

Disclosures

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The information shared with you today is the result of a literature review on play-based learning and instruction for speech and language, performed in 2014 and updated to-date. Clinical examples shared do not come directly from empirical studies but instead are based on the presenter's interpretation and clinical application of available research to-date.





What is "play"?

Broad definition

- flexibility and nonliterality
- positive affect and intrinsic motivation
 active (rather than passive) engagement
- active (ratner than passive) engagemen
 no extrinsic goals or learning that must

Narrower definitions occasionally include

- episodic
- rule-governed
- process-oriented
- artifacts
- · other people



Dietze & Kashin (2012) Hirsh-Pasek & Golinkoff (2003) Isenberg & Jalongo (2003) Krasnor & Pepler (1980)

Types of play

functional play

exploration or functional use of objects begins before age 2

construction play blocks, legos, race track

games with rules

Candy Land, Don't Break the Ice begins around school age

outdoor and movement play kick all, hopscotch

symbolic, dramatic, and pretend play ("as-if"3)

kitchen, zoo, camping begins around age 2

Dietze and Kashin (2012) Garvey (1990) Kostelnik et al. (2011) Watson et al. (2011)

Social stages of play

- onlooker play watching
- solitary play playing alone
- parallel play

playing next to, but not with others

associative play

playing with others (occasional cooperation)

cooperative play

playing with others (full cooperation; emerges age 4)

Benefits of play

- plays a role in maturation of problem solving, reasoning, social $skills^1$
- improves mood²
- improves attention²
- plays a role in development of language and narrative skills^{1,3}
- · studies consistently find positive benefits of play on learning outcomes⁴ and literature suggests that guided play can be used to teach the curriculum $^{5,\,6}$

Play & Language Development

• language (and social) skills associated with symbolic play skills in children ages 1 ½-6 ^{1, 2, 3, 4, 5}

for both typically-developing children and those with many disorders, including autism

- why?
 - unknown, but several theories 1,9

 - difficulty accessing both words and ideas? delays or differences in symbolic skills? or just preference for patterned and kinesthetic-type activities? good play skills provide a good context for social language learning?



Play in Speech-Language Therapy

- Responsivity Education ¹, Prelinguistic Milieu Teaching ², Milieu Communication Teaching 1,2, programs from The Hanen Centre 3 and many
- speech: play-based therapy is beneficial for articulation and phonological therapy, and preferable over drill-only treatment programs ⁴
- language: children learn language best in meaningful and interactive (not
- **social**: positive outcomes found among many studies for play-based learning and following the child's lead^{7, 8, 11, 12, 13} for teaching language and social language in children with autism; goals including:
 - joint attention 9, 11, 14
 - responding to others 10 · initiating interactions with others 10
 - turn taking 10
 imitation 11
 - pretend play 10, 11, 14

"free play"

So what are SLPs supposed to do?

- Is play the tool or the goal?
 - Are we teaching play skills to bolster language development, or using play as an instructional strategy, within which we directly teach language? Or both ...?
- Studies consistently find benefits of play for teaching speechlanguage skills, yet the strategy differs from study to study...
- What are the commonalities in studies using play to teach speechlanguage skills?

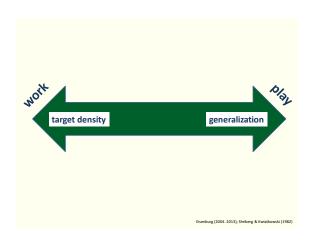


"adult-directed therapy" "drill-based"

"playing to learn" "child-centered therapy" "guided play" "whole-child" perspective "structured communicative play"

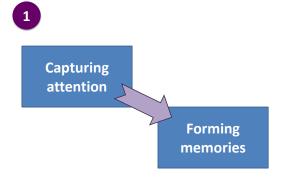
*Fey's "Continuum of Naturalness" (1986) spans from work to playful learning

¹ Bodrova & Leong (2001), Golinkoff et al. (2006), Hirsh-Pasek & Golinkoff (2004), Weisburg et al. (2013)



So what are SLPs supposed to do?

- playful learning involves at least a couple (several?) aspects of play
- •... we don't know for certain *which* of these has the biggest impact on learning; any/all could contribute to the benefit of playful learning
- current *best guess* from available studies^{e.g. 1–3} centers around capturing attention, forming memories, and sacrificing as few elements of pure **play** as possible
 - Ebbeck et al., 2013
 Hirsch-Pasek et al., 200
 Resnick, 2004





required targets

- child must use these in order for play to continue
- "require" by considering how to obtain access to a result: social interaction funny/amusing consequence parts of a whole

toys • suggested targets

modeled and used heavily by clinician, but not required of child

Play-based therapy is **NOT** unstructured or uncontrolled therapy. Instead, the *best* execution of playful learning involves a high level of control by the instructor, imperceptible to the child.

*The idea of pre-planning targets for play-based sessions is mentioned throughout our literature, e.g. Leonard & Deevy, 2017

Example: speech



Example: speech



Consider method, not toy



Drill play and other fun work



When we need to drill

- Who is easier to do drill-based activities with?
 - · Preschoolers?
 - Early Elementary?
 - · Late Elementary? · Middle/High School?
- drill work requires the ability to attend to something that's somewhat "boring", and persist
- "The Batman Effect" (White et al., 2016)



Play-Based Tx: Language

- generalization vs. target density¹
 - "Because embedded therapies-rely largely on consequent instruction (i.e., intruction delivered after a child had attempted a target form), a possible problem for embedded therapy is the low dose of teaching episodes if a child never or infrequently attempts the target form." ¹
 - major concern for language, because we know high dose is required for children with developmental language disorders $^{2,\,3}\,$
 - \bullet use drill within playful learning? ("mini- and micro-lessons") 1

"Vocabulary comes alive for the child when parents and caregivers build on children's focus of attention by offering information that the child is craving." 4

Example: Language



Example: Language



Language: don't forget the context!



THANK YOU Meredith.Harold@rockhurst.edu www.meredithharold.com