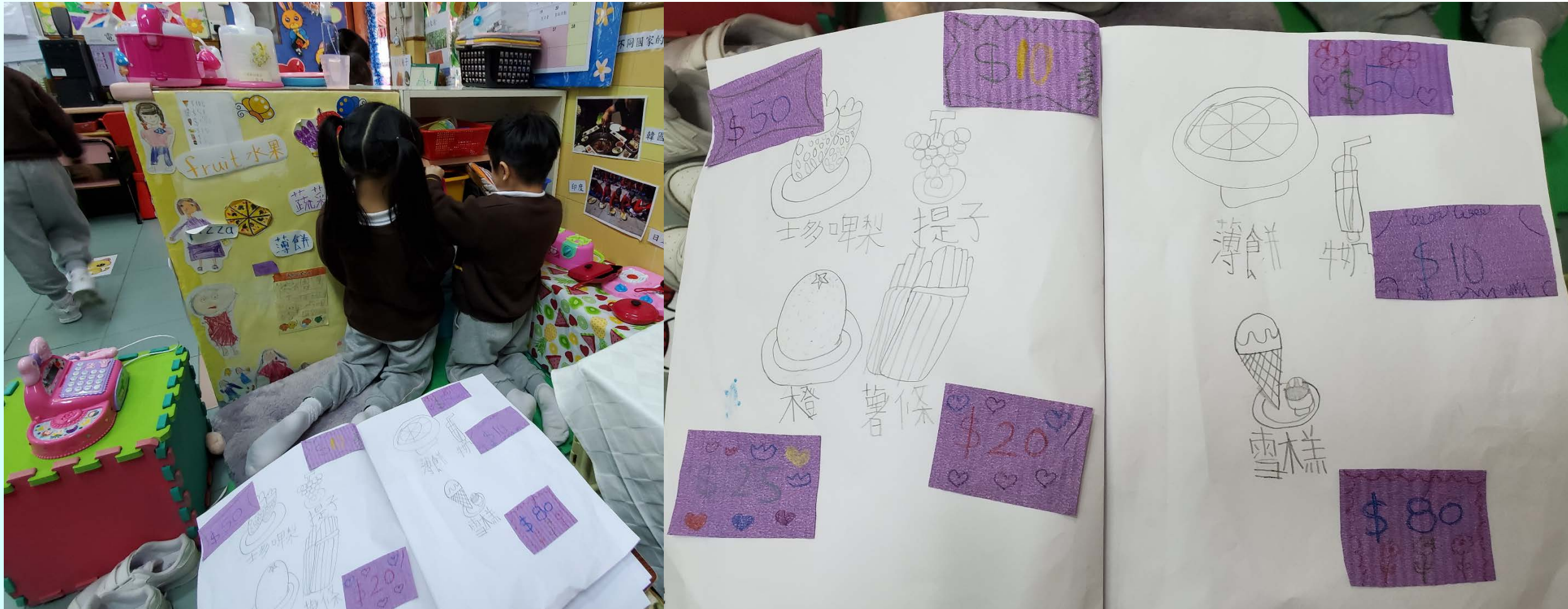
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Play in kindergartens

Free play in kindergartens:





