2019 REPORT : Comments from Individual WA Citizens Who Have Endorsed the WA Play Strategy Initiative
I fully support this campaign
I am pleased to be endorsing and supporting such an important issue for our young children and future citizens.
We must return play to our children's lives to stop the increasing problems with poor mental health outcomes especially children's anxiety, increasing problematic behaviour, concerns around lower emotional and social competence and more bullying. Educational outcomes are not improving with this schoolification and it simply needs to change.
The importance & establishment of a Play Strategy for WA will have a cross-sector impact at all levels; for children, their families and the wider community. We MUST commit to supporting PLAY in children's lives.
Love to see this mandated asap.
Play (especially outdoors) is so very important to children's development in all areas.
We are homeschooling in WA after having a great play based school in Hobart as no ideal school in the Pilbara - now in Perth we have to look at private options like Bold Park or Steiner to give our children a more play based school - this should not be how it is - all children have this right, it is our future, the evidence is there, please listen
I strongly believe that the play-based approach gives children the best start in life
Very much needed.
I'm completely against the more formalised learning that is constantly being pushed on younger children. It causes stress and anxiety and does not improve academic performance in later years.
Children learn best using manipulatives, socially constructing meaning.
This is important for my child and thousands of other young children in WA
Children learn an enormous amount through play. As an early childhood educator it saddens me that very young child are being stifled in their learning. I'm on maternity leave and I'm not sure if I'll return to education, my school has just introduced explicit direct instruction and there is no play at all. The schools that use play based learning are so inspired. I'm considering home schooling my child as I will not allow her to be stifled.
As a parent and early childhood educator, I am saddened by the erosion of play and the rise of formalised learning. Parents are confused and children are suffering and we will see the implications of the loss of play long into their futures.
The disappearance of play is causing young children to become anxious about school when this is the time to develop a love of learning. This alone is going to cause huge problems with the next generation. Why can't children be allowed to be little without taking away their staggered starts to ease them into Kindy and forcing them to regurgitate facts that mean nothing to them?
Children learn through play!!!
As a mother of three young boys (2,4 and 5) I see firsthand how beneficial play is! We are lucky to have an excellent teacher who allows freedom in the classroom and my boys love school!
Our kids need more play especially at such a young age. To expect a young child to sit still for long periods is not appropriate nor conducive to learning
Let them play!
Children need play now more than ever!
Play based learning is extremely important in child development
For decades, professional research has demonstrated the critical importance of play to children's psychological and physical development. Why does it take so long for leaders in government and education to acknowledge and support this?
Play is vital for early and lifelong learning, and is, in fact, serious business in child development.

As a mother of two little (soon to be school aged) boys I hope that my husband and I can send them to school without fear that the curriculum will force them to cope rather than thrive, that a love of exploring and adventuring will end at 5 years old within the confines of a classroom, that my inquisitive/daring/happy children will be too exhausted by 'learning' to live and that the stigma of 'not good enough' may taint them before they've even had a chance to begin. Let them play. Let them learn to be kind and fair with their peers. Give them a chance to be natural explorers and scientists. Do all this before putting a pen and paper in their hands.
The present and the future of our children's development is governed by the way we provide a play based program for all children from 0-8 years.
Play based learning is evidence based practice and helps a child be a whole person and not just academic.
Play is so important for all sorts of development!
The childcare industry has worked very hard over the last decade to have PBL accepted as best practise. Please safeguard our work for the future of our children.
Play based learning does not provide immediate evidence.. however, in the long term the results are amazing! I have seen it myself. I find it very sad that our society needs instant gratification. even in education where we should know better!
Protecting Childhood support this.
Play play play linked to the curriculum is needed for all children world wide. Teachers need to be told that play is crucial and a daily expectation. They feel to get through curriculum play is the first thing to go. Let's change this thinking.
Please make play a priority for our young children again!!
We're raising a generation of anxious and suicide-ready kids who are buckling under the pressure to perform and compete from the age of three. Children learn from play. Not from being expected to write their names and know the alphabet.
Play is critical to healthy development in childhood. It needs to be prioritised.
Playing is our natural way of learning about the world and how to interact with each other
I think this is really important
Very important
It is so important that we continue to nurture our children through play based learning
This is such an important initiative our children need this.
Children learn through play and having fun. School should be a place to explore and learn hands on
My son starts kindy next year and I'm really worried about how he will transition from program in primary school where he will have less time to freely explore at his own pace.
Listen to the majority of teachers who are not in agreement with the current curriculum.
This is a must for the sake of our future society!!
Play is the most effect form of learning because it involves making mistakes!
It's time we started to follow the research into play based learning. We're creating mental health issues for our children in later life that the medicare system will be resolving.
I sought out a school for my children where play is central but it is needed at schools for all children.
Having worked in a Walker Learning Environment and witnessed the joy on children's faces when engrossed in learning I endorse a WA Play Strategy.
Any advocates for play-based education need help to thrive!
So important for ECE learning and development!
As a mother of a 17 month old son, I see him explore, take risks and develop confidence through play every day. I am concerned as an educator that many early learning programs have an emphasis on curriculum learning with "free" play thrown in only once children have completed tasks. Play is important for all children to learn about their bodies and the world around them.

This is too important to not take action. I'm concerned about sending my daughter to school in 2020 and about all the poor children who aren't thriving because of unreasonable expectations.
This is really, really important! Children learn so much through play.
We are damaging a generation of children by taking away play in early years, please let's get back to what best, and what's proven to benefit children and society and get away from this scramble for the Asian education model!
Play is critical for ECE. I would love to see some clear guidelines supporting the development of play based pedagogies.
As a foster mum I have seen the changes over 20 years and the lack of play and academic focus breaks my heart!
It's consistently been proven that play based is the most beneficial. Our policy documents support this. Therefore this is a no brainer. Also there was a study completed in the US that showed the re-education of principals greatly improved the effective inclusion of a play based approach. Maybe we could implement something similar?
This is essential, vital and urgent.
I feel that schools have shifted too much focus towards early academic learning with kindergarten children now expected to learn skills previously not taught until year 1. In the early years especially I believe play-based learning is critical.
As an educator of primary school age children, and a mother of preschool age children, I strongly endorse play as a priority in children's learning schedule. Too many primary school children are lacking independent problem solving skills and basic social skills. They have issues with writing due to lack of experience in gross motor and fine motor activities. Children are built to play.
This is such an important initiative to drive home the importance of play and the right every child has to pay. This is something I am very passionate about.
As a thoughtful mother of a 5, 3 and 1YO this is one of my greatest concerns. I want my children to grow up confident, curious and happy which requires a foundation of play and exploration before formal learning.
Things need to change. Urgently.
Thank you, this is SO important. Kids need to play - physically, emotionally and mentally. They develop important problem-solving solving, creativity and negotiation skills. They need play to make them better students and people in the future.
Play is so important. Please stop damaging our children
Play is a child's work, it is absolutely vital to their development. We are failing our children if we do not protect play and ensure it is a valued component of their education.
I am an occupational therapist with many years experience working with children who are affected by the move away from play based learning. We set kids up to fail academically when they aren't given the opportunity to learn through play. They need play to develop gross motor skills, core stability, motor coordination and good proprioception. And they need all of this BEFORE fine motor skills and learning to sit still, and write their name. Stop problematising normal development and let kids be kids. Finally, as a current academic in the School of Occupational Therapy and Social Work at Curtin University, I am more than happy to make additional informed comment on this.
Please put more play based learning back into our schools!!
Play is the most critical form of learning a child can do.
The "academic" push down of non developmentally appropriate content in kindergarten and pre primary has to stop. I fully support play based learning in the early years as outlined by the EYLF.
Would love to see my Grandsons learning through play.
Let the children play play
Play is so critical to children's development
This is so important. I have a child in kindy and another in pre-primary, and 3yo too. I love learning, so does our family, and I feel very strongly that for these early years of education we should not be pressuring our children to achieve a set academic curriculum. In my opinion, our children deserve a chance to socialize and feel comfortable in the school environment, to encourage a lifelong enthusiasm for learning.

I want happy, mentally healthy children who learn through play at their own rate. The push down of formal learning is an abomination.
I feel this is so important for our kids and hope it happens
Play based learning allows the kids to learn so much easier than sitting behind a desk. The concept of sitting at a desk so young scares me.
Learning through play is essential to learning & developing social skills, empathy, communication, imagination, caring, sharing, personal boundaries etc etc. You cannot take play away from children
I am an early childhood teacher and the mother of a 4 year old boy who I have kept out of Kindy this year for this reason exactly - not enough play. I have no faith in the current education system and I am currently looking for alternatives (home-schooling, Steiner or independent community school) for next year. For the families that don't have a choice but to send their young children to mainstream Kindy and pre-primary, it is essential that this WA Play Strategy is implemented to protect the rights of those children to learn through child-initiated and child-directed PLAY.
Clinical physiotherapist and mother.
Play is vital for our children, it mustn't be taken away, they do need more!
Play is what children needs it helps with learning!
Plenty of time for desks, young kids need play based learning.
Can't wait for this to be changed back to how I remember school being, fun and caring
Kids need good oral language skills to develop good literacy and learning. They need to play to develop good language skills.
Honour childhood, honour the wonder and value of play! So important!
Play is vital to children's development!
I believe whole heartedly that play should be the basis of learning in the EC arena. I do not support the push down of academic expectations to young children... let children be children & develop at their pace - let our EC teachers prepare them for the world without assessment etc. And why isn't this a NATIONAL initiative?
Play based learning is so important. The right of the very child. Why is this even an issue?
Let the children play☺
As a former kindergarten teacher and now, as a deputy principal, I have seen first-hand how a structured curriculum in early childhood impacts negatively on children's social skills, emotional regulation and problem-solving capacity. Our children are increasingly moving into the higher age-grades without the basic oral language skills required to enable them to become effective learners in all curriculum areas. I regularly see students with anxiety-based issues which I firmly believe are attributed to an increased pressure to achieve at a very young age.
I have an 18 month old, and even at day-care there are learning objective. I just want to know she's safe, well cared for and having fun! When she starts school at only 4, I still want her to be having fun!
Childhood is a journey not a race
Play is essential for healthy children and families, learning and relationship building
Play is the major way young children learn. They need great freedom to explore their world and what their bodies are capable of.
So important that play based learning is in kindergarten
I am very concerned about the pushdown of academics and the lack of play in early childhood learning - to a point I no longer feel confident about sending my children to the local state school and am sending my children to an alternative evidence based school - Bold Park Community School (As I can see that they value play based learning in the early years and follow best practice). Our children deserve a better start to their education, we should not be killing their love of learning.
Play is so important to a child's development.
Let our kids be kids! Let's take note of what schooling looks like with a play based world and maybe the adults in this country will finally do the right thing by our Little Ones.

Not just for early childhood grade ones are suffering with pressure to excel academically causing emotional problems and dislike of learning
Play is an integral part of childhood and as it disappears we see a growing rate of unhappiness amongst children. This should be a world priority.
This is so important for our children, their development, their wellness and self-esteem. We need to honour our little people so they can grow into great adults.
I have 3 kids who are about to enter school system and it worries me that the lack of playtime will see them under too much stress to "learn" at the mere age of 3or4!
This is such a critical initiative - the current state of our education system is disappointing and disheartening. I worry tremendously for my children (both boys), considering all the research that abounds outlining the importance of play and the detriments of too much structure and rigidity too early. I feel powerless as a parent to do anything to make our approach to education more progressive. We must do things differently, so many experts and thought leaders highlight their concern for the current approach.
By recognising and dignifying our play with an ethical force, we can begin to create and act, rather than simply consume and speculate.
I am very concerned for young children, unrealistic expectations cause needless stress. Children need to develop at their own pace in a fun loving play based environment
This needs to happen today!! So so so important
formal/structured learning starts too soon. high school starts too soon. what is the rush people. play, play and more play. this should apply for adults too!! :)
I strongly believe play is important for children's development.
This is soooooo important!!
Please bring back play!
Please get on board WA! Play is so important and simple. My son is in year two and he has been so disappointed and frustrated by the lack of play during school since moving from pre primary. There is too much pressure on our kids to grow up. Amongst many positive reasons, play regulates our children and in this fast paced digital world we need to ensure they are balanced. Free to be young kids using their imaginations. I hope my two younger children will be able to experience the benefits of a new Play Strategy.
Crucial for healthy development of children and for them to make meaning of their learning!
Simply put, play-based early learning is proven to be best practice.
Play-based learning is so important for developing children's social-emotional, gross and fine motor, cognitive and language skills and constructing their own knowledge. There is so much enriched learning in children's play and so much more they can gain in real-world knowledge than from sitting at a desk at such a young age, when their bodies are just not ready for it.
From my observation as a K-7 teacher for 14yrs, Anxiety in our young kids is increasing and I feel that that the reduction in play is attributed.
It's all too much too soon for kids these days - basic to basics & play based learning
As a trained Early Childhood teacher who has over 30 years' experience in all sectors of education, but most recently as the Assistant Principal of a large urban primary school, I have become more and more concerned at the erosion of play in the first years of school, largely due to the top down pressure from education departments and curriculum writers. Early Childhood teachers in schools are now required to submit young children to developmentally inappropriate curriculum and pedagogy, regardless of the individual child's readiness. I fully support any effort to return play to the front and centre of early childhood teaching and curriculum.
my daughter now hates school due to the focus on reading and writing as 4 year old! She is so disenchanted with school she is falling well below what she is able to do. Play is proven to be the best language teacher with the highest outcomes – it's too late for my daughter now, its a struggle every day to get her to engage with her education, but its not too late for the future generations! Please back play based learning.
Play is fundamental for child developmental
Please listen to Maggie Dent.
As an Occupational Therapist working in the field of paediatrics I have observed a significant gap between the education curriculum as is currently set and the actual developmental needs of our kindy and pre-primary aged kids! Kids are missing out on play opportunities which lay the foundation for future learning. It is an ongoing frustration for health professionals such as myself that evidence highlighting the importance of play in these important early years is being ignored by those dictating what our kids are required to do in early education settings.

This is so important. I would love to see it in every state of Australia. I wish Western Australia all the best in hopefully starting a nationwide momentum.
My child is so anxious about pre-primary, worried about his handwriting and not knowing all his letters. What are we doing to our children when a 5 year old develops these kinds of insecurities. Play based learning develops these essential skills without the anxiety and worry that a highly structured and prescribed learning environment brings in.
Please, please, please listen. Our children deserve this! As a junior primary teacher of over forty years I know how important play is for children's development. Please help our kids!
Yes they need play
Play is not a frivolous exercise it is fundamental for children's learning health well-being and future success. Play is children's work and should be taken very seriously
Stop the academic push down and let children learn the way they do best!
Fully support and advocate for a return to play based learning where the kids don't just 'learn the desired skills' as per the curriculum, but learn much more broadly around how to problem-solve, negotiate, develop awareness of others, be accountable, develop imagination which enhances a sense of curiosity and wonder. That's where the leaders of tomorrow will come from
Children are working too hard in classrooms and homework and need more time to play.... either for education or fun.
This is such a vital part of learning and sadly it is getting pushed out by the pressure of the push down from the powers above. I will always endorse play based learning in my classroom as it provides such great learning experiences and opportunities for children to explore and discover. 😀
As a teacher and mum of 2, I can't stress enough how important this is to me!
Please!!!!
I am an experienced Early Childhood Teacher (over 20 yrs) who understands and values play. Play is diminishing in our K and PP classrooms and there will be NO opportunity to regain its benefits in formal classrooms. We need clear directives from our Educational authorities to mandate and maintain play.
Desperately needed initiative
Our preschool has moved from play based education to more academic style education, and Miss 3 is coming home over-stimulated and not as happy with preschool as she used to be. I'd rather see kids allowed to learn through play as kids should than a push for academic learning at such a young age.
I'm sure my kid’s facility is unsafe as it has no guidelines
I endorse this proposition both as a Senior Occupational Therapist who specialises in developmental paediatrics, and a parent of a young child.
Love this and hope it's heard and implemented. As an allied health professional, I struggle to marry together the current education expectations and development expectations in kindy and preprimary.
As a parent and a pre-service teacher I believe in the need for children to learn through exploration and play.
My son with a June birthday has really struggled emotionally with early childhood public education that was supposedly 'play based'. The current curriculum makes it very hard for teachers to run a play based program ☹
I'm an early childhood teacher and fully support this initiative. Let the children play to learn please!!
As an Occupational Therapist and mum of 3 I have seen first hand the benefits of play based therapy.
So much is learnt during play, they don't need cotton wool, they need a little dirt and imagination.
Let the children enjoy their learning, all is them to learn through play.
With the change of society pressures for both parents to work, the increase in technologies at home and school, playbased strategies need to be implemented to benefit our future leaders now... they need to be able to problem solve, grow their leadership skills and have the knowledge of "where their body ends”. Skills that can only be learnt through play based learning

I am a teacher with many years' experience. I have watched the erosion of our education system from one focussed on children and educating them, to one controlled by politics, politicians and money. Children do not seem to be of consequence, nor do teachers at the coalface. Children need play as part of their development for so many reasons - socialisation, problem solving in a natural environment, gross motor skills, sharing, team work that is voluntary, not forced on them in a syllabus controlled environment, learning to take risks, resilience, persistence.... our current junior primary children do not display these things and many are suffering from anxiety and mental blocks re subject areas pushed onto them before they were developmentally ready. Bring back play, both free and structured.
Play is so important
It is their job to play! Let them do it.
Unstructured play was a fundamental part of my childhood 28yrs ago. Now a mother of 2 boys, I feel the need and want to give our children as much opportunity to play and learn from play, and therefore support this endeavour and truly hope for a positive outcome for children's sake!!!
Watching how children learn - through play - it is really concerning that this is not seen as a valuable, essential tool, central to the education policy of the state. Fostering a love of learning should be of paramount importance to education policy. WA and Australia seem to be going backwards with their education policies and it is time for some visionary thinking (or just the application of common sense).
There is too much pressure too early in our children. By the time they get to year 9 they are sick of school. Let little children be children
Kids learn so much more through play based learning than structured because they are actually having fun doing it.
Play is the perfect practice for learning!
As an Early Childhood teacher I believe that this is vital. I no longer teach as the structured learning required now breaks my heart and goes against everything I believe I need to do in order to do my job properly.
Let kids be kids and let them play.
I consider playtime to be an essential for little children.
School starting age needs to also be amended in WA!
Kids should be allowed to play and develop naturally.
Play based learning encourages creative thinking inquisitive thinking features our children need in life. And they love it and thrive on it. It's important to love learning in the early years. My daughter has been lucky to have play based learning in kindy year 1 and year 2 she is now year 2.
I am an early childhood teacher and play needs to be PROTECTED.
Please let's not limit this to WA...let the nation share in some sound ECCE philosophy.
I fully endorse this initiative to allow our children the freedom to learn through play
And play shouldn't stop at early childhood - there are benefits right throughout schooling.
Strongly in favour of developmentally appropriate education, I.e. Play based learning for early childhood.
Bring back play!!!!
Play based learning is evidence based and essential for the development of our children mentally, emotionally, physically, developmentally, socially and academically.
Formal education should not start until a child is 7 years old. Play based learning allow was a child to become developmental ready for lifelong learning
This is a fight we must win. Let's lead the way, WA
Let our kids be kids. Education is not fun which is killing the desire to learn, and socialization is a fundamental building block for life.
good mental health leads to better learning. Play helps mental health.
Play based learning is the way to go. Very pleased to endorse this.

Children were made to learn by play, please let them do it.
So important for children to learn the best way Play Based Learning.
Totally support this. Have been concerned about lack of play in Kindy for many years.
I can't believe that people think play is insignificant to a child's learning. So sad.
It was so sad to see my son losing interest in school by the first fortnight of pre-primary due to the lack of play in his learning day (he ran out of class in the morning yelling "I don't want to go to school", when asked why he said "it's boring". Children need to learn through play not sit at desks.
I am nervous for my son starting kindy next year - all the kindys we have toured highlight their formal literacy programs. This is not what I want to hear!!!
Children learn more through play based teaching.
As an Occupational Therapist working with young children in schools, I see all too often the negative impacts of decreased play opportunities. Please raise the status of play in education and let children learn in the best way possible!
I find it so hard to believe that research proves play bases learning is best for children. However Australia still fails to see this!! We want to have bright students, focus in on the top countries in the world and actually see what they do!!!
Play is the natural way for children to learn.
The international research is clear and we used to be so good at it when I did my Early Childhood Education degree in 93-97. Without rich play experiences children cannot build the foundation concepts that they need to understand formal literacy and numeracy and other learning areas in later years. Not to mention the social and emotional skills they develop to become successful in life in general. Please put play first for our early years!!
This is EXTREMELY important, I cannot endorse this initiative enough!
Bring it on!
The push-down of formal learning is negatively impacting the learning outcomes of our young people. It's time to bring back play!
Play is learning!!!
depriving children of their right to learn through play in their early years is actually child abuse.
Give our children their childhood back please
Three year olds (which is how old many kids are when they start kindergarten) should not be expected to sit quietly in a room all day or give presentations (seriously, this happens in WA). It should ALL be play at that age, it's how their brains are programmed to learn.
Play based learning is crucial to helping the child's mind to develop. Children learn through play more so than other ways. Pushing to have play based learning removed only will bread a generation of children with anxiety, depression and other mental health issues. This is not what our society needs.
As a parent of 2 children under 5 and the daughter of a retired early years teacher, I fully endorse and appreciate the crucial importance of play based learning in the development of WA's children.
I am a Clinical Psychologist and a parent of primary school aged children. I am very concerned with the current low levels of play, high levels of structured, formal learning and the significant pressure placed on students in WA kindergartens and preprimaries.
I feel very strongly that an urgent rethink of the models of learning within our kindy and pre-primary classes is needed. As a parent of an imminent kindy student and am OT I belief that early years of education should have at their heart goals around engaging kids with learning, building confidence, resilience, social and emotional regulation skills and fun in preparation for future more academically more rigorous curriculum.
Play is the BEST way of learning for kids, not being stuck at a desk for the majority of the day doing 'formal learning'!
There is not enough play!!
Forcing children in unnatural learning environment that are not age appropriate have been shown to have ongoing negative impacts. Early childhood teachers know kids and their developmental needs and want things to be different but feel pressure from the education system to push children into an academic curriculum from such an early age.

Every child deserves to play.
I have been teaching Pre-Primary for 37 years and have seen a huge increase in children with anxiety, difficulty concentrating, language delay, self regulation difficulties, stress, children "freezing" when asked questions and much more. Let's get the pressure off these little children and let them learn through play. Let them learn to speak to each other, play social games, learn about caring for each other and problem solving. Let them learn to enjoy exploring and learning. Please let us get back to some good early childhood policies and priorities.
Play is essential to the development and growth of our children.
Endorsing as both a parent and an educator.
Play is learning!!
This is so important for our children. The government needs to act now to change things before more and more children are suffering from anxiety due to the pushdown of academia into early childhood classes.
We moved from a remote area in WA to Perth in June and looked at 41 primary schools in Perth online using the Better Education website, the My School website and each school's individual website. We only considered play based schools. We have our children enrolled at Hawker Park Primary and have a kindy starter next year. We would move our children to another school if the early years were not play based.
I would love to see play based learning happening more. I feel that all children could benefit from this. I am currently studying education assistant and the more I continue with my studies the more I would love to see play based learning. My daughter is currently at school and I see the programs that the teachers have to work to in the curriculum, not only does it put pressure on the teachers it also puts pressure and unrealistic expectations on the children. They are doing work well above their current age.
Children are not built to sit at a desk for hours on end, and should be able to be kids and play, learning by having fun...as Mary Poppins said " in every job that must be done, there is an element of fun, find that fun and snap, the jobs a game"...it's the same with learning, if it's fun they want to do it...and don't think it's a chore...
It is a necessity for the development of our children.
Let them play. In the rain , in the mud , in the sunshine. Let them play.
Please bring the focus of early childhood education back to the children and their developmental need for play, hands on experiences and exploration. The push down of the primary curriculum into early childhood is heartbreaking and goes against what good educators and research tells us about quality early childhood education.
Please let my very bright 5 year old play to learn so she can love school
Play is important in Kindy for their social and emotional development. Push down of the curriculum does not allow for play and it can lead to anxious children. Here's to a better future for children in Early Childhood.
As a speech pathologist I value play based learning - it is essential for the early years and early primary aged children.
My daughter benefited from play based learning in Kindergarten and continues to benefit this year in her Preprimary class. It works well for our little children and should be in every early learning classes at school.
Give our family good reason to stay in WA to raise our family. This matter is of high priority to us as we debate moving back to eastern states where there is greater access to flexible school start age. We want to see our children thrive in school and those early years of playbased learning is vital.
It saddens me the academic expectations that are placed on our children from such a young age. Bring back kindy (3-4 yr old) being about fun and socialisation, not about learning to write your name and learning to count and learning the alphabet.
This is so important for young children!!
As the mother of an active little boy ready for kindy I want to see more play based learning.
Young children should be educated through the use of play based learning, not outdated academic strategies that stifle their creativity & enjoyment of learning.
Keep up the good work Claire Wylie and all at Early Childhood Australia.
I can't believe that people think play is insignificant to a child's learning. So sad.

Kids anxiety is on the up Every child should be so excited for kindy and Pp days. But with the curriculum push Down teachers are forced to teach concepts kids aren't developmentally ready for. The government needs to listen to the teachers Any good teacher who teaches the whole child's needs will tell you we are doing it all wrong
Let them play. In the rain, in the mud, in the sunshine. Let them play.
Flexibility with age to start preschool & more play based learning in school curriculum
Absolutely should be play based for early childhood.
As an early childhood carer and educator I fully endorse children's right to play!
Let children be children <3
This is a serious issue that needs to be addressed
Prolonging play-based learning as long as possible through the early years is a basic right for all children. I fully endorse the idea of developing a WA Play Strategy as it will advocate for children to experience a necessary and important ingredient of childhood - play.
Children and adults alike, learnt a lot more when having fun :)
Play based education is vitally important. It is sad to see the curriculum being pushed down and the expectations placed on our very young students becoming highly focused on academic achievement. Let kids be kids and enjoy their childhood. They need to play to learn.
I consider playtime to be an essential for little children.
Learning at play should be embraced but all
I believe there is Too much emphasis on DI and play is not valued in the same way because it can't be measured statistically by system data. The long term benefits socially, emotionally are foregone for the short term results Academically.
Time to play is imperative-recess and lunchtime breaks, need to be longer for all children, especially those children in their early years of school.
Play is essential for children's mental health and wellbeing.
Young children learn through play
At a meeting on 30/08/2017 the Canning Vale Prekindy Management Committee agreed whole heartedly and unanimously to endorse the development of the WA Play Strategy which is in keeping with the vision and philosophy of our service
The push for more complex curriculum, testing and standards is damaging to our children and the mental health and well-being of everyone who is a part of our education system. It's time to take a step back and allow learning to be enjoyable and meaningful.
My wife is a teacher and I believe her when she says she is concerned about the well-being of this generation of kids.
Working as an assistant in a kindy, observing two different teachers, long uninterrupted play creates all the opportunities for age appropriate learning. When tested children that have played freely reach the same level of skill physically, STEM and literacy. The difference is a more socially confident and happy child.
I am an early childhood teacher but gave taken a few years away from teaching to have children. During that time I've been alarmed at how much pressure is being placed on teachers and students in academic pursuits to the detriment of play experiences. The sad thing is that we were always teaching literacy and maths and the other learning areas through play anyway. Play is the way children make sense of their world and is vitally important for young children.
Play is the most important skill our little people have!
As an educator and a parent I can attest to play's role in ensuring children grow to be lifelong learners. Play provides children with opportunities to problem solve, persist, cooperate amongst other skills that any sane society would want in their population.
Very important our kids play while learning
As an educator and a parent I can attest to play's role in ensuring children grow to be lifelong learners. Play provides children with opportunities to problem solve, persist, cooperate amongst other skills that any sane society would want in their population.

