

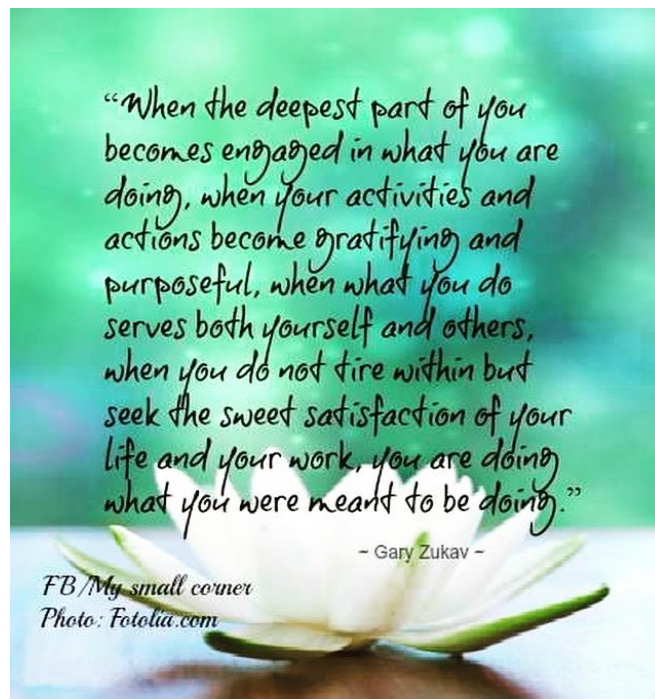


Australian Play Therapists Association

Australia's National Peak National Professional Play Therapy Australia

Welcome to the second Australian Play Therapy Association's newsletter for members in 2016. Our association has continued to grow and develop over the first six months of this year, and we look forward to offering continued opportunities for members to connect and engage with fellow members in the months ahead.

In this newsletter you will find information about our new members, our current and upcoming networking events, training opportunities and information on the latest research into play therapy and creative arts. We hope you enjoy this newsletter, and we welcome your feedback and ideas on ways to improve it.



Membership

We welcome enquiries and interest in becoming a member of our association. For all membership enquiries please email info@apta.asn.au or check out our website www.apta.asn.au and look for the 'Membership' tab to learn more about which level of membership you are eligible for.

We also wish to welcome the following new members to our association since April:

- Kathleen O'Connor (Clinical)
- Tammy Hazel (Affiliate)
- Kaye Wilmshurst (Associate)
- Mardi Thorpe (Associate)
- Angela North (Clinical)
- Helen Barrett (Associate)

- Sally Baron (Associate)
- Angie Zapala (Associate)

- Nadine Sherer (Associate)

We also welcome the following renewing members since April:

- Shawn Rutland (Provisional Clinical)
- Naomi Button (Clinical)
- Kathleen O'Connor (Clinical)
- Kylie Ellison (Associate)
- Penny Tripoli (Associate)
- Julia Stevenson (Associate)
- Kathleen Williams (Affiliate)
- Ane Bryden (Associate)
- Nina Fitch (Associate)
- Mia Lawrence (Associate)
- Catrina McNulty (Associate)
- Suzanne Hall (Associate)



President's Update

Wow where has time gone its nearly two years since I was voted into the presidency role. 2016 has been a great year for APTA and this would not have been possible without our fantastic and dedicated committee and all of our members.

I would love to share some wonderful work that has been achieved 2015/2016, It's been a very productive year that has resulted in significant growth of member numbers (70% increase). Addressing the needs of members is an on-going priority for the board and 2016/17 yields exciting development and growth and the board is working hard behind the scenes to ensure members' get maximum benefit from their membership.

Following our AGM, I would like to share with you some changes within our committee positions, we have sadly and reluctantly accepted a resignation from Dhyana Stein as Vice President. I would like to thank Dhyana for her wonderful contribution to APTA and the field of Play Therapy.