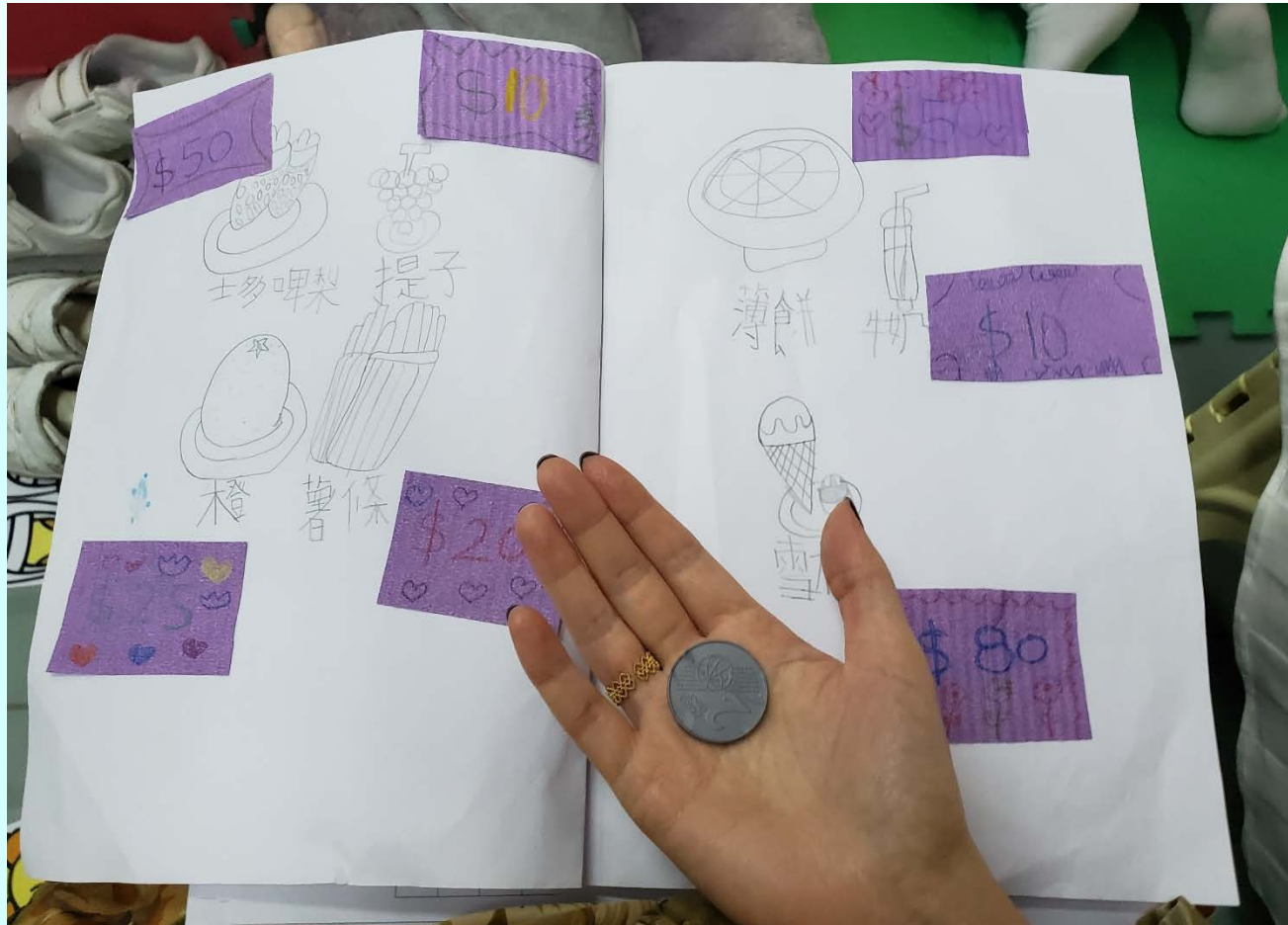
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Play in kindergartens

Free play in kindergartens:





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Free play in kindergartens:





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Free play in kindergartens:





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Play in kindergartens

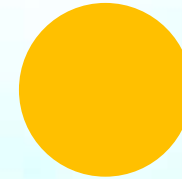
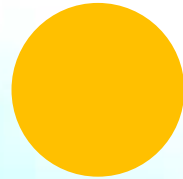
Free play in kindergartens:



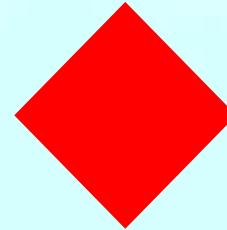
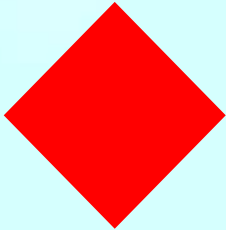


Play in kindergartens

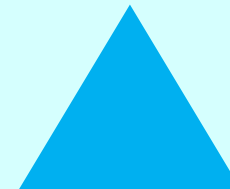
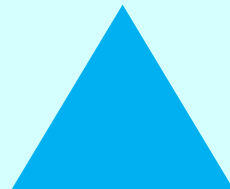
Free play in kindergartens:



?



