

# Developmental Benefits of PLAY

Play is beneficial to children's growth because of its ability to span multiple levels and domains of their development. Play capitalizes on the individual interests of children and their enthusiasm to develop their social, emotional, cognitive and physical skills.

Play is a self chosen activity that provides children with opportunities to experiment, explore and discover. Its purpose is the process that children engage in and not outcomes or products. Play fosters children's understanding and abilities to interact with people and situations they meet in their lives.

## Outdoor Play Fosters...

- Observational and reasoning skills
- ◆
- Lower stress levels and calmness in daily life
- ◆
- Positive relationships and bonds between peers
- ◆
- Collaboration and Language skills
- ◆
- Awareness of self and the world around them
- ◆
- Environment has shown a direct effect on the depth of learning and social experiences as children develop.



John Dewey and Maria Montessori, pillars of child development theory recognized that, "Children's learning and development are greatly enhanced through direct experiences of nature and natural materials." (Dietze & Kashin, 2012).



### Essential Life Skills Developed Through Play (Galinsky, 2010).

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|---------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Focus and Self Control          | Perspective Taking | Communication        |
| Making Connections              | Critical Thinking  | Taking on Challenges |
| Self Directed, Engaged Learning |                    |                      |

Social and emotional development is explored and refined through play opportunities. Self Regulation very important during early developmental stages for a person's ability to adapt their emotions, behaviors and attention to the demands of various situations. It has been found that restricting play during developmental years can limit the brain's growth in this domain

Self Regulation is expressed through a child's behaviors; they know what is expected of them and are able to adapt as they experience new situations. Play helps children to practice and improve their ability to self regulate in safe and supported environments. Children who have established the skill to self regulate their behaviors exhibit patience, persistence and flexibility.

(Dietze & Kashin, 2012).