

# PLAY BASICS

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North Carolina Zoo

Play



# PRESENTER

# LINDA KINNEY

North Carolina Zoo  
nczoo.org • Asheboro



# Play

*Note: Pictures included within this presentation are courtesy of the NC ZOO and their play initiatives.*



# PLAYFUL PEDAGOGY

*A Playful Approach to Connecting with Nature*

Play



***You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than a year of conversation***

***- Plato (427-347 BCE)***



**Play**

# THE VALUE OF PLAY

## What is Play?

- Freely Chosen
- Personally Directed
- Intrinsically Motivated



Play

# THE VALUE OF PLAY

What is Play?



IDEAS

INSTINCTS

INTERESTS



Children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play

Play



# THE VALUE OF PLAY

- Curiosity, Information-Seeking, and Eagerness
- Imagination and Creativity
- Risk-Taking, Problem-Solving, and Flexibility
- Attentiveness, Effort, and Persistence
- Language Learning
- Social Development



Play

# PLAY AND RESILIENCE

- Emotion Regulation
- Pleasure & Promotion Of Positive Feelings
- Stress Response
- Attachment

*Play Supports the Whole Child*



Play



# PLAYING OUT



Play

# NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS

*SUPPORT A WIDE RANGE OF PLAY*

- Diverse, Dynamic and Flexible
- Develops A Sense of Place and Attachment
- Possibilities for Construction
- Stimulates Creativity
- Creates a Sense of Wonder
- Risk Taking & Object Manipulation
- Increase Level of Physical Activity



Play



**Children can access their sense of self**

*Exploring their interdependence and connectedness to the natural world*

**Play**



# WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

- Early-Life Outdoor Experiences
- Restorative Benefits
- Adult Perceptions & Social Constructions
- Landscapes and Environmental Design
- Vitamin G
- Playful contact with materials, bodies and space

Play

# PLAYWORK PRINCIPLES

*PLAYWORK PRINCIPLES SCRUTINY GROUP, CARDIFF 2005*

Play workers follow a set of Playwork Principles that establish the professional and ethical framework for playwork

These principles describe what is unique about play and playwork, and provide the playwork perspective for working with children and young people

The Playing Child is at the Center



Play

# PLAYWORK PRINCIPLES

1. All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity and fundamental to the healthy development and well being of individuals and communities.



Play



# PLAYWORK PRINCIPLES

2. Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.



Play

# PLAYWORK PRINCIPLES

3. The prime focus and essence of playwork is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.



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# A PLAYFUL NATURE

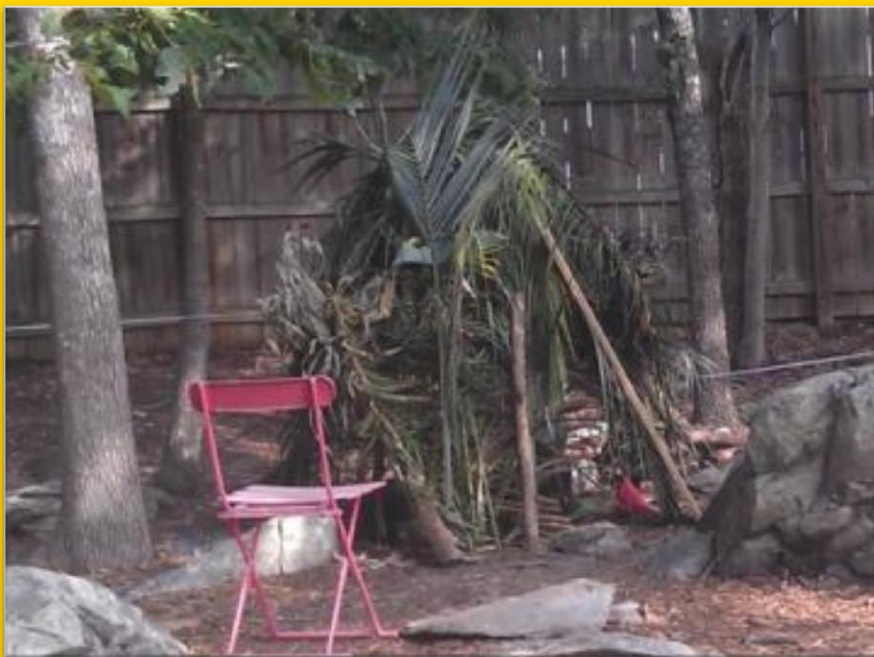
Being open to moments  
of **silliness** and **fun!**

A playful teacher creates a 'what if'  
environment open to endless potential.  
*(Power, 2011)*





# A PLAYWORKER'S TOOLBOX



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# TOOLS FOR PLAY

## Affordance of Space

- Look at **ALL** action possibilities
- Use both Large and Small spaces
- Action Possibilities are Relevant to the Individual



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# TOOLS FOR PLAY

## Loose Parts

Manipulatable

Natural or Manufactured

Trash or treasure?

