

The importance of play and how to use games in the classroom

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Research shows that play is very important for the development of the young learner. Play develops learners' ability to communicate, their vocabulary, language comprehension, attention span, imagination, concentration and curiosity. It helps learners develop problem-solving strategies and teaches them how to participate in and contribute to a group. There is a direct link between play and learners' ability to master numeracy and literacy skills.

Although there is overwhelming research to support the benefits of play, teachers often (and with the best intentions) structure their learning activities to such an extent that free play is reduced or even eliminated from their daily planning.

On these pages, we investigate different types of play and provide suggestions for making your classroom more play-friendly.

LARGE-MOTOR PLAY

Children love running, crawling, jumping, climbing and sliding.

Why large-motor play is important:

This kind of play develops coordination, balance and position in space. It helps children learn to cross their midline.

What you can do to encourage large-motor play:

Provide outdoor opportunities for play – make sure your learners play outside for at least 20-30 minutes daily. See page 8 of this Teacher's Guide for a list of equipment to buy or make.

