

Ravenside Pre-School

Definition of play (taken from the Children's Play Council publication)

Play is an essential part of every child's life and is vital to their development. It is the way children explore the world around them and develop and practise skills. It is essential for physical, emotional and spiritual growth, for intellectual and educational development, and for acquiring social and behavioural skills. Play is a generic term applying to a wide range of activities and behaviours which are satisfying to the child, creative for the child and freely chosen by the child. Children play on their own and with others. Their play may be boisterous and energetic or quiet and contemplative, light hearted or very serious.

Why play is important for children of all ages.

- Play promotes children's development, learning, creativity and independence.
- Play keeps children healthy and active - active children become active adults.
- Play fosters social inclusion. It helps children understand the people and places in their lives, learn about their environment and develop their sense of community.
- Play allows children to find out about themselves, their abilities and their interests.
- Play is therapeutic. It helps children to deal with difficult or painful circumstances, such as emotional stress or medical treatment.
- Play gives children the chance to let off steam and have fun.

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United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by the United Kingdom in 1991.

Article 31

1. States Parties recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural artistic, recreational and leisure activities.