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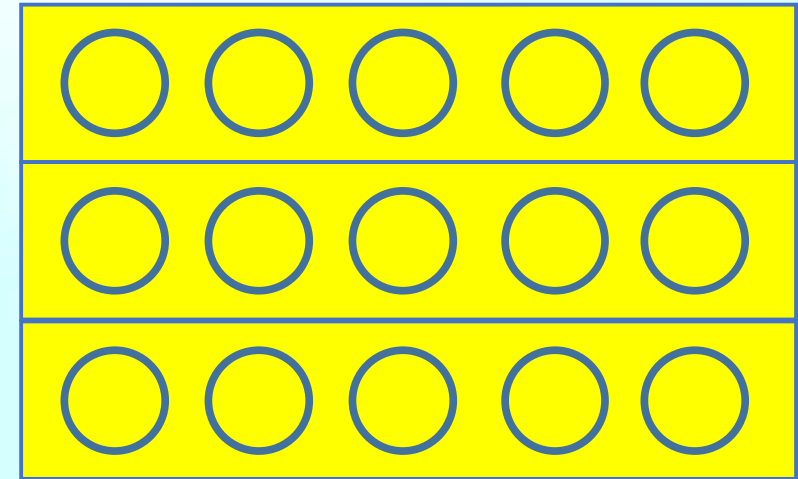
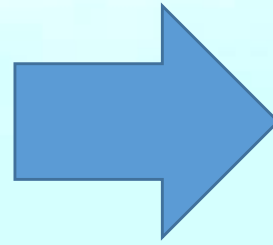
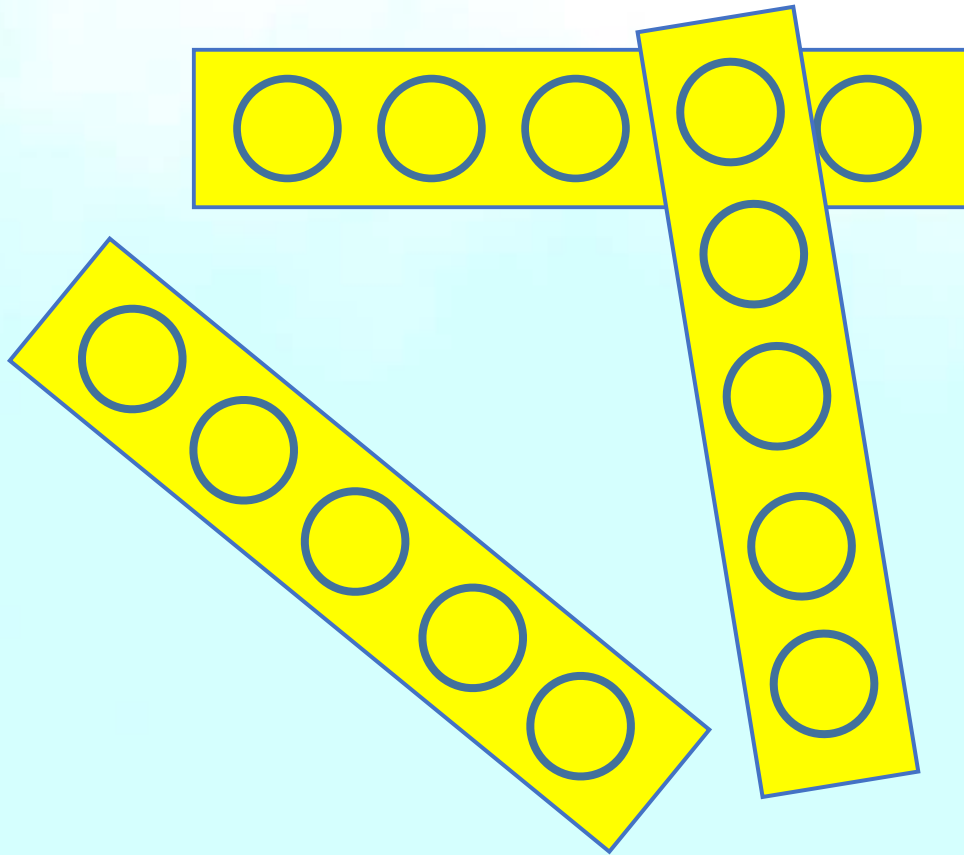
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Play in kindergartens