I would like to welcome Rebecca Campbell into the position of Vice President. Rebecca has been APTA's secretary for a number of years and has a huge amount of experience, I feel very privileged to be working alongside Rebecca. Shawn Rutland has been elected as APTA's secretary, Shawn's commitment to APTA, experience and dedication to Play Therapy will be an asset to the association. We also have several new general committee members, which is great news!

I would like to reflect on the amazing work of the APTA committee and share with you an update from the AGM:

- The committee has been developing and reviewing our policy and procedures, carrying out administrative amendments to ensure all of our membership documents are streamline, hopefully making life easier for all of our members.
- Our signature/marketing logo and usage guideline has now been approved for use by provisional and clinical members.
- Event dates 2016/2017 have been arranged.
- New committee roles have been established to ensure all tasks are completed to the highest of standards, which will benefit all members- Marketing, and Events coordinator and Membership Renewal secretary.
- Our quarterly newsletter has been well received by all of our members.
- APTA Marketing flyer has been printed for all events
- Melbourne networking group has already held several meetings working closely with our members to formulate this year's agenda.
- Work is underway to have a similar networking group established in Perth and QLD in the coming months
- Work has begun on establishing an International and honorary membership level.
- The board is also working on the development of a Business Quality Management System to ensure APTA provides efficient and timely support to all its members.



Donna Berry

APTA President

Melbourne Networking Group Update

APTA Victorian Practice Group Meeting

On May 25, 2016, the second meeting for the year was held at Downtowner Lygon in Carlton. We had a fantastic turnout, of about 20 to 25 people, including training participants of Play Therapy Australia, as well as experienced clinicians and supervisors. The focus of the meeting was a case presentation about the use of CCPT with a young girl and her mother, to strengthen their relationship and to address the child's separation anxiety. The group engaged in a robust discussion of practice and ethical considerations, as well as considering themes of the play therapy sessions and directions for future work. And as always, it was fantastic to see such a wealth of knowledge and experience in the room and to network and catch up with each other!

Please see below the information for the next Melbourne practice group:

Save the Date



Dear member,
APTA would like to invite you to the next APTA Victorian Practice Group meeting. The APTA Victorian Practice Group is a chance to meet other Play Therapists, and to access group supervision and professional development.

PRESENTER: Helen Kershaw

PRESENTATION: Play Therapy Dimensions model

Date & Time: Monday 10th October 2016 (6.00pm - 7.00pm)

Venue: Downtowner on Lygon Street, Melbourne VIC 3053

Cost: APTA Members – Free Non APTA members – \$5

RSVP: Via email to Info@apta.asn.au

- Please note light nibbles will be provided.
- Skype will be available for those who wish to participate but cannot join in person.



APTA Upcoming Networking Committees

Due to the success of our Melbourne networking committee we are looking to expand with regular networking events in Perth, Brisbane and South Australia to follow in the coming months. Stay tuned for further information!

APTA/ Other Upcoming Training Opportunities

Melbourne Professional Development Event

ANIMAL ASSISTED THERAPY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY



DATE: Saturday 15th October 2016 | **TIME:** 9.00am- 12.00pm | **VENUE:** Melbourne

TRAINING INFORMATION

The Australian Play Therapist's Association (APTA) is pleased to offer members and those interested in learning more about animal assisted play therapy the opportunity to engage in a professional development event to be held in Melbourne. The event will provide a half day training and overview of animal assisted play therapy, and offer the opportunity to observe and understand more about this important area of therapy work.

