

PART ONE:

This discussion board focuses on your readings from this week, specifically those on incorporating play into curriculum and creating effective play environments. **Answer BOTH** of the following questions. Please use the Discussion Board Rubric to help you compose your responses. You are required to reply to at least 2 of your peers' posts, with a substantive response (not just, "I agree" or "Good point"). **All posts, original and responses, must be posted by Sunday at 11:59 p.m. and all initial posts must be posted by Thursday at 11:59 pm.**

Answer BOTH of the following questions in your original post:

1. Discuss common elements, variations, and models in play-based curriculum models, including a discussion of how the varying approaches integrate the inclusion of play in the curriculum. Conclude with a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of some of these approaches and which one you feel most drawn to yourself and why.
2. Explain different approaches to creating play environments. Conclude with a discussion of which approach may be most useful to you in your future work with children.

Your posts should be substantial enough to address each required element of the prompt, include citations to support your responses, include a reference list, and be at least 300 words in length (not including your reference list).

from **Discussion Board #4**

Sep 27, 2024 8:48PM

Caroline Mayo

At the beginning of the 19th century, Schiller's philosophical writing emphasized the importance of play in child development (Frost et al., 2012). However, towards the beginning of the 20th century ideas on the importance of play and whether or not it belonged in the classroom varied. Child developmentalist like Maria Montessori, believed that through play, children could learn how to be self-sufficient as long as they were given the tools they needed to grow and learn. She believed allowing children to act freely was important and necessary, but play was not central to education (Frost et al., 2012). The Montessori classroom is set up in a large open space with low shelves and different sized tables and chairs. The play materials are organized neatly on shelves and children decide for themselves what they play with (David Elkind, 2007). A

weakness of this program is there is little research on the effect it has on development after childhood (Elkind, 2007).

I am personally drawn towards a Waldorf curriculum, and try my best to implement it as much as possible at the after-school program where I teach. I think hands-on learning that engages all five senses is the best way to help a child remember what you teach them, and encouraging them to try things on their own, and fail creates more self-sufficient children who are able to creatively solve problems.

Another educational program that prioritizes play is the Waldorf educational program. Rudolf Steiner, the man who invented this program, was deeply concerned by the direction society was headed in, because he felt we were neglecting the artistic and spiritual side of human nature (David Elkind, 2007). The program does not start actual instruction until second grade, and builds on complex craft skills every year in grade school. Children learn to move their bodies freely to music and are encouraged to express their ideas and their emotions (David Elkind, 2007), creating a positive environment that fosters love combined with play benefitting kids greatly. However, now many Waldorf schools downplay the importance of spirituality, and instead focus on Steiner's aspect of bringing together art, science, and technology (Elkind, 2007).

Play environments can vary greatly, Montessori schools focus on exploration, engaging the five senses, and hands-on activities, while Waldorf schools engage children more through storytelling and acting things out. Some teachers may prefer to actively engage in play with children while others prefer to take a hands-off approach. One is not better than another, and a mixture of the two is usually best. However, I believe engaging the senses while also providing a somewhat rigid structure is the best way to ensure children are growing developmentally because it allows for exploration with guidance from adults when things go wrong.

References

Elkind, D. (2007). *The Power of Play: How Spontaneous, Imaginative Activities Lead to Happier, Healthier Children*. Hachette Books.

Frost, J. L., Wortham, S. C., Reifel, S., & Reifel, R. S. (2012). *Play and Child Development*. Pearson