

Reyna Salas

Advocating for Child-Centered Curriculum and Play

Walden University

Reyna Salas

1023 W. 5th Street
Anaheim, CA. 92802
714-837-5583
reynasalas@ymail.com

November 18, 2016

Eugene Geist and Angela C. Baum
YC Young Children: Jul 2005; ProQuest Central

Dear Editors,

I am writing to both agree and to discuss the critical role of child-centered curriculum and play in children's development and learning. You mentioned in your article "YEAH, BUT's That Keep Teachers from Embracing an Active Curriculum Overcoming the Resistance", that hands-on activities, in-depth exploration, cooperative learning individualized instruction, and project-based curriculum are several items commonly associated with developmentally practice and that a developmentally practice curriculum for young children is child centered and I cannot agree more. I also agree that teachers are having a difficult time implementing developmentally appropriate practices in their classrooms because of the demands that they face.

More and more we are seeing that early childhood programs and primary grade schools are focusing more on preparing preschool children for kindergarten and school age children for standardized tests and are diminishing their play time. Play is very important to the overall development of children in general. Through child centered play, children create and explore a world they can master, conquering their fears while practicing adult roles, develop new competencies that lead to enhanced confidence and the resilience they will need to face future challenges (Ginsburg, 2007).

In order for a child to be fully successful, they need to be sociolinguistic competent. Children who engage in social pretense include information on social and linguistic competence, which are also vital for school success (Bergen, 2002). Children learn all of those skills through play activities and exploration. Diminishing play time can have a negative impact on the skills that children learn through play because children are not getting enough time learning and exploring, therefore; they are missing out in learning

the necessary skills for future school success and skills that are carried on to their adult lives.

Working with young children for over 20 years has given me the opportunity to see first hand the many benefits of play and the skills that children acquire through child-centered play activities and exploration opportunities. As a mother of 4 young children and as a parent and child educator of children 0-5 years old, I urge you to continue educating the communities, educators, and policy makers of the importance of play and how we can continue to advocate for developmentally appropriate curriculum and play.

When children are given many opportunities to create and explore their own ideas and interest, they learn self-regulation, negotiation skills, creativity, patience, academic skills, their self-esteem is higher, and they are ready and eager to learn. These skills are vital to their overall success. It is through play that children's brains and healthy bodies develop and also how children engage and interact in the world around them (Ginsburg, 2007).

Sincerely yours,

Reyna Salas

References

Bergen, D. (2002). The role of pretend play in children's cognitive development. *Early Childhood Research and Practice, 4*(1). Retrieved from <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v4n1/bergen.html>

Geist, E., & Baum, A. (2005). Yeah, But's that keep teachers from embracing an active curriculum. *Young Children, 60*(4), 28-36.
Retrieved from the Walden Library

Ginsberg, K. (2007). The importance of play in promoting healthy development and maintaining strong parent-child bonds. *Pediatrics, 119*(1), 182-191. Retrieved from <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/119/1/182>

Spiegel, A. (2008). Old-Fashioned Play Builds Serious Skills. Retrieved from <http://oldfashionedplaybuildsseriousskills:npr.org>

