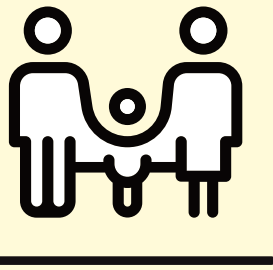


An adult's role in a child's play



Parents and caregivers are the gatekeepers of children's play in communities, which means they must value the power of play and provide **FREEDOM, TIME** and **SPACE** for children to play freely outside every day, for better health and wellbeing.

FREEDOM



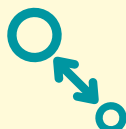
Children need freedom to play outside every day, their way. This means allowing children to be curious, to get messy and embrace new challenges. For growth and learning children need freedom to take risks and make mistakes when they play.

TIME



Children need regular times to go outside and play every day and more time is better. As an adult, you don't have to be sitting next to them, let's face it, it's often much more practical if you can complete your own activities, whilst keeping a watchful eye on them, as needed.

SPACE



Children need access to diverse outdoor spaces to enable them to explore different play opportunities. Take time to identify both natural and built environments in your community for your child's play. You may be surprised at the various ways children play across different spaces.



Challenges we face

- Values around the importance of formal learning over free play have changed. Play is often not taken seriously!
- Demands on children's time from school, after-school activities, means decreased time for free play
- Parents and caregivers are often limited by their own busy schedules and this in turn restricts opportunities for children to play or visit the park or playground
- The trend for residential homes is a bigger floor plan and less garden area, which means less outdoor space for children to play
- Time for play is much more structured or programmed than it has ever been before meaning that children have less time to play independently of adults



What You Can Do

- Try and make regular non-scheduled time for children in your care to engage in their own outdoor free play
- Encourage children to spend some time playing independently of you (even though you're supervising from a distance) either by themselves or with other siblings or friends
- Create a loose parts box and give children access to different materials when playing outside and let them work out how they use these materials.
- Remember not to worry about the outcome of children's play, the value of play is in the actual doing itself.
- Don't forget there is no such thing as poor weather when it comes to outside play, only poor clothing choices ...winter time is a great time to play outside!

Definition of Free Play

Free play is children's behavior, which is freely chosen, personally directed, and intrinsically motivated. Free play is by definition child-led and is often the vehicle by which informal learning happens.

Definition of Formal Learning

Formal learning is education normally delivered by trained teachers in a systematic, intentional way within an educational setting.



make time today for outside play



PlayAustralia.org.au