

Play Matters!



Play is a natural life enhancing daily occurrence.

Play enables children to:

- Engage in real life experiences
- Express their creativity
- Develop physical skills
- Challenge their thinking
- Engage in an imaginary world
- Extend their communication skills
- Foster social/emotional well-being
- Build resilience

Play is best when multiple opportunities are created and supported each day.

Play nurtures:

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Responsible citizens
- Effective contributors
- Strong communicators

Play gives children the best start in life for them to succeed.

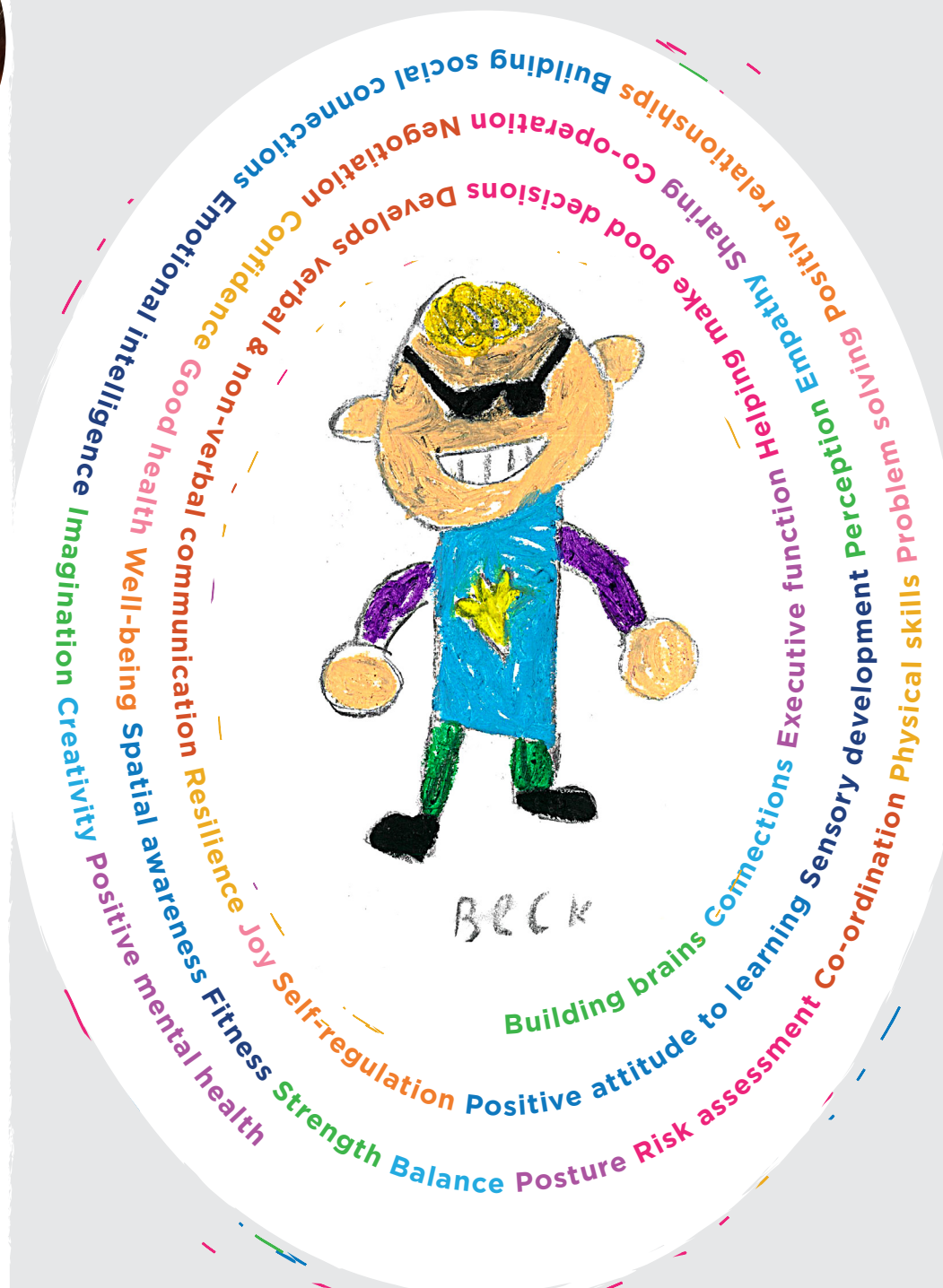
Play gives children opportunities to:

- Flourish
- Maximise to their full potential
- Have fun
- Be happy
- Be healthy
- Be challenged
- Regulate their emotions
- Nurture sustained shared thinking

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ECA WA thanks Kyla Williams (Photography), Clayton Cabral (Design), Perth Individual Montessori College and the children who contributed to the production of this pamphlet.