Free play in kindergartens:





What do children learn through play

Do you think children can learn the followings from free play in kindergartens?

- Language
- Mathematics
- Science
- Arts
- Physical fitness
- **Social skills**
- **Emotion regulation**
- **Empathy**
- **Concentration...**

Skills required in
the 21st century



What do children learn through play

Time for game:

- “Happy, Smiley”
- Case:
 - Are you afraid? Am I afraid? (K2/ Male)
- Parents’ attitude:
 - Unconditional positive regard
 - “It is okay to be not okay”
 - “I am always your safe haven, supporting you to explore bravely and freely”

Roles of parents

Parents can be a/ an ... in children's play:

(1) Provider

(2) Participant

(3) Inspirer

(4) Observer

(5) Intervener

(6) Good partner of home-school cooperation





Roles of Parents

Parents in children's play can be a:

- (1) Provider
Provide and arrange the necessary time, materials and environment for children
- Time: Children's time and self time allocation
- Materials: Types, storage
- Environment: Venue, people (including parents themselves)

Roles of Parents

Parents in children's play can be a:

- (1) Provider
 - Close-ended materials



Roles of Parents

Parents in children's play can be a:

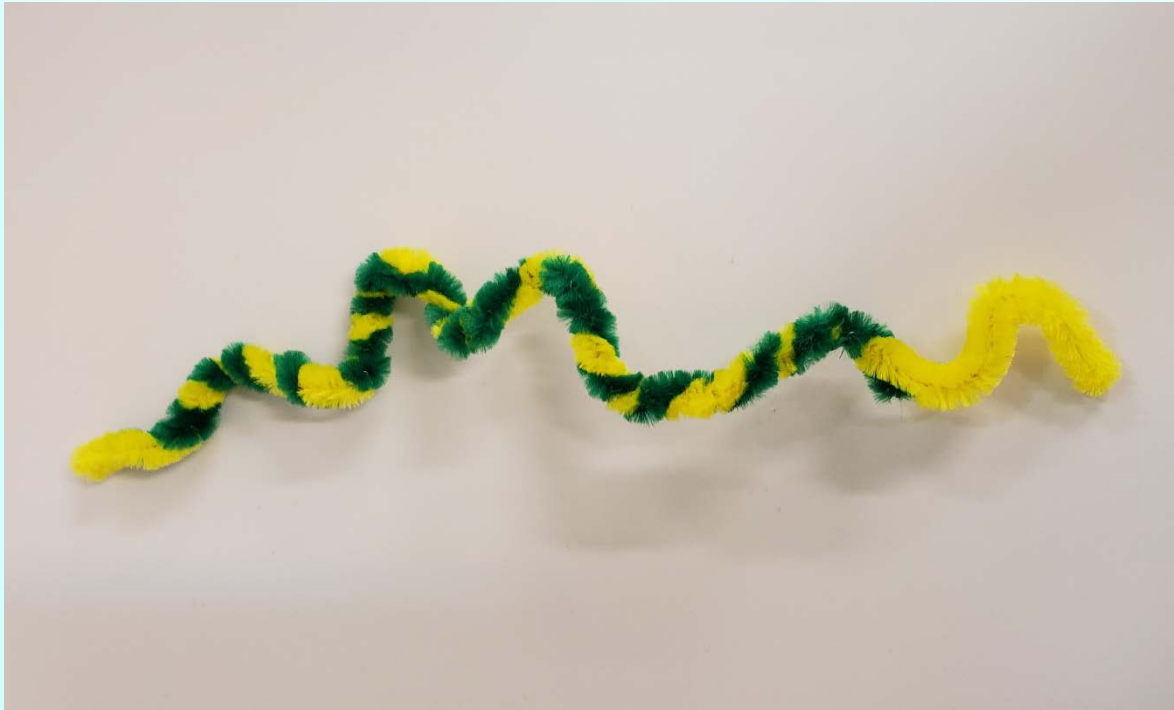
- (1) Provider
 - Open-ended materials



Roles of Parents

Parents in children's play can be a:

- (1) Provider
 - Open-ended materials



Roles of Parents

Parents in children's play can be a:

- (1) Provider
 - Storage of materials