I fully endorse the idea of developing a WA Play Strategy, it is vital for our children
Children learn social skills from play
As an educator and a parent I can attest to play's role in ensuring children grow to be lifelong learners. Play provides children with opportunities to problem solve, persist, cooperate amongst other skills that any sane society would want in their population.
This needs to happen
More play based learning is critical for our kids! I fully endorse this.
Yes
Play based learning is vital for early childhood education, please ensure this is embedded in every WA early childhood classroom.
Thank you! We need to stop the formalisation of Kindy and Pre-Primary. Play all the way!
I find it kind of sad that we need to endorse a play strategy when most teachers already know how valuable it is! My fingers are crossed that our kids get more time to learn through play.
My youngest son started school so eager to learn and now he is so anxious about school he feels sick every day. I have been a class helper in kindy, Pre primary and year 1 and what I noticed the most is that everything seems rushed because teachers are having to fit so much into a day to meet standards. Children who aren't yet ready to meet the standards are being sent out of the class because they get so frustrated trying to achieve the standards that some of them aren't ready for. Punishments being handed out for not finishing work are usually missing out on recess or lunch.
Delay academic learning
Children learn by play, we would be making a huge mistake to take it away from them.
Play based is the way
More play
Our children are growing up way too quickly - let them be children in their early years with some more play. There is plenty of time for a structured learning program.
Thank you, very happy to support
It is so vital that early childhood education be play based.
Play is the way-great for every child and achievable for everyone.
Incredibly important!!
This is a vital program and needs to be protected.
It's all too much too soon for kids these days - basic to basics & play based learning
Play based learning is essential for pre school.
Please let the children play!
This has got to change!
As an Occupational Therapist and parent I am fully aware of the importance of learning through PLAY in our younger children
Child led play and learning is the best strategy to encourage our children to develop into happy resilient people
Delay academic learning
Play based discovery and learning is so very important for the development of our young students. Child centred, child led, unstructured play for discovery and learning is not only fruitful but also a fun way to explore their world.
This is great. I think at present there is almost too much structuring of children's free time instead of allowing them to be bored and use their imagination to play. I don't agree with groups that want to influence too much how children free play so as to be "inclusive" or for children to not play our traditional gender roles in case it offends someone; this is ridiculous. I feel children use play to understand the world around them and we should allow them to do that without too much interference or over guiding

This is SO IMPORTANT! As a teacher it devastates me to see everything I have learnt in my studies and that which I strongly believe in being ignored. Play based learning is the foundation of the EYLF!
Play is life
When are we going to start listening to the experts?
Most of the world's leaders and industry General Managers were raised and taught under the old system of play based learning. Kids need five years of being just kids to discover things for themselves with just a little bit of encouragement and care. My youngest child's preschool teacher also raised Labrador puppies for the WA Blind Institute to then be trained as Guide Dogs. She said preschoolers need the exact same training, consistency, rules and play.
This is so important
It's such a shame that we need a strategy for what so many of us believe and do already
My son has ADHD. He needs play based education or else he will be behind.
Children learn so much about all aspects of life through play, including social awareness and relationship building, negotiation and cooperation as well as developing skills in language, maths, science and physics in a natural and non prescriptive way. Play should always be a Key area of focus in education.
Would be lovely to see this in public schools where parents don't really have a say on the everyday running of the school. My daughter was so anxious when she started year 1 as suddenly there was no play apart from break times and she had frequent melt downs at home because the amount of home work given meant after school hours are spent doing homework.
Please review the research into play based learning, it is clear that it is best for young children and impacts greatly on the rest of their schooling years.
Follow the lead of the successful countries such as Finland. Play based education is proven to work!
Essential that Administration at Schools are trained in the value of Play Based Learning.
Fully support
I am a grandmother and former primary school teacher who feels strongly about the importance of this issue
Children learn so much about all aspects of life through play, including social awareness and relationship building, negotiation and cooperation as well as developing skills in language, maths, science and physics in a natural and non prescriptive way. Play should always be a Key area of focus in education.
It is a child's right to play and the educators obligation to provide and support play based learning experiences.
I have a daughter in kindy. Please respect her right to play and be a kid! They're only little for such a short time and play is so important.
A great initiative. We must push back the formal learning
Play is a vital way of learning in children. It also helps develop the necessary skills to ensure our children grow into well adjusted adults. Children are our future and we owe it to them to ensure they have the best opportunities in their lives, and hence their early childhood lives.
Thanks to all who are advocating for appropriate learning for young children.
Let the children play!
Kids need play to develop fully
Play is the way young children learn and develop their skills which they will use for the rest of their lives. Please let children be children <3
Way too many children struggling to sit still in class, and thus impacting on learning because they haven't had an opportunity to play and move. To name only one concern.
Early childhood is the most important stage of life for further happy, interested an independent person. If no play there is no intellectual and social learning leading to a dependent, stressing and frustrated child. Please let kids do what they do best, PLAY!!!!
Help save our children's childhood.
Play is what children do.
Children learn best through play and we must respect and support their right to do so.

Honour their play!!! It's the optimal way they learn.
Bring back play based learning
Sooner the better!
play is so so so important in all young children
Play is important to learning many life skills, it is near non existent at the school my daughter attends. The lack of play is making me consider home schooling for my other child who will be kindy age next year.
I am a very passionate EC teacher and would love to assist in any way I can.
Less pressure more play!
I definitely feel strongly about keeping play-based learning in school's curriculums for the early years.
Imagination is not something we can teach later, denying it's development through the loss of play opportunities is denying the world the problem solvers of the future! Play is essential. Make it a priority.
I totally concur and applaud this concept. I feel sad that this has become a reality and requirement.
Kids need to be kids
I run 2 prekindies and appalled at what some Kindergarten and preprimary are teaching.
Play allows children to figure out who they are and who they want to be.
Let kids be kids
I fully support the play based approach
I am a teacher with a child in kindy - please let her learn through play.
Whole heartedly agree that play based learning is a crucial element to children's Success in their education future!
It's gorgeous watching them learn but why do they have to be so overloaded and learn everything so quickly. Rushing through the day from one class to the next. There is enough of that already. I do parent help a lot and they have to do so many things in their day. It's not high school with 7 periods a day! Let them take their time learn something new and enjoy being children and making new friends.
Social and Emotional needs are not being met in Kindy and Pre-primary leading to many social issues in the later school years. We need play to learn social behaviours and how to cope with everyday life.
I fully support this initiative. The evidence is clear, let the children play!
Great cause
As an early years educator (Year One) I'm seeing more and more the vital need for play. The engagement of children when learning in this way is phenomenal and their capacity to explore, learn and teach others often blows me away.
Child lead play develops so many aspects of human development, I've seen great growth in my son in the area of building resilience, problem solving, confidence building, imagination, expressive language development, fine and gross motor skill development, and the opportunity for child lead play provides much needed emotional decompression from formal learning and teacher and parent lead time, thereby reducing anxiety and behavioural problems that young children are more often struggling with in modern heavily scheduled life. It also provides opportunities for children to create healthier relationships with each other as they get to engage and negotiate with peers in the pursuit of play.
As an occupational therapist and mother to three children, the youngest who is in pre primary, I am very concerned at the unrealistically high academic expectations of our children in EC now. This has shifted the focus entirely from play based leaning and it comes at a huge cost, especially to those who aren't quite developmentally ready. For what? Play time needs to be valued again in schools and curriculum. A strategy would support that.
Children should be able to play! We're building social, emotional and physical health of these little people! Not just their academic skills

As a mental health professional who works with children that are showing signs of mental illness, I see firsthand the effects that limited play and too much pressure on young children to "perform" academically has on their anxiety levels and development.
Let our children be children!
Endorsed by OMEP Australia, play-based learning is the most effective mode of learning and development in the preschool (0-5 years) and should be maintained.
I am absolutely appalled that PLAY the most important activity in early leaning for all areas has been degraded to this extent. I applaud getting this back on the agenda. Universities and elites are so ignorant and must be challenged.
The biggest atrocity of all is to indoctrinate our children into a system that does not value their creative expression, nor encourage their unique abilities outside of the prescribed consensus. It is more important for children aged from 3 to 8 to learn how to think for themselves rather than continually repeat information in order to perpetuate the corporate system of indentured servitude.
Children need lots of play to develop their full potential.
My child would have greatly benefited from this. He is in Year 1 now, struggling. We are having to pay for OT, And other assessments purely because he just wasn't for the curriculum as it currently stands. It's ridiculous and adds enormous pressure on family and on the child. My child has used the word "failure" a few times this year. How does a Year 1 know such a word!
My son is going into 4 year old kindy in Feb 2018 as the youngest child in the class. I want him to learn how to play, build friendships and enjoy life with his classmates so I endorse this vital initiative. Learn through play!
Value play in the early years and strongly advocate for the need for it to remain as the central focus in all early years settings.
It's so important for children to learn through play. It’s heartbreaking watching little children struggle because of the way the schooling system is currently running. They are so eager to learn but also need to have fun!
This is such an important initiative. Thank you ECA WA for continuing a long history of advocating for the rights of children.
Play is real work for young children, why are governments so quick to take away their childhood. Kindy and Pre Primary are where children learn to work with their peers before entering the more structured area of Yr 1 - 12
It has been proven that teaching to succeed at tests like NAPLAN and WALNA don't work. The research is there to back up play based learning and children are more inclined to want to learn when they are engaged and happy
Play is vital to the development of young children, necessary for all humans and it should be a breach of human rights to remove it.
Play based learning is vital, enabling children to make better personal decisions later in life. Children learn in different ways and many children learn more hands on, allowing them to be guided in directions that interest them not just rote learning
There is such a lot of research that shows play is essential for the learning and development of young children. Less and less play has resulted in worse and worse educational outcomes. It's time to change our strategy - it is clearly not working. Let's look at countries like Finland for some new ideas instead of persisting with strategies that are not working. Also the current system has resulted in significantly increased levels of stress, anxiety and depression in young children - this is not acceptable and must be rectified!
The evidence speaks for itself that play based learning in those early years is vital. If children are allowed to learn in the way that best suits them they will flourish
I strongly believe that each and every child has the right to access learning through play!!!! In my 22 years of pre-kindy, kindy and pre-primary teaching I have witnessed the remarkable discoveries that children make about themselves and the world when they are allowed to spend time engaging in playful, supportive environments. Bring back the awe and wonder!!!
Having had my own children in play based kindergarten and then some of my grandchildren, I wholeheartedly agree that play based learning plays a significant role in the lives of our children/grandchildren.
My children have benefited so much from play
Play IS learning!
Play is a child's main occupation, they learn FM, & GM skills, social skills and so much more.

Play based learning for early childhood education is imperative for children's development both now and in later years. Let our children be children for as long as possible!
Please raise the starting age for school so my little boy has the option of starting later if he's not ready at 4.5. I just don't understand why it has to be so young!
In play children learn to use their imaginations, develop negotiating skills, conflict resolution skills, challenge themselves physically and deal with frustrations at their level. Directed learning and focus on content can wait. They have 12 years of formal education to look forward to.
Play is so important for learning and it seems to be disappearing fast - early childhood education should be all about learning through play.
Let's do this, our children deserve it
Play in the early years will lead to healthier minds and bodies and more efficient learning when children are developmentally ready.
Play is the best and most natural way for children to learn and develop
Play is just so important for the developing brain to facilitate all areas of development!
Children need play!
A play-based learning environment is crucial during the early years of a child's life and increases the likelihood of successful transitions and outcomes in formal education in the future. There is substantial evidence to support this and the WA government need only look at the successful models operating in some European countries and our neighbour across the ditch, New Zealand. The wellbeing of a child needs to be at the core of any learning framework, and their human right to learn through play needs to be protected and valued.
Play in a natural setting is the best learning possible for a better future for all
I need to travel to find a Kindy programme that ensures a play based curriculum for my son.
Play based learning is essential our children's' development and wellbeing. It horrifies me that so many classrooms are lacking even basic play experiences. Being such a fundamental element to development, it needs to become a much greater focus in our schools again.
The evidence suggests that inquiry play based learning is a wonderful foundation to support student's interest, motivation and outcomes at school for years to come. In the modern world with its excessive focus on achievements, the preservation of play in the early years is even more important for our children. It allows children of all abilities to engage actively in their learning increasing their sense of self efficacy. Please take a progressive role in developing a play strategy for our children's early years.
It's so sad that in WA we have to fight to endorse play base learning for our young children. They deserve better than this!! My son spent pre kindy and kindy at Bold Park and we are forever grateful for this truly beautiful community school. Please let children play, make their own games, run, be free, get dirty, have fun, laugh, make mistakes, pick up their own pieces, be outdoors. This creates happiness and resilience! We need to nurture children's inquisition, it's part of who they are. Please respect our little people! Maggie you are a true inspiration and an amazing advocate for improving children's lives, I'm so passionate about this topic, well done and thank you!!
Fully support play based learning
If we want children to learn they need to play...it's that simple!
I feel proud to endorse this and thereby add to the growing bank of people who have genuine concern for the pressure we are putting our young students under. Let’s stop aiming at numerical results and direct Early Child education at developing children who love learning now and in the future.
The most important factor for the child care centre and primary school I chose for my child is that there is a play based approach
We need to advocate for play and remove this huge push down on formal teaching and constant formal assessments
After 18 years in the industry and as a mum I have seen the erosion of outdoor, nature and unstructured play in schools and care centres. We require a strategy to ensure children are not subjected to education milestones before they have a chance to develop naturally through play.
This is so important for the healthy development of our children. PLEASE scrap terrible testing such as NAPLAN and let kids learn and grow how they do best. This should not be restricted to people who can afford to send their kids to 'alternative' schools. Children of all backgrounds deserve to be given this opportunity, as has been evidenced in countries such as Finland and Scotland. Let Australia be progressive and give our kids the best.
Play is essential

Kindy and Pre primary kids need a good balance of play and curriculum. Teachers are too pressured to teach, teach, teach with a very cramped curriculum. In return K&PP miss out on Child Directed Play opportunities.
Children learn best through play, and it helps with happiness and social cohesion too! It's the best way to prepare our young people for later schooling.
My children are entering the school system next year and I am concerned about this subject
Concerned father
I am a teacher and see many sensory and anxiety issues in many students and can't help but wonder is this because there is too much pressure on them and not enough play!
Having two children of my own and studying early childcare education at ECU I have never been more aware of the importance of play based learning. Our teenagers are suffering from stress and anxiety and this can be combatted for our next generations if we can instil in them the necessary life skills through play as opposed to stress them through imposing academic pressure at such a young age. Our kids deserve better.
Play is a right of all children
Endorsing as an Early Childcare Educator in Queensland who is saddened by the level of importance being placed on children to "perform" academically before they're ready.
Our kids have the rest of their lives to be institutionalised. Let them play until they are old enough to have formed long-lasting memories of their time playing.
As a parent and a teacher, the lack of play and push down of formal curriculum in early childhood is of great concern. Please reverse this trend, put play back at the centre of learning and stop damaging our kid's education and futures for the sake of uninformed policy that is not backed by research!
Following your campaign closely!
Play based learning much better for kids
Play is the child's work, especially in the early years. It is best when centred on the real rather than the virtual world
I am a recently retired early childhood teacher with 40 years of teaching experience in government schools in the United Kingdom and Western Australia. I now care for my grand daughter while her mum is at work. She plays all day, interspersed with stories and going for walks My ongoing play based approach with children has always achieved consistent outcomes. Each child can develop to her/his full potential because she/he can choose 'hands-on', open ended experiences that provide opportunities to create, discover, role play, practise new skills that are suited to her/his individual interests and needs. Explicit teaching is an important part of play based learning because children cannot always make independent judgements about what they need to learn. For example road safety; parents and carers need to explicitly teach the skills but the teaching can be done in a role play, fun way! Play based learning is the mode to deliver the curriculum. It is not an end in itself! I believe that play based learning in some schools has not been implemented appropriately with some teachers allowing "free range", aimless experiences to dominate their programs. Consequently parents and administrators push for a more formal approach. Children who have the opportunity to learn in a playful way are happier, more confident and more fully engaged students!
As a child health researcher specialising in exercise health in paediatrics, and as a mother, I fully endorse a play based approach to all learning particularly within the early years. We are doing our children a great disservice with a push down of formal education.
I'm currently struggling with accepting the amount of homework and the expectations of what my son is expected to do and achieve in pre primary. I don't see it bring a positive outcome for his future development with this pressure at such a young age and hope common sense prevails and we met kids be kids and learning develop when and how it's meant to, not this current " you will fit in a box mentality". We are old for a long time.
Kids learn through play. Let's stop formalised learning and standardised testing in early childhood education. Let them play!
Play is the most pivotal strategy for learning in Early Childhood Development.
I feel this is so important, children need to play. I fully support Play based Learning.
I worry about the compulsory seated at tables, structured programs for learning in our younger children. I worry that we get caught up pushing/dragging our kids along so they can keep up with the other kids (who could also possibly be being pushed/dragged along). I worry about the lack of play area available to students once they get to year 1. I'm concerned that once my kids are in year 1 then their classes cannot fit in parent helpers or fathers/Mother's Day mornings due to the workload to be completed.

Kids need more outdoor play, construction play and free play and less screen time at school!
Teacher and educator since 1978
I have four children aged 17 down to 5. The changes I've seen in early childhood in the last 13 years as a parent and also from working as an education assistant is staggering. I fully support this Play Strategy and will be hoping for its approval.
Finland, widely recognised as the best education system in the world, has lots of play time, few tests and no national school comparison programme like NAPLAN.
The difference between my 14yr old and 10 year old's experience in Pre primary was significant. Scary to think things change so quickly!
Let our children have a childhood, not everything needs to be rushed just to suit a curriculum that was created by adults without considering the best interests of what young children really need
Back in the 80s we had 10 mins afternoon recess for quick play and drink. Now my kids come home with their lunches untouched simply because if they eat there is no time to play. Both my boys are active kids and trying to sit still and learns numbs their brains. They have fallen so far behind and I believe not being able to be as active has stifled their classroom learning ability.
Play is vital to the development of young children, necessary for all humans and it should be a breach of human rights to remove it.
Also remove or reform safe schools program.
I believe kids learn more through play then a book in their early years. This is why I chose the daycare and school I did.
The lack of recognition of the importance of play based learning in ECE causes stress and anxiety in both the children and their educators, who are being forced to formalise their teaching even though it goes against their own training, experience and philosophy.
Play is so important to every aspect of life learning for our children.
I would dearly like to see this initiative brought across Australia.
Since free play is disappearing from children's home lives, then it is even more important that early childhood education centres and Pre-primaries base their program around free play.
I just so believe in this for all children, and have nothing but admiration for all those that wish for this :-) Thank you and am in NZ, but my daughter and her family are in Perth :-)
This is a much needed initiative. There is substantial empirical evidence supporting the importance of play in children's learning, physical development, social development, and general wellbeing. The research community needs to stand together with practitioners in advocating for children's right to play!
Invest in their futures by giving them more years of play. Their brains and hearts need it. And "we" big people need more adults with bigger brains and hearts.
I think more of school should be play based and gamified, i.e. make learning addictive and the students will excel.
I don't understand what the rush in academics is. Our kids are forced into school full time by age 5/6 and need more play based learning
Thank you. A badly needed piece of advocacy.
Allow children to explore and learn in their environment
Learning through play is an essential part of any childhood and teaches children to share, to reason, assists with gross and fine motor skills.
Please allow children to be children and enjoy the magic of play for as long as possible.
We do not need to give children permission to play it should be a right which is valued and protected by the whole community.
If a child is feeling happy and safe they're more likely to be in a state where they can learn e.g. In a classroom that embraces play based learning compared to feeling stressed and anxious in a classroom where there's no play. Play is paramount to 4 and 5 year olds !!!!!!
This is essential to the success of future generations, the ability to improve out society's diminishing mental well being and to halt the increasing behavioural and academic concerns being seen across our schools.
I would also like 'allergy awareness' be part of this development as there are far too many people who have no/little knowledge in terms of recognizing an allergy reaction.

This is very much needed in WA. I hope the role of play in education is brought to the forefront.
Vital for early childhood. Teen recreational hours also desperately need safeguarding, with school timetables often that would not be tolerated in a workforce.
I support this strategy 100%
Play is fundamental to the healthy development of all children and I'm deeply concerned about the current trend of lack of importance placed on play in some Australian schools.
As a retired early childhood teacher I totally endorse the importance of play in early childhood education.
It's time we think about the mental wellbeing of these little people
Society pushes 'health and wellbeing' in the work place and destroys it in childhood. Just another thing adults get wrong. We should follow a child's example on how to live life instead of 'teaching' them all of the rubbish we think we know.
There's too much focus on teaching letters and numbers to kindy and pre-primary student. Dropping my son at kindy last week, he wanted to do a jigsaw with me before I left - there were lots of jigsaws to choose from on the shelf but ONLY ONE of them was a picture, not an alphabet puzzle!
Play is the child's way of learning in early childhood
I am an early childhood teacher and I strongly advocate the importance of play in my classroom. I follow the Walker Learning Approach and believe in the role of the 3rd teacher (Reggio). When setting up play spaces for the children in my class I believe they must be both intrinsically motivating and inviting for each child. The learning I see taking place using these approaches is wonderful and I am also learning from my class too!
I am an early childhood educator of over 20 years (have taught at both school and university level) but left the profession a few years ago to start my own business.I find it alarming that this should even be something we have to fight for! The push for so much formal learning in the early years is not supported by what research tells us. I have personally witnessed so many young children (including my own) being stressed to the point of saying things like "I don't like reading/writing". How tragic!One thing we do know is that for good learning to take place, it should be meaningful, and the learner needs to be feeling emotionally secure. There is so much more I could write about this but I'd better stop here!
As an OT working with young children, I see the effect on behaviour, self esteem and social skills when essential foundational play skills are replaced by formal learning. They are not developmentally ready to cope and will disengage.
Play based learning is the ONLY way forward in creating inquisitive children, who will become tomorrow's innovators!
The research is there! Stop screwing up our kids by making them sit and "focus" all day!! More play = better, healthier, happier, smarter kids!
Please let our kids play and learn! We need to make use of the amazing resources in and around schools so that kids remain interested in learning not just in early years but all through their learning years. Let kids explore and create their own fun just like they do at home but with guided teaching and specialist knowledge.
Play based learning is so important from my experiences with working with children for over 9 years
As a parent of a 6 year old daughter who 'likes nothing' about school, and a teacher I am passion aye that put education system must bring about a change and let kids be kids!
Children need time to develop and rushing into class style learning had been proven time and again that it is not beneficial.
It is so important for children to learn through play. They grow up soon enough.
Thank you
As a therapist working with babies and children j set 10 years I strongly support play based activities and learning for Australian children under 7 years old.
Let them play and be kids for longer. What they learn now in Kindy, I didn't learn until year 1. Children haven't changed, so why do we expect so much more from them now?
My children transferred to Bold Park this year after spending pre-primary in a school which barely paid lip service to the idea of play-based learning. The difference in their engagement with learning, their attitude to school and their very demeanour is palpable. Every child is entitled to get the kind of education they are now getting.
Bring back play

My son starts kindy next year and it worries me that he will have a negative experience due to the possibility of limited play and more focus on sitting down and academics. He is very energetic and doesn't always sit still for long. He likes to run and climb and jump etc. Thank you.
It is so obvious that children learn best when they play, not sit on a mat and "listen"... let them play!!
This would be excellent, there is not enough play in our younger years
Please let them enjoy being children - such a brief stage in their lives ☺
Sad to see the loss of play in Early Years.
Play is the highest form of research - Albert Einstein
The stress we are subjecting these children to can only be described as criminal. It does not need to happen this way, using play and a sound knowledge of child development, we have confident, happy learners with a thirst for knowledge.
Play, it's simple but so complex. The place where language and so much more is learnt!
Young children thrive in active, hands-on, play-based environments, why would we take this away from them? If we are serious about lifting the quality of education in Australia we need to start looking at countries like Finland and following in their footsteps.
We learn the most about children when we closely observe their play. This is how young children learn about the world around them.
Play is an integral part of early learning and should be embraced
Why not measure curriculum delivery of appropriate play based learning in schools? If we measure it might be valued.
Wholeheartedly endorsed.
This strategy is desperately needed to help redress the harm done by the push down from the standardised tests and the influence of touch screens on children's development.
Play based learning is essential for children's learning! We need more NOT less!
The school my son goes to, East Butler Primary, does play based learning for kindy & pp. it completely disappears for yr1. I would like to see more in yr 1. My son struggles to sit still & concentrate & while I realise this is necessary I also feel being constantly told off or sent to time out because of this is detrimental. At 6yrs old he often cries at having to go to school because he gets in trouble. He's not perfect but if he's trying his best & still gets into trouble then he's just going to fall behind.
My children go to a school that follows play based learning (Kathy Walker). Having two young sons (5-7yrs) I was very concerned how they would adapt when attending full time school. My youngest son in particular loves to play and hates to sit and concentrate. However in a play based learning environment he has flourished.
Children learn so much through play such as teamwork, sharing, negotiating, caring, inclusion, fine & gross motor skills to name a few. It is crucial for play based learning to be the large part of their curriculum. They will get enough structure and discipline when they get older.
Non agenda play is early childhoods most important form of learning
From a pre-service teacher at university; what we are taught and what the research tells us helps young children learn is worlds apart from what actually happens in the early years classrooms. I have witnessed firsthand children losing interest in learning and determining school as boring as early as pre-primary - there is something very wrong when this is the majority of the case. How is this the "norm" when the research and what pre-service teachers are taught is not aligned?
Play based learning for less than 6yo has proven time and time again to prevent adult anxiety & depression. Child Psychologists fully and thoroughly have discussed this matter. Northern Europe practices this and have nothing but success. Children should be children, giving them unnecessary stresses of being tested can only do more harm. Children <6 are not equipped for homework. Children learn through structured and unstructured play, being bored gives them a chance to process what they have learnt. Continuous stimulation especially with tech devices have only proven futile in long-term. We are creating unrealistic ideals for our next generation and this is not acceptable. We are raising humans not robots. Let our children play!
Play is the work of children
let the kids play
Play is the way young children learn. It's the most important thing they need to be doing! Let them play.

