



Play: A Hidden Gift

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Play

- Spontaneous pleasurable action on self, other and object
- Play skills-the mechanics of play
- Play themes-the content and meaning of play
- The social continuum of play-the relational dimension of play



Functions of play

- Expression, tension-reduction and pleasure (the self-curative power of play)
- Exploration, discovery, stimulation and mastery
- Arousal and regulation-novelty, uncertainty, complexity
- Pleasure and imagery which compensates for felt limitations, anxieties and deprivations-wish fulfillment
- Problem solving , rehearsal and adaptation



Functions of play

- Anticipation
- Surprise
- Pleasure
- Understanding
- Strength
- Poise



Play Skills

Sensorimotor Play (Birth-12M)

- Mouth, fingers, vision and the surface of the skin-self and parent: reaching, tasting, touching
- Exploration, discovery and differentiation of the property of objects
- Mini-experimentation- grasping, mouthing, banging, clapping, dropping, inspecting



Play Skills

Functional Play (12-24M)

- Combination: filling-dumping, opening-shutting, fitting-in, messing
- Movable toys in correspondence to locomotion
- Constructive play: building and destruction in correspondence to ambivalent trends
- Repetition, imitation and ritual



Play Skills

Symbolic Play (24-60M)

- Imaginative-novel combination-pretense beyond personal experience and break with convention on object use, scene or role
- Object substitution
- Socio-dramatic- story line with props, ideas and deepening plot



Play Themes

- Sensory pleasure and tension reduction
- Getting and taking in
- Alertness and “ableness”
- Resolution of ambivalence
- Mastery and autonomy
- Reality and fantasy
- Consolidation of sexual identity and social roles
- Experimentation, problem solving, trying –on new possibilities-an “intermediate space”



Social Continuum of Play

- Solitary
- Onlooker
- Parallel
- Associative
- Cooperative



Play Materials

Basic materials

- Blocks
- Water
- Art materials
- Resistive materials
- Simple toys

(balls, bubbles, cars/trains, dolls/figures, house, kitchen, doctor kit, puppets)



Caregiver Roles

- Set designer
- Expander/challenger
- Narrator
- Reflector
- Clarifier
- Interpreter



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