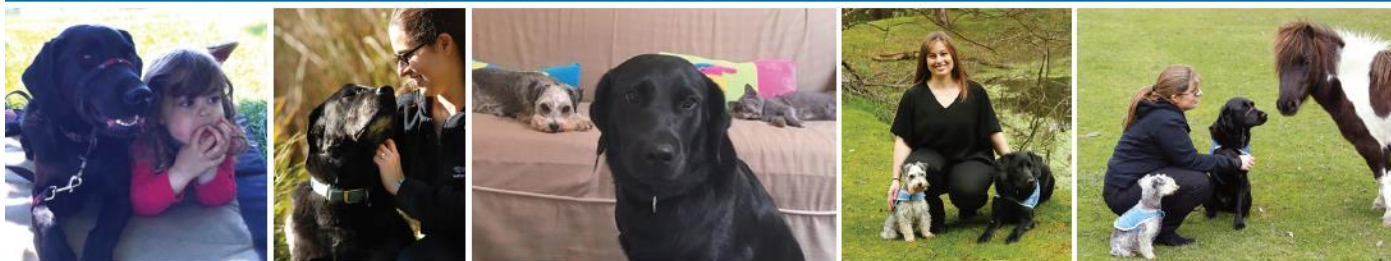
ABOUT THE PRESENTER

Melanie Jones is a Registered Psychologist and Animal-Assisted Therapist with a special interest in working with children, adolescents and families. Melanie has been working as a Psychologist for 16 years, and has been developing her craft in Animal-Assisted Therapy for nearly 15 years. Melanie has 14 years experience working as a Professional Dog Trainer, with over 10 years experience training and certifying Therapy Dogs.

Melanie is the Clinical Director of Lead the Way Psychology Clinics, where clients have the opportunity to work with a range of Therapy Animals, including dogs, a cat, and horses. She is also the Training Director of Lead the Way's AAI Institute where she works in conjunction with The Alpha Canine Group to train clinicians to work in Animal Assisted Interventions (AAI) and certifies Therapy Dogs. Melanie also works weekends as a Senior Canine Behavioural Trainer at Alpha Dog Training.

Melanie is the founder of the Animal-Assisted Intervention Association of Australia (AAIAA), a professional body set up to benchmark and establish industry standards for the field of Animal-Assisted Interventions. Melanie is also currently studying her PhD at Melbourne University, where she is exploring the efficacy of canine and equine assisted psychotherapies for adolescents.

To register or for more information please contact us on (08) 6363 5557 or send an email to info@apta.asn.au



PACFA Conference



Transformation through relationship
The heart and soul of therapy

JOINT PACFA / CCAA / SCAPE / APECA Conference – 9 to 11 September 2016

Conference Theme

The conference theme, *Transformation through Relationship: The Heart and Soul of Therapy*, will draw together aspects of integrative, spiritual, and educational practice, transforming the relationship between therapist and client, teacher and student. The encounter of being a therapist or an educator is one of connectedness and deepening; a co-created process that is the heart and soul of therapy. The conference will offer a supportive space to share and explore how we, as therapists and educators, offer the relationship as our field of practice – a way to help all involved to improve their mental health and wellbeing. **Stream 1: The heart and soul of therapy** This theme explores integrative practice and the transformational potential of relationship as the heart and soul of therapy **Stream 2: Spirituality** This stream focuses on the integration of spirituality in counselling and psychotherapy practice, drawing on Christianity and other spiritual approaches **Stream 3: Teaching and learning** This stream addresses the broad themes of transformation and relationship through teaching and learning To read about the conference, go to www.australiantherapyconferences.org.au



We are now on Facebook!

Search 'Australian Play Therapists Association' to join and connect with fellow members and keep updated on events and networking opportunities through the association!

FILIAL THERAPY WORKSHOP

MELBOURNE: October 10th and 11th from 9am - 5pm

PERTH: November 2nd and 3rd from 9am - 5pm

PRESENTER: HELEN KERSHAW



WHAT IS FILIAL THERAPY?

Filial Therapy was created by Drs. Bernard and Louise Guerney in the late 1950s and has continued to be refined, developed and researched thoroughly. As a therapeutic intervention it was amazingly ahead of the times, representing one of the first systemic family interventions, and using a psycho-educational framework that remains a valued intervention in mental health work today. It remains unique in that family members are involved as the primary change agents for other family members.

