

Play is More Than an Enjoyable Waste of Time

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More and more I get requests from parents wanting to know more about my music playgroups and if there are places available. It made me think, what are parents really looking for and why? What I found was that parents want the best for their child/ren (as most parents do); however, they also want to start education early and not just 'play'.

My alert systems went berserk to say the least – PLAY is not just enjoyable waste of time, to a child PLAY is their business, PLAY is their way of exploring; PLAY is how children learn.

If I had to label all the things that happen at playgroup to inform parents how their child is learning, I would run out of labels.

Take **playdough** for instance: do they realise...

- how many muscles are developing in those little hands while they are manipulating playdough?
- how using playdough prepares a child to be able to hold a pencil and to begin to write?
- how they are developing hand/eye co-ordination and fine motor skills while using playdough?
- how the five senses are developing from the colours and shapes, feel and texture, smell, taste (yuk!) and even the squish, pound and thump of manipulating playdough?

And that's not to mention all the other things that they are learning and exploring at playgroup. If parents could see those labels, perhaps they wouldn't look at playgroup as just an enjoyable waste of time.

It also makes me wonder, if parents go for "educational" activities, what are their children missing out on? Are they really preparing their child for an educational future or has their child missed an important step in life? Play also stimulates the imagination and creativity, and lays the foundations for lateral thinking capabilities.

TO ALL THOSE PEOPLE WHO RUN PLAYGROUPS AND ORGANISE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN TO LEARN THROUGH PLAY, THANKYOU.

Kathy Blazewicz