

SOCIAL PATTERNS

There are 6 basic classifications of SOCIAL PATTERNS used by children. They are:

1. **UNOCCUPIED BEHAVIOR:** The child is not involved in any particular activity. He/she just observes what seems interesting at the time. When nothing of interest is happening, he/she will walk around, look around, or play with his/her fingers, hair, etc. The child often appears to be day dreaming.
2. **ONLOOKER BEHAVIOR:** This behavior involves watching other children play. The child may talk to the children who are playing but does not become actively involved. The onlooker wants to be close enough to interact with the children who are playing whereas the unoccupied child's interest keeps shifting to anything that interests him/her at the moment. (TODDLERS)
3. **SOLITARY PLAY:** This type of play involves a child playing alone. He/she has no interest in anyone else or that they are doing. The toys he/she plays with are different from those the other children are playing with. He/she is totally involved in a personal activity. (INFANTS)
4. **PARALLEL PLAY:** This type of play involves a child playing beside other children. There is no actual interaction, but the toys are similar. The child is playing beside the other children rather than with them. (2-3 YEARS)
5. **ASSOCIATIVE PLAY:** This type of play involves a child playing with other children. The children share toys and interact with one another. Children are involved in similar but not identical activity. There is no specific organization of activities. Each child does what he/she wishes but is a part of a large group. (3 YEAR – SCHOOL AGE)
6. **COOPERATIVE PLAY:** This type of play involves organization. The child is a part of a group that has a specific purpose in mind such as making an art project or playing a game. There are usually leaders and followers in this type of play.

TYPES of PLAY

Play is an important part of a child's life. It provides a purpose for the child. Children must play to help them grow. There are five basic areas of growth:

1. **PHYSICAL:** Play develops large and small muscles and increases speed, strength and coordination.
 2. **EMOTIONAL:** Children learn how to handle their feelings and fears through play. It gives them opportunities to try expressing emotions they have seen other people express
 3. **INTELLECTUAL:** Play teaches children how things work. They learn how to reason and solve problems as well as practice new mental skills.
 4. **SOCIAL:** Play teaches children the type of social behavior that is acceptable in society. They find ways to get along with other people. They become more understanding of other people and learn to share and cooperate.
 5. **MORAL:** Children learn to be honest and considerate as they play.
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There are many types of play. Some general types are listed below:

DRAMATIC OR MAKE-BELIEVE PLAY

The child is involved in make-believe or imaginative situations. They may wish to play house, doctor, office, bank, or restaurant. This play is important in the development of a child because it teaches about real life situations and problem solving. It also teaches social interactions and behaviors. The child is able to express him/herself in a different role, which allows him/her to release pinned –in emotions. During dramatic play, children may act out things they have experienced such as happy moments, sad moments, fears or anxieties.

ACTIVE PLAY

A child is involved in playing and interacting with others and/or with objects. A child needs to be involved in active play a majority of the time because children learn by active playing. The term activity does not necessarily mean jumping up and down or running. A child can actively look at a book, put a puzzle together, look at the clouds and create images out of them, etc.

PASSIVE PLAY

Passive play is passive or non-interactive. A child does not interact with anyone or anything. There will be times when all children need to have passive play: when they are tired, angry, watching television, or just need a few minutes alone. However when a child is passive and not interactive a great deal of the time, a caregiver needs to try and involve the child in some form of active play. Watching television is a great example of passive play. Children should be limited in the amount of passive play they are allowed to have.

.... PLAY Information

SKILL MASTERY PLAY

This type of play occurs when a child learns or is beginning to learn a new skill. The child will continue to repeat the new skill over and over and over. Some examples of skill mastery play are rolling down a hill, riding a bike, skating, etc. A child will engage in the same play activity for hours. This allows for several developmental processes to take place. First, the child is mastering or perfecting a skill. Secondly, as the child is in the process of mastering the skill, he/she recognizes his/her progress and feels a sense of accomplishment. This builds self-esteem.

SENSORY MOTOR PLAY

This type of play utilizes the senses and motor skills. A child playing in sand, mud, water, play dough, saw dust, corn meal, packing material, oblique, or any type of textural media is actively involved in learning about pre-math and pre-science concepts. The way the matter feels, the way it pours or oozes, and the way it changes by combining it with other matter are important concepts for the child to learn

ROUGH-AND-TUMBLE PLAY

This type of play can look a great deal like wrestling or fighting. When children are playing, their faces will represent happiness and their tone of voice will be pleasant. However, if there is anger or fear in their faces or voices, a caregiver needs to intercede. Rough-and-tumble play allows for a great release of energy as well as physical and social development.

