

The Power of Purposeful Play

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Town of Mooresville, Parks and Recreation
Therapeutic Programs



A little about me

Places I've worked

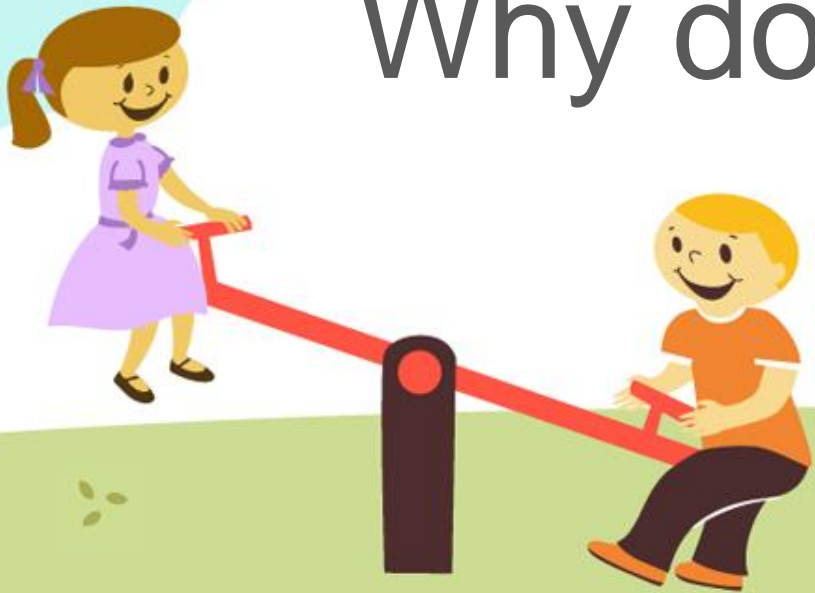
- Preschool Classrooms
- K-12 classrooms
- College transitional Classrooms
- Parks and Recreation Programs
- Special Olympics Programs
- Autism Society of North Carolina Programs

Outside of work-

- Married with two girls- one of which has autism.
- Love learning, being active and the outdoors and around animals
- Certified Handler for therapy dogs



Why do I like to talk about play?



Why do children play?

- Play is fun, but it's also....
- A form of learning known as social cognitive theory
- An idea that we all learn from interactions and observations of others, rather than being specifically taught a lesson.



Adults play too!

- Play may not look the same to adults as it does to small children- but we still play.
- Benefits to play can occur at all ages!



The Power of Play



Exploration

- Learning through the senses
- Testing boundaries
- Understanding cause and effect concepts
- Finding likes and dislikes
- Meeting new people
- Finding new activities/adventures





Learning Skills

Each activity gives the opportunity for learning skills-

A boy playing with a plane could be learning about aerodynamics, cause and effect, wind speeds and directions and so many other skills.



Socialization

Team Sports

- Team sports provide cooperative play situations
 - Learning to work together
 - Interacting with others
 - Making relationships

Single player sports

- Single player sports can also provide opportunities for socialization.
 - Being in an environment with others who enjoy similar activities
 - Asking others/responding to others about their activity.
 - Learning to congratulate others in their successes.





Alpine Skiing



Athletics
(Track & Field)



Basketball



Bocce



Bowling



Cheerleading



Cycling



Equestrian



Figure Skating



Flag Football



Golf



Gymnastics



Motor Activities
Training Program



Powerlifting



Roller Skating



Sailing



Short Track Speed
Skating



Snowboarding



Soccer



Softball



Swimming



Tennis



Unified Sports



Volleyball



Young Athletes





Self-Regulation Skills



- Understanding how to wait for a turn
- Dealing with sensory input
- Standing in one certain area
- Waiting for the result before continuing



Physical Benefits of Play

- Release of Energy
- Exercise
- Increased brain function
- Increased cardiovascular health
- Encourages an active lifestyle



Examples of how play works in the real world for developing skills



Water Table

Exploration	Sensory pleasure of water, cause and effect, anticipation of what will occur
Learning Skills	Wet/dry, float/sink, empty/full, colors,
Socialization	If with friends, this practices sharing, turn taking, cooperative play
Self-regulation	Self confidence, need to keep water in play area to continue to play, patience
Health/wellness	Strength and flexibility increase with stretching and pouring, hand/eye coordination, fine motor skills, motor planning



