

# Chapter 10

## Play for Everyone

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Play is a vital activity that continues throughout life, not just in the world of children. It repairs, develops, and protects the emotional, mental, and physical health of individuals. Stuart Brown emphasizes that play is unique to each person, while Peter Gray highlights its critical importance for survival in the evolutionary process. Johan Huizinga argues that play is a fundamental element of human culture. Play creates a network of interaction between people, fostering trust and self-confidence. It reflects the emotional and cognitive world of children and provides a natural opportunity for their development. Throughout history, educators have praised the virtues of play in learning. However, as children grow older, they distance themselves from play due to various complex reasons, including the expectations of the adult world and the incompatibility of play pedagogy with school pedagogy. Children are directed to engage more in academic activities, reducing their playtime.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

There is play wherever there are children, indeed wherever there are people. Although some people are more prone to playing games than others, evolutionarily everyone is born with a hardware that is programmed to play games. However, the common view is that play is seen only or mostly as the main occupation of the childhood world. The context of play and child is correct, but incomplete, because play is a vital action that starts from childhood and continues throughout life, changing and transforming. In summary, although play and children are reminiscent of each

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other, play is not only an occupation of the childhood world, but also important and necessary for individuals of all ages.

Play is a lifelong need for all ages and is one of the most effective ways to learn throughout life and enjoy life. In different stages of human life, play is not only an act of spending free time, but also a source of enjoyment of life by reducing the pressure on the individual, and a means of self-realization and social interaction. It is not easy to give a single definition of the play, but it is easy to recognize the play.

The National Institute for Play (NIP) founder Stuart Brown emphasizes that play is unique to the individual and as special as a fingerprint. Peter Gray states that play cannot be limited to adding fun to life, and that play is of critical importance for survival in the evolutionary process (Wallace, 2017).

In the philosophical perspective, play reflects a deep understanding of human nature. Play is good for everyone, not just children. Play repairs, heals, develops, and protects the individual's emotional, mental and physical health. John As Huizinga noted in his work "Homo Ludens", play is a fundamental element of human culture. According to Huizinga, play is not only a leisure activity, but also an expression of human existence. Huizinga argues that the conflict between play and seriousness is very fluid. Also, claimed that "the contrast between play and seriousness is always fluid." For elderly individuals, play can be an important tool in discovering the meaning of life and coping with various difficulties of life (Huizinga, 1960; Korin et al., 2023).

The play causes the formation of an interaction network between the people with whom it is played, and depending on the nature of this interaction process, it creates a solid basis for people to trust each other and build their self-confidence. There is a universal acceptance and positive perspective on the power of play, not only specific to one culture but also on a global level. Both with peers and younger people we continue talking about the positive effects of the play on the person during the process of playing with adults, parents or alone. The positive effect of play on children's mental, social, emotional, and physical development has been the subject of many scientific studies. According to Eberle (2014), play consists of six elements such as expectation, surprise, pleasure, understanding, power and balance.

Play is the child's agenda and it is an agenda that is always updated. We can see the reflections of the child's world of emotions and thoughts in their plays. Opinions and arguments that play is the most effective and safest way of learning in a child's life and the most natural opportunity for a child's development are not the subject of the new century.

Historically, educators from Plato to Dewey have extolled the virtues of play and fun in learning (Dewey, 1944; Froebel, 1887; Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2009; Huizinga, 1960; Piaget, 1971; Vygotsky, 1978). However, as children grow older, from kindergarten to primary education, they begin to distance themselves from play and

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