Filial Therapy is an evidenced based therapy, with nearly 50 years of research. Longitudinal studies of Filial Therapy have shown that improvements in child behavior, parental empathy, parent skills, parent stress, and parent satisfaction have been maintained over a three and five year period. Its use of child centred play sessions, and its involvement of parents as partners in the therapeutic process ensures its accessibility to all with both families and professionals stating that the process is both empowering and respectful of individuals and family culture. During a Filial Therapy intervention the therapist teaches parents to conduct special child centred play sessions with their own children where parents learn skills to help build their relationship with their child.



ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

During the 2 days you will be introduced to this effective family systems way of working with children and parents. You will learn and practice new skills to empower parents with new innovative ways to interact with their child in order to effectively listen and respond to their child's emotions. You



PART OF THE PLAY THERAPY GROUP

will be introduced to tools to help encourage the enhancement of the child's self-esteem. You will learn how to teach parents to set therapeutic limits whilst employing principles of play therapy and how to support parents in conducting at-home sessions, whilst providing an authentically accepting and understanding atmosphere in which their child will find security to explore their own emotions and the relationship with their parent.

HALF DAY INTRODUCTION TO THE DIMENSIONAL MODEL OF PLAY THERAPY (Yasnik & Gardner)

Included in the 2 day Filial Therapy workshop is a half day training workshop. This will introduce participants to the Dimensional framework proposed by Yasnik and Gardner (2014). The model allows practitioners to integrate both directive and non-directive play therapy approaches in a purposeful manner. The play therapy process is conceptualised in this model according to two dimensions, directiveness and consciousness and allows for a process-oriented framework. Knowledge of this model is an essential tool for any practicing play therapist. However for any therapist working with highly complex cases it is a framework that cannot be ignored if you are committed to change and positive outcomes for the children and families you are working with.

SUPERVISION MASTER CLASS OPPORTUNITIES

MELBOURNE: October 9th from 3 - 5PM **PERTH:** November 1st 2016 from 3 - 5pm

ABOUT THE PRESENTER

Helen Kershaw holds a Masters level degree in both Clinical Psychology and Play Therapy. She is a registered play therapy supervisor offering supervision to students studying the master degree in play therapy at Deakin University, Melbourne. Helen is also an experienced child protection social worker.

Helen has worked for over 25 years with children and families in both child protection and therapeutic services. Helen gained experience in both government and non government organisations always with a focus on supporting children and families. Whilst employed as a therapeutic social worker supporting families affected by bereavement and serious illness Helen undertook a master degree in Non-Directive Play Therapy where she had the privilege of being supervised by Dr Virginia Ryan.

Helen integrates all of the training and expertise she has gained throughout this time and provides therapeutic services to children and families from a strength - based perspective. It is this ethos, which pervades Helen's work and attitude with families irrespective of her approach, whether it be from a play therapy, filial therapy or more traditional psychological services approach.

Helen has supervised therapists for around 20 years in various roles within the organisations she has been employed. Her supervision style relies upon both experiential and more traditional learning methods. Helen works from a strength-based perspective and recognises the uniqueness and valuable contribution each practitioner brings to the supervision process.

This supervision master class is an opportunity for you to receive supervision around matters relating to your own individual work whilst sharing and learning from the experience of others. If you decide you would like to participate please bring an issue you would feel comfortable sharing within a group setting. There will be no pressure to share but your experience will certainly be enhanced if you choose to do so.

For enquiries in regards to any of the workshops published please email info@playtherapyaustralia.com or phone (08) 6363 5557

Theory

Curiosity, Pleasure And Play: *A Neurodevelopmental Perspective*

by Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D., Lea Hogan, M.Ed., Sarah J. Marlin, Baylor Medical Student

The human brain is an amazing organ. It mediates all of our thoughts, feelings and behaviors. It allows us to create, share and hope. It allows us to communicate and connect, to teach and to learn. The brain allows us our humanity.

