

# WHEN I PLAY I LEARN

**A child learns through play – in all ways, a truth adults do not always understand.**

David Elkind, psychologist and author (“The Hurried Child”), says of play: Young children learn best by playing and following their own curiosities, by solving real problems, such as how to balance a stack of blocks, or how to negotiate a zipper, put together a picture puzzle and most of all, by making mistakes and trying again.

## **When I easel paint I learn:**

- To develop my imagination and creativity (*intelligence*)
- To develop eye-hand coordination (*writing skill*)
- To distinguish and purposely create shapes (*math and writing skill*)
- To express my feelings and ideas (*language*)
- That my ideas have values (*self esteem*)
- Relationships of space and size (*math and science*)
- Concepts of symmetry, balance, and design (*intelligence*)

## **When I finger paint I learn:**

- ♥ To exercise my imagination and creativity (*intelligence*)
- ♥ About how colors mix to make new colors (*science*)
- ♥ Concepts of shape, size, and location (*math and writing*)
- ♥ An acceptable way to make a mess and have fun sharing ideas with others (*self esteem*)
- ♥ Eye-hand coordination

## **When I scribble and draw I learn:**

- ◆ To hold a pencil or other drawing implement and to control the pressure (*writing skill*)
- ◆ To express myself with words when describing my drawing (*language*)
- ◆ That my ideas have value (*self esteem*)
- ◆ Concepts of color, shape, size, and location (*math*)
- ◆ To exercise my creativity and imagination (*intelligence*)
- ◆ Eye-hand coordination
- ◆ The basic strokes of the printed language (*writing*)

## **When I glue and collage I learn:**

- ▶ About different textures (*intelligence*)
- ▶ How to create patterns and designs (*math*)
- ▶ To distinguish patterns from a background (*reading skills*)
- ▶ Concepts of shape, size, location and design, which is relevant to reading
- ▶ To exercise my Imagination and creativity

## **When I look at objects at a nature table I learn:**

- \* New vocabulary (*language, intelligence*)
- \* Concepts of texture color, weight and size (*intelligence*)
- \* To group objects into categories (*math*)
- \* To observe likeness and differences (*math*)
- \* To appreciate nature and develop a sense of wonder (*intelligence*)

**When I look at books and listen to stories I learn:**

- That books are important and enjoyable
- That print is written down word
- To express my own thoughts, feelings, and ideas
- To handle books with care
- To follow the development of thoughts and ideas in the plot of a story
- That I like books and someday I'd like to be able to read them too, when I'm ready
- To recognize certain words when I see them in print
- To use more complex patterns in my own speech
- To use my imagination and make up my own stories

**When I play with blocks, cars, and trucks I learn:**

- ~ Concepts of shape, size, length, and location (*math and reading*)
- ~ To create and repeat patterns (*math*)
- ~ To exercise imagination (*intelligence*)
- ~ To express ideas and exercise imagination (*language, intelligence*)
- ~ To cooperate with others (*social*)
- ~ About the properties of wood (*science*)
- ~ To see myself from a different perspective (*self concept*)

**When I play on climbing equipment I learn:**

- Physical strength, coordination, and balance
- To use my imagination
- To cooperate with others when involved in group play
- Self confidence as I develop new skills
- To solve problems

**When I play with sand I learn:**

- ♥ To exercise my imagination
- ♥ How to use tools (*writing*)
- ♥ To solve problems (*intelligence*)
- ♥ How to play socially with others
- ♥ Concepts of size, shape, and volume (*math*)
- ♥ Concepts of warm and cool, wet, damp, dry, heavy, light (*intelligence*)
- ♥ To create systems for classifying, ordering and arranging (*math*)
- ♥ To observe changes (*science*)

**When I sort things I learn:**

- ◆ To notice details, likeness, differences, and to form categories (*reading and math*)
- ◆ Concepts of color, size, and shape (*math*)
- ◆ Numeral concepts or more and less (*math*)
- ◆ Logical reasoning (*intelligence*)

**When I string beads I learn:**

- ▶ To create and reproduce patterns (*math*)
- ▶ Pride in accomplishment (*self-esteem*)
- ▶ Number concepts like more, less, longer and shorter
- ▶ Concepts of color, shape, and location
- ▶ Eye-hand coordination

**When I play with pegboards I learn:**

- \* One to one correspondence, concepts of addition (*math*)
- \* To make and repeat patterns
- \* Possible left to right progression (*reading and writing*)
- \* Symmetry, shapes, order, and design (*reading, writing, math*)
- \* Eye-hand coordination
- \* Colors

**When I participate in group time I learn:**

- To listen and understand spoken words
- That my ideas have value to the other children and the teacher (*self-concept*)
- To wait my turn when others are talking
- New vocabulary words
- To help plan what we will do and when we will do it
- The names of others in the group
- To remember the words of songs and poems I have learned and to put things in proper order
- To cooperate and be considerate of the needs of others

**When I do cooking projects I learn:**

- ~ About nutrition, tastes, and food groups (*intelligence*)
- ~ How heat and cold change things (*science*)
- ~ Whole-part relationships and concepts of volume and measures (*math*)
- ~ Vocabulary
- ~ Awareness of my own and other cultures (*intelligence*)

**When I play in the family living area I learn:**

- To be flexible in my thinking (*intelligence*)
- To express myself with my words (*language*)
- To try on different adult roles (*self concept*)
- To solve social problems through negotiation with friends (*intelligence*)
- To sort and organize play things (*math*)
- To make decisions (*intelligence*)
- To improvise and use things in a symbolic way (*intelligence*)
- To have an object represent something else (*intelligence*)
- To carry out my ideas with cooperation of others (*intelligence, self esteem, social skills*)
- To exercise my imagination and creativity

**When I play with riding toys I learn:**

- ♥ Strength, balance, and large muscle coordination
- ♥ To use my energy in a constructive way
- ♥ Concepts of speed, direction, and location (*math*)
- ♥ To use my imagination
- ♥ To negotiate and take turns (*social skill*)
- ♥ To solve problems (*intelligence*)
- ♥ Self confidence, as I master new skills

**When I dance I learn:**

- ◆ Balance and coordination
- ◆ To be conscious of moods and rhythms of music
- ◆ To express myself physically in an appropriate way
- ◆ About the space around me and the space of others

**When I play with rhythm instruments I learn:**

- ▶ To be conscious of rhythms in music (reading skill)
- ▶ Concepts of fast, slow, loud, soft, high, low (reading and math)
- ▶ To express myself in new and different ways
- ▶ Listening skills
- ▶ Auditory discrimination – recognizing different sounds (reading)
- ▶ To interpret and understand signals and cues

**When I sing songs I learn:**

- \* Principles of music and rhythm
- \* Vocabulary
- \* Memory skills and sequencing (reading and math)
- \* To be conscious of others
- \* Various concepts emphasized in songs
- \* Phonics or auditory discrimination (reading)
- \* Awareness and identification with my culture and other cultures

**When I cut with scissors I learn:**

- To control the small muscles in my hand (writing)
- Concepts of shape, size, color, and location (math)
- To exercise my imagination and creativity

**When I play I learn:**

- ~ **That I am me – a small child who is valued, cherished, and loved**
- ~ **I count in the world**



