

TPS Professional Development Activity

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Title of Activity:

What is the Importance of Play in a Child's Early Educational Development?

Overview:

Through the use of primary sources from the Library of Congress, a facilitator will view how "play" has had an important impact on a child's early development including a child's social and cognitive skills. Using the "Inquiry Process", a facilitator will examine Primary Source photos and cartoons taken from various periods of time, to learn and reflect upon.

Observations will also determine if "Play" activities and outcomes has changed in the 21st century. After reflection, questions can be posed to determine whether more adult centered activities have altered early childhood education.

Investigative Question:

How do children learn through play?

Audience:

This activity is best suited for educators in Pre-K through 5th Grade, across all subject areas.

Time Required:

To better understand the concept of "Play" as an important element in early education, additional research should include books, and other educational sources. For this reason, several hours would be needed to review the material before examining the primary sources in this activity. (3-5 Hrs.)

Goal:

The goal of this Professional Development is for educators to view primary sources as key components in understanding certain concepts. In this PD, the educator will learn about the importance of "Play" in early learning and how "Play" has changed over time by viewing photos from the Library of Congress. Through the inquiry process, educators can make their own reflections from their close observations. A final goal of this PD is to teach facilitators and students that "Play" is a key part of early learning and it transcends culture, race, gender, economic level, and time.

Standards:

This PD activity will use the *AASL Standards Integrated Framework* featured within the *National School Library Standards*. AASL Standards Integrated Framework featured within the *National School Library Standards*. Through the use of the "inquiry process" each educator should be able to learn the information in a more meaningful and focused approach. This form of learning will enable the educator to personalize their experience and collaborate with fellow stakeholders.



Objectives:

The objective of this PD activity is to understand the difference between Primary and Secondary Sources and to recognize the benefit of teaching with primary sources to substantiate a theory. In this PD, the educator will come to their own conclusion of whether "Play" is an important factor in early education.

Digital Resources: This PD will involve several photos and cartoons from the Library of Congress Primary Sources which the audience will review and determine their own conclusion or reflection. *Photos & Cartoons (Primary Sources from the Library of Congress):*

Little girl playing--doing laundry]

Created / Published c1902. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3b41635/>

[Eskimo children playing]

Created / Published [between ca. 1900 and 1916] <https://www.loc.gov/item/99615123>

A new book for children: The blackberries.

New York: R.H. Russell, [between 1890 and 1900]. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2014650101>

Children coming home from school

Created/ Published: [between 1880 and 1890?] No author/ creator noted

<https://www.loc.gov/item/92515572/>

Blind children playing "hide and seek" among arcade pillars, Overbrook

Contributor Names: Bain News Service, 1900-1920 <https://www.loc.gov/item/ggb2004003972>

Kindergarten: Crippled Children's East Side Free School

Contributor Names: Bain News Service, publisher, 1900

<https://www.loc.gov/item/ggb2004001515>

Thurburn's fruit preserves and jellies / Forbes Co., Boston & N.Y.

Created / Published: [between 1850 and 1900(?)] <https://www.loc.gov/item/93506660>

Children who stay in the city--Children who go to Rockaway

Created / Published: Five Points, N.Y.: Donaldson Brothers, [ca. 1900]

<https://www.loc.gov/item/93500133/>

Indian children and their playhouses

Contributor Names: Tuell, Julia E., photographer. Created / Published :[1907], c1909

<https://www.loc.gov/item/98506632/>

[Children catching minnows]

Contributor Names: Curran, Charles Courtney, 1861-1942, artist

<https://www.loc.gov/item/det1994023331/PP>

White children playing

Forms part of: Frank and Frances Carpenter collection (Library of Congress).

Created / Published: [between ca. 1900 and ca. 1930]

LCCN Permalink <https://lccn.loc.gov/99614694>

Children playing with toys]

Contributor Names: Harris & Ewing, photographer. Created / Published:[1927]

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.hec>

Children playing with boats, Grundy Center, Iowa

Contributor Names: Vachon, John, 1914-1975, photographer. Created / Published: 1940 Apr.

http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/res/071_fsab.html

Children playing in street, New York

Contributor Names: Bain News Service, publisher. Created / Published 4/2/09

<https://www.loc.gov/item/ggb2004003232/>

Children in bed with dolls; in hospital?]

Contributor Names:Harris & Ewing, photographer

Created / Published: [1931]

<https://www.loc.gov/item/hec2013006620>

[Children playing in sand]

Contributor Names: Harris & Ewing, photographer Created / Published: [1922]

<https://www.loc.gov/item/hec2013012137>

Girls' playground, Harriet Island, St. Paul, Minn.