In order to do all of these wonderful things, our brain must organize its 100 billion individual nerve cells (neurons) into efficient systems to sense, process, perceive, store and act on the continuous bath of sensations sights, sounds, tastes, smells and touch - in the environment. Furthermore, our brains do not just automatically pop into existence, capable of all these wonderful functions. The brain begins to develop in utero from just a few cells. Within a few short years it has grown to be 85% adult-size. The brain grows to become a dynamic ever-changing biological system which gives us the capacity to love, create, communicate or think. Our brain becomes a product of our genetic potential and our history of experience.

Experiences - repetitive, consistent, predictable and nurturing experiences - are required to express the underlying genetic potential of each child. It is becoming increasingly clear that it is the experiences of early childhood that play a key role in determining the foundational organization and capabilities of the brain (Schore, 1997; Perry, 1994).

The experiences, environments and opportunities we provide our children help determine their strengths and vulnerabilities. If the child's world is chaotic, violent and emotionally or cognitively impoverished, his potential will remain unexpressed. If the child's world is safe, nurturing and rich in social, emotional and cognitive opportunities, he or she will flourish. Central to a child's healthy development is the opportunity to act on his natural curiosity - to explore, to play and, thereby, to learn.

Play, more than any other activity, fuels healthy development of children and the continued healthy development of adults. This is a bold statement. To judge this statement, we must consider what play is and how the human brain develops and changes.

What Is Play And Why Is It Important?

Play takes many forms, but the heart of all play is pleasure. If it isn't fun, it isn't play. We play from birth on - we play using our bodies (e.g., building with blocks) and our minds (e.g., fantasy play). We use words to play (e.g., jokes, wit, humor), and

we use props (e.g., blocks, toys, games). While the exact nature of play evolves, becoming more complex as we grow, play at all ages brings pleasure. And with pleasure comes the powerful drive to repeat the pleasurable activity. And with repetition, comes mastery. Mastery brings a sense of accomplishment and confidence. The more comfortable a child feels with the world, the more likely she will explore, discover, master and learn. This cycle starts with curiosity.

Curiosity, a neurobiological feature of many primates, drives exploratory play. Play can satisfy curiosity as the child explores her environment, thereby expanding her catalogue of experience. When the child explores, she discovers. A wonderful cycle of learning is driven by the pleasure in play. A child is curious; she explores and discovers. The discovery brings pleasure; the pleasure leads to repetition and practice. Practice brings mastery; mastery brings the pleasure and confidence to once again act on curiosity. All learning - emotional, social, motor and cognitive - is accelerated and facilitated by repetition fueled by the pleasure of play.

Simple principles of neurodevelopment match the observations related to play that have been made by academics, clinicians and parents over the years. Neurodevelopment, while very complex, has a number of core concepts and principles that can illustrate the central, crucial role of play in healthy development.

Neurodevelopment Principle One: Sequential Development.

The brain, at birth, is undeveloped. During its development it organizes and grows in a sequential fashion, starting from the lowest, most regulatory regions of the brain and proceeding up through the more complex parts of the brain responsible for more complex functions. Healthy development of one region/capability is dependent upon the healthy development of lower brain regions that take place earlier in the process (see Figure 1). Play during development, therefore, parallels this sequential neurodevelopmental process. In early childhood, when the brain is developing motor-vestibular capabilities, for example, there is much more large motor play than in adolescence. Play opportunities for the child must be provided in an appropriate sequence and matched to the child's level of neurodevelopment. In turn, this matching process is dependent upon adequate assessment of the child's development in the key areas of physical/motor, behavioral, emotional, social and cognitive domains.