At a meeting on 30th August, the management committee of Canning Vale a prekindy voted to endorse the WA Play Strategy
I work in early childhood and are horrified at the changes in the last few years. The children are coming through to year 1 lacking gross motor skills, social skills and many are already tuning out to learning.
Play is an essential element of Early Childhood learning and it is fast disappearing from our classrooms. With the rise of anxiety in young children we need to ensure the push down of curriculum stops and ensure that children have time and space to learn through play.
Change is needed immediately.
It's so important! Why are we ignoring the research?
As a teacher and parent I cannot speak highly enough of the value of unstructured play and the depth of learning that comes from it.
I work with families and children under 3, I see frequently that children need time to develop their skills. I also see that they develop their skills quicker when it is fun, play is the first step to learning in all areas of development. We should have a strategy to help support these skills.
Play based learning is vital for our children
Support play based learning
Stop the formality in Early childhood, stop the pressure for teachers to pump out sad, clever (on paper) kids. Critical thinking, problem solving, fine and gross motor and kindness should be the priorities cx
Play based learning has strong, proven benefits. Strict & structured learning does not need to be pushed down on to your youngest minds
There are so many overseas examples of how this approach benefits children and society in the long-term. Our future adults will have better mental health as a result and will be so thankful if you change the current approach!
It is vital for kids' development
Such a push down of curriculum, particularly in PP. These children need to time to grow and play, without having to worry about reading and writing.
Play is so important towards future learning
I believe play based learning is important to a child development
As an educator I have seen the erosion of play based learning in early childhood facilities replaced by sit still, work at a table on organised activities focusing on number, writing & reading. It's about time children should be allowed to be children. If you make learning fun, children will learn.
I support this 100%
Early learning for young children should be play play and more play that's how they learn
We are in desperate need of changes to early childhood programs.
To many kids being put in their grownup pants too soon. Let kids be kids for longer. Look at the countries that don't start formal schooling till much later, the kids are far and above getting better results when they have been allowed to learn through play, then be put into more formal classroom learning.
Bring back play!
Play-based education is possible and vital for the early years! Let us embrace the children's love for play and allow them opportunities to enjoy school and learning rather than dread it!
It is terrifying to see where early childhood is heading with the push down of the curriculum. It is imperative that an appropriate play based curriculum is implemented.
As a parent I'm concerned about an over reliance on technology in Early Childhood education at the expense of experiential play based learning. As a landscape architect I'm concerned about the often sterile education environments designed to make maintenance easy rather than being focused on creating spaces which encourage play.
Play is critical to a child's language learning and development of social skills.
It is through play students learn the skills they need for life. We don't need a head start on academics, they need practise of safe risk taking, impulse control, patience, sharing and team work. Without these academic lessons will be far less successful.

Please, let children play, it's their work and right.
As a primary school teacher (three years getting it right literacy specialist) who has taught over thirty years, I strongly feel that It is crucial to raise the status of play based learning in particularly, in the early years of schooling.
I have 3 young children so I'm very passionate this needs to happen asap!
As an Education Consultant and grandmother to a 5 year old boy in PP I have seen firsthand the need for a strategy like this! The formal education expectations for 5 year olds is not in the best interest of these children or their future education and life.
A wonderful idea! Let's keep defining play too - this word is open to such a variety of interpretations ☺
Please!!! Back to basics for our most vulnerable...let them play laugh enjoy socialising.... the importance of which cannot be undermined!!
Children must have the right to play. It is a critical element to learning.
Full support from a mum of 2 young boys!
Child led play is vital to the health, well being, and development of young children.
Play all the way!
Play is so crucial to children's health development and well being, please bring back play based learning in particular nature play
All 3 of my children have anxiety related to having formal education too young. Too much pressure is put on them at school- Especially for those more immature and/or with learning difficulties!
Play is so important to a successful childhood and is paramount to raising resilient fully rounded children who grow up to have diverse interests
Our children deserve and need the right to play! The push down of structured learning is proven not to work, and I want my kids to learn through play for as long as possible
Developmental play is critical to nurturing creative thinking and aids development.
There is so much stress in young children's lives these days manifested by adults and by the education system. There appears to be an urgency for kids to learn formally, to be tested too often and moved into new areas of learning before areas taught have been mastered. Readiness to learn is being ignored and learning through play eroded due to a ridulous urge by educators to teach to levels that far exceed the abilities of most kids. Kids learn through play. They learn to share, make friends, to communicate, mathematical concepts, self worth, self regulation, self efficacy, special awareness and much much more. Children do not learn these concepts tied to a classroom chair from the age of 4. Their chemical composition does not allow them to sit still for ridiculous lengths of time nor should they have to. They need to move and play, to discover the world by themselves through teacher guidance not by teacher instruction. Children are not puppets to be drilled and manipulated by our education system. They are young minds and bodies that need to be protected and allowed to be developed slowly and carefully not bombarded with information as is now happening in our schools. Information overload is damaging our kids. For the sake of our kids Bring Back Play into their lives or future generations will suffer from the consequences of what educators have done to them. We already have stressed kids as a consequence of pushing them too early. They will turn into unhappy stressed adults who will wonder where their childhood went. What we are doing, when you consider it, is actually child abuse.
After working nearly thirty years in early childhood education I have witnessed the decline in play based education as our system pushes towards more formal learning and unfortunately more stress being put on and exhibited in our little ones, many of whom are not ready for this type of learning. In the past we used play based learning to assist with social and emotional skills. Also many opportunities for creative and imaginative play and tactile hands on experiences, stimulating curiosity and imagination which in my opinion produced a much happier child who was then able to embrace their further learning experiences at their own pace without feeling pressured and stressed.
Learning can be interesting and engaging!
As a Speech Pathologist I see so many children who don't have the oral language skills needed for formal learning. Without the opportunity for play, these children are being forced into "learning" situations they are unprepared for and are being setup for a lifetime of struggle.
I think children especially boys benefit more from hands on experiences and need to be moving more.
Play is important to avoid behavioural and social issues as these children grow into young adults.

Well done to the team at Early Childhood Australia (WA) on putting this together. Let’s keep promoting play in the Early Years.
As a mother of kindy age children and a teacher I strongly believe that play based education is integral to the development of well rounded children.
Play is a child's basic right. I'm an educator in a Kindy and an educational Leader. I worry for the well being, health and education of all children and am happy to endorse and be an advocate for the right for children to play.
There is more than enough evidence and research to affirm that play based learning is critical in early childhood. The notion of this being phased out rather than rigorously encouraged is unthinkable!
Play is terribly important, not only for humans but all animals. Watch "The Power of Play " by National Geographic.
Please listen to and act to ensure the suggestions are made effective for the future happiness of our children
Let kids be kids, learning through play is MORE IMPORTANT in the younger years and allows kids to be socially and emotionally setup for future activities
Playback learning is extremely important, particularly for tougher children. I know that my son always calms and learns and is so happy when playing, particularly outside.
As a parent and a Social Worker in out of home care, I'm really concerned about the disappearance of play in early primary education.
Play is so important, this must be impressed upon all who seek to legislate and direct learning curriculums. Play learning must be encouraged and protected.
Play based learning is essential for our youngest children. Social and emotional skills learnt in these settings along with other intellectual and creative benefits are vastly important for our kids!
It's quite obvious that more play actually helps learning and integration as per the results from other countries employing heavily play time school days. We should keep up with what's better for our kids and their future.
As an early childhood teacher and mother, I understand and endorse the vital place that play based learning has in our children's lives.
This has worried me for some time and as an OT I am seeing a lot more anxious children and anxious parents
I have seen the difference of engagement for my son through play vs table-based and outdoor vs indoor learning. It is internationally proven that such formal early learning doesn't guarantee strong academic results. It also places extra strain on families and educators.
When children miss out on play our society misses out on growing resilient, compassionate and well-adjusted human beings!
In early childhood, children learn through hands on play, NOT worksheets and tests. Please let them play!
I was shocked at the expectations the curriculum puts onto a pre primary student. My Child attends an independent WA primary school. It's seems like there has been a shift where what was once introduced in year one is now an expectation of pre primary in the hope that this will improve literacy and numeracy. Unfortunately my child is just not quite ready to write and read at this level, other are, but he is not quite ready. This did at first make me feel like he was far behind where he should be but in reality he is only 5! He is interested in the world around him and asking the right questions etc The quality peer review research needs to be looked at, showing that play based learning assists the child best with their learning. Not the current knee-jerk reaction of teaching more earlier, as a panacea for higher naplan test scores in year 3.
Play based learning is important for a child’s development. It gives them the start they need to find their path in their future lessons
Let children be children.
Learning through play is so important, yet the curriculum push down is seeing children as young as 3 pressured to achieve literacy and numeracy targets. Hands on, integrated and fun learning is such a vital part of early childhood.
Having worked in the early years as an assistant for 17 years and a mother of five now grown up children and a grandmother of 7 I have personally witnessed the effect of pushing children too early to write without the developmental stages being considered in each child...my biggest question to teachers that feel they new to push is What's the rush??? Let them play and develop naturally...
Children learn best through play!
Children learn so much through play which cannot be underestimated. Let's protect play and allow children to be children.
Childhood is so short. Why are we cramping the imagination and joy that is the gift of childhood play.

Let's build core values first through play not continue to push academic structures younger and younger
Please...let our children play!
As a mother of five I have seen our kindergarten and pre-primary classes lose the magic that it takes to engage young children and start them on a healthy start to an enquiring future.
Play is vital for learning it saddens me to see so much pressure on our little ones, please bring it back into our schools so our children can flourish
It is through play that young children learn
As a parent and an educator I strongly believe in play based education for children.
I fully support and would love to see this strategy in any school and feel strongly that it's what our children need and is a very natural way of learning-let's get back to basics please.
Let our children be children.
absolutely agree with this erosion of Play Learning - which desperately needs to be brought back into the school regime asap
As a speech pathologist, I am particularly concerned about the increased academic focus in the early years of schooling, which is taking away from the valuable, irreplaceable time that children of that age should be spending on play-based learning.
I believe it is essential to the health and well being of young children that they experience play-based learning. I have a grandchild in pre-primary, and one going to kindergarten next year, and another one aged two. I am very interested in this topic.
Mother of 2 boys, oldest currently kindy, youngest kindy 2019
Our children need this right now, please do not delay.
Fully support this strategy as an EC teacher and interested in being involved in research initiatives in WA
It is vital that play is the key part of children's learning in the early years. The rest of their learning is already so regulated.
As a retired Early Childhood teacher, I fully endorse what should always be the way to function in an early childhood setting. So much is learnt through play and example and so little from being told what to do in confined spaces!
The lack of play and force down of curriculum is not allowing for the whole child to develop. We might be building minds but we are weakening bodies, emotions and social skills.
The importance of play is incredibly important in the learning process not only for learning skills and concepts but to develop a love of learning. If learning through play was extended up into primary school there would be many more eager learners.
Play based learning is what is best practice in the early years of education...in fact all children learn best this way
Play is important schools are losing that with the push to learn too much at once.
I believe this is crucial to develop strong, creative thinkers and create a confident and forward thinking future generation.
My son is in kindy and I feel learning expectations are way too high on these little ones.
We need more play based learning as children are struggling now more than ever
Play is a crucial part of every child's life.
This is crucial for our children, they NEED to play
Play = social emotional development = happiness=: willingness to learn.
This is critical for young children and their development. It should be common sense to increase this way of learning throughout Australia
I support 100% a WA play strategy in our children's early development. The research speaks for itself.
What Maggie said!
This is definitely needed!! Especially in WA!

Children need play. Children learn through play.
As an experienced Early Childhood Education Assistant, who has worked for 25 years full-time in the Catholic School System, I have personally witnessed the erosion of play-based learning and the detrimental effects on young children of increasingly, academically-structured and assessment-driven curriculum. Put bluntly, politicians and education bureaucrats are stealing a generations' childhood.
I have been working in the early years for 15 years and in my studies learnt how important play based learning is in those years but have seen it slowly pushed out of our schools.
Play is the key.
I think this is an issue right through primary school and into lower secondary. The curriculum is too content heavy and students are not given opportunities to be experimental and creative in their learning.
The WA Play Strategy is a NEED, not a want!!
There is no substitute for the thinking, problem solving, resiliency and social development that occurs through play. Language is developmentally at a crucial stage in early childhood and the best provocation to expose, motivate and build vocabulary and language is through play. I am delighted to support any endeavour that shouts to the decision makers that Play Is Real Authentic Learning.
I'm a primary school teacher currently teaching pre-primary in WA.
Is my EC Philosophy since the 90s based on my qualifications and experience!
Don't dismiss play as idle time wasting. It is so important for children to develop early concepts and skill.
PLAY is, has always been and will continue to be THE best way for children (and indeed adults) to learn
Play is paramount!
Protecting children's childhoods is essential to their well being.
Play play play. Never stop.
I am witnessing a significant increase in anxiety in teenagers that I teach particularly in the last 10 years
For the sake of our next generation of thinkers and inventors and for those
For those scientists and thinkers that are tortured by chalk and talk...and sit still!
As a mother of two I most definitely endorse play based learning
Letting them play benefits all of us.
I think it is no coincidence that the standard of education has dropped since introducing OLNA and more focus out in testing with NAPLAN. Not all kids 'test well' but that does not mean they are re not learning. I also think it is no coincidence that anxiety related mental health disorders are exploding since the pressure has increased from kindy/pre primary and play reduced.
Please give our little ones the best start in life, by implementing play based education in their earliest years.
Play is extremely important.
4-8 year olds are not designed to sit at a desk and write all day. They should have opportunities to play and run every 45 mins for 20 mins.
A WA play strategy would go far in protecting children's rights to a childhood. We need to recognise the importance of this age in regard to fundamental principles for positive development, health and wellbeing for both the individual and in turn the whole country. A deficit in play is and will continue to be detrimental to our country's well being should we not protect the child's right to play.
As a teacher of 35 years experience in primary teaching education of deaf and disabilities education, and a mother of four children I know that play is the first form of learning. It is also evident in adult learning as have seen as a TAFE lecturer for ten years. I also see how readily my adult children play games in family social events. That is where we learn and consolidate new skills.

Play is the way!
I have worked in Kindergarten for over 15 years as an education Assistant I hate what I see now. What is expected of four year olds. When do they get a chance to be children and learn through play. We need a change.
Please secure play based learning
Play=social interaction=education =literacy =self discovery =wholeness
I think it is very important for children to be children, and have time to play, and I am not happy that the curriculum is being pushed down and there is pressure on children to be learning earlier. It doesn't make a lot of difference to the end result whether they learn to read at 5 instead of 6 for example.
I would like children to stay home until the year they turn 7 - learning from older children, parents, grandparents and other people and IMPORTANTLY the environment. Sadly our society has changed so much this won't happen. BUT at the very least, children should have unstructured play - inventive play - making up their own role play and scenarios. Get them out of the classroom in all weather. There will never be a more inventive mind than one that learned through physical experience.....
As an early childhood teacher I see too many kids struggling with the pressure of the push down curriculum and it's not resulting in any more success. We need to do what we know is best - playbased learning!
Let the children play - for love's sake!!!!
I think it should go past 8 years of age too
We need to follow in the steps of other countries that have much better educational outcomes and encompass the importance of play
I am a parent and early childhood teacher and I've seen first hand how play makes children more happy and skilled and independent thinkers.
It is incredible that we need a strategy to raise the status of free play which should be a natural part of childhood and not impeded by interference from the state.
As a mother with a 5 year old who already hates school, suffers anxiety and is ridiculed by classmates for her reading and writing skills, I am appalled by the current system! Children at this age should not feel shame for learning through play!
Much needed in WA
Completely agree
My two eldest children attended a kindergarten in South Australia with a strong outdoor play-based learning focus. Both children have extremely good numeracy and literacy skills, and are exceling academically in their early years of primary school. I'm so grateful for the opportunity for them to be immersed in this culture of learning through experimentation & risk-management, being allowed to make mistakes, digging in dirt, playing with water, climbing trees and being deeply aware of and connected with the world around them.
Unstructured play is no doubt the best way for young children to learn and develop. This play, taking place in natural surroundings, holds multiple benefits for children.
Play is children's work. It is how they make sense of their world. Play is essential for children's optimal, holistic development. Let's stop hurrying and placing so much pressure on our young children and allow them to just learn through child-centred, rich, meaningful play experiences!
Play is the right of every child and is the most important work a child does. Children learn through exploring, trying stuff out, being free to experiment, observe, become confident and competent when in their play world. Schools need to trust a child's inbuilt need to play and competence in knowing what they need to learn in the moment. To many interfering curriculum driven adults with poor understanding of how young children learn and develop leading schools in WA.
Play is also good for stress relief regardless of age. We are making our children sick by our expectations of their performance.
Play is absolutely critical for language, cognitive, Social-Emotional and other skill development in children. The absence of this in favour of structured learning within classrooms is an oversight which must be addressed and protected.
As a Mum of two little girls (3 and 6 years) I believe play based learning is so so important. I watched my (then) 5 year old struggle at the start of the year adjust to year 1 where she had to sit for long periods and work from text books etc. They are still so little and play is so important.

I have an 8yo and a 5yo and a new baby due this year; this is a pressing issue for our family as we seek to raise healthy, resilient children equipped to maintain sound mental health in what is already a very stressful world.
I believe play and interacting children with one another is very important exercise healthy for them socializing is even more healthier not just work work work
test
Play hits all the right buttons- exercise, early social skills, coordination, time to explore their imagination & learn empathy towards others. Best of all away from electronic screens.
The irony of all this emphasis on formalised learning in order to raise educational standards is that teaching children to perform rote learned tasks and skills does nothing to foster genuine intellectual development (which we well know to be the result of open ended exploration, questioning and play) and hence results in the actual dumbing down of our children!!!
I am an ECE educator in Kindy who is very passionate about play, outdoor play and nature play. I agree the push for formal education is happening earlier and earlier and play is not valued enough. However, I also believe that it is possible to achieve a balance between teacher initiated structured learning and play based learning for the overall well-being of children. Teachers do have to be trained to balance time to do both, and to do both well. One of my big concerns is the long-term impact of taking away the right of play from our children. We have too many burnt out teenagers and children with mental health problems, I believe the medical profession need to get on board with this too and push the right of children to play.
I am an Early Childhood Teacher who also recognises the importance of evidence-based approaches to instruction including explicit teaching. However, I don't believe that play and explicit teaching need be mutually exclusive and optimal results are achieved by using healthy doses of each.
Learning should be structured to enhance the learning process. WA Play Strategy does that.
- Parent of three young children - Teacher (currently non-practising) - Independent Public School Board Member - P&C Member - Local Playgroup Secretary
How come it's got to this? Time for a reality check humans
Awesome stuff.
This is something I have had concerns about for a few years now. School has become too structured so the children are missing out on "play learning". Social skills need developing too...& "play" shown at this school will go a long way to achieve social skills & motor skills.
Sad to see that the "values of play" have been forgotten.
Children learn more life skills from play at this age than making mistakes with pencils and paper that can just be erased.
I love it never hurt me to be a kid. The DOE push far too hard and forget they are kids! The varying learning abilities of every one of them often leaves the strugglers still struggling, to find the switch via this strategy is an awesome idea! Mum of a son diagnosed with ADHD & ODD. My little man is so full of life and curiosity he is a hands on learner always in the shed building or the yard climbing trees, tanks, riding his bike push and motor to building a really complex farm or bike track in the dirt for his toys. To have schools implement this WA strategy to guide their day I'm sure would benefit them all.
I believe that well facilitated free play in a nature based environment both in and out of the classroom is vital for supporting children's development across all developmental domains.
This is a really important strategy for Western Australia and I am fully supportive of the issues raised in the discussion paper.

I have recently retired from My teaching career due to the frustration of being constantly confronted with the schools Admin staff being total unaware of appropriate Early Childhood Education and children's development. It was difficult to communicate these concerns as the reaction was that education had moved on to direct instruction. To quote the Principal "if we waited for children to be ready we may still be waiting in High School". pressure from the Principal to reduce outdoor time, align the only outdoor time to recess and lunch as per the primary school classes. Class time was suggested that it be organized in small group sessions with the children rotating every 15 minutes, children having no opportunity for self direction in their learning. Aide time in Pre Primary being reduced and allocated to other sections of the school. The Curriculum mentions 'Play', but it has been my experience over the last 10 years that Administration staff have no idea what this looks like in a classroom. Younger staff were recruited to the school so that they could 'be moulded' to the ideas of the Administration. They were told to do as they were asked or they wouldn't have a contract the next year. The School that I taught at has changed dramatically over the last 10 years due to the influence of the Administration. Their obsession with Naplan results and lack of understanding on Early Childhood Development caused a pushing down of the formal curriculum in the School Plan. These unrealistic and inappropriate outcomes for our school resulted in poor outcomes for particularly boys in our Early Years. The frustration of having to implement a program to the best of your ability for the sake of the children, whilst knowing it is inappropriate (but the rest of the school is doing it) is soul destroying. In my experience, when I spoke up I was humiliated in front of the staff by Admin. I decided to retire after a 39 year teaching career and am so grateful to see the work being done to restore 'play' to the Early Childhood Arena.
I have already submitted a response earlier but would just like to comment that about 10 years ago I attended a work shop where the Presenter was speaking about how early childhood needed to change. Her comments were that all "the fluff" (and by this she was referring to painting, playdoh and craft activities) were not to be allowed in the Pre Primary program in the mornings. I believe this woman was supported by the Principals Association and in my opinion has done enormous damage to how Early Childhood programs have changed. She is still part of the system.
All the best for this very important play strategy.
We have Kindy Curriculum Guidelines & EYLF but teachers are forced to adhere to school based curriculum decisions. Force Principals to embrace true play based learning.
Play is crucial to education
Play is vital to all children's development.
In this technological world our kids grow up way too fast. play-based learning is essential for healthy minds and bodies.
Play is so important.
I think this is of utmost importance, and can only be a benefit for WA, its community and its children.
I am a teacher and so know they learn best through play! Thanks xx
100% behind this strategy.
Play based learning is our future
Research suggest play is the best way to learn for all children 0-8 years. Allow our Western Australian Children the right to play based learning.
I am a speech pathologist and early childhood educator running my own family daycare. The need for the early years to be based around play based learning is huge! I have seen some early educators, both due to lack of child development knowledge and good management, make young children 2-3 years sit at tables, trace their names (when the can barely control a pencil) and expect a classroom like environment. This is totally wrong and breaks my heart that children miss out. Education on child development and play based learning should be engrained into the training of these 'childhood educators '. My son is in pre-primary at a fantastic school where play based learning is clearly evident. Other schools however are sending pre-primaries home with homework (other than a book) and spending too much time sat at tables.
There is a need to support and advocate for children's right to play, both as part of an education setting as well as after school, in the local area. Opportunities for play should be able to be accessed independently by children in their immediate neighbourhood.
I'm absolutely committed to children learning through play. But true play based learning where children are able to direct their own learning at their own pace based on their interests.
Play is essential in kids social, physical and emotional development
The current trend of "3 year old kindy" being promoted as if children are missing out if they don't attend is concerning as parents aren't being informed that all learning at this age should be play based

Please ensure Play-based learning continues to form a large part of learning
Nearer to nature everyday
As an early childhood school we are a huge advocate for play and would love to see a strategy developed to help other schools where a push down approach has been adopted to be more like us where we advocate for the children's right to play.
As a parent of a 3 year old I am anxious about sending him to kindergarten next year. He is a little boy with big ideas who has a thirst for knowledge about how the world around him works. I have many playgroup friends whose children have started school in the previous years and many of them don't enjoy it, it appears to be causing stress and anxiety on very young children. Children learn through play and this push down curriculum is extremely worrying
Learning through play NOT worksheets
I believe that play helps children to grow in many different ways and should necessarily be included as part of school learning
I had the opportunity to play all year in my PP class, I was reading and writing by the end of that year. I want all children to have the same great PP year that I had.
Thank you!
I have gone from a sincere play supporter to be drowned in the system that stifles the natural development of children in the early years through play .... social and emotional connections need to be more valued in our education system that is letting the children down and destroying their love and enthusiasm for learning !!!!
Learning through a play based approach is essential to our early childhood classrooms, it enables our children to develop skills for learning, a love of learning, essential social/emotional skills and the confidence to take risks.
I volunteer at a kindergarten and it pains me to see the difference between a Swiss kindy and an Aussie kindy. Playing is children's work
Looking forward to hearing more.
Play Matters!
It's time to put PLAY at the top of the priority list for Early Childhood Education and indeed all Education
Education
Play=best ever learning
Play is important work for our children, they learn so much about themselves, others and the world around them. Play is learning, developing so many skills it is shameful to rush them.
I am an early childhood teacher and with the continued push down of curriculum and no play, young children do NOT develop social, emotional development skills appropriately, leading to poor social and language skills, inappropriate behaviours to other children and adults as well as told they are weak academically, they can't do this and can't do that because they are only developing their skills at a NORMAL rate like children are meant to!!! I didn't study early childhood to assemble broken robots into society. I am here to educate unique little personalities that can explore, experience, problem solve, engage, inspire and guide them in developing skills that will amaze their selves to be the best that they can be and live a wonderful, for filling and happy life in society!!
I am an early childhood teacher in WA who is lucky enough to work in a school that promotes and implements a true play based approach to learning. It breaks my heart knowing that there are young children in the same state and country who are being deprived of this vital element of childhood.
I have worked in early childhood for 36 years this year. I have never felt so dismayed at the lack of developmental and pedagogical practice I see. Let's turn it around and advocate for children.
Let then learn through play!
I would like to see us embrace more of the Scandinavian education philosophy and systems. The American system has been broken for years with many experts now critiquing the American system which we seem to be following. The Canadian institute of research has been supporting Child Australia and ARACY, it's imperative that we refocus society and begin to implement. The best and latest research which is not supportive of a push down of academics but rather supports creative play to lay the foundations for higher thinking skills. Though I understand that the government does not embrace new generations of creative innovative thinkers rather drug addled

dysfunctional units easy to control and manipulate. However humans are hard wired for connection and attachment.
Play a child right
We must stop this push down so that no more children are damaged
Learning through play is so important to me and how I have raised my child. We play kitchens and in only this game she has been exposed to-but not limited to-fractions (cup measures), safety (cooking temperatures), hygiene (wiping down surfaces) as well as language acquisition and general social interaction. There are many years for students to sit at a desk and write. Let's make learning suited to a child's level of development and interest.
Children learn so much from play and early childhood is becoming too formalised and structured.
It will be great to see wonderful ideas for the kids
Let them be young!
Let’s stop subjecting our children to corporate culture in education.
Learning through play is so important. Leave assessment out of early childhood schooling. There enough to come in subsequent schooling years.
Wholeheartedly support this, play is so important for our children. Our kids are thrust into formal education at such a young age, let’s be sure it’s being delivered in a way that supports their future years of schooling. Free play is so important for their development, as young learners and also as functional people. More time to play in early childhood education please!
Please give children their childhood back!
Children in the early years need play.
It’s so important for children to learn through play. They need a channel to explore their creativity at a young age
As a kindergarten teacher I cannot believe the number of children I am teaching this year who are delayed in one of their developmental domains. The best way I see to assist them to reach their full potential is to teach them through play...not through the push down of academics. Childhood is only short, we should honour it rather than rushing through it.
I strongly feel that the importance of play in early learning is being eroded by structured learning at too young an age adding to anxiety and self esteem issues in later years.
Very passionate about play in young children’s lives.
We must protect the children's opportunities to play and process their works and learning in safe unstressed environments at home and at school. The most successful educational programs value play as the core of learning in early childhood. The provision of safe, play spaces indoors and importantly outdoors is a fundamental responsibility of the adults in every community. Through play children learn emotional, social, physical and cognitive concepts that help firm their construct for a healthy life. The unhealthy obsession with measuring a very narrow portion of learning in the early years is horribly unbalanced and leads to undue stress on children and unreasonable expectations beyond their developmental capacity. Over forty years I have observed the erosion of early childhood in our society and am concerned fir our future. The mental health issues and anxiety associated with this are well documented and horrifying. Play is vital, a child's right and we must protect them.
I have committed to play based learning in my classroom this year with full backing from my Principal.
As an Education Assistant and as a parent myself, I feel play it is so important in young children's (all children's) development and social skills to endorse as much play as possible. This encourages gross motor skills, social skills and interaction with others and encourages independence.
Let our little people play!
Children need a childhood, play based learning is vital to developing social, emotional and resilience. Too many children are anxious and not coping as it stands!
At my school we have fought for our pre-primaries to have a longer play time, but our principal insists that we are on the exact same timetable as the rest of the school.