Contributor Names: Detroit Publishing Co., copyright claimant Created / Published: c1905

<https://www.loc.gov/item/det1994010557/PP/>

Children playing in street, New York

Contributor Names: Bain News Service, Created / Published: 4/2/1909

<https://www.loc.gov/item/ggb2004003232>

[Four young children loading rocks into a wagon while a smaller child sits on the ground playing with his toy ponycart]

Contributor Names: Beals, Jessie Tarbox, photographer Created / Published: [ca. 1915]

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2006683709/>.

Kindergarten: Crippled Children's East Side Free School

Contributor Names: Bain News Service, publisher 1900

<https://www.loc.gov/item/ggb2004001515>

[Untitled photo, possibly related to: Children playing, New York City, New York]

Contributor Names: Rothstein, Arthur, photographer Created / Published: [1941 Dec.]

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1997013695/PP/>

[African American children playing outdoors, Eatonville, Florida]

Contributor Names: Lomax, Alan, 1915-2002, photographer Created / Published: 1935 June.

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2007660115/>

Blind children playing outside, Overbrook

Contributor Names: Bain News Service, Created / Published: [no date recorded on caption card]

<https://www.loc.gov/item/ggb2004003971>

[Children playing]

Contributor Names : Harris & Ewing, Created / Published [1935 or 1936]

<https://www.loc.gov/item/hec2013009812/>

Girls and Barbies, East Harlem, 1970

Contributor Names Vergara, Camilo J., Created / Published 1970.

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2014648659/>

Playground

Created / Published: between 1918 and 1920]

<https://www.loc.gov/item/npc2007000289/>

Additional Resources:

Books:

- *Just Playing? The Role and Status of Play in Early Childhood Education*, Janet R. Moyles
- *Children at Play: Clinical and Developmental Approaches to Meaning and Representation*, Arietta Slad andDennie Palmer Wolf
- *The Self-Respecting Child: Development through Spontaneous Play* By Alison Stallibrass
- *Play and Exploration in Children and Animals*, Thomas G. Power
- *Free to Learn: Why Unleashing the Instinct to Play Will Make Our Children Happier, More Self-Reliant, and Better Students for Life*, Peter Gray

Video:

The Decline of Play, Peter Gray <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bg-GEzM7iTk>

Classroom Material:

Since most of the photos which were selected from the Library of Congress Primary Sources do not have copyrights (those which were dated prior to 1923) it would be good to enlarge the pictures for easier viewing. For those that do have copyrights, they can be viewed on a laptop for only educational purposes. Sheet paper or sticky notes could be used during the inquiry process.

Preparation:

Prior to starting this activity, the facilitator should make the following resources available that focus on the importance of play in early child learning and development. These include the books and YouTube video as noted in the Digital Resource Section and the Primary Sources from the Library of Congress which have been copied. They should also have sticky notes for writing observations and a lap top to view photos which have copyrights.

Procedure:

1. As a whole group, facilitators and students will analyze individual images carefully and find evidence within the sources to answer and discuss:

- What type of learning is implemented through “Play”?
- Does “Play” involve risk taking and freedom of expression? Why is this action important in early childhood development?
- What mathematic concepts can a child learn during “Play”?
- How does a child develop social and emotion skills?
- How does a child model and learn adult behavior?
- Does a child learn about technology and engineering through “Play”?
- How does a child develop musical and artistic skills?
- What type of positive and negative outcomes can be learned through “Play”?
- Does “Play” increase language development, motor skills, and creativity?
- How does “Play” contribute to emotional health during problem times?
- Is good physical health a key component of “Play”?
- Can “Play” overcome the fear of the adult world?
- How can “Play” contribute to the understanding of the outdoor environment and life cycle?
- How does “Play” build community engagement and acceptance of others?

2. Reconsider individual images above, from various perspectives:

Divide the students into groups to respond to specific photos which relate to specific aspects of play:

- Social Engagement
- Exploration
- Freedom
- Imagination
- STEM building
- Modeling Adult Behavior
- Physical and Emotional Health
- Use sticky notes to record observations.

3. Following observations, ask individuals to reflect and propose a theory based on the primary sources as a set: Compare and contrast sources dated prior to and after 1923.

- Were children more independent?
- Were children more apt to “Play” on their own?
- Does this differ from today?
- If so, does this affect a child’s early educational development?

Assessment/Reflection:

The facilitator will lead a discussion of the various findings from group and individual reflection. Categorize findings as agreeing or disagreeing with the premise that “Play” is an important component in a child’s early education and development. Be sure to have participants cite specific evidence exhibited in the primary sources.