

Learning through play

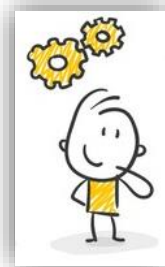


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Direction de la formation générale des jeunes
Ministère de l'Éducation

Objectives of this presentation

- Clarify the orientation of play in the Preschool Cycle Program
- Understand the importance of play in learning
- Identify the role of the adult
- Encourage reflection





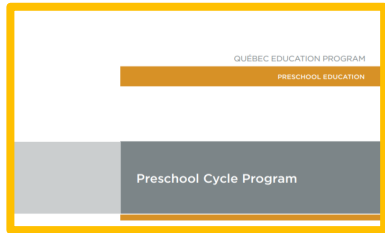
The Preschool Cycle Program

*This program is a **prescribed** pedagogical reference designed to help ensure quality educational services.*



*Children who **learn through play** and who feel comfortable in kindergarten will see school in a more positive light and will be more confident, motivated and capable of succeeding. In this sense, **preschool education plays an essential role in inspiring children to be more enthusiastic about school.***

Preschool Cycle Program, pages. 3 and 4



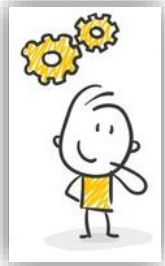
*Three orientations are being used to pursue the two main objectives of the mandate for the Preschool Cycle Program, which are to **foster the global development of all children** and to **take preventive action to meet their needs**. These three orientations are **play**, observation of the child's progress and classroom organization.*

What is play?

Activities that are freely chosen and directed by children and arise from intrinsic motivation.



(Edward Miller and Joan Almon, *Crisis in the Kindergarten: Why children Need to Play in School*, college Park, MD: Alliance for Childhood, 2009)



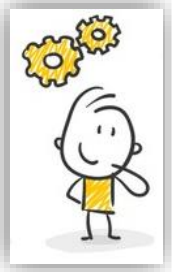
What are my beliefs about the importance of play?



Inspired by Cheney Munson, TCRWP, Summer Writing Institute 2019

*Children have different strategies they can apply in order to learn, including imitating, observing, experimenting and questioning. However, **play is the ideal way for children to learn and develop their full potential.***

Preschool Cycle Program, p. 9



What educational contexts proposed to children promote enjoyment?



Researchers talk about the power and importance of play

Winnicott (1970) presents play as a mechanism for adapting to reality, a "transitional" space between one's inner world and outer reality. Several researchers have stated that symbolic play is the central activity of the preschool period. (Bodrova and Léong, 2012)

While play may seem like a trivial activity to many people, it is far from it for young children. It is an asset in stimulating a child's development. When children have fun, they become engaged in play and learn different things. (Point and Dugas, 2016)



Therefore, children should have two periods of between 45 and 60 minutes of free play every day and should be **permitted to choose with whom and what they will play**.

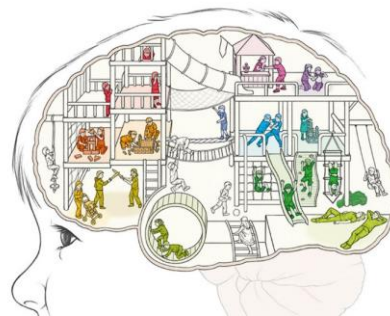
Preschool Cycle Program, p. 9

Essential characteristics of free play:

- ***Play is pleasurable***
- ***Play is spontaneous***
- ***Play offers the choice of:***
 - materials (we can even divert objects from their primary functions),
 - partners,
 - flexible direction (we don't automatically know where it will go, it can change along the way, no predetermined result expected),
 - duration (you can stop playing whenever you want)

To foster the global development of all children by cultivating enjoyment through exploration, discovery and learning.

***The enjoyment and satisfaction** that children derive from self-initiated play will motivate them to become fully engaged and to persevere.*



Preschool Cycle Program, p. 3 et 9

<https://www.cerveauetpsycho.fr/sr/infographie/comment-le-jeu-faconne-le-cerveau-13048.php>

SKILLS DEVELOPED THROUGH PLAY



<https://gooveybrains.com/2016/04/10/using-play-to-build-the-brain/>

Adapted from «Curiosity, Pleasure and Play: A Neurodevelopmental Perspective »
(Perry, Hogan and Martin (2000))

When playing, (children)

- learn to develop their autonomy and their relationships with others*
- make choices, decisions and discoveries, have ideas, develop scenarios and learn to concentrate and not get distracted*
- make themselves understood, often act as conciliators or mediators, and find solutions to problems.*

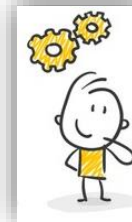
Play is also a means of communication, expression and action, and it encourages children to be open to the world.