I agree completely however it is imperative the educator has a comprehensive understanding of childhood development in the early years and how little children learn
Children need play to gain healthy emotional development. The world needs play!
Our students lack social skills and resilience. Play based learning allows growth in these areas.
There is extensive research and evidence to state play is essential and vital to the successful development of children. It provides children the opportunity to make sense of their world, and emotions, consolidates learning, learn essential and healthy communication skills, regulates emotions, and develops healthy relationships. These are just some of the essential building blocks play offers in developing a whole rounded and soundly developed individual. It is vital!!!
Play is such an important part of all childhood, it is essential for children to learn, explore and develop in so many ways. It is a must in all early childhood settings.
Please, oh please let children have time to equalise their core foundation of being as an essential educational foundation to future curriculum.
Play is essential to create minds that can innovate for the future. Support the creation of well rounded, lateral thinking human beings of the future!
As the mother of both a mainstream and special education child, I value social skill development as a priority over academic results.
Our children need to play
Children need our protection in the early years, with time to develop much needed skills for their future! Play based learning is the only way to do this! No anxiety, depression only many diverse opportunities to learn skills and concepts in meaningful ways!!
Our students lack social skills and resilience. Play based learning allows growth in these areas.
It saddens me to see children missing chunks of social and emotional skills as play has been forfeited to formal structured learning.
Children need to learn play skills as well as classroom skills. It is important children enjoy outdoor and messy play as we did as children
It is terrifying to see so many young children sitting and being talked at when they could learn so many more skills by interacting and playing.
I am highly concerned about direction Early Childhood Education us being steered in WA. Something needs to be done!
Our children are being let down. They are being set up for failure in a most horrible way. Watching little ones crying in frustration and suffering anxiety with no control of their learning, all in the name of ‘My School’ or NAPLAN is heartbreaking. The learning is not relevant, not purposeful and absolutely not engaging. They do not feel safe and nurtured. They feel scared and a lack of autonomy. As do teachers who know it’s all wrong. Children need to move, interact, explore and discover the world they live in. A child’s work is play. Let them get on with it.
Let them play! Xx
It’s time to stand up for young children and be supported in delivering a programme that reflects our understanding of how they best learn and develop.
This is imperative
Thanks so much. So needed
This is so important!
As a junior primary teacher I've noticed a drop in the love of school and a drop in basic skills since the curriculum has become more formalised and less play based for the pre's. They need the language and social skills that come from a play based program.
As an Early Childhood Educator and parent I strongly believe in play based learning. Play is a basic right of all children and schools need to make time and allow time for children to be and to play.
Please, it’s my kid’s future you are messing with.
More play. Less regimentation = creative adventurous kids.
Support play based learning and less standardised testing in the Early Years
Let our kids be kids enjoy their childhood with play - what better way to learn

ECE is far too important to the development of all children and our future generations to just use it for data! Please allow all children to have the 'research proven' learning opportunities of a play based, discovery laden , exploratory filled educational learning environment that they deserve. Let's develop independent thinkers and grow their love of life long learning! They are your future - don't you want the best?
Totally agree with your stance on the importance of play in ECE I have been teaching this age group for over 20 years and the expectations on teacher and child have changed drastically and not for the betterment of the child unfortunately.
Childhood is so short that we do not need to fill it with formal education too early. Children need to learn through a play based system. Look at the Norwegian Education System for inspiration.
Children have enough tests later in life and they learn so much in play maths conversation sharing and understanding
Children learn through play and discovery. When they are ready, their learning is exponential - forcing reading and writing before they're ready just adds further stress on the child, parent and teacher.
Pushing the curriculum down is damaging our children's education in the long run. Please let our children be children>
I'm ashamed of what this country is doing to the next generations. So much pressure is unnecessary and placing kids on a spiral towards anxiety and depression. I urge our state govt to critically examine the current system and make changes asap.
My child has gone from a confident happy 4 year old to am anxious bedwetting kids that is having night terrors most nights since starting fulltime pre primary it is heartbreaking to see how much he is supposed to learn and complains his head hurts at night. Please change the way it is and let them be children from longer.
My son is coming home from year 1 with so much homework. He doesn't want to do it after a day at school where he sits at his desk all day. He is 5
Stop the anxiety this teaching method is causing
The push towards formal instruction in the early years goes against everything that early childhood education is all about. Learning and discovering through exploratory play while the instructors seize upon the interests of the children to ensure their learning is relative and meaningful to their little lives. Pushing them forward only creates anxiety and behaviour issues because they are simply not ready.
Learning through play for my kids please!!!
I am horrified at what some ECE teachers are being told to do with and to their children. We once had an ECE culture in WA with appropriate resources for children and teachers that was looked up to by many other states. Now we are almost underprivileged and to be pitied. We have to stand up and be heard. We have to be advocates for young children and ensure they get a strong play based program in their schools and centres so that they can be successful in life and have the necessary skills to survive and thrive. s
Play is vital!!!!!
I was an early childhood teacher for many, many years and do not like the move away from learning through doing and interacting with concrete materials. There are far too many worksheets and too much time sitting at desks.
Play base learning is so important for our kids. x
I have a vague memory of a philosopher who stated 'give me a point in the world and I will change the world'. These pre school years are the most important developmental years of any human. Why they are ignored is beyond me!
Nature play and growing food and gardens so many learning aspects also builds resilience, caring, self esteem, sense of belonging, great for mental and physical health so many wonderful benefits

Children are Children! They are supposed to be 'Childish'! It's what defines them. My kids learn MORE about Maths by throwing and catching a ball than they do from writing anything down, OR by sitting and listening to their teacher. My kids learn MORE about English, and Creativity playing 'pretend' than they do from learning about grammar. All these things can wait until their brains are at the stage of development! LET THEM PLAY! LET THEM LEARN THROUGH PLAY! Let them LIVE the stories that they write. Let them be outside in the sunshine rather than in, sitting on the mat. Little muscles need to be developed, not sat still! And let them go to school to learn to engage with other kids. And learn to Share! And learn to Compliment Other People! And learn to respect their elders... Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic can wait. Help Them Be Happy Mummy of Five!
Play Play Play!
Sad world when we are submitting forms for children to play more.
Playing leads to children discovering new things and how things work. Reading a text book is great but seeing them in action makes it easier to understand for a lot of children. Some children are book smart and others are practical and need to see.
I started in my chosen career in 1986 and have seen many changes but none for the better. I am very concerned about the future of early childhood teaching expectations especially as things get worse each year and my grandchildren have entered the system I am concerned about . The anxiety I see in young children has increased immensely and this concerns me as it effects mental health which has already shown adverse effects in youth and young adults We must act now and undo the damage that has been done
Agree
Critical thinking, problem solving, interpersonal skills, creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship are all skills for the future. These are developed through play and exploration.
Play is social development and the first building block. A person is more than book learning. Help our future generations to learn how to be part of a group. Getting Along, Persistence, Adaptability, Creativity and most of all Resilience to name just a few. Without these base tools of life children become lost and disconnected. Please put play first for early childhood learning. It teaches way more in this ever changing world than current standards.
Please let it happen!!!
I agree with play
This play-based strategy is particularly important for boys but also benefits girls. Evidence of the positive benefits for learning is very evident but equally importantly the long term associated benefits in terms of reduction in mental health disturbances would be very welcome in today's communities. I would strongly support the review and redesign of school curricula to incorporate play-based learning and believe this should be a major focus of the curriculum until the end of year two.
Children learn through play. Let them play and learn!
Let our kids learn the way they are designed to and have done so from birth to school. Let's be forward thinkers with our education rather than following the mistakes of American and British education systems. Let's be more like Finland. Let's make our most precious futures of our world, the best start possible, make them the centre of our policy making, rather than accountability. Let's be brave! Let our children play in quality learning environments with educators who understand the development and needs of children, let our children play!!!
My children learnt with play at Kindergarten & Pre School, let children learn through educational play.
As a qualified early childhood educator I am concerned that the current trend of abandoning play based learning in the hope of better Naplan results will only bring more anxiety and mental health problems to our young people. Sadly I fear for my grandchildren.

Fantastic idea!!
After being involved in ECE for 40 yrs in WA it is horrific to see what is being pushed down into k & P and the loss of play based programs.
Playing is a joy through all ages especially childhood
Play based learning is so important and it is imperative that status of play based learning is raised.
I love play and want play in our classrooms
Students are lacking problem solving skills and social skills due to limited play opportunities. This becomes evident as the students reach middle primary school. They lack the skills students of that age had in the past.
This is absolutely vital for giving children the right introduction to school, and safeguarding learning through play.
Where is the research to support the current curriculum vs play based learning?
A must, not just in Kindy and Pre-primary but also Year 1 to 2.
Too much academic pressure is put on young children. They need to focus on building their social skills, imagination, friendships. There are so many more important things than academic achievement.
Please encourage all primary schools to get on board.
So incredibly important and can't happen quick enough enough!
Let kids be kids. There are plenty of time for structured learning.
“Learn through play” is the motto at Hillary's Community Kindergarten where our son attends. Thank goodness for teachers like Alison Ford and her assistants who offer a wonderful learning platform built around play.
Play is a natural part of development and it is vital that we allow time and space for it. There are so many ways that a good educational program can support and extend play for individually or groups of children by creating appropriate learning environments and opportunities.
As a teacher and a parent of little boys, I am appalled at the direction our early education system is headed. I am disgusted with pressure that is placed on young children and believe that the disregard of play is robbing our children of necessary skills and experiences that foster a love of learning.
I think children these days are expected to grow up way too quick with all this structured learning in a kindy class. Let them be kids!! I also strongly think the kindy age should be changed let these children be at home with their parents not getting sent off to kindy at 3.5 like my eldest son did.
Save our play!
I didn't put my child into Kindy for this reason and if I could make it financial viable I would be homeschooling as I believe so strongly in the need for play for young children.
Save our kids and bring back the play!
About time!
Playing is really important for developing young brains!!!
Our children need to learn how to safely express and process their emotions through play to become confident well rounded adults.
I feel that it is so important to develop a play strategy in Western Australian schools. As a mother of a child in pre-primary, I am quite dismayed by the loss of play within early education in schools, the loss of creative activities and the push of inappropriately high level literacy & numeracy expectations (for their age groups). I am also alarmed at what I can only describe as anxiety and social issues starting in children early in Kindy & Pre-primary, which I believe are a direct result of too little play / play based learning and exhaustion from too much time performing “formal schooling” activities. I believe in play based early childhood / schooling models from overseas and we should look at examples from Finland and the like. I also believe that should the government wish to pursue 13 years of formal schooling, then a “Year 13” should be added (perhaps with a year of life skills and career explorations in year 11), rather than compulsory full-time pre-primary. From my observations, our current schooling model seems to be “too much, too soon” with too little play, to the detriment of our kids and their mental health.
It is unfortunate we need to fill out forms like this to encourage educational policy makers to create a system to fit with best educational practice.
All children need to play to learn. They only get 1 childhood and play is an essential part of learning, and using their imaginations

I am a concerned parent of a gifted 4 year old who I have elected to not send to kindy this year. We may be forced to home educate because of a lack of actual evidence based learning through play at any of our local school options. Best practice teaching should not be hard to find and even when the importance of unstructured, child-led play is emphasized in the early childhood curriculum (and beyond!) it seems to be merely lip-service and not enforceable.
Parents are terrified of sending their children to schools that value desks and testing over the (more significant) learning that can occur through play. If you get a good teacher you might have an uncaring principal or vice versa, there needs to be a curriculum that the people less educated on the subject can go off so they don't feel lost, and then give up and revert back to the old way of desk learning
Forcing structure and learning before they are ready creates so much stress and unhappiness in children. Loosen off in the early years at school and you will get happier and better adjusted teenagers and young adults.
As a teacher currently working in this field I feel strongly that there is a need for a policy to protect the place of play in early childhood education in WA and therefore fully support the WA Play Strategy.
The erosion of play-based learning represents the loss of the view of the child as capable and competent and places the child within a deficit ideology. Is this the message we want for our children who we aim to help develop their full potential as global citizen helping to create a more peaceful world? No way. Stop pushing schoolification on our young children in an effort to evaluate Australia's international education standing to the rest of the world and take courage from Scotland and become part of the world leaders restoring best practice early childhood pedagogy back into the early childhood education and care sector. Honour the EYLF in its entirety.
It is unfair and cruel to take away the child's right to learn through play. This is where the magic and 'real' learning takes place! We have so much awareness now as a society about the impact that mental health problems can have on children, especially from an early age. We are meant to be a preventative and safe guarding society not one endorsing suffering to our future generation.
I see my 5 yr old losing interest in learning the basics at an age where they should be feeling no pressures but soaking up the amazing 0f life ... the pressure of perfecting his letters/numbers in writing, the homework that's required of him at the end of his already long day. the seriousness of the teachers expecting this perfection, makes me feel it's, more about them and the pressures on them and not these little people whose life they hold in their hands daily.
We must address this as a matter of urgency for the wellbeing of future generations of children, short term results on test scores will not give children or our society a better outcome, play is a vital part of childhood, a human right and an evidence based way to ensure children learn and grow in healthy ways that lay the foundation for their personal futures and the future of our community. It's time to wake up and stop the push down.
Please notify me of any events or speeches that will be held that promote play based learning.
Play is an important part of learning that should be focused on particularly in early years
I believe play is beneficial for the development and growth of the child's social, emotional and cognitive abilities. Play teaches children valuable life lessons and assists with building the foundation for mathematics, Literacy and so much more.
Having Play time is critical for a child's learning & development
I am a pre-service teacher and believe play is a fundamental right and need of a child and it needs to be encourage more in WA.
Also in all the states and territories of Australia
I believe that well-structured teacher facilitated play strategies are important in early childhood teaching.
Last year I presented a box of electronic equipment (globes, wires, low voltage power packs - all equipment that they had used the previous year) to a group of year 8s. As it was the first lesson in the series, the instructions were along the lines of 'have a play, see what happens'. All were in my sight, no safety issues. To my surprise over half of them just stood there. 'What if I get it wrong?' I was asked. I replied that there was no 'wrong'. All but one group then started to experiment clicking wires and globes together. The final group was still not moving, so I worked with them to guide exploration. Although this is not the standard understanding of 'play', it seemed. that the loss of courage to experiment was detrimental to their learning experience.
Soy estudiante en los años once. Jugar es muy importante para el desarrollo.

I am a student in year 11. I study psychology at school. I believe that younger school children need play in order to develop the skills they need to. As fair as it may be that children have a chance to play at home, but with homework being assigned from as early as Kindergarten, play has become limited. Also, due to the loss of safety and security, play is evidently also lost more so outside of school. Children need play in school because they need a chance to interact with everyone, especially people of their own age, to develop their friendship/people skills and communication skills. My brother started Kindergarten this year, and his play time in comparison to when I was his age is severely different. He spends a lot more time, inside, reading and writing, and only plays twice a day with other people. Recently his play has been even further constricted as he "needs a chance to learn more book knowledge". I strongly believe his play limitations is further leading to deterioration of his social skills, especially because he had limited to begin with.
I am a student.
At last a pulling back from the unreasonable academic demands placed on our youngest learners and an emphasis on play and play based learning. Much more suited to the way a young child learns.
Hello, as a business we have endorsed the WA Play Strategy and will be attending the Play Fair at Perth Individual Montessori College, Saturday 23 March. We would love to add our logo to your website carousal. What is the best way to send it to you?
As a mum of 2 under the age of 8, I totally endorse this campaign. Technology is not the key to a bright future, letting kids be kids as nature intended is. Let them be in nature, let them learn through play using what comes naturally to them. But must importantly do not continue to force our children to live adult lives.
I am fighting the government to not force my 5 year old into full time structured prep. We want to delay a year. The bigger the movement to support childhood play, the better society will be.
My little girl has just started PP and for the first time I've heard my happy, confident, bright little girl say "I don't want to go to school mum" "Why?" I ask her, "because the teacher talks and talks and we have to sit still all the time. I say to her, no - stop talking, I just want to play!" BRING BACK THE PLAYING AND MY HAPPY LITTLE GIRL !!
I would absolutely love to see this implemented. As someone who has worked in the Early Childhood education sector for a number of years I have seen first had the value of authentic play experiences in terms of student engagement, social and emotional security and a sense of feeling safe in the classroom- something which is critical to address before learning can occur.
I endorse this campaign wholeheartedly. Please allow our children to feel safe, express themselves and develop self confidence by ensuring they always have the opportunity to play.
In the UN Convention Rights of the Child - it is clear that children have the right to play - we need to as a society uphold that right in order for our children to have access to experiences of play so they can thrive in our communities.
Children need play. Give them this wonderful opportunity, which they won't need when they are older. Don't ask teachers to follow a 'tick list' to check if the kids are reaching targets.
The importance of play and play based learning cannot be underestimated. The push down of formal learning must stop. All children deserve access to provocative play learning based experiences. Children should also have increased outdoor time at school.
The power of play for all people is imperative to well being and development. Even more so in the early years were 80% of brain development occurs!
Power to the ground swell. We need to move forward with a united front across all sectors to ensure the health and well being of our future generations. Let's not lose this!
Educators are receiving mixed messages that muddy the waters regarding the framework/curriculum. Academic vs Play Based. Rather I believe in the philosophy of Playful learning, and that the window of learning for certain elements and milestones requires multi-sensorial, cognitive and physical maturation, before being forced to learn when they are not ready. Children learn in accordance with their own circadian clock, not when directed by adults when they don't have interest in the topics.
Children are natural investigators learning at their own unique pace. Through play children explore, design, construct, imagine and have amazing conversations! Let's ensure that our children are given every opportunity to have the freedom of PLAY!
I believe there is a very high correlation between institutionalising 3,4, and 5 year old children and deteriorating mental health in later years. The scaffolding social strategies and thinking skills is a base for formalised learning. Without these foundation skills the rest of education cannot be structured. Human skills before knowledge and content skills must be the focus in K and PP.

Would like to see a calmer more play based approach in schools particularly in kindergarten and pre primary. Too much stress and naplan is proving detrimental to this generation.
All children have the right to play - in play children are an agent in their own learning
Play is so important and play based learning is critical for our children
Love play!
Congratulations ECA - WA!! If not in Early Childhood then when? So many health, education and wellbeing issues experienced by very young children stem from the lost natural art of playing ability. Let's advocate to reclaim Early Childhood by advocate to reclaim Early Childhood by advocating for genuine play in all contexts and challenging the 'push down' curriculum.
Play is an essential part of childhood for healthy physical, social, cognitive, cultural and creative development. Thank you for this important initiative.
I've recently become aware of the WA Play Strategy Campaign as a consequence of my trying to challenge the Department of Education (WA)'s incredibly inflexible and impersonal school starting age requirements. I have two daughters who are/will be both born in late June of 2016 and 2019, respectively. I Subject to a discretion on the part of School principals which is exercised in exceptional cases only, children will be just 3.5 at the beginning of Kindergarten. This is crazy. I have witnessed my son- a bright, capable, mature boy - attempt the Kindergarten curriculum with mixed 'success' and am confident that my eldest daughter - who will be the youngest student in her year level - will not be sufficiently equipped to thrive in this environment. I'm desperate to find a way to circumvent this - moving state and home schooling is unfortunately not an option. Do you have any advice, information or research that might assist me in terms of making a submission regarding the Dept's primary school starting age? Subject to me getting formal confirmation from the two schools that my daughter is eligible to attend (private and public) in Karratha, that she cannot defer her starting date - I am planning to make a complaint to the HREOC on the basis that she is, for all intents and purposes, being required to start formal schooling one year earlier than her counterparts in other States and Territories. Of course, my main driver is for my daughters - and the hope that I may secure them a later, more appropriate, start to school. However, I am genuinely hoping that I might bring some attention to this issue for the benefit of many other students for whom the inflexible approach to starting dates puts them at a significant educational disadvantage. As a community, we want lifelong learners. I believe every child should be given the ability to start school at an age that is most conducive to enhanced educational outcomes. The current approach being taken by the Department is, in many cases, contrary to the best interests of individual children - and I do not think that this is a position that should remain unchallenged.
ECE Teacher looking for more info about the play matters event
I have hyperactive 6 year old son that struggled through kindy & pre-primary. He is only now ready to start learning in year one. The school starting age should be more flexible, especially for boys who take longer to mature.
I fully endorse children's right to play
Play is a crucial part of a child's learning and development. Children learn a lot during independent play as they use it to test their ideas and concepts. They use play to investigate their world and their relationships. Play is so important and is a basic need for all children. Play and learning can occur at the same time. As a parent to a toddler and an experienced early childhood educator, I value play in my children's lives. It allows them to explore and create and express their own identities.
Play is an essential part of learning as a society we have seemed to be forgotten just how important it is that children are given time to explore and investigate concepts through play. As a parent and worker, I think as adults we have also become disconnected from the world of play. As a collective we need to learn how to play so we can teach and learn from our children.
With a two year old daughter - I hope that her early years experience with me is continued within her early educational experience.
PLAY is so important in a child's life, it is a child's work. Children choose when, what and how they play and learn from their interests.
There is nothing more important to a child's learning and development than learning and discovering through play. It is the foundation and ongoing structure for children's life long education and well being.
Play inspires creativity, develop self-regulation, resilience, support self nurture self-identity and well-being (Dr Sandra Hesterman). Play Fosters social, emotional and physical well being.
Play is the Right of the Child.

Play is where exploration, experimentation, investigation and learning happens
More play opportunities and options accessible to all children
I am extremely passionate and interested in furthering this strategy. Please let me know how I can support. Assist this campaign.
A numerous amount of research has gone into the study of play to show its importance and vitalness in the early years of a child's life and throughout. Play is an effective way for children to grow and develop a happy and healthy brain,
Large amount of research from around the world show that children learn best through play, actively learning with the support of educators in authentic ways. Early childhood is such an amazing time and has such a HUGE impact on the adults we become. Don't rob children of this magical time by forcing them into formalized learning too soon. Think of the WHOLE child not just their ability to read write and do maths but their social and emotional ability and skills and their creativity and other higher order thinking skills critical in today's world and skills and thinking that are learnt and developed through play. Play can be complex for children - don't underestimate it and the many many benefits it brings to children. We may have children who can read earlier with our current system but what skills are they lacking in because of formalised learning occurring too young and what social emotional and mental health (e.g. anxiety, behavioural issues) are being generated as a result.
Free directed play opportunities are paramount in ensuring the children can develop, learn, grow and can become their best selves - especially having access to a sense of well being and freedom to be themselves. Our lifestyles and education systems are increasingly robbing children of these basic fundamental freedoms and needs. Being the parent of 2 young children aged 6 and 4 I witness the overstructured, hurried lifestyles and education systems out culture is imposing. It's time for change. For the sake of future generations to have a sense of well being. To combat the alarming growing rates of anxiety amongst our children we must promote a space for learning through play. For just being - that is being a kid!!! To allow the opportunity for children to get lost in their imaginations, their own creativity, free movement and sense of connection to nature - its paramount. Let's reinstate a childhood of yesteryear for our children! Allow them the space, time, environments to explore, play, laugh, love and truly live as these experiences is what will hold them in good stead for their future! It's an important life skill to learn.
Children learn through play. Play is a very important part of children's development.
Children need to explore their own environment and develop an understanding of THEIR world before they can even begin to consider moulding to the constructs of the educative norms of Australian education system. Let children BE children and learn through their own and shared experiences that play provides.
Play is a critical component of every child's learning, growth & development.
I would love to see more play based learning. kids learn from a more hands on approach from activities they enjoy doing.
Play is so important for our children as it is the foundation for their current and future learning.
As a student who is studying teaching, play-based learning is so important for children as it provides a foundation for their learning.
Please support this as they respond well to this form of learning
Play is such a very important part of children's development! We need to continue to support their right to have time for play as well as its importance and impact on mental health, learning, and key social skills.
Play is so important for our children
I couldn't share or like or agree more... not only should children be allowed to transition at a more developmentally appropriate way through their first years of school, but teachers should have the pressure to perform and to meet these ridiculously high standards in early childhood removed.
I see so much anguish in children trying to read, blend sounds, feeling left behind because they can't keep up. It is so sad and unnecessary let kids play and learn through thoughtful education.
27 years working with children in a long day setting to then primary and high school as an Education Assistant to now being a small business owner providing centre based education and work skills development program using natural materials. I know nature play based experiences provide their own nurturing wholesome body and brain development. No one needs to teach children to play we only need to provide a natural safe environment for them to explore and development will come naturally
This is so very, very important!
Let's bring childhood back to what it should be!

