

## Play Revisited

### "Let My Children Play"

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## Why Should Children Play?

- Fosters creativity and imagination
- Promotes social development
- Promotes moral development
- Learn a sense of self
- Relieves stress
- Linked to motor development

## So Why Are So Few Playing?

- The cultural "work ethic"
- Too little time---too much to do
- Parent expectations, angst
- Lack of Understanding, misinformation
- Lack of a Philosophy

## Two Contrasting Views

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Homo ludens</b></li> <li>■ <i>Play is essential to human nature---the defining characteristic that distinguishes her from other animals</i></li> <li>■ <i>Life is all play, ruled by feeling and sensation</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Homo faber</b></li> <li>■ <i>Man, the maker of things. Work gives meaning to life. Play is an escape valve to enable man to work harder.</i></li> <li>■ <i>Life is work, ruled by reason, law and order</i></li> </ul> |
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## The Image of God

- Before creation God did not need to work, He imagined
- He worked for His good pleasure
- Redemption was freely engaged in, not obligatory

## The Sabbath Rest

Eugene Peterson

- In Exodus we are commanded to keep the seventh day for rest because God did. If God does, we can too. "The precedent to quit doing and simply be is divine."
- In Deuteronomy the reason for Sabbath was to maintain man's humanity. In Egypt slavery did not allow for rest. They were no longer image bearers of God but equipment for making bricks.

## Praying and Playing

Eugene Peterson

- "Two biblical reason for Sabbath-keeping develop into parallel Sabbath activities... The Exodus reason directs us to contemplation of God...the Deuteronomy reason directs us to social leisure, which becomes play. Praying and playing are deeply congruent with each other and have extensive inner connections."

## Consequences of the Fall

- Work has become toil rather than for good pleasure
- Leisure (and play) viewed as laziness rather than a celebration of God's gracious provision
- Play is self-indulgence rather than gladness in responsible relationship to God

## Play, Love and Work

- The Power of Play: How spontaneous, imaginative activities lead to happier, healthier children by David Elkind, Ph.D.
- Play, Love and Work are intricately connected throughout development and "power human thought and action throughout the life cycle
- Infancy: **Play, love, and work**
- Early Childhood: **Play, work and love**
- Childhood (6-12): Play, **work** and love
- Adolescence: Play, work and **love**

## To the young child, play is life itself...

- Play fills mind and body, mentality, emotionality, and physical becoming. A child engrossed in play is inventive, free and happy. Through the variety and depth of play, the child learns and grows. It is serious business, it is his/her world.
- M.W. Evans in "Play is Life Itself"

## Overcoming Obstacles

- Parent Angst
- Technology and Screen Time
- Not understanding how children learn

## Parental Angst

- "It originates in pressures unique to contemporary family life." p.64
- Reemergence of the imaginary audience due to new social situation
  - Comes both from without and within because they are evaluating the parenting of their peers
  - Difficulty in taking a stand

## Parent Angst

- "...because many traditional child-rearing functions are now shared with others, parents tend to overinvest in functions that are still considered their territory." (Elkind,p.74)
- "Role differentiation also means that roles are more complex and demanding than they were in the past." (p.74)

"When parents are fulfilling several different roles, they may feel anxious about not investing enough in their parenting role." (p. 74)

- The result:
  - Hyperparenting / hovering
    - Compensate in part for inability to protect psychological innocence
  - Overprotection
  - Overscheduling and programming
  - Overinvesting

## How Children Learn: Misunderstandings

- *The Watch Me Theory*
  - "effective learning involves self-initiated, pleasurable activities---play and love."
  - "a good teacher always watches the learner...since children can only imitate actions they can already perform"

## How Children Learn: Misunderstandings

- *The "Little Sponge Theory"*
  - Misunderstand brain-based principles
  - Children "take more time to process information than adults do, at a lower level of abstraction and complexity."
  - "It is only after children have attained the age of reason that they can learn verbal rules---the basis of formal instruction."

## How Children Learn: Misunderstandings

- *The "Look Harder Theory"*
- "If only they looked harder, they would see it." Does talking louder to someone who does not understand English help them understand?
- The child has not yet externalized concepts. They see the worldly differently than the adult.


## Screen Time / Screen Play

- "It is the extent of the child's active participation as a viewer that determines the media's impact."
- Hot (less viewer participation) and cold media (less defined and intense)
- Cool invites more learning (quote p.42)
- Self selecting is most appropriate



### Types of Play: Important to Development

- Creative and Imaginative Play (symbolic)
- Socio-dramatic
- Adventure
- Manipulative Play
- Destructive Play



### Learning Through Play


David Elkind

- Mastery Play: exploring, manipulating, repetition
- Innovative Play: expansion
- Kinship Play: relational
- Therapeutic Play: release stress, imaginary companions



### Promoting Play

- Attitude
- Time
- Environment (indoor and outdoor)
- Involvement



### Evaluation

- What is my personal philosophy surrounding the play curriculum?
- Am I playful?
- What is the school's philosophy of play?
- Are we proactive in overcoming obstacles to play?
- Are we training parents?