Open Ended





# ACTIVE PLAY CONTINUUM

**Structured  
Play**

**Unstructured  
Play**



*Mostly Adult-Led*  
*Ex. Football Game  
w/ coaches & refs*

*Adult may facilitate  
play through  
suggestions*  
*Ex. "Who wants to go  
on a bug hunt?"*

*Adult provide  
materials with  
model of final  
product*  
*Ex. Fort building*

*Adult provide just  
the materials &  
settings*  
*Ex. Setting out a  
variety of loose parts  
for fort building in a  
wooded area*

*Adults provide  
access to a  
variety of  
settings*  
*Ex. Sand, creek,  
hill, woods, open  
grassy areas*

*Children decide  
it all*  
*Ex. What to play,  
when to play,  
where to play,  
with whom to  
play*

**Play**

# TOOLS FOR PLAY

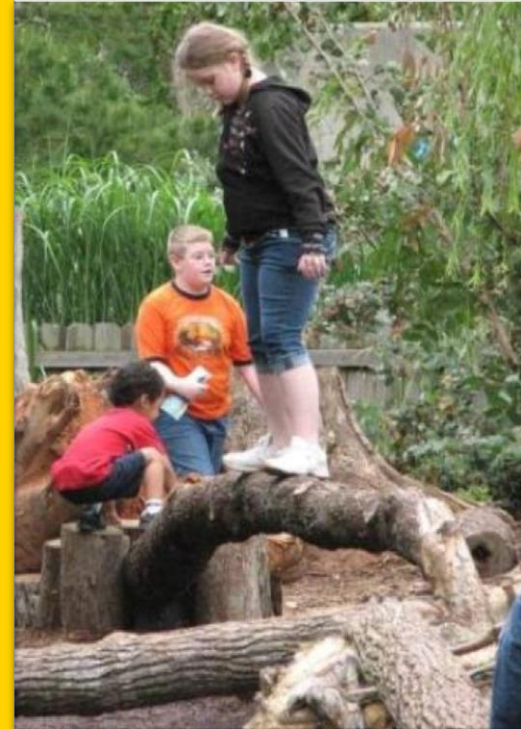
- **Play Cues**
- **Being in the Present Moment**
- **Invitations to Play**



Play



# SUPPORTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR RISK TAKING





# RISK ASSESSMENT

## Different Elements of a risk assessment:

- Nature of the Activity
- Benefits of Activity
- Type of Injury/Harm
- Severity of Specific Injury/Harm
- Hazards
- Control Measures



# DYNAMIC RISK ASSESSMENT



PLAY



# ROLE OF THE PLAY FACILITATOR

The overall goal for your event is to be:

*CHILD INITIATED, CHILD DIRECTED PLAY!!*

- This means that as an adult volunteer your role will be a supportive one.
- Children should feel free to go wherever they want to play within your Play Daze outer boundary
- And free to take materials from one area to another.



PLAY



# ROLE OF THE PLAY FACILITATOR

It is fine to switch off with someone else so that you can experience different play areas

Decide on the “Rules of the Event” beforehand and keep them SIMPLE – ex: bathroom breaks, first aid...

Leave the area better than you found it



Play

# PLAY MATTERS

Play is an essential part of every child's life and is vital for their development.

Through play, children explore and connect with the world around them.



Play





PLAY IS THE HIGHEST  
EXPRESSION OF HUMAN  
DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDHOOD, FOR IT  
ALONE IS THE FREE EXPRESSION OF  
WHAT IS IN A CHILD'S SOUL.

*FRIEDRICH FROEBEL, 1782-1852*

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# CONTACTS

**Linda Kinney**

**Education Specialist/Manager**

**Playful Pedagogy**

**NC Zoo Education**

**336.879.7710**

**Linda.Kinney@nczoo.org**

**Evie Houtz**

**Program Manager**

**Be Active Kids**

**919.287.7012**

**evie@beactivekids.org**



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