



# Defending the Early Years

*Promoting a just, equitable, and quality early childhood education for every young child.*

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Working to support and nurture the rights and needs of young children

## Greetings from



The USA Affiliate of the International Play Association:  
Promoting the Child's Right to Play



[www.ipausa.org](http://www.ipausa.org)

[www.ipaworld.org](http://www.ipaworld.org)





# 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Defines basic needs of a  
*thriving child*

Article 31: Right to Play



Working to support a

United States is the *only* country that  
has This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA not ratified the 1989  
Convention on the Rights of the Child!

[www.childrightscampaign.org](http://www.childrightscampaign.org)







# Seize the Opportunity for a New Paradigm for Early Childhood Education

- Based on the science of child development
  - Bronfrenbrenner, Erikson, Maslow, Gesell, etc.
- Based on social justice
- Guarantees quality for all children
- Play must be the foundation



# All Play Is Important

- Construction play/ wood working
- Creative play
- Manipulative play
- Sand and water
- Play with symbols
- Exploratory play
- Gross motor/active or Functional play
- Oral language play
- Music play
- Group/game with rules play
- Dramatic play
- Pretend/Make Believe
- **Socio-dramatic play is the highest level of play**  
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# Executive Functioning Skills Develop during Mature Socio-Dramatic Play

- Focus
- Self-control
- Persistence/Engagement
- Perspective-taking
- Communication skills
- Making connections
- Critical thinking
- Problem Solving
- Creativity
- Flexibility
- Taking on challenges





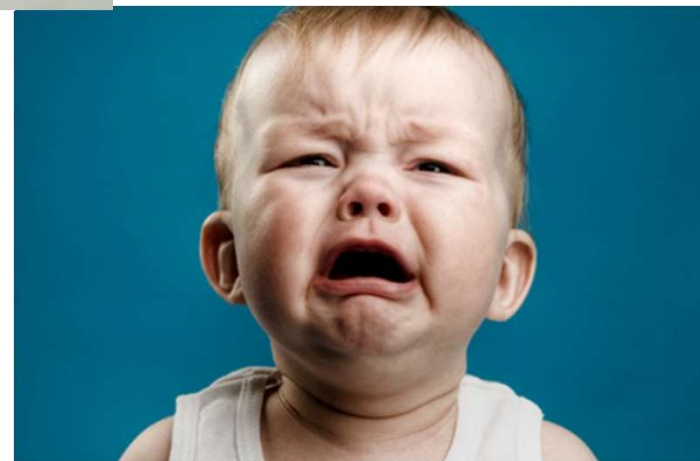
# **Dramatic/Pretend Play Can Be Therapeutic**

- Play in the Micro-sphere or Macro-sphere
- Play can be healing, cathartic
- Play is child's 1<sup>st</sup> language
- Play is how child learns about the world
- Play is the expression of the child's most inner thoughts and deepest emotions
- Play helps heal the trauma stored in the right side of brain
- The more the child plays, the deeper the feelings are—play same theme over and over



# Symptoms of Distressed Child

- Acting out
- Aggression
- Regression
- Clinginess
- Withdrawal





# Field of Play Therapy

- Dibbs in Search of Self—Virginia Axline 1947
- Play Therapy
  - Promotes Self Regulation
  - Promotes Coping Skills
  - Skills Transfer to Other Relationships



# Action Steps



- Make time for unstructured play at home, in classroom, and outdoors—**nothing** is more important
- Learn things outdoors that they can't learn indoors



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- Allow a minimum 60 min. inside & 45 min. outside daily
- Play with child, take on a role



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## Need Props

- Provide props
- Dramatic play items
- Junk; e.g., empty boxes, barrels, crates, cloth, tape, natural items, rocks, boards, leaves
- Loose parts
- Stuff



## **Advocate for a New Paradigm**

**Promotes unstructured play for learning and healing;  
and plans and provides for playful, hands-on,  
experiential learning activities based on  
principles of child development!**



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