



Just Play! Inspiring Adult Play
in Early Childhood Education

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Welcome!

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Chasing
the "Best"



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The Little Prince

"All grown-ups were once children...
but only few of them remember it."

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry,



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The Deceptively Simple Definition of Play

- What we do know to be true is that every ounce of learning derives from play.
- Before we can advocate for play, we must develop a clear mental construct of its meaning.
- Play has its own intrinsic rewards. We know that at the heart of play is the pleasure of engaging in the activity or thought process for its own sake, without the expectation of being rewarded or recognized.



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- **Play is an action** - Play is the act of building a block structure for the purpose of accomplishing and idea or pursuing a theory.

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- **Playfulness is a behavior** (or a set of behaviors) that occurs in a state of mind that leads to wonder, discovery, flexible thinking, and risk taking.

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You Need Both Play and Playfulness

We do not necessarily need to play to be playful.

We just need to be present and yield to the moment, ready to respond to new opportunities.

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- **Present**—We are present and, in the moment, and we find a sense of place and belonging.
- **Lasting**—We construct lasting memories that sustain us for the rest of our lives.
- **Affinity**—We build relationships with people and the environment.
- **You**—We focus on ourselves to find our childhood genius.
- **Flow**—When we are in a state of flow, we achieve greater enjoyment, and, creativity.
- **Unity**—Our mind, heart, body, and soul become one united entity.
- **Learning**—We learn for the passion and joy of it.

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Play Challenge

- Go on a photographic safari searching for play in the "wild." Take photos of children fully immersed in play.
- Recreate the play in the photos with you colleagues.



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There is no better vehicle for authenticity, equity and inclusion than wholehearted play!

Playing together, we create:

- **Equity of voice:** We listen to each other. When we are playful, we stop taking everything that is said so personally, so trust can develop.
- **Inclusion:** We can play in different ways and participate with freedom.
- **Collective perspectives:** Our play contributes to the group and helps us learn collectively.



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Discover Your Childhood Genius



Curiosity



Flexibility



Daydream



Imagination



Wonderment



Playfulness



Risk-Taking



Sense of Humor

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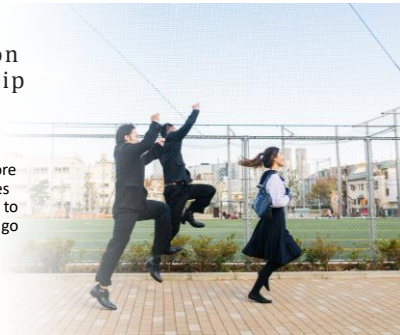
Embrace Disruptive Disequilibrium



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A New Vision of Leadership

Leading people to embrace a playful attitude requires more than a leader; it takes someone who dares to play, transform, and go beyond leadership!



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Play Challenge

- At your next meeting, share a play memory of your childhood.
- Bring the artifacts that inspired the play.
- For instance, if you share how you used natural items to build imaginary worlds, bring the materials for people to create their own imaginary worlds.



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Design Playful Meetings – Learn from Tik Tok

- Delivers high-energy and engaging content in small, bite-size.
- Keep the content going by inviting people to add to it.
- Play meaningful games that build relationships.



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TRANSFORMATION

Design Playful Professional Development

- Curate music
- Play games that require innovative solutions
- Use art media
- Play with unscripted materials
- Incorporate dramatic and role play
- Begin meetings with drumming or dancing



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What strategies will you use to make professional development more playful and meaningful?



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The Adult Space in the Early Childhood Ecosystem

- Freely play with your ideas.
- Test your theories.
- Develop techniques and inspirations to keep you playing and exploring with confidence.
- Envision an abundance of play possibilities.
- Make mistakes and conquer your fears.
- Gather with a friend to reflect, plan, wonder and design together.



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How are adults represented in the early childhood ecosystem?



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Just Play! Include Families

- Create a sense of community and a playful culture



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When play is infused into any ecosystem, we plan to ensure that the play or game is:

- Easy to understand
- Easy to play
- Easy to quit
- Safe
- Fun
- Inclusive and equitable
- Voluntary
- Non-threatening

And it does not include final answers or outcomes



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Join the Play Movement!



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THANK YOU!

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