



OUR HOUSE CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

Welcome to Our House Child Development Center. Here you will observe children engaged in all types of activities and discover the importance of our work here. Come with me, I'll explain.

As we enter the infant nursery we see mobiles hung over the cribs, mirrors, rattles, squeeze toys, picture blocks, nested boxes and cups, and plastic containers of different sizes. Caregivers are talking to the infants, playing “pat-a-cake” and “peek-a-boo”, and making faces in a mirror while music plays softly in the background. Instead of toys and games, think of these things as tools of the trade. Our infants are developing perception, manipulation, and exploration. And yes, they are learning about spatial relationships, shapes and sizes. Did you know that the complex process of reading involves eye coordination, visual, and auditory discrimination? So yes, our infants are learning to read.

We enter a toddler classroom where children are engaged in building with blocks and logos, painting, drawing, shaping clay, and assembling puzzles. Look closer, I urge you. These children are developing thinking, organizing and reasoning skills, problem solving, and creativity. Fine motor skills are also being developed which are needed for writing. Imagine that, toddlers learning how to write!

In one of the preschool classrooms, children are playing board games and playing at the sand and water tables. Is that all you see? What if I told you that through this type of play children learn and practice cooperation, mutual understanding, and logical





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thinking? They are developing social and communication skills not to mention identifying, classifying, sequencing, observing, discriminating, making predictions, drawing conclusions, comparing, and determining cause-and-effect relationships.

A group of children are enjoying story time in the Media Center. What did you say? They are just sitting there. Oh, to the contrary! It is not quite that simple. Literacy and auditory discrimination skills are being developed here as they sit there and listen.

Imagination is our dramatic play area. Children are engaged in pretend play, transforming themselves, others, and objects from real into make-believe. Look a little closer and you will see that they are processing emotions and events in their lives, practicing social skills, learning values, developing language skills, using symbolic representation, and creating a rich imagination.

Exploration is our outdoor play area. In addition to the ladders, tunnels, slides and other outdoor play equipment, you see tricycles, scooters, wagons to get into, large balls, and a sandbox with sandbox toys. All these play things attribute to gross motor development, fine motor development, spatial relationships, and exploration.

Sometimes you have to look below the surface to discover what is really going on. It is not always as it first appears. Do not misunderstand. Children learn academics and social skills through play. Play contributes to cognitive growth, aids social and emotional development, and is essential to physical development. So you see, children learn as they play because play is their work.

