



Play Resource Sheet for Grown-Ups

Play Power, an exhibit celebrating the power of children's play, was created by Providence Children's Museum to share our conviction that children's self-directed, free play is essential to their healthy development. Due to a number of factors, today's children have fewer opportunities to engage in open-ended play. We hope adults will help make time and space for the children in their lives to play, and make time for themselves to really notice the remarkable learning and growth inherent in children's play.

For play ideas and information on the benefits of play, we recommend the following resources:

Books

Play With Your Kids! A How-To, Why-To Guide for Parents by Providence Children's Museum

Available in English and Spanish at the Providence Children's Museum Gift Shop or by contacting the Museum at (401) 273-5437 ext. 234

- Ideas for simple, spontaneous ways parents can connect with their children through play every day

Unplugged Play: No Batteries. No Plugs. Pure Fun. by Bobbi Conner

- Chock-full of tips and hundreds of engaging play ideas for children at different developmental stages: indoor and outdoor play experiences, parent and child play, crafts and games

The Power of Play: How Spontaneous, Imaginative Activities Lead to Happier, Healthier Children by David Elkind, Ph.D.

- Uses research analysis and powerful examples to argue for the benefits of free, unstructured play time as children's time is increasingly taken up by scheduled activities and passive toys and electronics

Reclaiming Childhood: Letting Children Be Children in Our Achievement-Oriented Society by William Crain, Ph.D.

- Focuses on appreciating children in their present lives and de-emphasizes preparing them for adulthood, with advice for helping children develop their natural strengths and interests

A Child's Work: The Importance of Fantasy Play by Vivian Gussin Paley

- Through stories of children's pretend play in classrooms, a veteran kindergarten and nursery school teacher illustrates how fantasy play is an important mode of learning and meaning making for children.

Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder by Richard Louv

- An influential work about the staggering divide between children and the outdoors that offers hope for connecting children to nature through play to promote their healthy development

The Case for Make Believe: Saving Play in a Commercialized World by Susan Linn, Ed. D.

- Uses research and anecdotes to argue against consumerism and for the critical importance of children's creative play – and how parents can protect it

Taking Back Childhood: Helping Your Kids Thrive in a Fast-Paced, Media-Saturated, Violence-Filled World by Nancy Carlsson-Paige, Ed.D.

- A guide for protecting and nurturing critical aspects of children's healthy development: creative play, a feeling of security and strong, meaningful relationships with adults and other children

Einstein Never Used Flash Cards: How Our Children Really Learn – And Why They Need to Play More and Memorize Less by Kathy Hirsch-Pasek, Ph.D. and Roberta Michnick Golinkoff, Ph.D. with Diane Eyer, Ph.D.

- Empowers parents with evidence and tools to help children reach their potential through caring and playful environments, not “early learning toys”

Local Resources

PlayWatch: Connecting the Community to Promote Children's Play

To view the PlayWatch listserv archives or to join the list, visit www.playwatch.org

- An email discussion listserv hosted by Providence Children's Museum to share information, articles, resources, events and more – including ideas about what we, as a community, can do to safeguard children's play

Kidoinfo www.kidoinfo.com

- Independent weblog of information, creative ideas, things to do, places to go and links to family resources, based in Providence, RI

Rhode Island Families in Nature www.rifamiliesinnature.org

- Group for families who want to spend time outdoors together – learn about the monthly hikes, and for local nature resources and places to explore

Organizations

Alliance for Childhood www.allianceforchildhood.org

- Promotes policies and practices that support children's healthy development, love of learning and joy of living; links to articles on the website

KaBOOM! www.kaboom.org

- Creates playspaces through the participation and leadership of communities with resources to build spaces for play and “help save play” online trainings, research and links

TRUCE: Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children's Entertainment www.truceteachers.org

- Organization of educators concerned about the impact of media and commercial culture on children; produces an annual printable “Toys, Play and Young Children Action Guide” and “Media and Young Children Action Guide”

Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood (CCFC) www.commercialfreechildhood.org

- Advocates for the adoption of government policies that limit corporate marketers' access to children; fact sheets and articles available

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) www.aap.org and www.healthychildren.org

- This organization of pediatricians issued an important report in 2007: “The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bonds,” available on the site

Children and Nature Network (C&NN) www.childrenandnature.org

- Encourages and supports individuals and organizations working to reconnect children to nature; research, newsletters and a guide to starting family nature clubs

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) www.naeyc.org

- Dedicated to improving the well-being of all young children from birth through age eight; “For Families” link includes a search for “Early Years are Learning Years™” articles by topic, including “Play and Learning”