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Theory

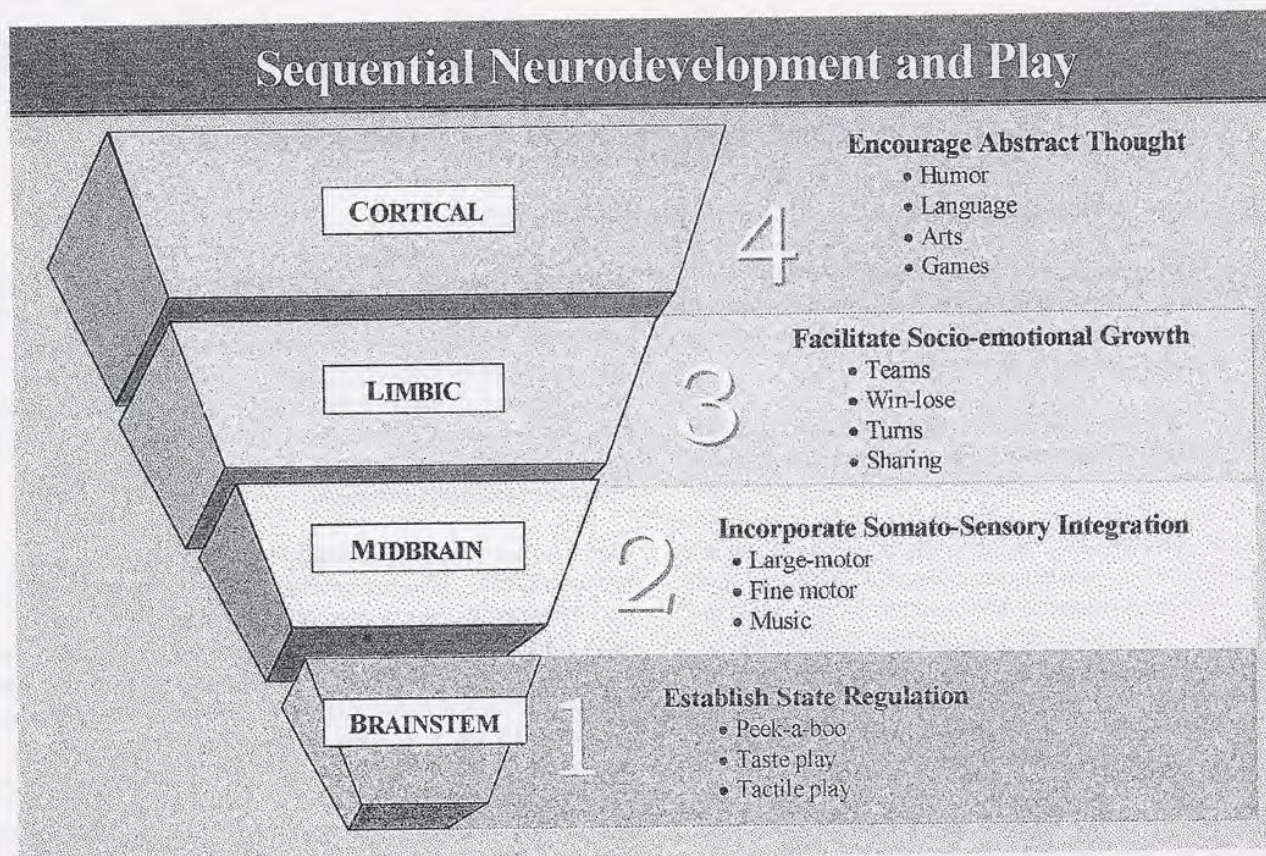


Figure 1: The Hierarchical Structure of the Human Brain: The human brain is organized and develops in a hierarchical fashion. The lowest and most simple areas develop first, followed in sequence by more complex areas that mediate more complex functions. Play activities of children mirror this process and facilitate healthy development of the brain. Babies play at the nipple, toddlers practice motor skills, and fantasy play encourages socio-emotional and cognitive development. As children grow, the complexity of play grows. Solitary, parallel, dyadic and then group play develops in sequence with the developing social capabilities of the child. At each stage of development, it is play and the repetitive elements of play that help organize neural systems which will ultimately mediate more complex motor, social, emotional and cognitive skills.

