

# Play is Learning

## Why Joyful Curiosity Matters More Than You Think

In a world driven by outcomes, assessments, and schedules, it's easy to overlook something as simple as play. But ask any child deeply immersed in building a fort, solving a puzzle, or acting out a story and you'll witness learning in its purest, most alive form.

**Play is not the opposite of learning. Play *is* learning.** It's where creativity takes root, where problem-solving is practiced without pressure, and where children explore who they are and how the world works. Through play, children learn to communicate, collaborate, and regulate their emotions. They build resilience, try new ideas, and make sense of their experiences.

Research supports what many instinctively know: play stimulates brain development, nurtures imagination, and strengthens social and emotional growth. Whether it's imaginative play, building with natural materials, free movement outdoors, or role-playing with friends—these moments are rich with opportunity.

For educators and parents alike, this is a reminder to **honour the power of play**. Not as a break from learning but as learning itself. When we let go of the need to control every outcome, and instead follow the child's lead, we open the door to deeper curiosity, intrinsic motivation, and joy.

So the next time you see a child deep in play, remember: they're not "just playing." They're building a foundation for lifelong learning.

*"Now what we know from research is that it takes 400 repetitions of an act or a learning skill, 400 times, to get one new synapse. Or ... 12 repetitions with joy and laughter and you get a synapse because there's a release of a chemical dopamine."*

*(Dr Purvis, Karen Purvis Institute of Child Development)*

If this topic resonates, then I encourage you to listen to the 30<sup>th</sup> August podcast **on All Learning Reimagined**. <https://bbsradio.com/alllearningreimagined>

Enjoy! Teresa 2025

