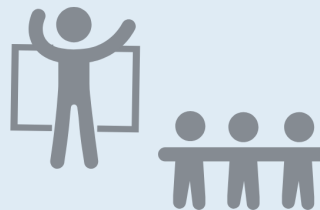


A Continuum of Play-based Learning: The Role of the Teacher

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Introduction

Research has demonstrated the developmental and educational benefits of play. Despite these benefits, teacher-directed academic instruction is prominent in kindergarten. Current research emphasizes a narrow definition of play-based learning as a child-directed practice, resulting in teacher uncertainty about the implementation of this pedagogical approach.



This study sought to examine **the role of the teacher in play** to provide a broader and more concrete definition of play-based learning.

Methods

This research used a qualitative methodology to explore the use of play-based learning in public kindergarten classrooms in Ontario, Canada.



15 FDK classrooms



interviews with teachers



classroom observations

Results

6 of 15 teachers



viewed: play and learning as **dichotomous** constructs

role: little educator involvement as students engaged in mostly free play

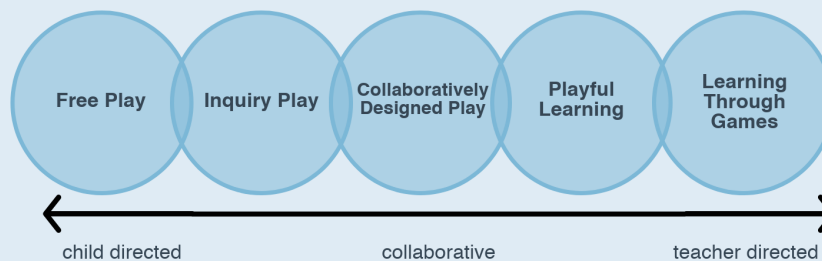
9 of 15 teachers



viewed: play as **directly supporting** academic learning

role: range of educator involvement as students engaged in different types of play

A Continuum of Play-based Learning



Conclusion



academic learning



developmental learning

The continuum of play-based learning highlights different levels of educator involvement in play that can support children's academic and developmental learning in a child-centred manner. This broader and more concrete definition of play-based learning serves to help teachers implement this pedagogical approach and to enhance the study of play-based learning in early years research.

Pyle, A., & Danniels, E. (2017). A continuum of play-based learning: The role of the teacher in a play-based pedagogy and the fear of hijacking play. *Early Education & Development, 28*(3), 274–289. DOI: 10.1080/10409289.2016.1220771