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Neurodevelopment Principle Two: Use-dependent Development. The normal organization of any brain area or capability is 'use-dependent.' Neurodevelopment is dependent upon the presence, pattern, frequency and timing experiences during development. The more patterned activity (e.g., music, reading, conversation), the more the brain regions responsible for these tasks will organize and be functionally 'healthy'. The implications of this are profound. Patterned repetitive activity results in patterned neural activity that changes the brain. These experiences help build in the neural capacity to better perform those functions (i.e., hearing language helps develop speech and language capabilities; practicing piano develops fine motor and rhythm-reading capabilities and reading increases capacity for verbal comprehension and abstract reasoning). Children exposed to consistent, predictable, nurturing and enriched

experiences will develop neurobiological capabilities that will increase the child's chance for health, happiness, productivity and creativity. Conversely this means that the child with neglect, chaotic, and terrorizing environments will have significant problems in all domains of functioning (see Perry 1995; 1997).

Play has a crucial role in providing the repetitive experiences that can improve and express the potentials in all areas of the human brain. Depending upon the nature of the play, growth and change in all parts of the brain can be facilitated. The more opportunities for enriched and complex play, the more repetition will take place. As we think about the importance of play we can never underestimate the need for consistent, predictable, patterned and frequent opportunities for play in a child's life. This means that the major providers of the experiences in the child's life - caregivers, teachers, and parents - must appreciate the role of play and pleasure in overall learning.

Theory

Conceptual Principle Three: Windows of Opportunity.

Much of this sequential and use dependent development of the brain takes place in early childhood. This means that of all the experiences throughout the life of an individual, the organizing experiences of early childhood have the most powerful and enduring effects on brain organization and functioning! Society does not capitalize on this window of opportunity in early childhood. Indeed, we typically wait until a child is so impaired and dysfunctional, acting out and failing in school, before we initiate services. Those few resources that are dedicated to early childhood tend to be inefficient and unfocused.

With play, we have an inexpensive and efficient means to help children develop. Proactive is better than reactive. Simple music and movement activities provided early in life for high-risk children, for example, appear to have powerful and positive impact on young children. We must teach young mothers and caregivers how important it is to play with their young children. The best toy for a young child is the invested, caring adult - someone to pay attention, to engage and to play with the child using words, song, touch and smile.

Play And Exploration

Play and exploration are crucial activities for young children. They help the child's brain develop in optimal ways. Child sensitive spaces, semi-structured activities and opportunities for exploration are safe, nurturing and enriched in developmentally appropriate stimulation and should be the core elements of all child-focused programs. Play and exploration grow the brain - healthy play and exploration grow healthy brains.

How Does Play Help Your Child Grow?

Through play, a child's sense of who she is can become more defined and integrated. As she learns about herself and the world, she acquires a wide range of important developmental, social, and cognitive skills, as well as positive inner traits, that help form the basis for happiness, productivity and a healthy future. Play-related skill building tracks with neurodevelopment. As described in Figure 1, the brain organizes from the bottom to the top.

Gross motor skills, such as walking, kicking, or skipping, can be enhanced when a toddler pushes a toy grocery cart or an older child jumps rope. When a young child kicks a ball across the room, she is practicing coordination by balancing on one foot to kick with the other. She is additionally developing larger muscle control, tone and flexibility, qualities that may help her score the winning goal when she is old enough to play soccer.

Children can develop advanced fine motor and manipulation skills while playing as they use their fingers to build and color a

sign for a backyard tree house. When throwing and catching a ball, they are practicing hand-eye coordination and their ability to grasp. As they scribble with a pencil on paper, they are developing the muscle control and coordination needed to one day write a letter to a friend.

Children have opportunities to enhance their language skills through play by talking and singing with other children. A child's interactions with and repetition of his playmates help him master the semantics of language as he participates in spontaneous rhyming and word play. While having fun, he increases his play-related speech, his sentence length, and his vocabulary.