Preschool Cycle Program, p. 9



Areas of development and competencies	Focuses of development	Key features
Physical and Motor Development Increases physical and motor development	Motor skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explores sensory perceptions • Develops body awareness • Uses gross motor skills • Uses fine motor skills • Explores the concept of space • Explores the concept of time • Discovers lateral dominance • Explores different ways of moving
	Healthy lifestyle habits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explores the world of food • Explores different ways of relaxing • Adopts practices associated with good personal hygiene • Learns about safety
Emotional Development Builds self-awareness	Self-knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes own needs • Recognizes own characteristics • Expresses own emotions • Regulates own emotions
	Self-confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explores own autonomy • Responds with confidence
Social Development Maintains harmonious relationships with others	Sense of belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows openness to others • Participates in group activities • Collaborates with others
	Social skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradually complies with rules of conduct • Creates connections with others • Regulates own behaviour • Resolves conflicts
Language Development Communicates using oral and written language	Oral language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interacts verbally and non-verbally • Demonstrates understanding • Expands own vocabulary • Explores different kinds of statements • Develops phonological awareness
	Written language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interacts with written language • Recognizes some reading and writing conventions • Discovers some functions of writing • Knows the letters of the alphabet¹
Cognitive Development Discovers the world around them	Thinking skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquires new knowledge relating to the subject areas (mathematics, arts education, social sciences, science and technology) • Uses reasoning skills • Uses imagination
	Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes action • Explores different actions • Explains the actions taken



What observations did you make in relation to the five areas of development?

http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/education/jeunes/pfeq/Programme-cycle-prescolaire-synthese-AN.pdf

Preschool Cycle Program, pages. 15 and 16

The importance of play is recognized as a key contributing factor in the global development of all preschoolers, whatever their needs and characteristics may be.

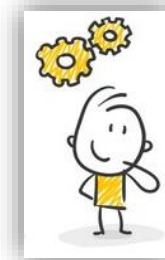


A rich environment where children initiate play, [...] with support from an adult, will allow them to explore, create, improvise, portray a role, manipulate and so on. Through play, children activate a sensorimotor and affective memory, acquire knowledge and concepts, structure their thoughts and expand their understanding of the world around them. Preschool Cycle Program, p. 9

Close-ended materials for play

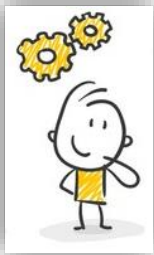


Open-ended materials for play



How are the materials offered to children flexible and open-ended ?

*In addition, they should have daily access to a range of quality **outdoor play** structures and materials that are age appropriate.*



How do I
encourage
controlled risk
taking?



Preschool Cycle Program, p. 9

Children often make up their own rules as they play.

Letting children play can lead to conflict and chaos, but it can also lead to negotiation, spontaneity, teamwork, mutual aid and learning.



In free play, there is...

