



Department of  
**Education**



IMPORTANCE OF  
*play-based*  
**LEARNING**

# Your child is naturally curious.

They want to know about the world around them. Right from birth, children are learning. They do this by watching and listening, moving, talking, feeling, exploring and questioning; by interacting with people, other children, animals, objects and spaces indoors and outdoors, around the home, and when you are out and about.

**In other words, your child learns through play.**

Children's first teachers are their families. The daily interactions and experiences you share with your child is how they learn about their world, their culture and family. When children are little, a lot of these interactions involve play.

Play is an essential part of every child's learning. When children are playing, they are building their knowledge, skills and attitudes for lifelong learning. When children start school they bring all they have learned with them. Their teachers seek to build on these skills, interests and knowledge using the same vehicle for learning that works so well at home – PLAY!

## PLAY-BASED LEARNING AT SCHOOL

Public schools are fantastic places for children to learn through play. Dedicated play spaces assist children to learn how to solve problems, persevere, compromise and cooperate with others. Through play they practise and apply the skills they are taught in the classroom. Schools understand that play-based learning is an important part of a balanced approach, and that alongside more explicit teaching and instruction, it helps to keep every child productive and engaged.

### Kalgoorlie Primary School

Children have made their own outdoor theatre where they create and perform their own plays and puppet shows. This helps develop their oral language skills and builds their confidence and teamwork.

### Brookman Primary School

Children use their natural curiosity and playfulness to learn about Aboriginal language and culture through activities such as cooking, games and story-telling. The local Aboriginal community works closely with the school in developing these activities.

# TYPES OF *play-based* LEARNING

## TYPES

## WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

### Child-initiated

- Freely chosen by the child
- Little direct adult involvement or interaction
- Spontaneous

### Guided

- Initiated by the child or adult
- Adults may join in to extend learning through questioning and demonstrating

### Adult-led

- Organised and directed by an adult and may include instructions but remains open ended
- Intentions are clear, specific and promote high level thinking skills



### Dianella Primary College

The school is very multi-cultural with children and families from across the world. Nature play spaces and “spare parts” collections are used to encourage children to work together, solve problems, and make friends from a range of backgrounds.



**Through play-based learning, your child is:** discovering, taking risks, negotiating, problem-solving, being creative, learning to get on with others and developing self-awareness.

A play-based learning environment encourages talking, reading, thinking and writing. Through this, your child sees literacy and numeracy as part of their everyday experience. They see themselves as communicators, readers, writers and thinkers. They make predictions and generalisations about their world, use patterns and symbols, and experiment to find out why things happen. They make connections between experiences, concepts and processes.

Play-based learning involves careful decisions and support from teachers, so your child grows to accept responsibility for their learning while still receiving purposeful guidance and feedback. It promotes important opportunities for your child to understand how to learn, develop critical thinking skills, adapt to change, and work independently as well as with others.



### Huntingdale Primary School

A whole-school approach to incorporating play-based learning throughout the curriculum. Children engage in role play, simulations and learning games, developing their creativity, flexibility, and persistence.

# HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING

## AT HOME:

- Seek out different experiences – at home and while you are out and about.
- Read every day with your child.
- Have meaningful conversations with your child about things they are interested in.
- Ask lots of questions such as *I wonder what would happen if...?* or *I wonder how ...?* or *I wonder why ...?* The best questions are ones that you don't already know the answer to, or that don't have a simple 'yes' or 'no' answer. Questions help your child make connections and meaning and let you know their interests and opinions.
- Encourage your child to discover and develop at their own pace.
- Give your child time to play outside, as well as inside, including physical activities like running, throwing or kicking balls, and climbing.
- Try to relax about messiness and untidiness – clearing up is a productive part of children's development.
- Limit 'screen-time' on television or computers. Children thrive on two-way interactions.

## AT SCHOOL:

- Share information with your child's teacher about your family background, and your child's interests and ideas.
- Ask how information will be shared between you and your child's teachers.
- Ask about the learning program and how your child will have opportunities to make choices and contribute.
- Ask how you can be involved.



“We are never more fully alive, more completely ourselves, or more deeply engrossed in anything than when we are playing.”

- Charles Schaefer,  
psychologist

For more information on play-based learning visit [education.wa.edu.au/play-based-learning](http://education.wa.edu.au/play-based-learning)