The child's cognitive, or mental, abilities can also be enhanced by play. A child's play often involves physical and mental trial and error, problem-solving tasks, and an ability to discriminate between relevant and irrelevant information. Play requires the child to make choices and direct activities and often involves strategizing, or planning, to reach a goal. Through pleasurable play, children often become motivated and perseverant, qualities that frequently may later translate into the classroom.

While enjoying their play, children can acquire a wide range of interpersonal/social skills, ranging from communication to cooperation. When children argue about who stepped "out of bounds" and agree upon a "do over," they are learning how to negotiate, compromise and work together. They are learning about teamwork when they huddle together and decide how they will position themselves for the next shot. The child gains an understanding about those around him and may become more empathetic and less egocentric. When playing with peers, children are developing a learning system of social rules, including ways to control themselves and tolerate their frustrations in a social setting.

Play Develops Skills

- | |
|--|
| • Creativity |
| • Teamwork/cooperation |
| • Communication/negotiation/compromise |
| • Developmental skills |
| • Goal setting |
| • Following rules/directions |
| • Self-reliance |
| • Empathy |
| • Social interaction |
| • Problem solving |
| • Self-expression |
| • Self-confidence |

Theory

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Creating A Healthy Environment To Optimize Play And Learning

A child will play when she feels safe. And to a child, feeling safe has little to do with outlet plugs and childproof cabinets. A child's sense of safety stems from a calm and *predictable* world – one in which she knows what will happen next. This means her life is fairly consistent from one day to the next – and the adults in her world are predictable, consistent and, ideally, attentive, attuned and attached. She knows her caregiver is there for her to feed her, protect her and comfort her. You can make a child's world more predictable by keeping her on a daily schedule. For example, she wakes, eats meals and bathes roughly at the same time every day. Significant changes to her daily routine (for example, frequent home moves) are kept to a minimum. Predictability will help eliminate the element of surprise. In an unpredictable world with no routine, children may be anxious. Anxiety kills curiosity. A child that feels safe and is in familiar space will be curious and will seek novelty. A child that is anxious or in an unfamiliar setting will be unwilling to try new things.

“With play, we have an inexpensive and efficient means to help children develop.”

A child's environment should also be rich in sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touch. Environments rich in sensory experiences stimulate the child's brain and give him/her new information about the world. For a child, a sensory-rich experience could be as simple as the smell of blueberry muffins baking in the kitchen or the touch of a velvet pillow to the face. It is important for caregivers to recognize the importance of sensory experiences to a child. Caregivers should also recognize that too much stimulation could overwhelm a child. For example, one toy with bells and whistles might be interesting to a child, but many noise-making toys might over stimulate him/her. Caregivers should note that television is not considered a sensory-enriched experience for a child.

In today's world we often underestimate the importance of play. We over schedule our children with educational or structured activities that often inhibit spontaneous, curiosity-driven exploration. In the end, if we want to help our children meet their potential, we must allow children to have free time, spontaneous play and safe and enriched play and learning environments.

For more information on this and related topics:

Visit these web sites;

<http://www.ChildTrauma.org>

<http://Scholastic.combruceperry>

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About the Authors

Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D. is the Thomas S. Trammell Research Professor of Child Psychiatry in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas. Within the Baylor College of Medicine clinical system, he serves as Chief of Psychiatry at Texas Children's Hospital.

Lea Hogan, M.Ed. is a clinician at the Child Trauma Academy where she is the project director of the Early Childhood and Neurodevelopment Curriculum Project. Ms. Hogan has extensive clinical experience working with maltreated children and has been active in the Child Trauma Music and Movement projects.

Sarah J. Marlin graduated magna cum laude from Columbia University, New York, NY with a Bachelor of Arts in Biology. Currently she is a medical student at Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX.

Editor's Note: Dr. Perry will be the keynote speaker at the HAAEYC Fall 2001 Conference.