Play is essential in Early Childhood Education
Finally, Common Sense, I welcome the return
Kids learn so much through play
I am a huge supporter of play based learning. Kids need to be kids! I hope this expands to NSW.
Our kids deserve the right for play based learning so keep it like that please
Play is vital for a whole raft of reasons, and especially to build joy, resilience, persistence, problem-solving, decision-making, collaboration, co-operation, and conflict-resolution skills.
Supporting WA play base learning
I absolutely 100% endorse this strategy. I see the effects of not having this green time and having too much screen time every day with my clients. I work with wonderful families around Perth whose children are anxious, overwhelmed and not coping at school. I would love to see this strategy go ahead and would love to be involved in any way possible.
Stop children turning off education and suffering anxiety and stress from a young age. Bring back play and stop the curriculum push down which has been proven doesn't work.
Children have many years of formal learning ahead of them. Play in the early years prepares children for this formal learning and essentially, cannot and should not be 'fast forwarded'. We are doing our children a massive injustice if we continue to follow this trend of forcing our children to skip these early childhood play experiences.
all in a good time
Our children need this. Play is not a trade off for academic success. Play is learning and it is development.
I couldn't possibly love and support this more! As a parent and an ECE teacher I feel beyond passionate about giving childhood back to our children! Well done and thank you!
kids must be allowed to be kids
As both a teacher and Mum I feel this is incredibly important for my students and son going forward. I have seen how the results first hand can make a big difference in the lives of my little people.
Play based learning is critical for positive engagement of kids with learning. Our kids need more of it
Time for change, let children be children and learn through play-based pedagogies. Think about their mental health and building all those foundations for learning!
Play based learning is engaging, multi-sensory and fun! Please let the youngest in our community find joy in the discovery of new things in a way that is developmentally appropriate.
I fully support your campaign. Play is so important for children. They are only little a short while, don't rush them. They have their whole lives ahead of them to use the skills, language and knowledge that they learn which is best learned through play.
We need change, our kids need play based education!!
My children safe struggling more and more as they get older with so much pressure. My daughter is the youngest in her year group and was pushed to grow up way to quickly and leave play behind and this has been detrimental to her mental health now that she has hit high school
Let children be children! Let them take their shoes off, get muddy, learn to work together and solve problems!
The evidence is there. Let's step up and put it to practise. Play based learning is the way to go! A mind set shift needs to happen big time. Let's stop putting stress on our kids and let them grow!
Less time writing pointless documentation...more time setting up play inspirations...a photo for proof... a picture speaks a thousand words…
I believe in play based learning for the early years and beyond. We all want to play no matter what age we are.
I strongly support the play strategy for children in our schools.

I totally would love to see playbase learning come back especially in prep - yr2/3
I am disheartened at the "push down" academic trend that keeps on happening in our schools. Play is reduced and academic achievement and data driven curriculum is given priority. Play is proven to be our best educational tool and is valuable in developing the "whole child".
Please spread this around the country. Our kids need to be kids for the good of us all and the country.
Play all the way!
Let our kids learn the way they do best- play!
I have worked in both government school early childhood settings and independent play-based school settings in WA for over thirty years. In the past decade I have witnessed a huge decline in quality play-based learning in government schools, driven from the top down in an attempt to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes. I have seen early childhood professionals' concerns sidelined by school admin, with the result that five and six year old children spend greater parts of their day either interacting with electronic whiteboards or doing teacher-directed table-top activities. I fully endorse a return to quality play-based learning in WA government schools, especially in nature-based settings, in line with best international early childhood practice.
As an early learning teacher, previously teacher in WA and now in Queensland, I couldn't agree more!
Too much pressure is being out on children to grow up and fit in to an arbitrary ' box' the school system has created. I have seen too many young children with mental health issues after being unable to cope with the demands the schooling system puts in them so young. Children can still learn when they are playing. All the necessary curriculum can still be taught through play and our children will be way better off for it. I had to take my own child out of school at 6yrs old as he could not emotionally cope with school. He was convinced he was stupid and couldn't do anything. He was so sad he was trying to hurt himself. Six months of homeschool and he is way ahead of his year level and he learn everything through play and at his own pace. He is happy, confident and resilient again. The school system in its current form is damaging our children.
Very very important! I have two kids of my own and the both love learning and playing outside or hands on.
I am a passionate advocate of play based learning during the early school years. It is vital to the mental & emotional well-being of every child. We expect too much from our children at such a young age. They learn best through physical movement, hands on learning, human interaction, practical problem solving & outside play.
We need to learn from research that shows us again and again that young children learn most when they are engaged in play.
I completely support play based learning and can't wait for the education department to start making changes to align with all the recommendations in this area
I absolutely 110 % agree with this. I am a play based learning educator :) We are here to allow children to be just that CHILDREN!! Just let them learn and grow as individuals. There is so much pressure put on children these days to know everything before they even get to school, well guess what, THEY WILL AT THEIR OWN PACE !!!
I recently attended a Maths moderation for kindy!! The set tasks were really disappointing considering play based learning is a 2019 focus. I feel that although it is a focus play based learning is still not valued.
Supporting something that is vitally important for the education of our youth.
Let's do this before it's too late! I am appalled at the pressure young children are under. It's compounded when they have speech and language delay. Historically we have had the preschool years until Year 1 to fix their problems before formal literacy teaching began - now we don't have that time and these kids are failing before they even begin.
Early childhood schooling needs to start at a later age, and be more play based. The current schooling system is leaving our kids behind with no flexibility for individual kids needs
I support this strongly

This state seriously needs to change its current way. As a mother of a 6 yr old who attends a very crammed, pushy school where academics seem to trump everyday skills and manners, it cannot cope with individual kids learning styles due to the tight full on schedule and then we have to pick up the pieces at home every night. Yr ones reading novels (due to pressure) in Term 2 (not all can cope then they feel under pressure). Homework from Term 1 in PP. Class starts at 8:50am yet from 8:30am they are doing heavy maths sheets! The kids just lose interest and gain anxiety and I have seen it first hand with this Independent School. Nothing like the local private schools whom nurture and have Assistants & are Reggio based. Testing every Friday in yr 1. Homework every night. Kids can't cope, Teacher can't cope nor can the parents. Look at the Montessori and Reggio Schools who sit high!!
Could not agree more! If politicians really do think that Australia is the best country in the world, as we keep on hearing, then they better actually be dynamic enough to do things better!
Play based learning is the most effective way to engage, stimulate and educate our children
My almost 3yo will start kindy in 2021 and I'm already worried about the current academic-focused education system marginalising him since he's a very hands-on, active little boy. Implementing Play-based learning will give me greater confidence that his learning needs will be met.
Mum of a child with anxiety brought on from school too early. Make the change.
Play based learning ultimately sets the foundation for ALL other learning in future years. We should not be pushing down the curriculum because without PLAY students cannot focus, socialise, investigate, wonder, develop fine motor skills or thrive to their full potential. They need to master the essentials of cutting, gluing, developing spatial awareness via outdoor large motor activities and combining materials through simple box collage. Also the art of developing community awareness via role play in a home corner teaches children how to develop problem solving skills while strengthening relationships with others and promotes oral language skills. They do not need to be assessed on how many high frequency words they can memorise.
We need to take every opportunity in every state to promote play with time to Be and Become. So much learning and development happens in 0-5 yrs. we need to resist the push to hot house children and build strong early learning skills in a relaxed play based environment with ample time for practice and consolidating.
Hi there... I'm studying a bachelor in early childhood education and care, all we study is learning through but it's really sad to see children sit for hours for their mathematics and writing preparations. We need a change. Thanks
As a pre-service teacher and a Mother I can see the benefits to children's education and wellbeing with play being a focus in their learning journey.
Absolutely support play-based learning
Play based learning is required in ECE.
Thank you for what you are doing to draw attention to the importance of play in the early developmental years.
It is sad that the pressure of curriculum and data is getting in the way of the ability to teach in a play based way and teach basic social emotional skills important for life.
Let's bring this to the rest of Australian schools ,
I value play based learning and am lucky enough to work in a school where it is recognised and encouraged as the best way to teach young children. All children should have the same opportunity to learn through play!
Stop pushing the curriculum down on our little ones!
Play is so important as a child. Looking back at my youth it's the play time that is remembered; sliding down grassy slopes on cardboard, building cubby houses in the bush, creating sand castle sculptures, racing sticks in flowing water. Let out children play, create memories and all the while learn.
I'm so pleased to see this push. I just wish all stakeholders would get on board, particularly school administrators etc.
This must happen ASAP
Play is how young children learn. We do not need to be teaching children formal academics and testing them at such a young age!

With children experiencing anxiety and stress heading to school or at school I feel that this is a better way to learn
This is absolutely so important as a specialised child and adolescent mental health social worker, I too often see young people particularly young children struggling with huge anxieties around school and as a mother of boys, I have personal experience with my own children whom would rather be playing then siding inside looking at a screen. Play is so so important
Play based learning all the way!
Play for all
Play needs to be more of learning at school and before/ after!
Play is essential for children to develop holistically.
It's vital that children learn through physical based play learning rather than boxing them in to learning styles meant for much older students
We are already there! The children love it and they are learning so much, everyday. Children are absolutely open to learning, they don't need to be forced to sit inside or complete templated paperwork to learn. Bring back nature play, risk taking, independence and resilience! Bring back smiles and pure joy 👏
Play and life skills are so important.
So important for so many reasons.
Play is the only way
As an educator who is experienced in early childhood education through my prior experience as a Diploma qualified educator and current ECT role in an early learning setting and is nearing who is nearing completion of my Bachelor of Early Childhood Education degree I would like to see the value of play more highly recognised in the early years of school. I would like to see more play based learning as opposed to play and learning being viewed as separate entities.
Shocked & saddened to read & experience play based learning is not being implemented for all children. We need real change for all children.
Let children play.
Learning comes naturally through play. It's all part of childhood and should be incorporated at every opportunity.
I am a huge advocate of Community Kindergartens and the importance of play in the early years of a child's life.
Thank you for continuing to fight for our precious children and their right to play. They deserve the freedom to live, laugh and play.
Play is the highest form of research (Einstein)
Research has shown that play is integral to learning. Play is a serious matter! We have the opportunity to endorse play as being a right to a child's learning. Years later we will look back and be proud that we chose to enrich the lives and learning of our young children.
Play based learning is the only way to learn for ECE students.
Let the children play!
This Play Strategy is much needed in today's schools. I believe the push down in curriculum is damaging our children, but with Admins focus on data and results play is often seen as something only done during recess and lunch breaks. Bring back play!
See the benefits of play daily within my work. And the notable difference between children who engage in play and children who don't. Would love to see a play strategy implemented to help guide educators
This campaign is awesome! Play needs to be seen more in schools. Play was important for me in my younger school years. Well done!
Children need more time during the school day for play and outdoor activities/ exercise

As a year 11 psychology student I learn about how play is important for the younger years of life and believe it should be included more into when teaching students whether they are in kindergarten or Year 9.
Children need to play so that they can in order to learn about sharing and interacting with each other properly. They need to develop at their own pace, and the unrealistic expectations for them are something that is irrelevant towards their development at both a social and cognitive level
We had it right and now we have killed quality play based education with an overcrowded curriculum. Also, the teaching of subjects in isolation with a focus on work sheets and activities that are not developmentally appropriate is causing undue stress to young children. Play time has been reduced and obesity plus poor motor skills is on the rise...
Essential that play is encouraged in the early years and the benefits understood by all educators and parents. Have seen too many children 'failing' because of unrealistic expectations and inappropriate learning environments.
Play is the work of children!
Have been pushing for this myself
Play is vital to children's wellbeing and is their fundamental right. Seems crazy with all the research out there that this is something that we have to advocate for in an educational setting. As a teacher I can see the effects on children when play is cut short or not available. Behaviour, wellbeing, development, anxiety are a few repercussions that are affected when children don't have daily, long opportunities for free play.
Thank you for the work you have put into this campaign. During my teaching career of 40 plus years it saddens me to see children's play time being reduced. Children's abilities to cooperate, share, include others, use imagination etc etc are all diminished. I am very happy to support such an important initiative.
Congratulations WA Play Strategy on embarking on a journey that all other states and territories in Australia should be doing as well. This is visionary and leading the way in driving rich and meaningful change from policy and decision making through to grassroots action. To see children's rights at the heart of your movement, built on a foundation of advocacy and collaboration across sectors, is not only encouraging but revolutionary and just what is needed to drive positive change for childhood in this country moving forward. Congratulations and best of wishes for an authentically engaging process that will result in far-reaching best practice outcomes for children in WA (and with any luck, across our nation). Thank you!
My grandsons are affected by this policy and I know how much they love to be outside. This is so important!
Play based learning supports gross and fine motor skills that enable formal learning after age of 7.
Play is crucial to learning and needs to be recognised as an important part of a child's development!
Let them be children.
Play is the most vital ingredient to developing lifelong skills of learning.
A balanced approach is the best learning environment with play based learning being an extremely large part of that approach. It must be allowed and even allotted a minimum time otherwise it is being swallowed up by the academic focus that is now such a large part of early childhood classrooms.
I endorse this campaign. Play is vital in the early years of children's development. Play is the best way of learning - it helps develop the essential skills of interpersonal communication, collaboration, problem solving, emotional control, resiliency, persistence, and more!
I have said for years that the early years have been turning away from the social and play based form of education. Children need to learn how to play, how to socialise, how to learn to take a chance more than they need to stick a pencil in their hands. Children's fingers are not ready for pencils until they are 5 years of age. Play dough would be more beneficial for them. Time to let children be children first!
Play at schools is so important and should be encouraged ahead of academic study for all young children in WA.
Early childhood is a precious window of opportunity for learning through play and experiencing childhood. Collectively, we need to advocate for it, nurture it, and protect it. I fully support and endorse the WA Play Strategy.

Thank you for recognising our children's right to play! Play truly is the most developmentally appropriate method for our young children to achieve their potential so in a safe and fun environment. Following this strategy I would love to see better implementation of play in schools as many are confused, conflicted and pushed by management and parents into disguising formal learning as play and vice versa.
Play is children working . The life skills they are learn is in play. Taking risks and able to work out how thing work through play is so so so important.
Let's get this done!
Children are too sheltered and wrapped in cotton wool these days. Bring back nature play, climb a tree and fall and hurt yourself. It's ok, you'll get up and be fine. And so will your parents!!
Save play
I would like to endorse this initiative …
Play is paramount for children to become successful inside and outside of school. Play is integral for the development of all children and in achieving developmental milestones.
There is too much pressure on kids to grow up too quickly- to read, write and compete. With an increase in anxiety, bullying, depression, suicide. shouldn't we be looking into what's causing this? Play has been shown to benefit children in so many ways, it is the base for how our kids grow, and they need the opportunity to experience this as much as they can. Australia needs to go back to encouraging play and forget about making our kids read and write in kindy - they will learn these skills in time and need to be children while they can
Studying Early Childhood teaching
Play is fundamental to children's development and allows them to make sense of the world in ways that are relevant to them.
Play is an important part of learning. Children learn through play and their environment. They need more than they get credit for
I think play is an excellent way to learn and should be encouraged in early learning opportunities.
Children need more play to learn naturally. Ice becomes liquid, taking turns & getting along, role play, nature play, leaves fall from tree's, how or jump from 1 log to another. How to balance, how to run hang upside down. Make school fun. Amazing how they can learn maths, Mark making & writing in fun playful ways instead of sitting at desk with paper & pencil.
Learning through play is such a necessary mode ...bring it back please
It's time to update our curriculum and do what is best for our children - to protect their mental wellbeing, and to provide them with the best chance of future academic pursuits.
I am very concerned for families feeling that their children are not developing well because they don't cope with the pressure of formal learning and testing at a very young age. NAPLAN puts a lot of pressure on young children, their families and teachers. NAPLAN communicates to parents and teachers alike that cognitive skills, literacy and numeracy are more important than other crucial skills such as social skills and emotional maturity.
My son is attending in kindy this year. We hunted around for a school in our area that supported as much play-based learning as possible, within the constraints of the current curriculum. I am frustrated that there is a vast international evidence-base to clearly demonstrate the benefits of play-based early learning, and that too much focus on academic metrics in these early years can do more harm than good. How can an advanced western nation such as Australia ignore this evidence base? Parents want this to change, teachers want this to change, and the evidence supports this desire.
The Community Kindy Association of WA and its Kindergartens, never abandoned this pedagogy.
Play based learning is best, this is supported through extensive worldwide research and through early childhood teachers who see the results day in and day out of using play as a learning tool.
Let's do what's right for our beautiful children and support a play based learning curriculum - our children deserve nothing less
Play is an important learning experience for children to develop early milestones that set the foundation for later learning - a lack of it will result in life-long impacts on learning in a wide variety of areas.

Play is vital for all children
Play is an integral part of learning - we need our WA Dept to be a leader in advocating for play in education
Play matters!
Bring childhood back to the kids
Play is incredibly important as it allows children to be engaged, motivated, relaxed and excited about learning.
Politicians must be guided by the research and do what is best for our children - playing is fundamental to their success!
Thank you thank you thank you for launching this strategy! You have my FULL support
More play time at school, please.
From presenting hundreds of shows and workshops to tens of thousands of children and teens throughout Australia and New Zealand over the past 12 years, I PROMISE you that it is through play and laughter that children learn best.
The more children are exposed to play, they become more aware how people and the world around them work. Play builds crucial skills that will create the leaders of tomorrow!
After 30 years of teaching I'm extremely concerned about the consequences of the eradication of play-based learning our young children experience in Australia. Our children's mental health depends on us making significant change now! Please listen…
The Australian Early Years Education landscape is a disgrace!
I have noticed a significant shift in the approach to early years learning at my children's school from when my first child attended 10 years ago to my youngest child now. The teachers seem under a tremendous amount of pressure for children to be meeting benchmarks even when they are not developmentally ready. We know what is best for children at this age - play and lots of it. I worry for the long term impact this shift away from play based learning will have on this current cohort.
As a mother of three girls, I have seen firsthand the effects of the curriculum being forced down into the early learning years. Schools now have to focus on NAPLAN and the information kids now need to know by Year 3 is stuff we and our parents didn't know to years 5/6 or later! My two eldest girls have both seen OTs because one has sensory processing and struggled with emotional regulation because she was stressed in class, the other because she had too much energy and her teacher stupidly said she was 5/5 for disruptive because she walked around the classroom! I couldn't believe it. She was 6! Why are we making kids aged 5/6 sit for long periods of time? They have so much energy, require so much stimulation and yet we make them sit and be studious like a 12 year old and up. Kindy is now having to introduce letters, PP is reading when a lot of kids still can't write their own name correctly and yet we think NAPLAN is the answer?! Crazy and a stupid assessment that doesn't focus on the individual but the masses! Let our kids be kids, let them learn at their own pace, some will be quicker initially than others, others will get there at their own pace and be better for it. They won't be stressed, they will be more confident in who they are and how they best learn. If I can help this campaign in any way I'd be more than happy to jump on board as it's a big passion of mine.
I am a drama teacher running a privately run after school drama club. I see such benefits in our students learning and developing through drama and play based processes. I have taught in junior years and it is an incredible feeling when students are engaged practically and communicate with real expression, emotion and human connection. I and have small children, a 4 year old about to attend kindy next year. I really hope that I am able to in the immediate future help shape the way teachers use drama techniques in their classrooms. I would love to get in contact and find out more about what is happening and what I can do to help!
I 100% endorse a return to play based learning in early childhood
Early childhood professionals are trained to have the knowledge and skills to facilitate play based learning for young children. If these opportunities are not provided at school, then these professionals are not using their skill set adequately which may then translate to children having developmental delays and mental health issues. This may in turn lead to long term economical costs to an overwhelmed health system and social system ie unemployment, crime etc. As a mother of two young children who are not at school age as yet, it worries me that they will be put under academic pressures too soon and will be set up to fail instead of providing positive opportunities for skill acquisition. At this stage, I am seriously considering alternative schooling which promote play based learning instead of conventional schooling. It's a shame that play based learning is viewed currently as an alternative instead of the norm.

I am both a teacher and a parent of two children. I, along with my fellow colleagues, and very concerned about the push for 3-5 year olds to start learning to read and steering away from learning the social skills and problem solving skills gained from playing with peers. The high rise of anxious children who struggle to cope socially. The demise of play education is of high concern. We need to look at the best education systems in the world... Where they don't start to learn to read till they are seven and their brains are ready.
I agree. Definitely a disconnect between Early Years/Education/Social Care. Play needs to be an intrinsic part of a well-rounded pedagogical training, incl. for teachers. Germany also does this quite well. I'm now interested in what the other Australian States doing...?
We currently have a child in kindy and are very concerned about the lack of play based learning. Three year olds are expected to sit still on a mat or around tables and not fidget at all, and are not encouraged to ask any questions, but are instead told over and over to listen and look at the teacher. The school environment overall lacks nature play areas and does not encourage imagination or free play. It's really not surprising so many children are struggling with anxiety, 'behaviour issues' and obesity when such a strong emphasis is placed on academia/regimented following of a curriculum from such a young age, not to mention the use of iPads and TV shows in kindy classrooms. Unfortunately we are not currently in a position to change schools, (States or indeed countries), so live in the hope that this situation will improve soon.
Absolutely endorse this!!! Let's go!!!!
The developmental needs, curiosity and love of life long learning can only be met by experiential based play. Ongoing formative assessment and teacher child positive engagement is the gold standard for the early years and throughout. So very pleased to see this raised so critical and essential.
Schools and teachers should be held accountable to the damage being done. School's should be using only evidence backed methods. I have experienced firsthand with my own two children struggling with depression and anxiety. Struggling with mental health at 5 is not good enough. Both of my children have struggled with mental health because of inappropriate Preprimary practices
It's VITAL that this play strategy be fully endorsed. The early schooling years shouldn't be about meeting targets whilst sitting at desks!!
We need sensible c obstructive education, instead we have a rolling dysfunction of a system, who is pushing the current system?
The ACT preschool system is experiencing a similar trend in the demise of play :(I am looking at starting up an advocacy strategy much like your own, here in the ACT.
thank you
Play teaches essential skills that cannot be learned in a classroom environment and still supports and complements academic development, so it is a win win.
This makes so much sense!
Play helps children work through everything they see, feel or hear. For children who have been traumatised by life events play is a powerful way to work through what has happened & this may include negative play. EC professionals are critical to synthesising children's wellbeing & play is the greatest way to support children.
Allowing and encouraging children to play is critical for their everyday being, learning and growing.
I teach at Eton Farm school where we are all about play. My 4 year old started at a kindy where the second day he had a handwriting lesson and there was no play areas in the class. We moved to Eton Farm. We have loved our year playing at the farm. I am a play advocate and promote play in all my teaching
I want my kids to be able to play to learn as that is where I think they can thrive more than a structured curriculum so early in life, let them learn to love school
I am from SA but very keen to support and follow you
Play is vital for young and older children, it needs to be valued in early childhood educational settings.
I endorse your statements. Play is extremely important not only for physical development, but also for social, cognitive and emotional development. It is comforting to know that play is still being advocated for in ECEC and school where it is most needed. Positive play based experiences set children up with life-long skills.
As a high school teacher I enjoy seeing middle school students create Rube Goldberg machines in Physics and specialised adaptions for creatures in Biology. Without the imagination encouraged by play, these creative avenues can be pedestrian. I believe the WA play strategy encourages the imaginative, interactive and collaborative development of children, vitally important to their social and cognitive development.
Support learning through play and nature-based play activities

Children learn through play everyone knows
It's a United Nations Right of the Child - to play!
I qualified in an era where children played. As the years have gone by the programme has changed a little at a time until now. Children need play to socialise, learn, problem solve, create, enjoy, grow experiment in order to develop happily and successfully.
Play, the most essential part of a child's and adult's life learning and maintenance skills. Long live play.
I have been teaching in Early Childhood classrooms for nearly 20 years and are so saddened by how there is a push down of academics and the removal of play. This is evident in the expectations of fitting in the curriculum and from administrators. I'm lucky to be teaching in an inquiry school where I can promote learning through play.
I have 4 boys now aged 0 -15 and am becoming increasingly concerned for my youngest as he will enter his schooling years. The amount of play as learning has become less and less as I have supported each of my boys through their education.
Important work to support these ways of being with children in nature and play.
THANK YOU for initiating this! We need to formally recognise the importance of PLAY, the whole child and the critical need to adjust the overcrowded curriculum.
Our group supports, the Play-Based, place-based, action-based and the essential need for PLAY in early childhood, without hijacking the only non-pressured 4 years of life. However, with the NQS, EYLF and all the duplicity of paperwork, educators are not spending time on the floor, because of the fear of Big Brother breathing down their necks regarding every which way of documenting [which is definitely not done in a National manner] Checking, testing, observing, reflecting, individual planning, high expectations - a schoolification push-down, driving excellent educators to exit the sector. We are a WA group of 1500 feeling the pressure of the Government which lacks steerage and consultation.
Without play and fun children will not learn what play and fun is especially in today's lifestyles this is more important than ever
Play is by far the most important tool in teaching young children the skills and qualities needed to be well functioning adults.
Play is a child's work!
Let them play!!!
Play will always matter! It's crucial
Play is the best way!
Play is so vital for all areas of a child's development and we need to value and nurture it.
"Children need the freedom and time to play. Play is not a luxury. Play is a necessity." - Kay Redfield Jamison
I fully support play based and child lead learning. Here's hoping we see more of it back in early childhood
I strongly endorse learning through play in early childhood.
Keep up the good work. Play is the way!
Play based learning is child centred best practice.
Children, families and communities thrive when play is at the centre.
Thoroughly looking forward to engaging and participating in this- I am a single mother with a two year old and excited to learn, advocate and participate; THANKYOU
Stop the push-down curriculum in ECE and allow children to develop in their own time.
Please consider this, play is so important for learning in the early years
Whole-heartedly support this!!
The push down for formal learning is having huge mental health implications for many children and play is seen as a reward rather than a way of learning. Children need to develop their social emotional capacities through play before learning to read and write.
Kindergarten Curriculum should be delivered in early childhood settings!

