

*CAYC believes that children's natural inclination to play should be nourished and encouraged. The Canadian Association for Young Children acknowledges that play is important through everyone's life - beyond childhood into adulthood. Through play, children ask questions, seek solutions and grapple with real issues. CAYC urges all Canadians to become advocates for play*

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**What is the CAYC?**

The Canadian Association for Young Children (CAYC) is the only national association specifically concerned with the well-being of children, birth through age nine - at home, in pre-school settings and at school. Members of this multi-disciplinary association include parents, teachers, caregivers, administrators, students and all those wishing to share ideas and participate in activities related to the education and welfare of young children.



**The Aims of the CAYC**

- To influence the direction and quality of policies and programs that affects the development and well-being of young children in Canada.
- To provide a forum for the members of Canada's early childhood community to support one another in providing developmentally appropriate programs for young children.
- To promote and provide opportunities for professional development for those charged with the care and education of young children.
- To promote opportunities for effective liaison and collaboration with all those responsible for young children.
- To recognize outstanding contributions to the well-being of young children.

# PLAY

The Canadian Association  
for Young Children



L'Association Canadienne  
Pour Les Jeunes Enfants

*Federal Charter Granted, 1974*

**Young Children  
Have the Right to  
Learn Through  
Play**

# YOUNG CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT TO LEARN THROUGH PLAY

The Canadian Association for Young Children exists to provide a Canadian voice on critical issues related to the quality of life of all young children and their families. (CAYC Mission statement) In this regard, CAYC believes that play contributes to the quality of life of young children and, therefore, offers the following position statement on play.

*Children learn through play. Through their play children develop sensory motor control, eye-hand coordination and problem solving skills. Physical, social, intellectual and emotional development are all enhanced through play.*

## **CAYC believes that:**

- play is natural
- play is essential for children
- play is fun, exciting, adventurous, open ended
- play is creative and spontaneous
- play is magical and complex
- play is rewarding and stimulating
- play is non-threatening
- play is non-judgmental
- play is directed by the children
- play is full of choices and decision making opportunities
- play is posing questions and hypothesizing
- play is focused on the process and not the product



## **CAYC believes that it is important for children to play.**

Children have a natural mechanism that enables them to make sense of their world - that mechanism is play. For over 100 years, researchers have studied play and have found that play:

- Child-initiated play lays a foundation for learning and academic success. In play, children learn to interact with others, develop language skills, recognize and solve problems and discover their human potential. Play helps children make sense of and find their place in the world. (Alliance for Childhood, 2004)
- Play is regarded as interpretations of the situations of everyday life. In play, children interpret their experiences and give them life. (Sandberg and Pramling-Samuelsson 2003)
- Play is an integral part of a child's being. It is the business of childhood, and it has a unique and vital role in the whole educational process. (Weininger, 1994)

## **CAYC believes that children need time to play.**

Studies show the links between play and many foundations skills and complex cognitive activities, such as memory, self-regulation, oral language development, successful school adjustment, and better social skills. (Bodrova and Leong 2004)

*CAYC supports all programs, including the school setting, that provides time for children to play.*

## **CAYC believes that children need space to play.**

We promote children's to play by providing them with space, time, and materials, offering them support in building relationships, facilitating problem solving; presenting new ways of communicating ideas by attending to their spontaneous interests; and valuing their eagerness to learn about the world in which we all live together. (Jones, 2003) Support for play means guiding the development of respectful social interaction – CAYC believes that all children benefit from opportunities to be in safe, stimulating environments that encourage them to play.

## **CAYC believes that children need certain material for play.**

Expensive toys are not necessary, but natural materials and authentic items need to be provided tying children's experiences together, building connections of relationships within the child's world thus helping the to make sense of their environment. (Edwards, Gandini, Gorman 1998) CAYC understands that a rich play environment happens through careful planning and observation of children. Early Childhood Educators use their knowledge about the potential play value of a variety of materials to offer children enriching play opportunities.

## **CAYC believes that children need adults to support and enable their play.**

Adults take on many roles in order to facilitate children's play: stage manager, mediator, planner, communicator, player, and observer. (Jones and Reynolds, 1992) CAYC appreciates that adults draw upon considerable expertise as they enable, support and extend the play of groups of children in home, preschool, child care, and school settings.