

Making Sense of Play

Course Outline

Play - at least the kind that builds brains and forwards development - is becoming an endangered activity among those who need to engage in it most. This course is a must for all parents, day-care providers, and early childhood educators. Participants will learn why children need to play and what they need for true play to result.

Course Outline

Session 1: Why children NEED to play

This session begins by getting to the essence of what play is and by differentiating it from other activities - even those that often are called 'play'. Included in this session is an overview of the role of play in development, including its effect on brain growth and functioning. The implications for how we interact, teach, and discipline young children are explored. Suggestions are provided for when to introduce the idea of consequences and outcomes as well as the construct of 'work'.

Session 2: What children NEED to be able to play

The second session explores the conditions required for true play to result. In particular, suggestions are provided for removing the impediments to play in the lives of our children. The most important kind of play - *emergent play* - in particular requires freedom from stimulation and from the work of attachment. Parents and teachers are given practical suggestions on how to provide these conditions.

Course Objectives

- to reveal the essence of play and provide an understanding of how it differs from work
- to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of play in healthy development of brains and personality
- to reveal why the play motif should be the primary interface with children until the capacity for integrative functioning develops
- to shed light on what activities are truly play and assess electronic games in that context
- to elucidate the conditions that give rise to true play and to give strategies on how to provide these
- to reveal the problem with instruction-based learning for young children and to provide suggestions for more natural ways of learning