Roles of Parents

Parents in children's play can be a:

- (1) Provider
 - Environment: venue → nature
 - Increase physical activity, prevent obesity
 - Relieve stress
 - Provide new sensory stimulation
 - Nature provides new materials to support children's free play



Roles of Parents

Parents in children's play can be a:

- (2) Participant
 - Play with children
 - I assign you to be the chef! VS
You'll be the chef, I'll be the customer
 - Respect children's play and imagination
(Immerse yourself into their play)
 - “This Dad Made His Kid an Action Movie Star Get in the boat!”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ze_2ZyCDYTk





Roles of Parents

Parents in children's play can be an:

- (3) Inspirer
 - Question type: Open-ended VS Close-ended

Close-ended	Open-ended
Can you build a sheep with blocks for me?	What can we build with blocks?
Is this a square or a rectangle?	What are the similarities and differences between a square and a rectangle?
Shall we stride across that using one or both legs?	How can we get there?



Roles of Parents

Parents in children's play can be an:

- (3) Inspirer
 - As a model for imitation and learning
 - Provide play ideas for **younger** children
 - Add more fun to children's play
 - Help children to use their imagination and engage in play
 - Invite children to share their experiences and feelings after playing
 - Recall the experience, strengthen parent-child relationship
 - Consolidate new experience → What will you do if you face similar situation in the future?