A caring adult



A concern for safety



A harmonious group environment



An adult who is present, available and able to support

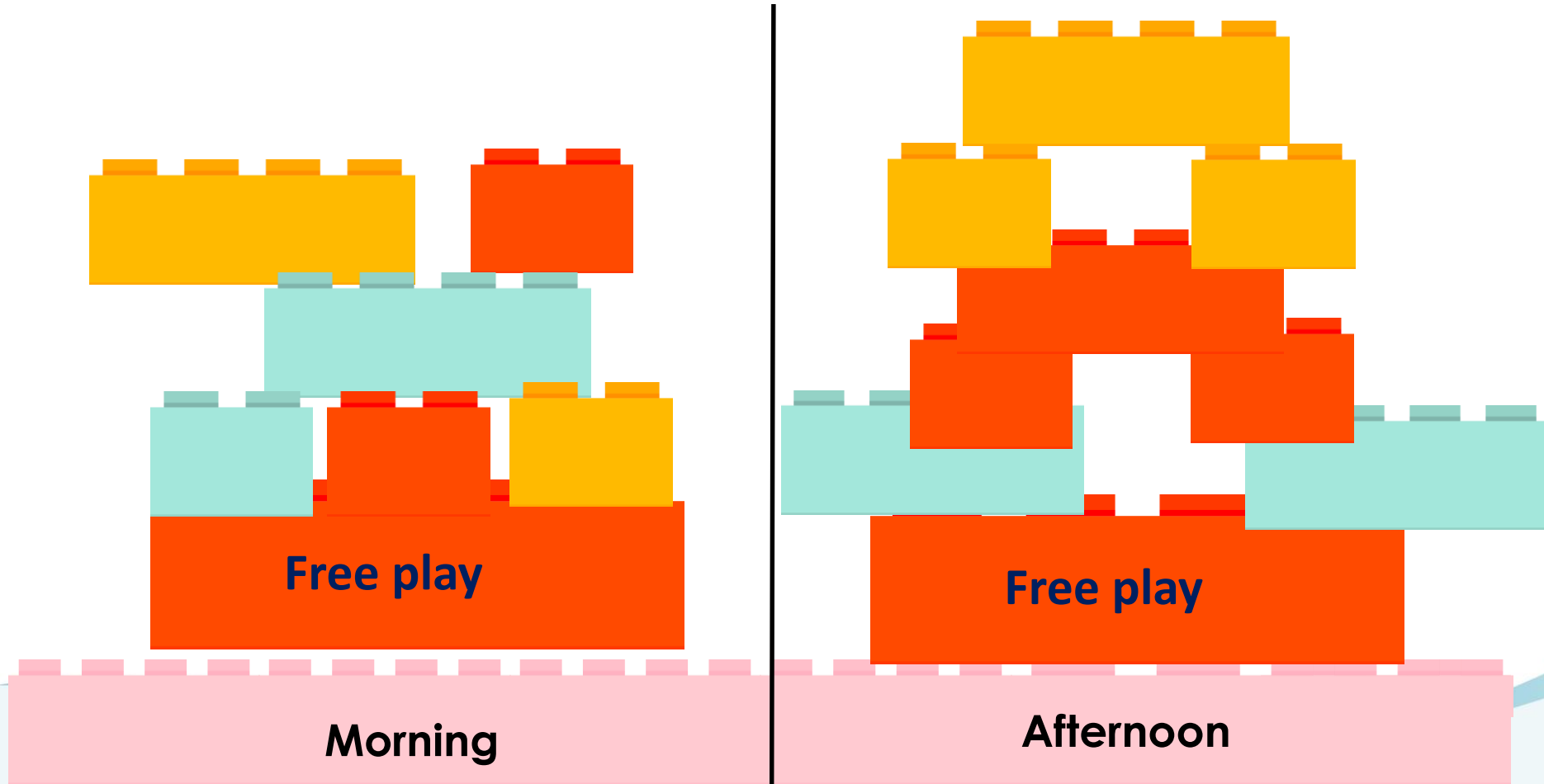




*Sufficient **time and space** should be set aside for each child to be actively engaged in play. When children know they have enough time to play, they are more likely to become fully invested. Children who **learn through play** and who feel comfortable in kindergarten will see school in a more positive light and will be more confident, motivated and capable of succeeding.*

Preschool Cycle Program, pages. 4 and 9

Strategy for a typical timetable



The role of the adult

With support from the adults, children are able to engage in learning situations based on a combination of play and real-life experiences, and hence begin to assume their role as active students.

Before play:

Preschool Cycle Program, p. 9

Planning:

