

# 6 WAYS TO PRETTY SMART PLAY-BASED LEARNING



THE LITTLE SCHOOL PROJECT

Play is one of the most important ways children inquire about the world around them. Research tells us that play is a vital force for physical, social and emotional development and when used in teaching and learning, can offer children a multitude of possible ways to connect and demonstrate their constructed knowledge. These children often perform as well as or even better than those who are denied play. And, they develop that elusive ability to balance and merge "work" and play.



1. Learning happens in a social context - allow play to happen organically, with other children (appropriately of different ages) and of course with you.



2. Our environments and the way they are structured communicate our perceptions about learning and where or how play fits (or does not fit) in. Additionally, the quality and approach of our interactions with our kids indicate our values about what rigorous purposeful study looks like.





3. If your child is plugged into his/her laptop doing most of their work online, play, if it exists is solitary and two dimensional. On the flip side, if each environment is designed in a casual free-flowing way, consider how the play might lose its academic impact; and just become playing around.

4. Play is an excellent way for kids to iterate ideas, explore new concepts, experiment with strategies and hypothesize new outcomes.

5. Play is not only for early years and co-op style homeschooling. Secondary school aged children can benefit from play within the independent study or as a means of collaborating in project and service-based learning.

6. Play is a joyous path through creative expression.

