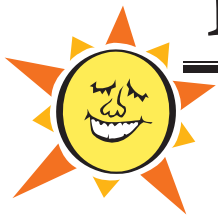


# Parent/Teacher Newsletter



## Helping Hands Putting Play Back in the Playground



Created by: SHIP Occupational Therapists

Allied Health – Edmonton Zone

Edition 4

SHIP Occupational Therapists give ideas to improve the fit between a student and the tasks they do at home and school. A good match can increase a child's belief in their abilities. This helps them have success on tasks they feel are important. In this month's newsletter, we review strategies for putting play back in the playground.

An important part of every child's day is play, be it at recess, the neighborhood park, or in the backyard. Play is important for a child's overall growth.



### Missing Out on Play

Have you noticed children on the playground who are unsure of what to do during playtime? Do they seem unsure of games to play and how to get started? There are many things today that have changed the quality and amount of play. Some of these factors include family structure, busy lives, higher stress on academics and increases in use of computer toys.



### Benefits of Play

What are the benefits of playground fun? Play helps them to develop fine motor, gross motor, leadership and social skills. Play is good for physical health and a general sense of well-being.



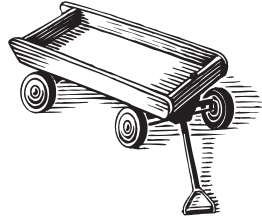
### Promoting Play

Promoting play in the playground may initially need adult help. The ultimate goal is for play to be directed by the children. Here are some strategies:

- First, make a rule that there are to be no computer toys on the playground. (E.g. gameboys, computers, MP3 players).
- Teach children the rules for various games. Try [www.playgroundfun.org.uk](http://www.playgroundfun.org.uk) for some fun ideas. Don't be too concerned if the children change the rules when playing. The most important thing is that children learn to direct their own play.
- Expect that all children are involved in the play activity. Try to make it fun and set it up so every child can play. For example, Hopscotch can be drawn in a simple or more difficult pattern.

For more information contact  
the therapist for your school.

- Have a variety of toys and play items available.



## Further Resources

- <http://positiveplaygrounds.com>
- [www.otworks.ca](http://www.otworks.ca)
- [www.qca.org.uk/pess](http://www.qca.org.uk/pess)
- [www.playgroundfun.org.uk](http://www.playgroundfun.org.uk)

- Give children the “job” of starting activities without direct adult help. Games are a great way for children to learn about their emotions and develop their social skills.



- Have children take turns being playground leaders. Their role is to look after the safe use and return of equipment.
- Consider activities appropriate for the season! Baseball, skipping and marbles in spring. Building an igloo, snow angels and snow tag in the winter. On rainy days – indoor games such as jacks, pick-up-sticks or Cat’s Cradle.