Roles of Parents

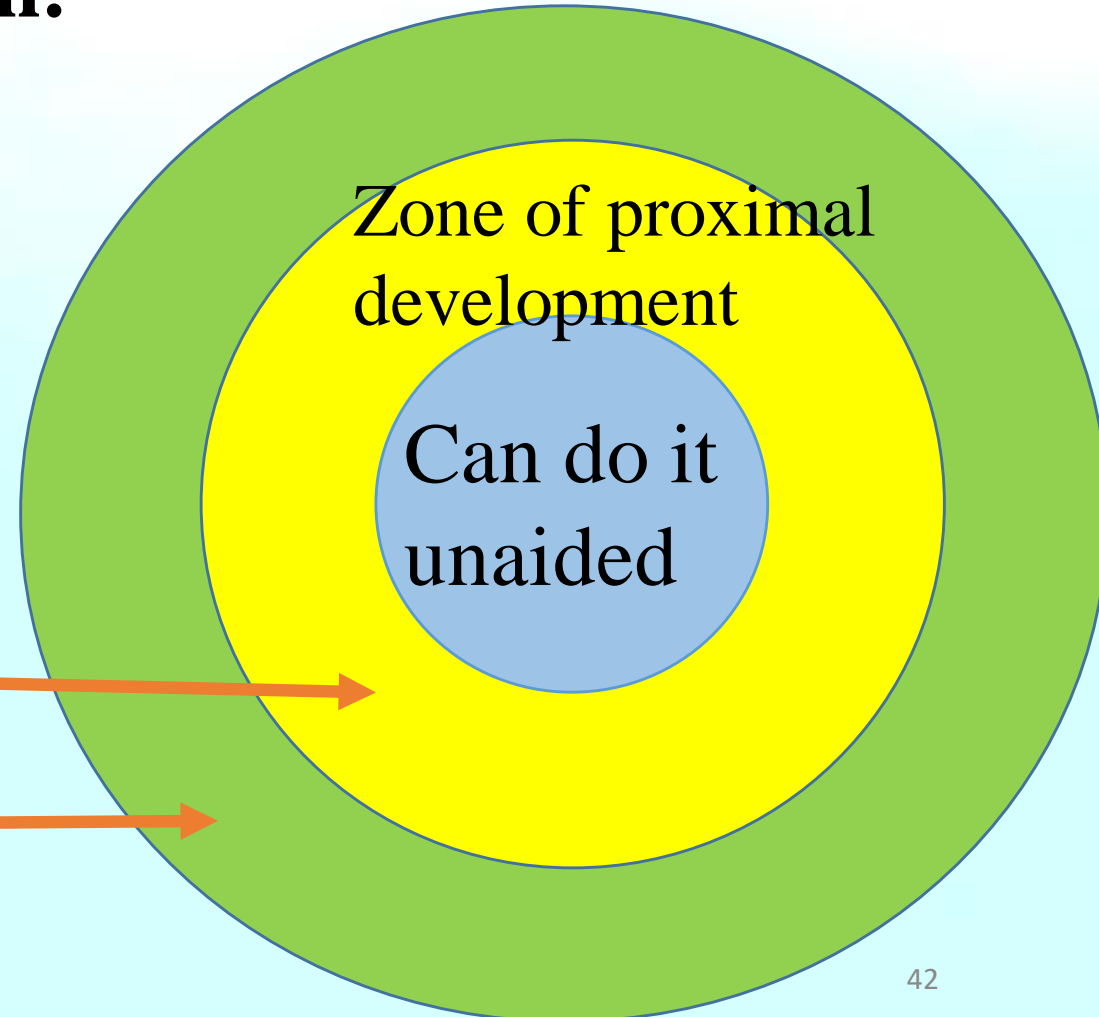
Parents in children's play can be an:

- (4) Observer
 - Observe and explore your surroundings actively. With new discoveries and ideas, it will be more fun playing with children and easier to guide children during play
 - Observe your children, learn more about your children through play (personality, ability, strength, etc.)
 - Develop the attitude of appreciating your children
 - Know when to and not to intervene

Roles of Parents

Parents in children's play can be an:

- (5) Intervener
 - When it is unsafe
 - When children break rules, e.g., being impolite and disrespectful (☆ cultural characteristics)
 - When you know your children can do it with a little help
 - When children cannot do it due to their limited ability





Roles of Parents

As a parent, you can also be a:

- (6) Good partner of home-school cooperation
 - Parent notice, newsletter, intranet → Parents' instant messaging groups...
 - Communication between parents and (class) teachers:
 - I don't know what and how to play with my children...
 - ❖ What do my children play in class?
 - ❖ Can I play these games at home?
 - What do teachers need to support children's free play in kindergartens?
 - ❖ Materials
 - ❖ Ideas



Conclusion

Myths about play and free play:

- Whether play is free or not depends on **children's perspective and point-of-view**
 - Free = **children can choose** what to play, whom to play with and how to play
 - Parents are the best playmates of their children!
- Even the activity is not completely free (e.g., with parents' direction or guidance), it is considered as play as long as **children are happy and enjoying** it
- With mutual respect, there is **no “right” or “wrong”** for play



Conclusion

Parents, please recall your childhood:

- Did you often play when you were a child?
- What did you usually play as a child?
- As a child, what was “free play” to you?
- Have you ever said these to your children?