Play needs to be available in every school in the state, not just a selected few.
The current systems wastes some of most precious years in the children's life, while there is no evidence for better outcomes to make up for this loss.
I am very concerned that children need freedom of movement and time outside especially with nature play.
My daughters will both be the youngest in their year groups (May and June babies). I'm hugely concerned about them starting full time school at 4 years old. almost 2 years younger than my generation was. I believe the current curriculum is too much for these young children and expected outcomes should be drastically reduced along with the hours. I believe current school hours, for early childhood, are there more so for the convenience of working parents (in lieu of childcare) and not in the best interests of the child.
I fully endorse this campaign. Let the children learn and play, play, play, play!
Kids should learn by play.
As a parent lucky enough to experience play based learning in Switzerland for one of my children (who had started schooling in WA and was facing a desk), I feel so grateful. In Switzerland he was climbing trees, spending hours in the forest undertaking unstructured creative play, taking risks and learning to work as a team. He was not ready for fully formal learning and did not have his own desk until grade 2- which was further delayed by six months due to their start dates. This (re)introduction to his schooling allowed him to develop a positive and constructive attitude to going to school and gave him the breathing space he needed to be truly ready to knuckle down to the learning he is doing now in year 5, back in WA. I feel that this play based learning structure saved his whole schooling experience.
Yes, I totally support. Children should be playing and learn to interact and problem solve through play based activities as an individual, in pairs and in small groups situations.
Play is the first step to STEM.
Let children be children. All work and no play has not proven to be advantageous for a child's development.
I love the idea of bringing play based learning back into the system. Children are being pushed entirely too soon. They have such a strong inquisitive nature, which presents naturally with such vigour. However, so many are stifled and supressed in the current system. Best of luck in making this happen. Our future could be so much better for it, producing geniuses, which may otherwise go unnoticed.
I am highly disturbed by the push down in Pre Primary and Year one classes that basically provide no play opportunities for these poor children. I have seen classes that have only 15 minute recess and 30 minute lunches where children are supposed to eat and play in that time. There is no play time in the daily work plan, only sitting at desks and work work work. It is so disturbing. Please do something to allow these poor children time to be children.
St Thomas More Catholic Primary School strongly promotes play in the early years. It is essential children are given the time to learn through play and discover in an environment that is fun and supportive.
Is there a play strategy for South Australia? Please roll this out to SA too :)
I endorse play based learning.
I value play in the Early Years, I would love to see it valued in the wider community and in the Primary Setting.
Authentic child-led play is so so important. I want to see early years education meeting the needs of all children instead of squashing the creativity and joy out of them.
Every child should have the right to play :)
I fully support the need for the development of a Play Strategy to ensure the place of play in education, the home environment and the wider community
To begin, play is a right of children according to the UN rights of the child. This is reflected in the EYLF, which positions play as a vital context in which children learn. The EYLF is based upon strong and compelling research about the benefits of play for children's learning and well being. Furthermore, the EYLF is embedded within the National Quality Framework (NQF), which is designed to promote quality teaching and learning experiences. The NQF also has National Law and National Regulations embedded, which compels educators and administrators to follow best practice. At the end of the day, I believe that education should be based upon what is best for children and the process of meaningful learning vs. education for the sake of showing outcomes and inappropriate pedagogy for young children. To finish, I would like to say I strongly endorse the WA play strategy.
CRITICAL

At St. Andrew's Grammar the Early Childhood Centre values immensely the importance of play in Kindergarten, Pre-primary and Junior Primary. In Kindergarten and Pre-primary play is entitled Outdoor Learning and Indoor Learning. In each class there is a designated play corner to involve the students in hands on activities, social interaction and creative play. Outdoors, the equipment is changed regularly to motivate students to become involved in a variety of activities and encourage social interaction in a variety of settings.
The Ottey Family and Neighbourhood centre want to endorse the play strategy on behalf of our playgroup and local children
I support the WA play strategy, acknowledging the large body evidence and drawing from experience which tells us play is the best way for children to learn. Play is a fundamental right for all children and as a society we have a duty to ensure that this right is upheld, supported, and advocated for.
I teach papermaking/marbling & recycling principles in SA kindergartens & primary schools. I have developed a new non messy system simple to use system that is mapped to the EYLF. It has endless extensions including creative pulp moulds...Kids absolutely love it, teachers love it. I would like this introduced into WA schools. Papermaking /marbling is child's play with so much learning initiated without U even realising!
Play play play Play is holistic learning, learning from real world experience, building neurological systems that will be forever- from childhood play to competent adults.
Research and child development has confirmed repeatedly that young children learn through play and concrete learning experiences. It is important for all learning areas including priority areas of literacy and numeracy to be integrated into well designed child-centred programs in the early years of education.
As a mother I think it is important for children to be able to play and learn through play based learning. It helps develop their physical, social, emotional, language and cognitive development.
Thank you for all of your work
More play and less structure based learning for our little ones will help build them into being healthy happy resilient little people!
Play based learning is extremely important to a child's well being, it's good for their mind, body and soul. The children don't think they are learning, just playing but in fact they are learning far more than just what they are playing. Play based learning can also be a great tool for weeding out any learning difficulties, behaviour problems, social problems, speech problems or child protection issues. There is only so much you can actually learn from theory based learning but hands on, tactile learning serves a better purpose for the current climate/ world we live in.
Please stop ruining childhood and allow children to be children for that very short window of time. It's too late for my own kids now but the mental health scars serve as a reminder each day of a broken system.
As a mother of three, I can vouch for the fact that all kids have different needs when it comes to learning. But one thing all young kids respond to is play! Can we please take some of the pressure off our young ones to perform in a classroom setting and let them explore their world? In a way that engages their curiosity and sense of fun and allows them to remain active? Play based learning is the best way to do this!
We need to maintain learning through play and ensure early learning classroom involve structured play as part of the classroom.
Play is essential to a child's success now and in the future
As a parent with a 5 year old child in pre-primary, I have witnessed the negative impact of too much academic focus and not enough play upon my child's stress levels and mental health. I believe that trying to increase play-based learning is not enough - the National Curriculum needs to be changed to reduce the curriculum burden on the early years (years K-2) so that teachers have the freedom to enable play and play-based learning without the pressure of unrealistic standards and targets. The evidence shows that delaying academic learning in favour of play does not negatively impact academic achievement in the long-run (Finland being a case in point). https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/freedom-learn/201505/early-academic-training-produces-long-term-harm?fbclid=IwAR22O_uBQrhMaj_Dhn4XLlMi1SXBvPZelf4K-U_JLg7kJEQp6UZ-2VWK6hs Please, please, please put the health of our children above academic targets and school results.
Everyone has the right to play - let's raise the profile of play on the agendas of politicians, planners, educators and private developers through a coordinated and collaborative advocacy strategy.
Great initiative.
This is the most important factor in early childhood education!
I support developmentally appropriate approaches to education. In early childhood that means play!

Thank you for your work to save and promote play in our early years learning places (care and education) as well as throughout the primary school years. I endorse your statements.
What a fantastic ground breaking initiative. Everyone needs to play in order to learn. Worksheets in schools are lazy and kill creativity. Play creates creative brains.
Let kids play!
Play is so significant in the early years for children's development. Children in the early years learn so much more through play than any other form of learning. Children need play especially boys to enable them to develop and grow in all areas required to learn formally in the later years!!!
This is so important! I hope other states will follow your lead!
Play is so important in childhood development and for connecting!
Play is everything for children, developing problem solving skills, resilience and creativity!
Youths of today are entering an epidemic of anxiety, and I believe it's due to too much pressure at school. I don't remember a single child suffering from anxiety when I grew up in the 80s. Children need more opportunities to play and to just be children. We need to look to models from other countries that are getting it right.
Please endorse play for children it makes such a difference
This is the single most important thing we can do for our children and our planet! We need creative, imaginative, problem solvers and out of the box thinkers for the next generation. Give them play our very world depends on it!
As an early childhood teacher I see the consequences of cramming more into an overloaded curriculum. Children need opportunity for meaningful learning, to engage in open ended activities that have a play based focus. I believe this would support early learning leading to better outcomes as children move through school and would mean less behavioural issues.
Learning through play and child led learning are so important for little ones. The world seems so bent on forgetting childhood and overlooking its impact on young developing brains and bodies. I'd love to see something like this take shape in the U.S as well.
My little guy starts kindy next year and I'm so worried about the formal learning push down that is creeping in earlier and earlier for our children. I'm a strong advocate for play based learning in the early childhood years and practice this within our home. I would love to see more play based learning implemented into our education system!
I am so concerned with how young children are starting school and what is expected of them. My oldest is in Kindy and it is really full on for her, day 1 they expected them to write cursive to write their name.
Play is too important and too valuable to be pushed aside. Please keep it in our classrooms!
I wholeheartedly endorse this! Children need the right to PLAY.
It is so great to see this strategy gaining strength and support in the Early Years Area. This is already our philosophy at Karratha Community House - we can't wait to see how the WA Play Strategy will evolve from here!
All children DESERVE the right to quality education. Research proves that children learn best through play!!!
We need early educators to be strong advocates for play in the public and political domains.
Play needs to be valued by all teachers and principals. Keep up your great work.
Mitchell Institute strongly supports the importance of play based learning and acknowledges the importance of play on children's development in every domain.
Play is the way children engage in their learning, problem solve and be inventive. All important strategies we use as adults to work in modern society.
I support the idea of developing a Western Australian play strategy
I endorse the WA Play strategy with all my being. I am an Early Childhood Teacher that wishes not to see children subjected to anymore reduction in play.
Play is so important to development
Yes!!!!!

I endorse the WA play strategy. Learning through play is an invaluable strategy, it provides for creativity, imagination, role play, risk taking, problem solving. These skills are all required in an ever changing economic and diverse community. Our future rests with the children in our charge and it is our role as educators to provide the best opportunities for them to learn; in early years this is provided through play.
Endorse.
I totally support the WA Play strategy in that this is a right to their childhood and enhances their oral language confidence and social skills. This is not just a strategy but a basic right for them to be able to learn through play.
Children should have a right to play and have a wonderful childhood they can look back upon. I always look back on my childhood and remember the sense of wonder I had when I was able to go outside and play with my brother and sister. I always remember it with a sense of fondness. I hope we don't lose sight of what's important. The future of these children lies in the hands of people who want to help make a difference.
Play is learning and children should be given the time, space and opportunity to learn through play - in school and out.
All children learn through play. It's that simple.
I am a year 1/2 teacher, I see children struggling to self regulate every day as it is so difficult to provide enough play in the day with the demands of an overcrowded curriculum.
We do not see better outcomes in education when learning is not play based at an early age!
Can't ignore the evidence. Children NEED to play!
Play is the fundamental part of a child's learning! Through play the child is learning social skills, how to think and reason, conflict resolution, creativity, the use of small and large muscles, how to have conversations with peers and adults.
Play play play play play!!!!! The best way children learn, discover and take risks!!!
Play is the natural, developmentally appropriate method for children to make sense of the world around them. Intentional teaching through playbased exploration and discovery is essential for children to learn. You can't change nature - a child cannot learn to walk at birth no matter how much their parents try make them - it is just developmentally impossible. Why then, are educators being forced to make children sit still and learn through direct instruction at 3, 4, 5 years old. It is just as ludicrous as expecting a baby to walk! Children are intrinsically motivated to learn -they need to be active to explore and discover, share and communicate, talk, sing, dance, paint, build, move, create and seek answers. Only then can children learn. Please stop the pushdown of the curriculum and let our children be children and trust our early childhood educators to teach the things that matter - the things that will set children up to be successful learners their whole life through.
Without play we are robbing our children of their childhood and the opportunity to learn lifelong problem solving strategies and creativity.
Children learn through play. It's real, it's meaningful. It's fun and it works. It's essential to build real foundations and develop important life skills!
Let's give kids back their childhood.
Our school, WBPS, has transformed over the past two years with introduction of a play policy, loose parts play and nature play spaces initiative. There has been a noticeable positive change in children, teachers and parents as a result. But more needs to be done to the curriculum to build play and connection to nature into formal learning.
Play based learning is vital to the healthy social, emotional and physical development of all children. It should be a child's right.
This is such an exciting movement. Astounding to all effects and to WA for moving forward.
Mental health and well balanced kind children matter!!
Bring back the most important subject for Early Childhood - play
I have witnessed over the years the decline in children's self regulation and their anxiety levels increasing and I believe this is due to a shift away from play in education where we are forcing the curriculum down with disastrous results. Play is definitely extremely important in education.
Play in children's learning is so important through play I support this campaign
Childhood is where we learn life skills , but it is also when we learn to love life. Don't neglect the one for the other. Play is the perfect combination.

I endorse this strategy because as a year 1 teacher my children are really missing out on play incorporated into the classroom environment. They need it, they miss it. It is about time the importance of play is recognised
Play is such an important part of a child's life and is how they discover new concepts in the world.
WA schools need more play. Play is a child's work and how they learn!
Play is the way!
Keep up the good work
Can't wait for more play based curriculum
This is a vital part of the education of a child. Play is essential in an effective learning environment and it is highly appropriate that it is included as a Government endorsed strategy. I totally endorse this proposal.
Children need play to enrich their learning.
Play sets children up for life. Not standardised testing.
Play based learning is imperative for young children
Whole heartedly agree with this proposal.
Pushing children too early into formalised learning environments (including sitting at assigned desks for long periods of time) is turning kids away from learning at school. Teachers need to be aware of how their students are learning when they are playing. It is critical for the future of our children and our education system.
Children have the right to play!
Garry Landreth says children use toys as their words and play as their language. Unstructured and free play allows children to express themselves, process what's happening in their life and beyond, and learn skills to enable them to self reflect and integrate in a social system.
Play all the way!!!! Common Sense!!! Don't limit our kids' natural development through prescriptive learning outcomes.
We fully support this initiative. We currently run programs using LEGO to provide children the opportunity to learn STEM concepts through play.
I am writing this with grave concern about the little amount of play time four and five year olds at my school experience due to the increasing demands of the curriculum. It is alarming and very negligent of the children's needs at this level and completely ignores E.C.E philosophy and principles. There is plenty of time for formal learning, why take away the enjoyment of play so young? This play initiative is crucial.
I am a mother of four adult children and grandmother of 8 grandchildren. I am the oldest of 9 children. Play was an essential part of my childhood and my children's. I am loving nurturing play with my grandchildren and observing their creativity and imagination develop. I believe play is even more important in this era of technology, it assists children to problem solve and role play, allowing them to explore their emotions, strengths, vulnerabilities and relationships.
Play promotes social and linguistic skills. It promotes choice which enhances independence. Most of all, it reduces anxiety in young children.
We have to protect children's right to learn through play. It's the developmentally appropriate vehicle that supports foundational learning.
I fully endorse the need to a WA play strategy policy with guidelines and examples of best practice.
Children learn through play. Play should be a priority in early childhood education, as OUTLINED by the Early Years Learning Framework.
Play is vital to children
I fully endorse the play strategy.
Play is how children socialize learn and expand their oral language through peer collaboration. Play is the most important activity all children can be involved in. The current STEM trend is allowing for structured type play techniques and experiences even in senior school, for example, students are involved in LEGO robotics and compete in challenges. Play is the basis by which children of all ages can be involved in learning activities, conducting their own tests and experiments, with educators guiding them and extending their knowledge thus moving them through their zone of proximal development.
Swings and roundabouts. Time to let the children play again!

I don't know why we had to have research to support what we already know in relation to how play supports healthy development, not only cognitively but emotionally and physically. Problem solving and emotional resilience requires a strong imagination - fostered through play. Healthy eyes, bones and muscles are built on physical activity - fostered through play. Sunshine is required for vitamin D and immunity - playing outside. Fine and gross motor skills grow the brain - play. I could go on, it's not that hard, please let's get behind this.
Learning through play is important. Play is children's "work."
Let kids learn through being kids. They are not workers who need to be tied to a desk. Let their minds develop strong neural networks in a more natural and social environment.
Children should not be indoctrinated to become automations tied to desks with an end goal of becoming workers. Childhood is a sacred time during which children should learn strategies to build a better world and play is the only way they can gain these skills.
Play based learning is essential for children in early childhood education to ensure their learning and neurological development. Exploring and learning through play is well-researched, well-documented, and widely known as THE method for early childhood learning. That Australian education systems choose to force children into desk-based adult methods is ludicrous, and not only ill-informed but detrimental to the social, emotional, psychological and academic development. We should and could be an exceptional standard for the world of best practice for what is best for children's learning, but the continued loss of play-based learning in our educational curricula removes any such claim and results in learning issues.
I support this strategy. 100% believe in the effectiveness of play based teaching in the early years.
Learning through play is so important for our little one's minds and bodies!
EC teachers have been waiting such a long time for this WA strategy. We need everyone to know the value of play for children. Great job well done
I fully endorse any initiative by the state government that encourages educators and carers of children to deliver play-based learning. The neuro-emotional benefits of an environment that allows children to explore that environment in an organic, child-directed mode, are well documented and understood by early learning experts.
Brilliant. Just brilliant.
Play is what the kids need!
This an absolute necessity for all children. So essential for their development in every aspect of their growth and learning.
As someone with experience in education and a number of years working in outside school hours cafe, it's absolutely apparent to me that children are not being afforded enough opportunity to play (and therefore learn) in their educational settings.
All children have a right to engage in free play.
Play is a great way to learn concepts and social skills! Children are at their happiest when they discover through play!
I find it demoralising working with pre-primary children who become disengaged due to too many worksheets! Let's keep the joy of learning alive. It is not age appropriate to expect this age to sit at desks all day and be quiet, it is cruel.
The child's right to play has been seriously jeopardised in the early years in Australia due to many factors including early school entry, a lack of representation of play in programs and curriculum for children under 8, and a demanding national curriculum that is pushed down to children at a young age before school. This is impacting on children's development and wellbeing. For these reasons, I fully endorse the WA Play Strategy.
Fully support play based learning in the early years. It is 100% developmentally appropriate and will give our youngest students a solid foundation
I hope for the sake of our young developing kindergarten/ pre-primary students that it is recognised as mandatory practise for all schools to implement, facilitate and embrace the valuable benefits of play-based learning.
I fully and whole heartedly endorse the WA Play Strategy to help protect the basic right of all children to be able to play, as listed in the UN convention of the rights of the child. It is time we upheld it.
A very important message to develop our future generations
Good luck you're doing important work,

Play IS the way. Our K-2 students are not developmentally ready for the push down.
After returning to teaching after 10 years of raising my four children I was saddened by the changes in early childhood to the point where I reconsidered my career. This new approach to children's learning (little play, direct instruction, rotations, long periods on the mat, little outdoor play.....) that I was now part of was not why I chose to become an early childhood teacher. Let's hope this new initiative can be implemented without too many obstacles
Play based learning is so important for our children.
Play more!!
PLAY is so important & kids learn so much this way!
Play is children's work
Play matters. Right behind this for my grandchildren
Play is very important
More play, less desk time
Let kids play. Don't push curriculum onto them too early
Play is integral part of development for all ages. When the child's hierarchy of needs is met they are safe happy and open to deeper learning. Think back to your childhood and remember all you learnt through play based activities.
Play a right that must be defended...honoured and promoted!!
As an ECE teacher and parent of two young girls the curriculum push down is heartbreaking. I'm so lucky we have a school that fosters play based learning and that my daughter goes to kindy happy and not anxious -anxiety which comes with the push down of letters, sounds etc when they're just not ready. Please put play back where it belongs. Particularly in pre primary where it's heart breaking to see these children sitting for long periods completing structured activities.
Latest discoveries in neuroscience and understanding how brain works reveals it is critical to challenge our past concepts that hard work is the key to great performance. Rather, we need to allow our brain the opportunity to digest new information so that we can make strong new neural connections. If we overwork, all we are really achieving is cramming our pre- frontal cortex as well as inducing stressor states, such as anxiety. The state of play is really important to this process and allowing the limbic system to do its best work. It is also important for developing healthy mental attitudes.
I absolutely agree and support your message and try my best to spread the idea in my family and community. Thanks
Kids learn so much through play - respect for each other, how to take calculated risks, how to do things that may scare them, how to be in touch with their bodies and their emotions, how to expend energy in healthy ways, how to interact with others and create boundaries for themselves. The best time to do this is whilst young. Learning happens inside and outside the classroom, and in the body, heart and mind. Play facilitates all three.
It's time for Australia to embrace play in early childhood education...it is proven that young children learn better through play and will enjoy school more!
I absolutely believe the best way to learn in early childhood is through play. It is also fundamental in supporting the mental health of young children and building a love for learning in the older years.
Feeling so sad about what has become of the early years. It frustrates me that I can't teach the way I want and in a way that is developmentally appropriate
Let the children play!
How is the education department losing sight of what is best for our kids and therefore the development of future generations? Stop following a system that doesn't work and get back to basics for our children. Take a page out of the Netherlands book. Allow children to be children and nurture better, well adjusted human beings.
I love this initiative and I hope it can be instilled into school fast! My daughter is currently in PP and fortunately they still do a lot of play. Sadly though, year 1 is a shocking transition into sitting at desks all day where kids are starting to dislike learning and going to school. 😔 I'm not looking forward to it when it should be something we are looking forward to. My daughter is a very hands on and doing learner so I hope she doesn't struggle.
Children's play in all areas is very important for their growth. Physically and mentally.
I love this initiative

Play is so important to children and I am particularly concerned that WA forces children to go to school before they might be ready. Please bring play back into our little one's schooling (particularly Year 1 and up).
My son is 5 and struggles from weeks 7-10 every term with the intense curriculum and high expectations of his school. Every school holidays he manages to reset his mental state through play.
Definitely need young children to participate in play, good for their mind body and general well being
This would benefit children and their families, let's listen to the research and make a change
The research and evidence is there to show how important play is for learning in early childhood. Even though our world is developing technologically at a rapid pace, kids still need the same things they did 50yrs ago. Child development is still the same. Play needs to take a higher priority to ensure we have citizens with good social skills in the future.
As the mother of a two year old boy, I'm greatly concerned with what his learning environment will look like when he starts school. I'm actively seeking an environment where he does play based learning amongst other things. Please introduce this as policy for all schools in WA
Fix this Our babies are growing up too quickly with anxiety and other issues due to the education system Something has to change!
More time needed to build social skills and confidence. Less time pushing academics. Play, explore, enjoy!
The push down of formal education in Western Australia has resulted in an increase obesity and in mental health issues for our children today as they are no longer getting opportunities to explore , experiment and build resilience. Please bring play back for children in K, PP and early Primary School.
100% endorse this initiative
I endorse this play initiative, our children need more play!
I only want to teach in primary schools that have play at the centre of their philosophy. I will be a guerrilla play advocate if I end up in a school that doesn't. It is too important.
I teach kindy in WA and each year the curriculum becomes more structured and academic and I find it harder to give children the time they need to play as they want to.
Play is essential in Early Childhood!!! Please endorse it within our schools!
Play is central to how children learn. It allows children to explore, invent, create, develop gross and fine motor skills, develop socially and emotionally and most importantly at their own rate and in their own way. A play strategy is vital for the development of our children into well rounded, happy, productive individuals.
Children are little for such a short time. All the research shows that children grow into healthier, more social & more intelligent adults if they are allowed to learn & develop through play. So it's obvious. Let them play!!
Please keep play in education
So, so important
Thank you! This is such an important stance for the early years of education. Young children deserve the rights to learn and grow through play. As a Graduate Teacher, I see the strong connections children create with their world, community and peers, when learning through play-based programs. The connections to real life and the world buzzing past our little learners. Why not have the future generations grow up with a realistic view of our world. And I believe we can only achieve this through emerging children in play-based learning programs that foster the real world, nurture each child's abilities and needs and gives each child a big voice to speak with.
Play-based, intentional teaching and learning needs to be valued within the community. Children learn and begin to understand about the world in which they live, and where/how they fit in, through play. Play allows for exploration, investigation, discovery, wonder and curiosity and if it's not fostered in early childhood then when? Early childhood educators must ensure play is meaningful and documented in a way that gives a voice to children's play and the outcomes that are achieved through play.
Play is the work of children. Young Children benefit most from unstructured play experiences and develop the social-emotional foundations for learning. Lots of time for free play, is essential and once in a formal setting, recess is critical.
Play all through life and particularly for children and young people, is essential for good physical, mental and cognitive health.
Every child has the right to develop and learn through play, be able to enjoy their learning with play and express themselves through play activities that develop all developmental domains.

The importance of Play has been documented over and over again for so many years. I have been teaching for over 30 years, it was a big part of my University education. I am beyond surprised that in this day and age it should be an issue. Where and why have we gone wrong?? Play is so monumental and important in the Early Childhood Years and beyond.
Learning through play is powerful and is the right of every child. We are robbing our children of their childhoods by placing them in a structured curriculum too early. Learning through play will still meet prescribed outcomes whilst allowing children the ability to gauge their own boundaries. Let the children play!
Play is so integral in children's lives and is extremely important to their social and emotional skills. It develops their oral language which is severely lacking in the digital age. I fully endorse a play-based learning act in all schools.
I am happy to endorse this worthwhile cause
Play is the best vehicle for so much of what young children really need to learn. It is being squeezed out by the demands of an academic curriculum at the same time that children are coming to school without a wide enough bank of experiences to make the most of what is offered.
In the fast moving and growing world play of the child has taken a backseat. There are lots of expectations set by the parents and society on young children. These expectations are not allowing children to learn and explore, ultimately young minds becoming like robots, doing what the parents and society say. Let's all of us break this pattern and let us allow children to drive their own vehicle of learning through play. Let us all only provide opportunities and scaffolding that our children require. Join and endorse play of the child because "Play is the work of the child".
Please
I agree that this initiative has a lot of merit
This is something that I feel strongly about both as a Manager of Community Services and a grandmother,
Play is essential for children and adults alike. Play therapy as an aid cannot be overstated in terms of its importance in working with children and families
I endorse the WA Play Strategy initiative.
We practice learning through play in both our crèche and vacation care services.
Play is so important to the education and development of children. It is heartbreaking and frustrating to see play based learning falling to direct instruction approaches in classrooms. A government driven Play Strategy that mandates play in Early Childhood settings, including schools is essential to the outcomes and lives of our children.
Absolutely!! this is most important.
Learning through play is the most effective form of education - and not just for early childhood! Our children need space to explore, experiment, create and interact to develop the strong neural infrastructure that will allow them to deal with whatever their future holds. Let's allow children the freedom to learn from their experiments, question assumptions, and develop their own knowledge. Who knows what the world will look like when this generation of children is grown - but my guess is that we will need them to have creative minds and cooperative spirits to deal with the issues that we are creating for them today.
Play is such an important part in a child's development.
Play is an intrinsic right of every child. From Birth, play develops fundamental skills, attitudes, learning dispositions and knowledge about the world in a social context. Play is the most appropriate way for children to develop executive functions and the cognitive skills needed for the academic learning which is appropriate later.
There is enough evidence from brain research and educational philosophy that supports play as the driver of educational curriculum in the early years. It is imperative that those creating and delivering curriculum understand what play-based means. It’s is equally important that regulators and managers support this by providing mentoring, coaching and keep the focus off rigorous assessment and data collection.
Our children need the opportunity to learn through play to develop foundation skills for their academic journey and for getting on with the business of life. It saddens me to see early childhood settings allowing less and less time for play, but instead pushing structured learning activities that the children are not developmentally ready to cope with. Many early childhood programs are depriving children of the opportunity to explore, engage, discover and grow through rich and enjoyable play based activities.
Children learn best thru play.
Pushing back against the push for academic learning in early childhood is so important. Thank you.

