



Talk To 10 Session #8 - Play & Pleasant Emotion

WHAT IS PLAY?

There are two types of play that are important for us to understand:

- Solitary Play (playing alone).
- Collaborative Play (playing with others).

Neuroscience tells us that both are important to develop brain function, but not all play is equal in psychological growth.

- **Solitary Play** uses the part of the brain that processes deep reflection, problem-solving and goal-attainment.
- **Collaborative Play** engages the brain's social system, and promotes dynamic, interactive learning. This play is sophisticated as it requires the constant assessment and shifting conditions of *thought and energies* between your child and another child or adult.

There are three ways we play that are also useful for us to understand:

- Structured Play - like football and board games.
- Creative Play - like art and sand.
- Imaginative Play - like dress ups.

A combination of these different types of play helps the brain explode with **neural connections** - but only if the child is safe in the play, and can safely exit the play.

Play looks like exercise for the body, but in fact, it is exercise for the brain. It develops **MENTAL FITNESS**.

OTHER KEY POINTERS ABOUT PLAY:

- If the emotions during play are mostly **pleasant** and **safe**, this will harness **learning**.
- **Pleasant emotion** is the **GLUE** for adaptive memory.
- If a child's play is aggressive, disconnected, hurtful or chaotic, then we might see difficulties in attending and responding to their learning in the classroom.
- Focus on **“encouraging”** your child to complete the board game as it allows them both to practice collaboration and problem-solving, rather than **“forcing”** by saying they lack focus and can't follow rules.
- The current research debunks the myth that *“play is a distraction from the more important task of learning”*, in fact **play and learning go hand-in-hand**.

STRATEGIES FOR PLAY PRACTICE

EXPOSURE TO PLAY

- 🎧 Role model healthy play to our children
- 🎧 Offering a broad variety of play - art, creative, collaborative, structure

PERMISSION TO LEAD

- 🎧 Allow the young person to lead the play
- 🎧 Tune into where the child wants to go with their play - this is their time to be seen, not yours - adults can lead their own play

CO-REGULATE AS REQUIRED

- 🎧 Monitor the child's high energy levels and assist them de-escalate and go to lower levels of energy to match the play task
- 🎧 Talk to the emotions that arise during play, especially the ones that arise when a new form of play is on offer

COMMUNICATE PLAY EXPERIENCES

- 🎧 Encourage the child to “re-tell” their play to the other members of their family or their teachers
- 🎧 Have children explain the play to peers and other children

Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Line [1800 512 348](tel:1800512348)

[headspace](tel:1800650890) 1800 650 890

[Lifeline](tel:131114) 13 11 14

[Kids Helpline](tel:1800551800) 1800 55 1800

National Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline [1800 250 015](tel:1800250015)

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