

## Get Outside!

Outdoor play time for children has never been more critical. Without exposure to nature, children do not develop a sense of place and their own development is inhibited. Their intellectual balance is interrupted with over exposure to technology and structured learning environments and under exposure to tree climbing, digging in the dirt and watching clouds go by. In addition

to the health and well-being of our children, our environment is in danger of losing stewards to care for it in the future. Take a pledge now to

connect children with nature by getting them outside. Start simple: play a game, visit a park; then build up to exploring independently. For more ideas, sign up to be on our mailing list. Email Linda Kinney at [linda.kinney@nczoo.org](mailto:linda.kinney@nczoo.org)



# Play Naturally!

Connect children with nature through play.



## NORTH CAROLINA ZOO

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**PEDAGOGY**  
inspire play. everyday.

# The Power Of Play

Play is a universal language. Play crosses cultural lines and species lines. Through play, we release endorphins, improving our well-being; we entertain ourselves and others; we learn about ourselves and the world around us; and we connect with people in a personal way.

The benefits of play are far reaching. In addition to the benefits referenced above, play impacts:

Physical development

Cognitive development

Affective development

Social development

Attentional development

Language development

(see more at <http://udel.edu/~roberta/play/benefits.html>)



## What is Play?

We can envision play upon request, yet defining it is more complicated. Most people think of play as fun, happy experiences. But play also challenges our fears, imagines worlds of quiet darkness and accomplishes goals. While play is hard to define, identifying it is much easier. We all know play when we see it.

To help discuss play and develop our response as adults to children in play, Playful Pedagogy recognizes the definition from the Cardiff Scrutiny Group: play is freely chosen, , intrinsically motivated, and personally directed. Recognizing the word 'free' is critical to understanding play. Children's activities today that promote play are often led by an adult, follow a set of rules or a combination of the two. Children don't have as many opportunities to play without an agenda.

## Why Play?

In a world where our time as human beings is filled more and more with structure: work, school, community groups, after school activities, the need for play is imperative. Children are not growing into independent decision makers. They are looking to other sources for answers because they have grown up without a sense of autonomy. They believe that finding the answer is about finding a person with the answer instead of solving a problem on their own.

Along with a lack of independence comes a lack of initiative and creativity. Our children are not being supported in their individuality, but pushed into uniformity. The consequences weigh heavily on their health and well-being as much if not more than their cognitive development. Play is an easy amendment to our daily lives to help resolve this epidemic. The benefits of play support flexibility, adaptability and creativity among many other things. Instead of asking Why Play? We should be asking ourselves Why Not Play?



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