

The Double Edge of Play

Play is the highest phase of child development—of human development at this state... It gives therefore joy, freedom, contentment, inner and outer rest, peace with the world. It holds the sources of all that is good. (Froebel)

	Play contributes to...	Playlessness contributes to...
1	Motor skills developed	Impairment, speech issues
2	Senses are sharpened	Sensory overwhelm issues. Mistrust of bodily sense-ation
3	Appropriate expressions of emotions (empathy)	Disassociation from actions
4	Sharing, turn taking, cooperation, feeling of well being	Self centeredness, poor impulse control, feeling uncentered
5	Sequencing. Learning to put things in order, large to small.	Disorganized thinking, feelings and actions
6	Perspective taking skills	"If you don't agree with me you're lying"
7	Delay gratification and impulse control	"I want it all now!" Attention priority issues
8	Vocabulary growth	Frustration at not being able to express one's self
9	Flexibility	Fear of change and problems with transitions
10	Role taking, working through fears via assuming archetypal roles	A generalized anxiety that builds over time
11	Ability to move between stimulation-activity and calm-relaxation	Stuck in low to moderate vigilance. Jumpy nervous. Sleeping and eating problems
12	Expansion of imagination and creativity	Rigid narrowed experience of the world
13	Learning to tell a logical story - script producing	Feeling adrift, fear of the future
14	Active empathy, seeking ways to help who are struggling	Schadenfreud. Delighting in others pain and misfortune
15	Humor, able to laugh at self as well as with others	Defensive, come-back oriented, sarcasm
16	Sense of mastery and competence	Inferiority, feeling victimized
17	Reduction of aggressive behavior	Emotional brittleness, imploding-exploding
18	Sense of timelessness, expanding	Overly self aware
19	Adapt to unexpected outcomes, able to accept winning or losing	Victor or victim, driven to win at all costs through fear of losing status
20	Accept challenges that require a "stretch" of learning and capacity	Over developed one sided skills and mistrust of new learning

If a child has been able in his play to give up his whole living being to the world around him, he will be able, in the serious tasks of later life, to devote himself with confidence and purpose to the service of the world. Rudolf Steiner

"Play is when we don't know we are different from each other." David, 5 years old.