I Endorse this on behalf of Yidarra Catholic a Primary School. I am happy to share our logo if you wish.
Play is vital kids learn in different ways so we have to adapt how we teach them
I endorse a play based strategy for our young students.
The research is clear - play is how children learn best, not desk and chair tasks. Our children have many years ahead of them to learn and work in a formal setting but let them first learn through play and experience as this is what their brains are ready for in the younger years and is therefore a far more effective learning environment.
Play is essential for children's social, emotional and educational wellbeing and development.
Children spend so long in education and the earlier we force a sit down and learn curriculum, the more of them are switched off before they even make it to secondary. I have two young babies now and watch how much my two year old learns while playing outside. The science of sand and water play, the mathematics of sorting and grouping by size, colour or genre, the English to articulate what she sees, hears and feels are just a few core examples. Let her continue to play. Feed her imagination so she will think, let her try new ideas so she will experiment and let her fall so she will persevere. More play in WA
All children deserve to learn in the most natural way to them, and that is through play. We are robbing the next generation of their right to learn!
At Spirit of Play we strongly support play based learning as we have seen first hand the benefits in allowing young children this vital time to explore and connect to their world and the worlds of their imagination. More and more research is backing up our personal experience s of seeing children flourish academically, socially and emotionally after being given the time to play in their early years.
Please keep me informed.
I endorse the strategy
It is a privilege in our work with playgroups to see the value of play in action. And to be part of helping many families discover the value of play. Some parents join a playgroup assuming that they must rush their children to end point goals, even if these goals are only achievable with the building blocks of play and of their child's stage of development. I endorse strategies to improve the community's understanding of children's development and of the importance of play.
As an EC teacher of ten years and a current student undertaking my Masters to move myself toward becoming a more present EC Pedagogy Leader it is most concerning to have witnessed the diminished focus and opportunities for play that occurs in most school settings these days. I have observed a rise in the incidences of anxiety in children as young as Kindy and PP which is most concerning and seems to have occurred in line with the Academic pushdown that has taken centre stage at the expense of children's natural inquiry and learning through play both indoors but especially outdoors. Please for the sake of our children's and future members of society's mental health - Bring Back Play. Teaching in EC is not what it used to be and I believe this is largely due to taking away the most natural intuitive innate forum that children have within them to learn - Playing! I resent planning and teaching in a way that goes against all the research and everything that I was taught at university - and for what - so that we can focus on producing better test scores in PIPS or the On Entry Assessment. Sad and Wrong.
Play is such an important aspect of our little people's learning. Nature play and roleplaying especially.
Let our kids play!
Play based learning is critical to not only the development of academic skills for the future but the more important life skills of interacting with people, communication, problem solving and self motivation/management.
Every child, in every school and every community needs to have boundless opportunities to enjoy, reflect, process, develop and learn through play. Children need to play so that they become adults who can problem solve, think outside-the-box, have well-developed social skills and are able to look after their mental health. It breaks my heart to see children in Early Childhood hate school and learning because they are over-tested, stressed and anxious about getting worksheets right, and not having the time to truly enjoy the rich learning they are getting through solid periods of collaborative play with their friends.
Play is an integral part of a child's learning. If children are playing they are learning. If we want our children to be life long learners we need to encourage play based learning in the early years. If we want our children to have a sense of self and to be autonomous we need to encourage play. based learning. If we want our children to be curious, to make their own choices and to inquiry then we need to encourage play based learning. These are just some of the benefits.
We are also introducing a nation wide initiative around the importance of play.
Our children need to play. Let school reflect this.

We consider play to be so important for the whole development of the child.
Children learn from experience and example that's why they need to try everything to do with movement and interaction with their environment and social intercourse. Playing is learning and fun. That's why I feel more time should be spent encouraging children to play.
If we want to have less violence, drug abuse, various types of other abuse, mental health problems, employment and education issues then we need to start with the kids. start from the beginning and give kids a positive happy loving education.
Please stop pushing our children too early too soon. It's creating anxiety for them, taking away their love of learning and is not setting them up for successful futures.
Play is vehicle for learning and development. When children play they learn to build relationships with others. Play allows children to develop their imagination, curiosity, creativity and dexterity in way that it cannot be taught. Children are born to play naturally in stress free environment it helps children in development healthy way.
Let the children play!
I support the WA Play strategy's proposal. Play is important to children, especially at a very early age. But this needs Government approval and backing. Kids need the freedom of expression during play to develop.
Fully support this initiative.
This is crucial! As a home school educator/ teacher and nature play educator I can't stress the impact and importance of play in the lives of my own children and the children I work with. I wholeheartedly support this initiative.
Play is such an important experience for children. Aside from children having fun there is a whole lot of learning occurring in play. Children use their imagination, they problem-solve, they learn to play and co-operate with others and fix conflict. Not all learning occurs in a structured classroom environment or by sitting at a desk learning. Children need to take risks when playing to learn what risks they can and cannot take and develop responses to future risky scenarios. We are taking the fun out of childhood and it is time it was returned and supported wholeheartedly by a multi-level network of government, parents and educators.
I couldn't agree more with this principle. Our kids need this, play based learning is how they learn best!
Play is integral for language, thinking & social development. Our children need play in order to learn, develop & thrive.
No more push down
Please increase play in the early years, it is of such benefit to all children.
Please allow children to be children and increase the opportunities for play - it's so important for them!!
Young children 3-5 should be encouraged to learn by playing not learning how to read and write. As long as they can recognise the spelling of their name at 3/4 that should be good enough. They are missing out on the enjoyment of playing whilst young and that is also a way of learning for them to mix and work thinks out for themselves. The serious business of reading and writing should be started at the age of 5/6. Most parents encourage their children at home by reading to them and helping them associate words to what is written. As long as they can write letters by age 5 that should be a starting point for teachers.
The long-term well-being (as well as the long-term academic outcomes) of our youngest learners is in crisis as we see increasingly more formalised learning and less play in our K-3 classrooms. Play IS how children NATURALLY learn. Early Childhood professionals (aka. teachers and educators) know how to harness this natural way of learning that gives children the best and most positive start to schooling, resulting in a love of school and a love of learning. Creating curious life-long learners should be the focus of all those involved in children's education, not the results of a standardised test. Teachers need the support of school administrators and policy makers to actualise this in the classroom. Let's get this message across with a strong play strategy!
More play in the younger years would benefit all children in this stressful World.
Engaging a child in developmentally appropriate, holistic learning experiences means play - not desk based, formalised learning. With 1 in 6 Australian children diagnosed with a mental health condition, we have to look closely at the causative factors and the push down of formalised learning into the early years is a significant contributing factor. And one that's easy to remedy.
We need something concrete to back what we know is right, to protect play and its role in early learning.

ECE looks, feels and sounds differently in schools depending on how the Principal views the ECE curriculum. We need EYLF to be followed and enforced as it is written and not some mutation of interpretation by a Primary trained Principal.
We need to value play and validate the role of educators. Play meets the child where Learning happens. It is entirely developmentally appropriate, with insights and opportunities for individual learning. It is fun. There are So Many years of schooling ahead. Let's bring some fun back to the fact of early learning *!
Children are spending too much time being organised by adults into various activities. Free play where children organise themselves and each other is a vital part of development. These are the skills we need to learn as children in order to function within the community as adults.
In today's frantic paced world; full of deadlines, testing and accountability; children are not being encouraged to be children. Many schools focus too much on the outcomes and the meeting of benchmarks and forget the value of the process. The importance of play in a child's learning should never be underestimated. The whole child blooms- emotionally, socially, physically and cognitively. Play is powerful and is an essential requirement in the learning process.
The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia states that play is a key element of learning in the early years. Further, not only is play key to learning in the early years, there is strong evidence to show that it is also important to later learning. ARACY urges all governments to encourage play-based learning in the early years, and to do so as part of providing universal quality early childhood education for three year old children.
Play, which involves inquiry, exploration, inventions, wonder and creativity motivate children to develop the love of learning. Children who are given time to play develop social skills and friendships, they learn about failure and they develop confidence with their successes. Importantly play must be planned and materials for play must be natural and open ended. Every moment of my teaching career has been made richer and more rewarding by allowing children to play and by watching children at play.
Respecting and valuing children's right to play and learn through high quality play experiences and in high quality natural environments is critical to include in policy.
Play is the most essential tool for appropriate childhood development 0-8 years.
play based learning should be a natural right for all children and the government need to support this endeavour. I personally will be seeking endorsements from families and staff.
Play is such an important part of a child's life. We are living in a world where technology is taking over causing children to have more and more developmental problems. We need to protect our children and let them play instead of sitting in front of a screen.
My 6 year old son is now suffering anxiety. This has started this year entering year 1 , where there is no free play or home corner at his school. He is just too young to be sitting there day after day trying so hard to learn how to read and do worksheets. Then he became wriggly at school and found it hard to sit still, then was always getting in trouble with the teacher! What a horrible start to school
I am committed to ensuring our children are given the freedom to experience their world, their way.
It seems to me that many of the experts agree that play is so important for young children's learning, which is why it's so concerning that kindy, pre-primary and early primary curriculum seems to be more focused on structured classroom learning and using screen devices. Our children's development and education is too important to mess with!
Play is important.
Play is vital!
Play is important!!
Please stop rushing our little kids into formal education and allow them to continue learning through play. We could learn a lot from the Scandinavian approach!
Play and activity at a young age is so important. Let's give them more time to play and more outdoor facilities!
Most members of the Home Education community strongly support play-based learning.
We are seeing the rise of countless problems that occur when children do not have sufficient opportunity for play. It is VITAL that we ensure our children have the chance for adequate play in their childhood!
Please support schools and education centres in developing play based learning opportunities for young children. Stop the push down of structured learning.
Children need free play.
Definitely!!

Coming from a child care background I know how much play has diminished in ECEC for various reasons. Play is the only way for children to learn in all aspects of development and should be promoted.
Teaching children to read and write is important. But they need opportunities to learn and practice sharing, turn-taking, communication skills, problem solving, conflict resolution and other social skills, as well as special awareness, and gross and fine motor skills (you need these for writing), all of which they get from playing. Without these skills, how are they going to cope in life and the workplace later on? Play is so important in so many ways.
Children have a right to play.
It is well known that play based learning is vitally important for young children. With the push down of more formal curriculum this is impacting children having access to play based programs. I believe that we will see long term impacts because of this. I whole heartedly agree with this initiative from Early Childhood Australia WA branch.
Smart Start is a campaign that supports early childhood education and is actively campaign for quality early learning for all Australians. The Smart Start Campaign is supported by Australia's largest not for profit early learning provider; Goodstart Early Learning. We fully endorse the WA Play Strategy initiatives when it comes to the importance of play based learning in our children's environments at any age.
The importance of play for children in their early years cannot be underestimated. With 80% of brain development occurring in a child's first 5 years, the role of play is crucial at this time to support the development of skills and behaviours that last a lifetime.
Play is a vital part of a child's optimal social, cognitive, physical and emotional development.
I am fortunate to work in a school environment that promotes a Play-Based program for Kindergarten. I hope for our students' well-being we can keep this program going strong.
Play is being overlooked in the formalising of our child care and early years schooling. Too much focus is on structured learning rather than on informal unstructured play environments. Children are being forced into the formal world of adults and technology from birth. Focus in child care is often on formal educational concepts rather than on developing environments for play.
Play is the most important thing for every child and the value of play needs to be recognised and embraced. Extended blocks of time needs to be given to all children make their own learning discoveries through play!!
The benefit of play in education and learning is undervalued and certainly needs highlighting. Our country's educational outcomes would get the boost they need if play was brought back into the early years of compulsory education!
It has been sad and upsetting to witness the effect that this push down in early childhood learning has had on our young kid. I have a 3yo & 7yo and I want for our youngest to enjoy the many years of schooling she has yet to have. I want to see her blossom with play-based learning strategies that will nourish and encourage her to want to learn and I want a school system that will teach with their interests. My 7yo is now having anxiety & stress issues having been forced to learn and keep up with an education system that does not want to try to understand how he best learns. Many other kids are anxious and stressed and this is preventing teachers from doing what they love to do. We all want to bring out the best in our children, we all want a school system that understands how young minds work. We do not want a system that forces them to start full time school before they are 5. We do not want a system which forces them to sit in a classroom for 6hrs a day. We do not want a system that disregards what parents & teachers have to say. We do not want a system that forces our kids to learn the things that they are not developmentally ready to learn yet. Please bring back play based learning to early years schooling and stop forcing them to sit at desks all day!
We can never estimate how valuable play is in the child's development.
Please support young children's learning through play.
A purposeful play based programme allows the child to become self engaging in their learning, the anxiety levels are kept to a minimum. The individual precious characteristics are accepted and developed as the children gain confidence. Many children are beginning Kindergarten with sensory processing issues, anxiety and ailments yet to be assessed and diagnosed. This has become very stressful for all involved. A play based programme allows flexibility in a positive environment to accommodate for these issues.

There is no greater pleasure than watching young children play, investigate, explore, taking "risks" to discover their environment and also their own limits at certain ages. It helps them to problem solve for themselves. I was a Primary teacher in the 70's and that idea was no strategy as such. It was the normal thing to do. Growing up in the 60's that was our way of life. We have lost a lot in Education over the last couple of decades. Signed: teacher, mother of 4 and nana of 4 young ones.
It is imperative that WA has a play strategy that ensures all children have access to this fundamental right of childhood and human development.
I agree that play is essential for every child's learning and development. Children do have a right to play when and as they please and this should be encouraged not stomped on. I also believe if this strategy is successful within Western Australia it should be developed as a country wide strategy so all Australian children will benefit.
In our remote community the 0-5 ECE program I facilitate is the only place where the children are immersed in play opportunities, once the start kindy they are forced to sit at desks and do book work. Play should continue through primary school as it is the best vehicle for learning. We need a state strategy that acknowledges the benefits of play!
Play is a fundamental right and the fact I have to write this is shocking. Research and child development screams out that children learn best through unstructured deep play experiences. In 31 years of teaching young children the stress and anxiety I see diagnosed now has to be the result of the push to academics before children are ready. So many colleagues leaving, disillusioned and angry. I have to admit I'd be gone if financial needs allowed.
The interference of political agendas within early childhood education has led to the drive to teach only that which is easily measurable, producing easily manipulable scores but resulting in children being taught only a steadily narrowing range of skills and ideas. Learning by rote rather than genuinely understanding becomes the order of the day. Hence we fail to produce flexible adaptable creative thinkers - surely what we need in so swiftly a changing world. If we want our children to truly develop their potential we need to give them the freedom to explore their world and anyone who knows anything about child development knows that this is best achieved through "play". Play is how we learn.
Play is fun and play is learning. Play is a fun way for children to learn, explore and experience their world.
Our society's constant focus on rote learning of literacy & numeracy concepts takes away the opportunity for our children to; think critically, challenge their understanding and gain a passion for learning. Play gives our children a space that they control and enables them to direct their truly relevant learning. We educators keep shouting the message but it's rarely heard!
Play is critical to the development of children. If you look at the research, this is evident. Listen to what the research is saying.
Congratulations on developing The WA Play Strategy website. May it inspire many an educator of young children to make play their prime go to teaching strategy.
YES! Now more important than ever to educate families, the community and particularly policy makers of the importance of play to every child's learning, well being, development and health. We need to make sure that accurate, factual and credible information about the latest research evidence and data is shared and explained so that appropriate decisions and funding (e.g. guaranteed funding for ECEC provision such as 'universal funding' and appropriate infrastructure is planned and built in communities e.g. easy access to purpose built outdoor spaces) are made to enhance the 'best interests' of children's current and future learning and well being needs. We need to get better at doing things that actually supports their life chances!
Well done WA. It is so important that early childhood professionals advocate for children's rights.
Play is essential to early brain development, therefore it is integral that we advocate and provide for children's right to play!
Children learn best through play and learn slowly that the acquisition of knowledge can be fun
Play is learning. Don't be in a hurry for our children to be the best reader or cleverest counter. Let them play all day. I wish I could step back in time and do this again.
Industry Graduates endorse the learning through play strategy.
As a parent of 21years and involved in an alternative education school that is parent-run and has the philosophy of play based, child-lead learning, I personally have seen the results of how beneficial it is for children to have their Right to play. The school is in its 45th year and I know adults, teens and current children that have thrived, and grow into confident individuals with a continuing want for knowledge and self learning. The beauty to is that most keep their playfulness without having it suppressed. As an early years educator I practice my personal philosophy in my programming and daily contact with my young children, creating a happy, nurtured environment for them to feel safe and play freely in.

Children learn best through discovery and play but need qualified early years educators to provide the right balance, educative opportunities and support to learn. There needs to be a review into the university entrance requirements and teaching of early years educators so that you get quality staff leading quality learning in the early years.
I endorse children's right to play.
Play is the most important thing in children's life.
I teach three and four year olds in a play based learning service. We encourage creativity and imaginative play with a focus on learning social skills such as sharing toys and being kind to each other as well as discovering the world around us. We get so much feedback from the parents and children, that this all changes when they go to Kindy and are expected to sit and learn in a more formal setting to read and write. School isn't fun for them anymore. Little time is set aside for the arts. The transition is difficult and many children struggle with this change in learning style. They seem to lose the opportunity to be creative thinkers
I endorse this strategy
Play is fundamentally a right of childhood and to deprive or reduce children's opportunities for play is a breach of that right. Research is clear that play has a significant impact of children's health, wellbeing, development and learning. An unhurried childhood filled with rich play opportunities, spaces and times is the best 'gift' we can give our children.
Important work!!
Supporting children's learning through play is the most effective way to promote development.
The less they play the less they learn.
Play is a vital yet not widely understood part of young children's learning, development and wellbeing. Opportunities for children to pursue play are diminishing in our increasingly urbanised, scheduled and fast-paced lives and where learning is frequently adult-lead and focused on achievement. I endorse the WA Play strategy and hope WA government leads the way nationally. Thank you
Play is so important. Young children need this, make it happen!
As a teacher and mother I can see in my own children, that a lack of play has a detrimental effect. As teachers we have seen the peer reviews that reinforce the importance of play for plays sake. The new curriculum is too academically full on in the early years. Specifically the younger boys are suffering. It's so sad to watch
Please don't put any more pressure on our young children. They need time to be children - without the pressure of achieving and educational expectations. They need time to just be - and play.
Age Appropriate Pedagogies recognise and value the need for quality play experiences in EC learning. 'Play' is learning, and it is critical that this is formally recognised to support best practise in the Early Years.
For me play is pivotal to the depth of children's learning. Our children learn while having fun-without adults directing them. They learn all their citizenship skills-how to be an effective team member, to be part of decision making process, lead others, follow others, understand their own emotions, develop empathy with others, creativity, problem solving, counting, math, science and literacy-you name it children lean this through play. I feel that a funded focussed strategy would assist with dissemination this message
I am deeply concerned and unsettled by the early school years strong emphasis on direct teaching and literacy / numeracy, and the limited opportunities for young children to learn through play. There is now so much evidence demonstrating that play based learning leads to better outcomes for our children's' health and wellbeing, as well as education outcomes. Please it is time to act!
Let's make engaging in play a must in our curriculum!
Play is a right not a privileged for all children.
Let the children play!!
I support a greater role for play in the class room environment. I worry about how my active son will handle pre-primary next year...
Children learn better through play. Please get them out from behind desks and onto the floor, outside, anywhere other than staring at worksheets all day. I'm alarmed by how many six year olds in my daughter's class wear glasses, need chiropractors, and are stressed by the demands of school - school work should not be damaging our children the way it is. I watch as my daughter's deep love of learning fades day by day, as she comes home from yet another day of spending all day at her desk. Please do better and support this initiative.

Play is an important part of learning.
The demise of play, or should I say the misconceptions about play in early childhood education, has been on a steady decline during my career from ECEC in the 1980's and mid 90's, Teaching in WA Primary Schools in the late 90's to 2012 and as a lecturer in Early Childhood Teacher Education from 2011 to the present. High stakes national and international testing has led to practices, such as rote learning, explicit teaching and 'teaching to the test' in order to improve results in these tests. Unfortunately, not only have these strategies not worked, based on data collected from these tests, but it has also increased children's anxiety and compromised children's opportunities for creativity, risk taking, problem solving, cooperation and enhancing their social/emotional health (based on research on a national and global level). All of these skills can be improved through the provision of numerous types of play. During my time as a teacher, I have also seen an increase in the number of referrals to Occupational Therapists and Speech Therapist. Play has the ability to help build children's language, cognitive, social, emotional and physical skills...that sitting behind a desk reciting (or parroting) literacy and numeracy equations can't. If we are to build children's competency, creativity and improve educational outcomes, then play MUST be a focus in early childhood education.
I endorse the right for children to play - for the benefit of children today and those in the future.
What a fantastic movement to start!
Play is essential for all ages to support creativity, collaboration and communicative skills. A great initiate - well done!
WA needs this
I agree that Play is such an important part of children's development and learning. We need to stop trying to make our children grow up too quickly and stop giving them a screen to look at and instead teach them how to play again.
Please do not phase out play in Early Childhood Education. All contemporary research strongly asserts that young children learn best through play.
Going from a Community kindergarten to Pre Primary at a state school what did we notice. No play-based learning, and what was labelled as play-based clearly wasn't. Art, storytelling and cooking are all worksheet driven. Imaginative play has been lost and instead the kids spend hours staring at the smart board. Is this a smart move? Isn't this like screen time except bigger and whiter. Learning at this age should be fun, creative explorative and interesting. When I did my first parent helper shift I cried inside. Why did my 5 yr old have to suffer this stale environment. We are looking at other schools and I will find the best enriching local school I can. We shouldn't have to put up with this bland and robotic style of teaching. If you have any power or influence, please push for change as these kids need play for a happier school life. Thank you
The evidence is overwhelming, children learn best through play. Why not give our kids the best that we can with the knowledge that we have?
Children learn through play, it's as simple as that. Literacy, numeracy, social skills and emotional development, to name a few, can all be fostered through play. Why deny children this holistic learning tool that is memorable, enjoyable and beneficial. Let the kids play!
Play is essential for social and emotional development which then allows children to navigate their school world more successfully.
Children learn from play!
Play enriches us all - young and old - satisfying the soul and connecting us to each other.
We absolutely MUST resist the schoolification of early learning - key to this is educating the community about the central importance of play, and making sure our early years educators are well educated professionals who know how to support play and also how advocate with community on behalf of children. How do I tell a parent who wants to see a 'worksheet' of copied letters as evidence of learning, that this is not a useful use of their child's time ...
Fabulous video - Let's get all the states involved!
I believe that play based learning is the best way for children in the early years to learn. I feel that by making the early years a more academic learning time, we deprive children of the time that they learn about social behaviours and interactions that is supported with play-based learning.
This is a very important initiative.
I believe without play children would not exist and without children adults would not exist.
I support the WA Play Strategy initiative aiming to deliver a State Government-lead play strategy

Play is integral, even crucial for normal child development physically, emotionally and cognitively. Supporting, providing and facilitating play opportunities for children should be prioritised by educational, health and government programs.
I strongly advocate a play-based strategy. It is vital for children's cognitive development, resilience, motor skills, memory - and recognition of this through a strategy is pivotal.
Let us take a leaf out of countries like Finland where children are encouraged to play. The strength of the Finnish education system and the impressive educational outcomes it achieves is because six-year-old children in Finland attend a full-time compulsory year of play-based schooling.
Play, particularly active play, is critical to all aspects of a child's development and can significantly impact their health and wellbeing across childhood and later life. A more strategic approach led by government, non government and the community is needed to ensure all Australian children are given every opportunity to learn, develop and be healthy through PLAY.
Let children play for the future requires problem solvers, creators and big thinkers and these are skills learnt in play. Again and again, researchers have shown play based early childhood programs have the same (if not better) reading results by Year 3 with the added bonus of having improved mental health and resilience. I wholeheartedly endorse a strategy that promotes more free play for WA kids!
We need more focus on play and in particular outdoor play in natural environments. Despite the wealth of research around the importance of this to ensure children's physical and mental wellbeing and learning, opportunities in families and ECEC services seem to be diminishing.
We have a commitment to hands-on learning in our early literacy programs in out libraries. Our It's All About Play Program is having a positive impact on children's development in all domains.
Play is so important to a child's whole development. Participating in play based learning activities assists develop a child's social, emotional skills in addition to their cognitive and physical development. Communication is integral in society. Through play, children gain the opportunity to practise communicating in whatever form is relevant to their needs e.g. device, pictures, gestures and or verbally. Academic experiences are interlinked throughout playing activities e.g. pouring sand - measurement, gross motor activities assist develop fine motor development. Children learn through play in a safe, risk taking environment involving language and visual materials...Gill :)
There is so much research that backs up the importance of Play, please please take note and stop the curriculum push down and let our children develop as they should in a Play based environment. Maybe you could even consider not having children in a school environment at such a young age!
Ensuring that children have opportunities to learn through play is critical to maintaining the highly positive dispositions towards learning that children bring with them when they commence school.
It is so vital we get this message out there and supported by the community.
We need to emphasize play based learning from BIRTH, not just school. The academisation of early years learning is starting to infect child care as well with "preparing" children for kindergarten as early as 2 years. Our children are missing out on key experiences that are really important for their social, emotional and intellectual development because of increased regimentation of their lives.
Our children need play based learning to be expected not only in kindy but extended into PrePrimary, Year 1 Year 2 and Year 3 - right the way through their early childhood.
This is incredibly important for all children but especially vulnerable ones. I am concerned for the very real mental health issues we currently have and without enough play at the most important stages, I strongly believe these are going to increase from earlier ages
As a grandparent I worry about the children being denied the opportunity to learn through play. Our grandson in pre primary has homework most days so even after school is still unable to switch off. I think there is too much pressure on 5 year olds and it would be more beneficial for them to have some physical activity.
My Year 1 son is just not ready for the work and learning he is given in the classroom. He is a bright, confident, social kid and often tells me it is too much work and too hard at school. Extensive evidence shows the benefit of play and looking at countries where children start school later, such and Finland and Sweden show there is no evidence of benefits starting school earlier in life. Kids need play as it is the best way for them to learn important skills at a young age.
Play based learning is vitally important in early childhood education.
Children deserve an enjoyable, stress-free introduction to schooling. The emphasis should be about developing free-thinking individuals not obliging robots. The world needs more innovative, free thinking people. Develop a child's curiosity, creativity and empathy through open ended play. Education needs to be based on children's developmental readiness. We can avoid a lot of unnecessary stress for children, parents and teachers if we do!