Play develops the whole child



Early Childhood Australia
Western Australia Branch

Everyone benefits when children play



To find out more contact ECA WA via their facebook page



“Play matters and needs to become everyone’s business.”

To ensure children’s access to play - We urge others to take action

A GOVERNMENT – POLICY AND ACCESS

We envisage that the Western Australian Government will take a leading role in promoting the importance of play and play-based learning.

It is critical that:

- i. The value of play is promoted directly to families and the broader community;
- ii. A play policy is developed at the government level to guide individual services;
- iii. A play-based approach is clearly articulated in all Early Childhood curricula;
- iv. Professional development in relation to play-based learning is provided; and
- v. Assessment of play-based learning is carried out by an independent body.

B EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE PROVIDERS (including the early years of schooling)

Children need generous amount of time for play-based learning, to be active self-directed learners.

It is critical that:

- i. Each provider has a context specific policy on play;
- ii. Play-based learning is at the core of all practice;
- iii. There is an ongoing commitment to the provision of high-quality professional learning in relation to play-based experiences; and
- iv. The early childhood learning environment is designed to support children’s ready access to play resources and activities.



To ensure children’s access to play - We urge others to be engaged

C FAMILIES

Families are encouraged to continue to further support their children’s access to play resources. As children grow and develop, their preferences for different types of play change.

- Infants and toddlers readily engage in play that involves all their senses. They thrive in sensory rich environments which can be explored in the presence of encouraging and trusted adults. They enjoy simple everyday objects and versatile toys that can be explored through hearing, touch, smell, sight and taste; and manipulated by pushing and pulling. They enjoy safe outdoor environments where nature can be experienced firsthand. Young children under three enjoy pretend play and will play-out things they see in the home and in familiar settings.
- 3-5-year-old children enjoy pretend and construction play. This age group especially enjoy collaborative activities with adults and other children of similar age.
- 6-8-year-old children enjoy games with rules and sophisticated pretend play. It is important to give them opportunities to be involved in games, but at the same time ensure that these are NOT controlled by adults.



“I think play is to have fun with your friends. You can invite some of your friends to play with you. You can help each other. Kindness, helpfulness, truthfulness, inspiring, sometimes frightening, sometimes alone and that is fine.”
Holly, 7 years



“You get fit and you are able to climb on the monkey bars, helps you sit with your leg crossed. Playing makes me feel good. My life would be horrible if I didn’t get to play.”
Lorelei, 8 years

D COMMUNITY

Local councils and other organisations can continue to fulfill an important role in encouraging children’s play. There are many examples of good practice in the provision of local nature and adventure playgrounds and play activities which can be readily accessed by children and families.

Some examples in the Perth area include:

Dinosaur Park in Kingsway with an emphasis on nature and sensory play; it has a big statue of a dinosaur, balancing logs around the playground, rocks to climb, a musical play area and a small water play feature for paddling.

Kings Park includes several children’s playgrounds for children to connect with nature and to appreciate our unique Western Australian environment. These varied playgrounds and large recreational spaces provide opportunities for children to explore, be challenged and have fun.

Piney Lakes Park in Winthrop is surrounded by a beautiful natural bushland creating a tranquil and peaceful place. It has a rich Whadjuk Noongar history. It features a sensory play park, open space, wetlands and picnic area.

Bibra Lake Regional Playground includes exciting and challenging play spaces and equipment such as a double flying fox, swings, a tree-top aerial rope walk, in-ground trampolines, sandpit, water play, pole maze, balance beams, and giant turtle splash pad. The Yarning Circle of ‘talking’ rocks present important local Noongar stories, the “Hollow Hill” play hill inspired by Aboriginal stories, along with cubbies and climbing frames have been modelled after Aboriginal fish traps.

More information about these and other facilities that support play experiences can be found online. Visit the websites of local councils and other community organisations for further information regarding local resources, community events and activities for families and children.