Playing Bocce

Exploration	Ground vs ball and how it will move, heavy/light, winds, ground surface
Learning Skills	Close/far, distance, measurements, angles
Socialization	If with friends, this practices sharing, turn taking, cooperative play
Self-regulation	Self confidence, patience, quietness
Health/wellness	Fine motor skills, critical thinking skills, arm muscle development



Pickleball (partner play)

Exploration	Winds, distance, need for strength
Learning Skills	Distance, wind speeds and adapting to the winds, movement, watching others
Socialization	Working with a partner, communication skills, teamwork, sportsmanship with the other team
Self-regulation	How hard to hit the ball, how to move to get under the ball
Health/wellness	Strength and flexibility in movement back and forth, hand/eye coordination, fine motor skills, motor planning



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Learning Skills
Socialization
Self-regulation
Health/wellness



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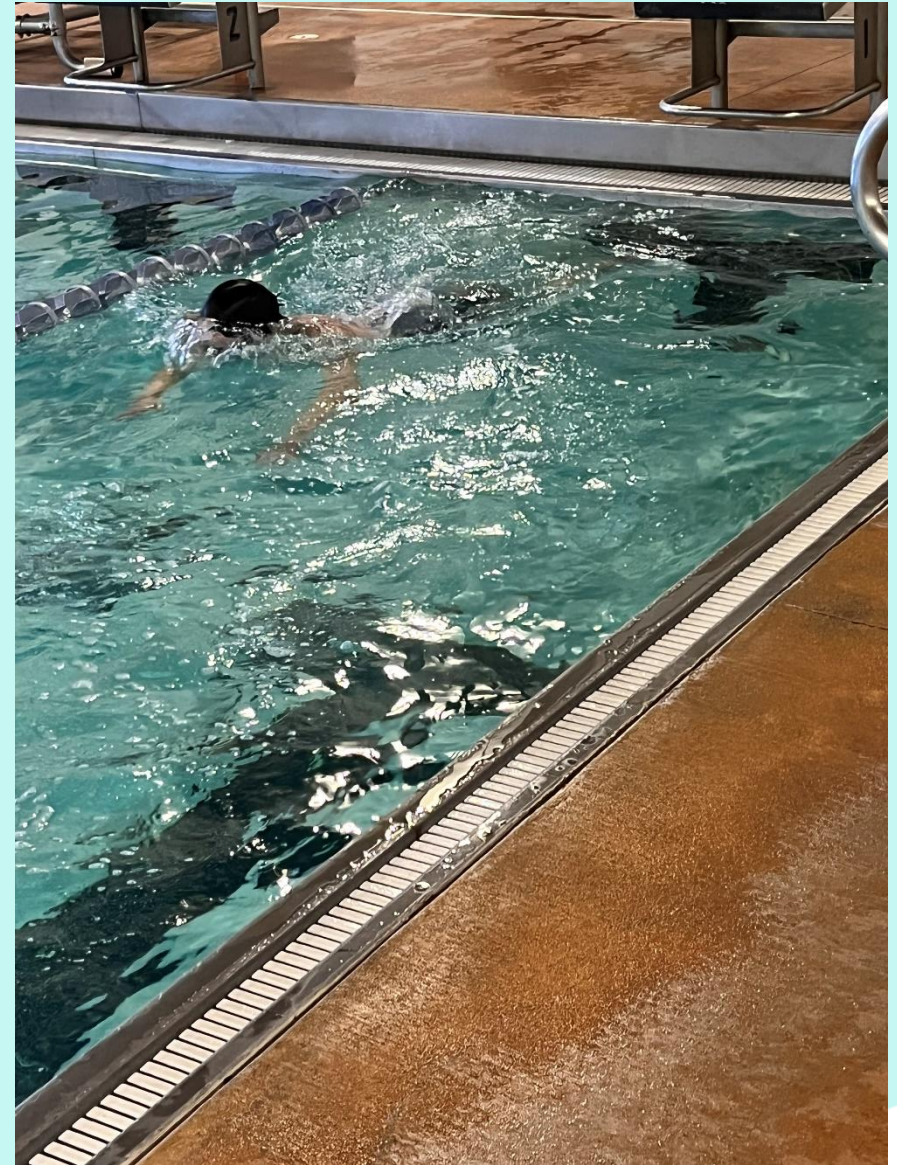
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Questions?