Play is central to children's development and learning: social, emotional, physical and cultural. When society supports children's play, it also supports society's future.
I agree wholeheartedly as knowledge is co- constructed
Let the children play!
Our children learn so much from play. They can test the boundaries of their social interactions. They learn empathy, leadership, regulation. They mimic the social norms they see being modelled around them and test them out among their peers.
Having had my 2 older children at a private educational facility endorsing learning through play and exploration for 8 years I find it hard to adjust to the government regime of learning for my children now that I can no longer afford the private school. I wish my 3rd child had the early childhood education of his siblings that fostered curiosity, wonder, unstructured and open ended play and questioning of the world around them and time, time to think and ponder without pressure of getting the 'right' answer. Play is the richest source of learning in such a whole and engaging way xx
Play is a fundamental right for young children. It is how they learn and process things and is something we must continuing advocating on children's behalf.
We advocate Early Childhood Education then introduce adverse learning procedures to this group to satisfy data collection based institutionalised learning. Not about the children but all about ticking boxes.
Play based learning and learning through nature are vital elements of all early learning environments!
As a parent to 4 young children just starting school I see that much more play is needed in schools. They are getting anxious about getting things right in reading and writing at the age of 4-5! They should be enjoying their childhood. It's the only time in their lives that they get the opportunity to ever just be a kid and play.
I have noticed a huge decline in social development with the new learning structure. Learning through play is so important for a child's development. Social development starts from such a young age although children aren't given time to learn this as they are expected to do too much structured learning. Play base learning helps with all developmental areas to create a base for further development in the future.
Play is vital for our young ones and developing a play strategy is important.
110% support this. Scary to think I could be putting my future children into a school system that values more about pen to paper test results and ticking curriculum boxes than respecting children's developmental age and rights! The UN Convention of the Child Article 29 says it best. "Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people". Play-based learning is THE education that will help children to do all these things, not smartboards, iPad apps and NAPLAN. If we want well rounded, respectful and contributing adults in the future, let kids play now.
Play is vital for children's learning and development
Children are being pushed into formal learning too early. They need to be allowed to be kids. Reinstate more play into their early education.
Principals need to stop pushing learning down on to PP and K classes. NAPLAN is one test on one day and demonstrates nothing. Let the children enjoy their first few years in school without so many demands put on them. Let's decrease the anxiety and stress these kids are suffering because of the lack of play.
It should be all about place in the early years. 40 plus years of teaching has confirmed this for me!
I fully support this initiative. It's is staggering how play is being forgone in favour of early academic learning.
My children and I are very lucky to be part of a wonderful school community (Walliston Primary School) that has always valued play in the Early Years! Play is the way☺
Through play our children learn and grow. Their curiosity and creativity can flourish. Play is important!!
Play is how children learn the social and emotional skills necessary to lead a full and productive life. Playing is ESSENTIAL
With a daughter rapidly approaching school age it actually devastates me to think of just stuck behind a desk. They are still so little when they start school. They need to use their bodies, they need to learn how to relate, they need to regulate their emotions. Reading and messages can wait. Just look at the results from countries where formal learning starts at 7 or 8. Let them be little.
A strong voice.

More Play in all areas of life, I say. If play was valued more and not stamped out of young children's learning environments , then we might see more valuable learning and developmental growth throughout a person's life. So many adults have forgotten how to play, because it was never seen as a key foundation of human nature. Let them play, all their lives.
I want my child to learn through play not stuck in a classroom at such a young age
Children are being forced to grow up too quick and learn at too fast a pace for some. Let them learn through play
Self directed play is so important in developing healthy children
My child is suffering at Preschool as there is not enough play to balance the formal learning especially when he was only 4 at the start of Preschool and yet attends full time. I do not wish to see my younger children also suffer in this way.
Soooo necessary ,so natural!!
As a mum of 3 very active boys, play based learning would be more beneficial to their development than work sheets & long periods of sitting still. There is not enough emphasis on physical movement in school and then the kids who can't sit still & engage in the boring curriculum end up in trouble when it isn't their fault that the learning isn't suited to them.
Let kids play, explore and have fun. When we enjoy life we learn and are kind. The world needs more people that are balanced, not burnt out!
Kununurra District Highschool must go back to play based learning in their kindy and pre primary classes
Please let them have more playtime.
Let our kids learn through play instead of forcing small, active children to sit still to learn letters and numbers curriculum. Finland's modelling leads the way, let pay attention.
Children are at the heart of everything I do as an educator. And as an experienced passionate educator I respect each child's right and need to play and through their play to learn.
My 7yr old son hates school & has done since Kindergarten. He is a bright little boy but forcing him into school before he was ready (because we were told we had to) combined with the ridiculous "sit down teach/learn" approach with limited play opportunities has killed his love for learning before we had a chance to build it.!!! It's criminal that the powers that be see play as an unnecessary building block in a child's development. Play based learning is the very basis of a child's development and now more than ever we need more of it in our education system!!! As for me, I will continue to work on repairing the damage done to my son's love for learning!!!!
I am very passionate about play based learning. Our world is becoming busier, more technological and instant. But kids are still kids, they still need the same things to thrive as generations ago when there was no technology and no rush. We need to get back to basics, back to play, back to nature, back to community and stop wanting them to grow up so fast. It is so disheartening to see the push down in formal learning, it goes against everything I was taught at university about children's learning and development. Kids need more play!
I have seen how this has helped many children, especially children from different cultures where English is their second language. The classroom becomes a very special place to be. Bring play back please. Let children be children , they learn so much.
Thankyou!
Play is a child's work. It is how they learn. It is their right and must be allowed nationwide and worldwide.
We all love to play and as seen in plenty of European schools, kids thrive when a more formal approach to schooling is brought in when the children are 7 or 8.
Our young children need time and space to play, explore and discover. Our early childhood educators understand this need to engage with children over points of interest to apply relevant developmental milestones. Play based learning for the early years holds incredible value and yet our education system continues to push curriculum for statistical data. These children need time to play and learn not have excessive structured school days where they can't use their own mind and imagination to learn.
The science backs play, there is no evidence that forcing kids through their curriculum the way you are is helping improve them- in fact the studies are showing the opposite. Let kids be kids!

Children spend so long in education and the earlier we force a sit down a learn curriculum, the more of them are switched off before they even make it to secondary. I have two young babies now and watch how much my two year old learns while playing outside. The science of sand and water play, the mathematics of sorting and grouping by size, colour or genre, the English to articulate what she sees hears and feels are just a few core examples. Let her continue to play. Feed her imagination so she will think, let her try new ideas so she will experiment and let her fall so she will persevere. More play in WA
Let the children play, let them just be
So true my son who started year one this year said that he no long liked school as it wasn't any fun anymore as they don't play as much anymore
I think learning through play is important for all ages in order to keep individuals engaged.
I fully endorse this strategy. there's nothing more important in the early years to help establish a confident happy child through the first few years of schooling.
Children learn through play!!
I no longer am able to do the job that I was trained to do. I have to hold flash cards up 3 times a day to teach letter sounds and as soon as I do, I see kids switch off and hear kids say, 'Not again!' I have to do learning sprints to 3 year olds who don't know their numbers, yet they still can't wipe their bottom or pay attention for more than 2 minutes. I pull them away from their engaging play to complete an assessment or take their photo for Seesaw or the school blog. I have to send home weekly emails to parents telling them what outcomes we will be achieving in Maths and English. I'm so close to being done and that is devastating because I love to teach, but I don't think I can do this for much longer. I can't stand this developmentally inappropriate practice which causes stress and anxiety in children because their childhood has been stolen. Principals and people in administration need to spend a whole week in a kindy and then make the right decision to let the children play.
As an early childhood educator and a parent of a two & a half year old I cannot describe how reluctant & fearful I am of sending my son to a kindergarten that is focused on academic learning to the detriment of play based learning. Children learn through play so why are we rushing children (some as young as three & a half years old like my nephew) to sit at desks and learn when cognitively, physically, socially & emotionally they are unable to do this. This creates an environment where children experience failure before they achieve, leading to their self esteem, self efficacy & self worth being affected and ultimately they develop a lifelong dislike for learning. Are we not trying to improve education across Australia??? The answer is simple...allow children to learn the way they have learnt since they were born...Let children learn through play based learning!
Don't start them too young!
Play at a young age is more important than ANY kind of formal learning. I can see it personally in my children
I believe that play-based learning in a child's early years of schooling is very important. I feel that too much emphasis and pressure towards the academic side may result in stress, anxiety and other issues later on in life. Thank you.
I endorse a WA play strategy so that ECE teachers and educators across day care centres and schools can have a consistent message about the importance of play based learning. Too many administrators are making decisions that affect the ability of teachers to provide a rich play based learning curriculum and are using standardised early testing as a means to push down academic skills, therefore the opportunities to show that play is an integral part of improving these results is just not available. It would give leaders a better united perspective and informative position to challenge and change current practises. A united agreement that allows teachers to embrace play based approaches will give the improved data results they are looking for. This document would help outline to administrators supports and understandings needed to make this positive difference.
Please support our community help our kids' mental health and take the pressure of them. This is a wonderful initiative with my 100% support
Every child has the right to learn in a developmentally appropriate way. All children need play, especially our younger children who are learning who they are and how they fit into the world around them by using play as a vehicle for learning important academic and life foundation skills.
As a Mother of a 3 year old and 9 month old I have many concerns with our current education system and its lack of play based learning. It seems that most parents and teachers value this style of education and are aware that evidence shows it to be the most effective way of learning.
Play based learning is the only way. Sad to see so many work sheets and TV watching in my son's pre-primary class.
I see first hand how much learning my children get through play. My six year old is very intelligent but thinks that year one is hard, even though she loves learning. Her favourite part of the day is recess. I am not seeing huge benefits from the very formalised learning regime. Kids need more playtime to develop to their full capacity.

As a parent and an early childhood teacher, I see the great importance of children having the right to learn through play at school and in the community.
I definitely feel children need more play. My son has just turned 5 and is one of the youngest children in his pre primary class. He struggles daily to stay focused he would love to go to school if it was more play based. So much pressure put on our little ones and so much anxiety at such a young age.
Keep the focus on PLAY in Early Childhood.
It is critical that our young children learn through play for as long as possible to help them to develop into a whole person, before focusing on purely academic learning.
Children are children let them be children let them learn by play it's so very important
Children are often not given enough time to play.
As an ex teacher and now full time parent, I strongly urge you to please consider this play strategy & protect our children's rights to learn and develop as a whole person through structured & unstructured play. The benefits are lifelong.
I am constantly having discussions with people regarding this issue. Hopefully we can create change. My son as a six year old is already struggling with what I call being programmed. Let them play.
I endorse play based learning for all young children before they are burdened with exams and academic pressure.
I fully endorse play based learning in the early years. It is so sad to see teachers using iPads as babysitting tools to occupy children instead of letting them play outside for free play. The dependence on technology is worrying and I don't feel that it is all of educational value. Children are bursting at the seams to be able to move around and play!
Our school children should be learning through play, that is how they learn. Play first, sitting down school learning second.
My children are 1,3,6 and 8. I see their childhood slipping away from the stress and pressure of school. I worry about the generation of adults who have not learned to play and be children.
I agree with this initiative
Children learn best through play - I see this everyday in my year 1 class. It's more engaging, creative and challenging, providing them with unlimited needs to problem solve and interact with peers. Students develop social skills, speech and language as well as fine and gross motor skills. Children under 8 are still young and their brains are still developing. There's no point forcing them to engage in rigid, high pressured education. Learning through play ensures they receive the necessary building blocks to a bright future. Please support play based learning!
As an EA in early years education, I see the importance of the return of play based learning. We should look to the Finnish education system for inspiration also
Learning through play is the best way for our kids
Let kids be kids just a little longer
Let children learn to share, talk, imagine, pretend through play. There is plenty of time to learn to read and write once they get to compulsory schooling. LET THEM BE CHILDREN. Why do we consistently look at countries that fail their children's education. Why are we not looking at countries like Denmark and Sweden that produce happy well balanced children?
Play is the best way to learn
Please let kids be kids
Play-based learning is essential for early education, and this is research based. I saw what the research shows first hand with my eldest. By the beginning of 3rd term of kindy (she had just turned 4) she told me she was no good at reading and writing. I asked her if she was finding kindy easy, ok, or hard. She said VERY hard. By first grade we had enough of all the teachers that went against this research. We moved her to a Montessori school, but even then they have to follow the WA curriculum. "There is no time to tell news" is one of the many laments from my child....
Endorse the message. Also, wish to highlight the amazing community Toy Libraries we have in WA, who could play an incredible role in this Strategy. Thanks.
Let our kids have a childhood and learn the social and communication skills they need to engage with the world around them and everyone that has the privilege to know them as Little People. Formal education before they are social beings is not the answer for our children.
Bring back play in kindergarten and Preprimary.

Let children play, it is how they learn best! Decrease the amount of formal sit still learning!
Please consider this strategy, our future depends on it!!
Play is critical. Learning through play is critical. And please, protect their childhoods!
Play based learning for children 7yrs and under works. You only have to look at Finland! Why are we ignoring what is best for our children? Let them play.
It's absolutely imperative that children be supported in play based learning. You cannot command a child so young to sit in lessons and learn their brains don't work that way!!!
Play is the work of early childhood
I asked my youngest "What makes you happy?" He replied "playing". His world is being constructed and understood through play. I dread in the near future that that world is taken away in the name of 'proper' learning.
Even with my first hand knowledge and experience of ECE teaching I couldn't protect my son from the push down at the local public Pre-Primary. In the space of six months he was a shell of himself; self harming, self berating and speaking suicidal thoughts. It has taken 3 yrs to undo this damage, but the scars are permanent and his resilience and mental health have been compromised. WAKE UP and bring back real early childhood experiences, hands on, rich, child directed learning through play K-yr2 !!!!!
As a teacher and a mother of a 6 year old girl I pray we make a change before it is too late.
Let the kids play ...stop rushing them into learning
For my boys. They deserve to play and learn.
Make the change!!!!!
Children need to learn through play, outdoor play, indoor play, nature play, building things, playing with others!
Absolutely agree
I work with young children and each year become more and more concerned about the negative impact on children's psychosocial and motor skills of high pressure, sit-down 'learning' at kindergartens and preprimary classes. These programmes are misguided as they cause harm and delay development in many children rather than speeding it up. Children develop better social, emotional, academic and motor skills if allowed to learn through play instead.
The lack of play and push for academics has become an epidemic. In the early years the development of the skills needed for constructive play and social connection with other children cannot be emphasised enough. Bring back play!
Children learn through play in the early years, so detrimental to their development to remove it!
A happy child is a child with lots of time to play. I would love to see a child's free play seen as valuable not wasted time
Having a son who is 16 months I see how important play is for his development and imagination.
"Let the children play". Studies have shown the benefits, let us be a leader in Australia for play based learning.
Play is essential for young children to develop their curiosity and self-confidence. The future is built on inventiveness so it is best to prepare them for their future by giving them more time to play as it nourishes their capacities for science, maths, creativity and self-regulation. Play encompasses more of what they need to be who they are than learning academically. Play is age appropriate practice for young children.
Achieving academic outcomes should not come at a cost of the child's right to play and learn through exploration of their environment. I am also concerned that young children may be encouraged to put aside play, in order to perform academic tasks that are beyond their developmental capacity. For example, writing letters, when at their young age they are still appropriately developing their ability to copy diagonal lines. Important building block skills cannot be skipped and children should have the time to develop these foundations, as they play and learn, as we all did in our early years.
Thank you!
I have seen firsthand, both as a Mum of three small boys and also as a music teacher (classroom and one on one), the importance of play for young children.
Losing play at an early age negatively impacts social skills, creativity, critical thinking, communication skills, mental health, physical health, and much much more beyond childhood. Save play = save our children and our future

Play provides meaningful, integrated problem solving experiences. It is vital to education and ‘thinking outside of the box’ in our constantly evolving world.
Early years curriculum needs to change. My heart breaks every time I walk into my daughter’s kindy class. Let them learn through play instead of worksheets from 3 years old!
I am a firm believer in play for children - this is how they learn - it’s proven not only by science but by the children themselves. Western society has become so obsessed with testing that it has lost sight of the meaning of schooling.... this is reflected in the ever increasing rates of suicide, drug abuse and criminal activity in our youth... let’s be the change they so very much need...
Play is a human right
Play is crucial to the social and emotional and brain development of young children. Please do not reduce this vital pedagogy and push down the curriculum. Look to progressive early childhood best practice pedagogies and practices and the works of theorist in this area to understand the importance of play in young children’s educational lives.
Let the children play!!!!!
Learning through play builds a strong foundation for more formal learning to happen later on in primary school when the children are developmentally ready for it.
Yes, yes and yes!
Play is the way! We need it in our schools, not just as optional but as a requirement! Thank you for this initiative!!
Play matters....it's really that simple!
Let’s support the science and improve education as well.
My four year old son finds it too formal doing advanced reading and writing in pre primary. Let him play!
Learning through play is so important
Let kids be kids
Play is the best way :)
I wholeheartedly endorse the strategy. The demise of play-based learning has been sad to see and as a mother it saddens me greatly. Please allow children to play and extend this through to lower primary as well. Let children be children.
My daughter was 3 when she started kindy and was expected in the first term to know sight words and write her name from memory. The academic expectations on early childhood is causing a lot of distress to so many children.
All the research, worldwide points in the direction of play based learning being the most advantageous. We need to utilise the information & chose the best path for the majority.
It is well known and researched that small children learn best through play. That is their natural learning medium. We need MORE play learning in early and middle primary school NOT less!!
As a mother and someone who has a Post grad degree in primary education I can’t endorse this enough. Please let the children play and they will learn.
More play for kids in school than sitting and learning. Less devices and iPad. More old fashion play
Prioritise play as the best form of learning for early childhood students.
Let’s please have less testing formalised teaching in the early childhood years at schools. No NAPLAN!!!!
As an educator play is one of the most important tools I have in my bag of tricks. When children play they relax and feel safe to explore, test new concepts and make mistakes. They make deeper connections between place and peers. Play allows abstract concept to become real and gives the child ownership of the learning they achieve.
My daughter who is now 6 and been in education since she was 4! I feel there is way too much pressure on our children from Ages 4, having to sit at a desk. There is plenty of time for kids to do this. Why are we robbing our future kids if their childhood!!!
Stop forcing our kids to sit down and learn at such an early age! Let them play and learn all the vital skills play teaches them first!

I endorse play based learning.
Please ...Please for the sake of our children they start school at such a young age and some are not ready to sit at a desk to learn
Play based learning is essential for our young children
Please support this program. Our kids need play to help their minds and imagination grow.
The demise of play and push down of academics into ECE is extremely concerning to me.
In my 16 years experience in the area of early years education I have learnt that the most important way a child learns is through play!!!
My daughter was just saying this morning how she hates school because there's no play and the work is too hard. She hates the classroom. She's in year 1. Please bring back play so our kids can actually do what they are meant to do when they're 5 and 6 years old!
Children learn from doing, they need the freedom to explore and experience .... preferably in natural environments. Adults need to be attuned to each child and groups of children and enhance their play. Children's physical and cognitive development are at risk when we stop them free ranging, these developmental areas are interconnected. Above all else their wellbeing is at risk which can lead to far greater mental health issues. LET THE CHILDREN PLAY.
The schooling system in WA is too pushy from a young age...there is not enough play based learning in the class rooms. Bring back play based learning and stop pushing our kids into learning.
This initiative has merit and deserves to be implemented. Research proves play based learning works!
Learn through play is the only way for kindly/ pre primary.
I see every day, how the over - schoolification of children from to young an age is creating a generation of anxious, stressed and confused kids! Play is how children learn: to problem solve, gain confidence, social skills, creativity and fun! What a wonderful initiative. Let the children play!
All the research shows play in the early years is the best policy for our children. It is time everyone recognises this and it becomes the standard across all schools.
Take away the testing, data collecting and formal approach to our young kids. Don't take away play.
Play is important for children to explore and learn, build motor skills. Especially in these times when so many children don't have big back yards.
Play is the primary occupation of children. It is vital to their learning and development. Learning through play enhances their cognitive, social and emotional abilities. Please don't rob our children of their right to play
The level at which our kids are expected to learn is going to result in a) children who give up and feel like they're not good enough or b) massive stress heads It's astounding that this kind of pressure is being put on young children.
Play is the most important way for children to learn
I endorse the WA Play Strategy.
Play so important save the worksheet till later !!
I have 2 boys, my first boy birth date is 24th June so he will be at the end of the cut off for schooling. He will be in formal full time school at only 4.5 years old! Where is his time to play? We are robbing our children's playtime.... our children need play!!
Please put play back in to class!!
I am new to my school this year, which until I came was overly focused on academics in ECE. We now have children throughout the school with socio-emotional issues. I believe this is because their opportunities for play were restricted in Kindy To Year 2. Play would have solved the issue for many of those children who are now struggling to learn and get along with others.
Please oh please put TRUE child lead play back into Pre Primary, Kindy and all ECE settings. Teachers - Stop taking photos of set-ups that look oh so great and natural so they are "worthy" of Instagram, Facebook and the like and truly just be there in the moment FOR THE CHILDREN when they play and make their choices to talk with them, scaffold their thinking and help all young children develop their love of learning in all areas of their existence (not just literacy and numeracy). For the love of children - let them really play!

I strongly believe there should be more play based learning in early childhood education. My daughter has just turned 5 and is in pre-primary (born in June), she constantly asks me why do they have to spend so much time learning & why can't they play more at school & she this is from a child who loves learning! The curriculum is so full for this age group & teachers are pushing to achieve it all when everyone seems to have forgotten that they are just kids, they are only young & they need to be allowed to have fun & learn through play.
Yes! We need this. I am so glad the movement is gaining more momentum. Keep fighting the good fight!
Such an important strategy to uphold the impetus for all of us to protect 'play' in all its guises. Building Brains and Strong Bodies is a brilliant affirmation of what we all want for our children - and the research confirms our long-held wisdom.
It very distressing as an early childhood teacher to see kindy and pre primary classrooms with no play area, such formal learning.
I happily support a ‘play strategy’ for our children. I’m an experienced teacher and it’s a tragedy to see/hear what is happening in some of our schools.
Play based education is proven over time to be an integral part of a balanced child’s learning. This does not change despite “latest trends” changes in policy made by hierarchy individuals with little knowledge of reality. Enjoyable self led learning experiences are the most memorable, effective and significant.
Playing allows kids to develop the fundamental building blocks required for school learning.
There is nothing more important to little ones than play
Children need play! With 29 years of teaching I am seeing a huge shift in children's resilience, problem solving skills, oral language, social skills and mental health. We need to stop putting our young children under so much pressure to achieve academic outcomes and allow them to develop as the full, beautiful, unique child that they are. They have so much more to offer than Maths and English!
A firm believer in play for children at least 0 -8 Years in schools. Benefits far outweigh no play in the early years and now it seems, crucial to adolescents too. Let’s build resilient, confident, calm, creative humans.
play matters
The evidence is clear. We MUST let our kids play or we are robbing them of what is required for them to become successful lifelong learners.
I have two boys under 7 who both need lots of time to play and less time sitting at a desk!
Stop trying to make our kids smarter, younger. Let our kids be kids and learn like kids, let them play!
Let kids play and learn
Play is the way!
I agree with the importance of play for young children’s development.
It has become more and more evident to me as I observe children at primary school age that they have not necessarily developed the skills to play imaginatively or with turn taking or being able to communicate the game they want to play. I strongly believe that unless we make sure that these skills alongside other similar skills are taught to children and they are given adequate time to practice these skills, that we will see a continued breakdown in the social and emotional (especially empathy) fabric of our society. We can make a difference and the time to act is NOW.
Play is vital to the development of all children. Research has shown the positive impact it has on all domains of child development. A very structured, formalised approach to learning is not the way to go for any child. All types of Play are needed for children from guided play to free, child-initiated play so that they have opportunities to learn from and with others as well as to make decisions about their learning and play. A playful approach in the classroom is also beneficial for children's learning and should be adapted throughout Primary School. Play is the way.
Balance in learning and life...
The most memorable ways to learn are through action and experience. There are lots of positives that come with this, including engagement, focus and behaviour.
I am supportive of this initiative as I can already see the importance of play and active engagement with my one year old son.
As Director of the Public Health Advocacy Institute of WA, I endorse this important Strategy that encourages, social capital, physical activity, mental health and experiential learning amongst our children.

A playful approach in the classroom is also beneficial for children's learning and should be adapted throughout Primary School. Play is the way.
Children need play in school because they need a chance to interact with everyone, especially people of their own age, to develop their friendship/people skills and communication skills. My brother started Kindergarten this year, and his play time in comparison to when I was his age is severely different. He spends a lot more time, inside, reading and writing, and only plays twice a day with other people. Recently his play has been even further constricted as he "needs a chance to learn more book knowledge". I strongly believe his play limitations is further leading to deterioration of his social skills, especially because he had limited to begin with.
Last year I presented a box of electronic equipment (globes, wires, low voltage power packs - all equipment that they had used the previous year) to a group of year 8s. As it was the first lesson in the series, the instructions were along the lines of 'have a play, see what happens'. All were in my sight, no safety issues. To my surprise over half of them just stood there. 'What if I get it wrong?' I was asked. I replied that there was no 'wrong'. All but one group then started to experiment clicking wires and globes together. The final group was still not moving, so I worked with them to guide exploration. Although this is not the standard understanding of 'play', it seemed. that the loss of courage to experiment was detrimental to their learning experience.
Children learn and develop best through play.
Being the daughter of teachers and comparing my experience through schooling to their children's, I see the importance play based learning has on the lives of young people. Not everyone learns in the same way, and learning doesn't have to be boring! Giving children the opportunity to learn through play is not about making children's lives easier, it's about letting them learn more effectively. It has been an absolute pleasure helping this cause, and I hope to see it gain traction!
Play is an essential for the development of the whole child. What is concerning is the lack of understanding and advocacy for play based learning continuing into the primary years of schooling.
I am currently homeschooling my 6 year old. I was disappointed to feel forced to send my daughter to Pre primary last year and it is all "work" for them. They need to have a childhood not be seen as workers that young. It's too much too soon and they are too young to be in full time education.
Play is extremely important and children need to have maximum play time to learn without stress and pressure that formal schooling and life places upon them. Play can help a child to be balanced, use their imagination and learn faster than pressured formal learning. Life is hard enough without removing basic right to play
I endorse the commitment and work of ECAWA in promoting the importance of play for children across all settings in which they may engage. I believe that play
I wholeheartedly and enthusiastically endorse the WA Play Strategy for Early Childhood and Care. I am really worried about today's children who are statistically fatter, sadder, sicker and less capable physically, emotionally, cognitively and socially than previous generations.
Play is not only a child's right, it enables and facilitates children's development on all levels to occur.
As is the evidence that intrusive formal instruction - and testing - harms both learning, and mental health. I strongly support the campaign in WA and worldwide to rescue early childhood from the bureaucrats and control freaks and develop happy and rich play environments for all children.
Nothing could reduce disadvantage or promote positive mental health as much as standing firm against the misguided schoolification of early childhood. Kids need to play, they love to play, and they learn best through play
With increasing rates of obesity, anxiety in young children, rapidly rising numbers of teenagers with mental illness, self-harming and the highest suicide rate for 15-24 year olds ever we must not waste any more time and we need to address the need for play to return to its rightful place in the lives of children especially those under 8.
The central importance of Play is a cornerstone of child development, of our own ethos here at the clinic, and my own personal approach - so it's with enthusiasm that we add our clinic support to your worthy endeavour. I look forward to seeing the Strategy progress.