

Balancing School with Healthy Play: An Effective Way to Improve Learning

When your child starts school, it's easy to forget how important playing is to their growth and development.

Many parents consider playing merely as a form of recreation – something to pass the time between reading textbooks or studying for exams.

But play – specifically healthy play – is much more than that. When you integrate play into your child's learning program, you'll find they can learn and grow in more ways than you could have imagined.

Why is Play Important?

It may not seem obvious, but your child is learning whenever they're playing.

Play is how we first learn about the world, ourselves, and others, and it's a process that we take with us for the rest of our lives. Whether it's through games, role-playing, or sports, play is a central part of human life.

It's as natural to us any other human activity, which makes it an even more powerful tool for learning when used correctly.

Healthy Play vs Non-Healthy Play

As helpful as play is to your child's learning, it's important to understand that not every form of play is the same. Some forms of play will benefit your child's learning better than others, and some can even hinder your child's development if left unchecked. So it's crucial to know the difference between healthy play and non-healthy play.

Healthy play is play that's safe, inclusive, appropriately challenging, and supportive of your child's growth and development (i.e. physical, social, psychological, etc.)

Non-healthy play, on the other hand, is play that's unsafe, unsupervised, demeaning, extremely difficult, or simply detrimental to their learning. In short, it's play that doesn't foster their growth and development into proper and responsible adults.

Benefits of Healthy Play

Healthy play provides several benefits that make it extremely valuable to your child's growth and development:

- ✓ **Stirs imagination.** Healthy play can help your child imagine possibilities and understand the world from another point of view.
- ✓ **Stimulates creativity.** Fun yet challenging forms of play can exercise their problem-solving skills and develop their creative thinking and initiative.
- ✓ **Reduces stress.** The excitement of games, sports and other forms of healthy play can relieve stress and help them cope with any difficulties they're having.
- ✓ **Improves social skills.** Healthy play involving other children can help your child hone their social skills and develop empathy.
- ✓ **Fosters cooperation.** Team sports and group-based games can build cooperative skills that are key to success in later life.
- ✓ **Promotes self-expression.** Many forms of healthy play encourage self-expression and provide opportunities to understand their thoughts and emotions better.
- ✓ **Improves physical fitness.** Healthy play that's active and physically engaging can help improve your child's health and make them more aware of their bodies and physical abilities.

Tips for Making Play Healthier

When choosing healthy play for your child, it's important to focus on activities that will benefit their learning and development. Every child is different, so it's crucial to choose activities that make sense to them and caters to their needs.

With that said, no matter what form of healthy play you choose for your child, we always recommend that you:

- **Keep It Active.** Active play will give your child a form of exercise that can improve their health and fitness.

- **Make Sure It's Safe.** Proper supervision is essential to healthy play, especially if your child is still young. Always use the right safety equipment and encourage safe play every time.
- **Make Sure It's Fun for Them.** Don't force your child to play something that they don't like. If they don't enjoy it, then it could cause more harm than good. Instead, focus on activities that your child enjoys so that they pick it up and benefit from it more naturally.
- **Try different games and activities.** Don't be afraid to try different activities to find the right match for your child. Sometimes, it's the unusual or unconventional activities that create the strongest connection with kids. Activities dancing or [trampolining](#), for example, can spark your child's development as effectively any sport.

Making Play Work for You and Your Child

The great thing about playing is that every child already knows it and they won't need any prodding or encouragement to do it.

The challenge for you as a parent and us as their educators is to find ways to integrate healthy play into their learning programs. By using something they naturally love to do to enhance their learning and development, we can help them grow into kinder, more determined and more caring people.

In line with integrating healthy play into our students' learning and development, we're raffling off a [Vuly Play](#) Lift 2 Medium trampoline at our Spring Flair this coming 7 September 2019. One lucky family will go home with this safe, high-quality trampoline that will surely provide hours of fun and healthy play for both children and adults. Festivities start at 11:00 am, and you can check the entire event schedule [here](#). See you there!