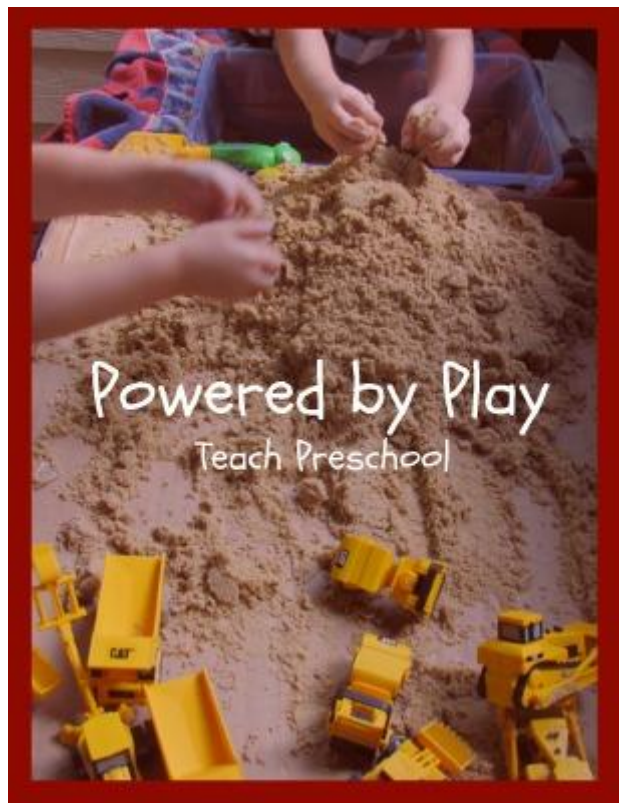


The Power of Play in the Early Learning Environment

July 26, 2012 by [Deborah J. Stewart, M.Ed.](#)

“How will my child be prepared for school if all he does is play?” This is a fair and common question that is often asked by parents of preschoolers and a question that can often be difficult for preschool teachers to answer. It isn’t because the teachers don’t know the answer – but to sum up the value of play in the learning process in one short answer is not so easy to do...



Part of the reason it is so difficult to explain how children learn by play is because play isn’t simple – it is instead complex. Learning through play is not about children wondering aimlessly around a room dumping baskets and throwing blocks. Instead, learning through play takes a carefully prepared environment that invites young children to explore, examine, question, predict, test, investigate, trial, error, and manipulate...



The ability to engineer complex designs is...



Powered by play

Teach Preschool

Through play, learning is different for every child because every child is learning at his own pace, learning in his own style, and guided by his own interests...

Mathematical thinking is...



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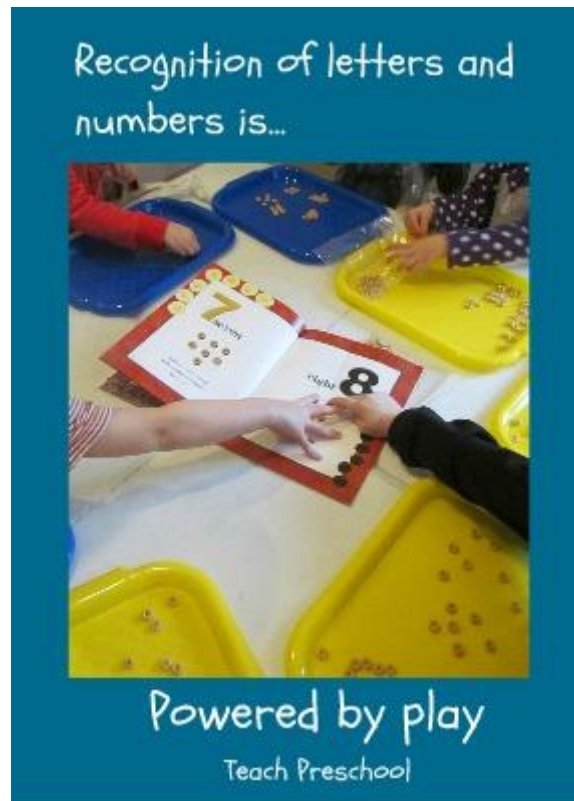
So how will play help young children be prepared for school? Through play, learning is in-depth, concrete, and long-term. Play offers young children the opportunity to put into action the ideas and processes being presented so that concepts and ideas make sense and the processes can be mastered...



The best way to evaluate the power of play in any classroom is to observe children at play and then reflect on how their play is facilitating or empowering young children to reach desired learning goals and outcomes...



Another question often asked by parents is “How will my child learn his letters and numbers (academics) through play?” This is also a fair question to ask so it is important to understand and to be able to explain the difference between intellectual learning and Academic Learning...



Academic learning by definition is the stuff that is clear like the alphabet, it's no logic, it just has to be memorized. **Intellectual Learning** has to do with reasoning, hypothesizing, predicting, theorizing, and so forth and that's natural. Academic learning does need to take place but academic learning will take place within the service of the intellect. (Lilian Katz in a discussion on **STEM** on **Bam Radio**). And the most powerful way to facilitate intellectual learning is through play.



The photos shared here today are from some of our own classroom experiences. As I plan for next school year, I am using the term “Powered by Play” as my guiding force for the plans I make. For each concept or idea or learning goal we hope to achieve, I am asking myself – “How can we promote, facilitate or reinforce this skill or concept through a play experience?”



I have been sharing these posters on Teach Preschool on Facebook to hopefully inspire and enlighten others about the power of play in the preschool classroom as well as to help me continue to reflect and learn how I can best teach young children through their play in my own classroom...



* This article was taken from www.teachpreschool.org