“UNICEF HK Children's Right to Play PSA”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j6RvnwZRs0Q>

- Play with your children. Let your children bring back your **childlike innocence** and **purity in play**



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Parents' Education Talks 2019/20

Learn about Free Play in Children
2020.1.18

Speaker: **Dr Lilian Chau**
Faculty of Education,
The University of Hong Kong



Learn about Free Play
in Children



Education Bureau
Parent Education Information
at Kindergarten Stage

Characteristics of Play

- Intrinsic motivation
- Positive emotion
- Active engagement
- With pretending element
- No externally imposed rules
- Focus on process rather than outcome



For more information:



HKU Faculty of Education



Jockey Club "Play n Gain" Project



Roles of Parents in Children's Play

- Provider
- Participant
- Inspirer
- Observer
- Intervener
- Good partner of home-school cooperation

For more information...



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The University of Hong Kong – Faculty of Education

<https://web.edu.hku.hk/event/parent-seminars>



The Facebook page for the Faculty of Education, HKU, features a blue header with the Facebook logo and a login section. The profile picture is the Faculty of Education logo. The cover photo displays the 2019 World University Ranking for Education, with the Faculty of Education ranked THE* No. 4 and QS^ No. 6. The page includes a sidebar with navigation links (Home, About, Photos, Notes, Videos, Events, Posts, Community) and a main content area with a post titled "Making a Change to the Next Generation of Educators".



The Faculty of Education website event page for the Education Seminar Series. The header includes the Faculty of Education logo and navigation links. The main content area features a large image of a seminar and a list of seminars. The first seminar is titled "Education Seminar Series (16): Ways to Facilitate Language Development in Kindergarten Children" and is scheduled for October 12, 2019, at 10:30 - 12:00. The speaker is 黃美燕博士 (Dr. Margaret Wong) and the venue is 香港大學明華綜合大樓 T7講堂 (The Hong Kong University Ming Wah Comprehensive Building T7 Lecture Hall). The page also includes a sidebar with navigation links and a search bar.

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The University of Hong Kong – Jockey Club “Play n Gain” Project

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賽馬會「玩學相長」計劃
Jockey Club “Play n Gain” Project

主辦機構 Organised by 香港大學教育學院 融合與特殊教育研究發展中心
Centre for Advancement in Inclusive and Special Education
Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong

捐助機構 Funded by 香港賽馬會慈善信託基金
The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust
同心 同步 同進 RIDING HIGH TOGETHER

讚好 分享 傳送訊息

推薦和評論 7人推薦

great talk hosted in HKU! Informative and fun! can't wait to join the workshop and seminars later ne... 查看更多
6月23日

Take a look and share. 2018年12月10日

用遊戲來吸引小孩真係一個很奏效的方法，我認為所有家長都要認識一下！

社群位置：香港 營業中

關於 賽馬會「玩學相長」計劃 JOCKEY CLUB “PLAY N GAIN” PROJECT 有關計劃

<https://www.jcplayngain.edu.hku.hk/>

English

主辦機構：香港大學教育學院 融合與特殊教育研究發展中心
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捐助機構：香港賽馬會慈善信託基金
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同心 同步 同進 RIDING HIGH TOGETHER

首頁 關於我們 遊戲寶庫 活動 伙伴學校 資源 新聞中心 聯絡我們 分享平台

社區活動
親子遊戲日日玩@聖誕
2018/12/29
活動重溫

1½ - 2 歲
1½ 至 2 歲的幼兒會利用仿實物玩具模仿或扮演日常生活經驗 (如：倒裝開水、倒裝和洋娃娃一起睡覺)。

2 - 3 歲
2 至 3 歲的幼兒會利用仿實物玩具模仿或扮演日常生活經驗 (如：倒裝開水、倒裝和洋娃娃一起睡覺)。

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For more information...



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- 賽馬會「玩學相長」社交情緒學習計劃 由幼稚園至社會推廣
<https://www.jcplayngain.edu.hku.hk/>



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Thank you!