CHILDREN'S PLAY

Think of preschoolers playing. You probably picture them chasing each other, playing house painting or coloring and basically just having fun.

For preschoolers, playing is an especially important tool that 2- 3- and 4-year olds use to learn about themselves, others, and how their world works.

Every child wants to learn. That desire causes a child to constantly do things like moving, splashing in puddles, dressing like adults, etc.

Playing helps preschoolers develop physically, socially, and intellectually. That is why a 2-year-old plays differently than a 4-year-old. The 4-year-old can already grab fat crayons and draw squiggles. He/she is ready for skinny crayons, paint brushes, and coloring or painting figures that portray people.

If you had to study all day, it would get boring and your study would be fairly unproductive. You must have a break to refresh your mind and eat something. This concept is similar to why preschoolers need to play. The delight and pleasure in play enhances their physical and intellectual development. The best way to keep a child happy and learning is to let him/her play.

Allowing children to play will give a child confidence. While children are playing, adults do not have to tell them how to have fun or what to do. They make up their own rules, games, and guidelines. This teaches them independence and gives them self-assurance.

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If a child just sits watching television for hours, he/she does not have the opportunity to actively learn and interact with other children and toys. Children who have not been allowed to play are not ready for school. They do not know how to explore, how to learn, how to make friends, or how to find information by themselves. Do not allow children to watch too much television. Encourage them to play. Make up games or have a friend over to play. Make the play active and fun.

If you watch two preschoolers of different ages, you will see that they play in different ways. The way a child plays is related to his/her physical, mental, social, and emotional development. During the first eighteen months of life, most children's play involves sitting up, crawling, standing, and walking. A child who has learned to crawl will follow a rolling ball across the room.

A 3-year-old child has mastered walking. The child then tries to kick a ball and chase other children.

3- and 4-year-old children have better control of their large muscles. They like tricycles, blocks, paints, and clay.

Play also builds language and social skills. Children learn social skills by playing with one another. They learn how to take turns, how to share, and how to deal with their own emotions and the emotions of others. Language skills are developed as the child hears adults speak and tries to imitate them.

As children grow, they become more interested in other children. Most 2- or 3-year-olds participate in parallel play. This means that they play by each other with similar toys, but they do not really interact or play with one another. This type of play is appropriate for their emotional development. They are egocentric, (selfish,) and have a difficult time sharing with others. They like to do things their own way. Common words are "me," "I want to" and "NO!" These words help them decide who they are.

When a child is somewhat self-assured, he/she can relax a bit and begin playing with other children. This happens around age 4.

When children pretend play, it helps them express and cope with their emotions. For example, a child who is afraid of the dark may build a fort and play inside it. Going in and out of the darkness helps that child work out fears about darkness.

Intellectual learning also occurs during play. Playing with nesting blocks teaches basic math concepts such as "bigger than." Hide and seek teaches terms such as "under," "inside," "around," "between," "over," etc.

Playing is how a child learns and how he/she develops physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally. Remember, play is a child's work—the most important work they will ever do!

CASE STUDIES

Label each of the following cases as solitary play, cooperative play, or parallel play.

Brad comes to preschool and walks over to play with the blocks. Brenda tells Brad to build a school right where he is and she will make a road to it. Brad begins working on the school and shows Brenda where he wants the road to be.

TYPES OF PLAY: _____

Eric runs into the preschool room and picks up the blue dump truck and begins driving it all over. He talks to himself as he drives back and forth telling the driver to watch out for the other kids.

TYPE OF PLAY: _____

Matt and Meg are both playing in the sandbox. Matt is making mud soup, Meg is building a castle. They share the funnel and bucket but do not say too much to each other except to ask for the funnel or bucket.

TYPE OF PLAY: _____

Ted is playing shopkeeper. Sue and Pam come to buy groceries. They select the food they want and go to the cash register. Ted asks them for money. They do not have enough money to pay for their groceries. They discuss how they can get the food they need.

TYPE OF PLAY: _____