- The environment
- The material
- The time allotted

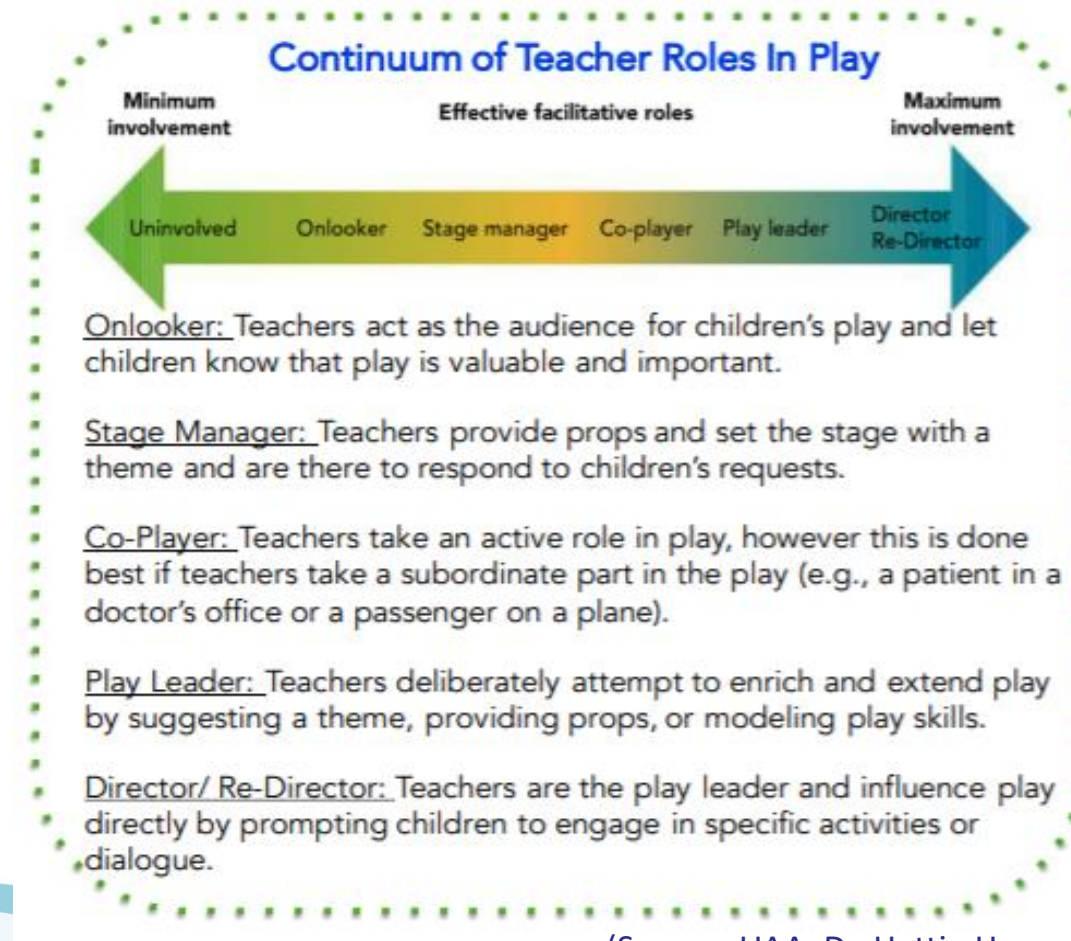
Observing and consulting

Discussing with the children how things work

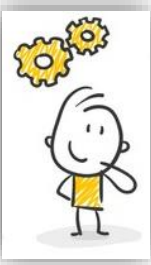
The role of the adult (cont.)

During play:

Role of the teacher during play
(Johnson, Christie. & Wardle, 2005)



(Source: UAA, Dr. Hattie Harvey)



In my practice, where do I fall on the continuum during children's free play and what step can I take to assume a different role ?

The role of the adult (cont.)

During play:



Uninvolved Onlooker Stage manager Co-player Leader Director

Roles that encourage and support children's play

Figure 1: A Continuum of Teacher Roles in Play (Johnson, Christie and Wardle (2005))

The role of the adult (cont.)

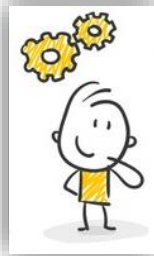
After play

Provide feedback / Plan a moment for discussion

- With the children
- With the colleagues
- With the family

Reflect on one's practice and adjust according to the children's experience.

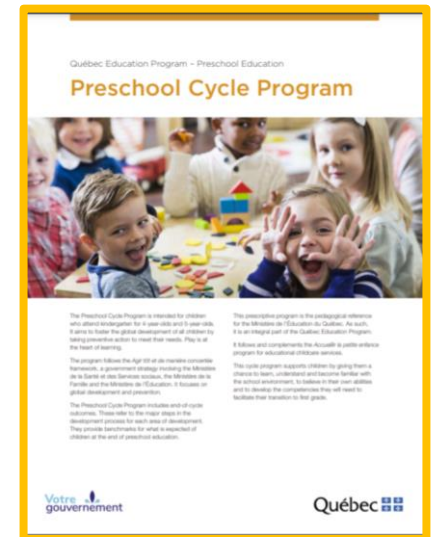
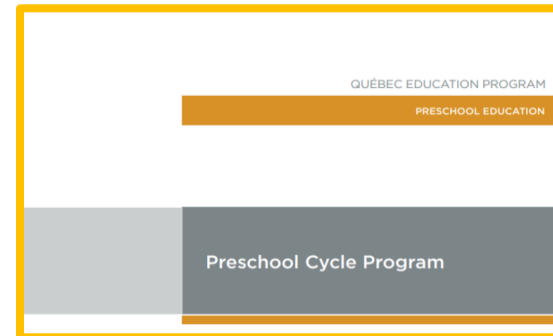
A few questions for reflection



Following this presentation:

- What will I be retaining?
- What will I stop doing?
- What will I be changing?

Preschool documents





Curious Learners: Milestones in Brain Development and Cognitive Growth

<https://www.britannica.com/video/219276/Curious-learners-milestones-brain-development-cognitive-growth>

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The biggest preoccupation you may have:
A classroom of children happy to be learning!



Thank you and see you next time!