



THE POWER OF PLAY

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Adapted from Dr. Barbara Sorrels, Connected Kids

**Imagination is
related to hope.**



We have moved
from a play-based
childhood to a
screen-based
childhood.



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- PLAY IS NEURODEVELOPMENTALLY RESTORATIVE
 - DISARMS FEAR
 - BUILDS CRITICAL SKILLS THAT ARE NECESSARY FOR FUNCTIONING AND LEARNING IN A GROUP SETTING.

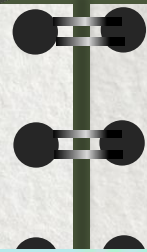
WHY PLAY?





PLAYING AT THEIR LEVEL

- "No!" to a toddler is a sign of independence.
- "NO!" to a four year old is a sign of defiance.
- Peek-a-boo with a teenager could be appropriate





Self Reflection

- Reflect upon your memories of play from your own childhood.
- Write each memory on a separate sticki note.



Group Activity

- Share your play memories with your group and sort them into common themes.
- What do you notice about your memories?



WHAT IS "CHILDLIKE" OR CHILD-DIRECTED PLAY?"

It's a type of play when children lead and direct the activity and adults follow their lead.

- 1-ON-1 WITH AGES 2-10
- THE SHEER PLEASURE OF THE EXPERIENCE MOTIVATES CHILDREN TO CONTINUE
- THERE ARE UNSPOKEN RULES CREATED BY THE CHILDREN
- CAN TAKE 1-1 ½ HRS. FOR PLAY TO DEVELOP

PLAY

- ☐ ACTIVE PLAY
- ☐ ROUGH AND TUMBLE
- ☐ DRAMATIC PLAY
- ☐ LANGUAGE PLAY
- ☐ MANIPULATIVE PLAY
- ☐ SENSORY PLAY
- ☐ RHYTHMIC PLAY
- ☐ CONSTRUCTION PLAY
- ☐ SYMBOLIC PLAY
- ☐ CAUSE AND EFFECT PLAY
- ☐ NATURE PLAY



TYPES OF PLAY



ACTIVE PLAY



-
- "Brain derived neurotrophic factor" (BNF) or Miracle Grow
 - Repairs the hippocampus which is the seat of short-term memory and information processing.



ACTIVE PLAY



Builds Working Memory

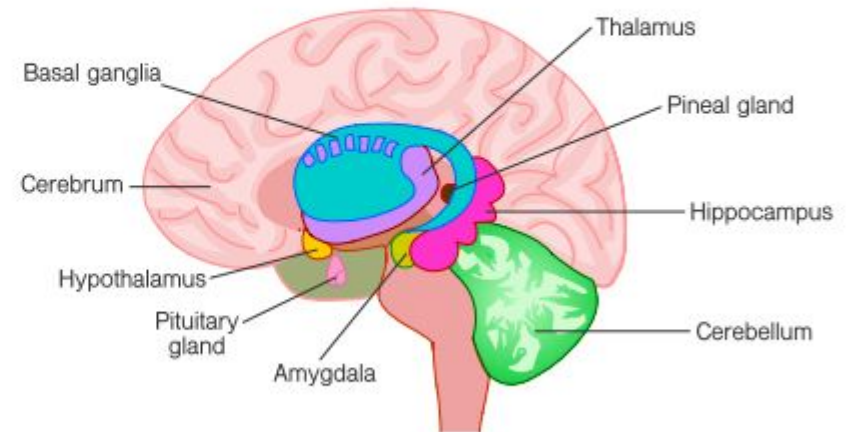
- The ability to hold information in mind while doing something else.
- Example: dialing a phone number that someone has stated orally

ACTIVE PLAY

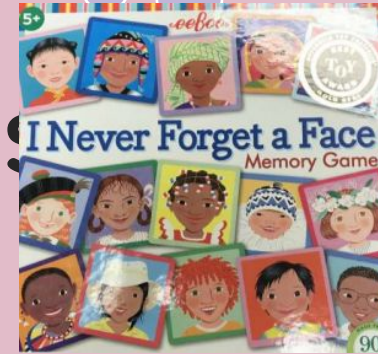
Hippocampus

- Short term memory
- Information processing
- Boys vulnerable 0-7
- Girls vulnerable at 11, 12 and 15, 16

Brain Anatomy



ACTIVE PLAY



Short Term Memory and Information Processing

- Memory games
- Visual cues



PAUSE

THINK

WRITE





ROUGH AND TUMBLE

Learn to read
non-verbal
communication

Risk taking

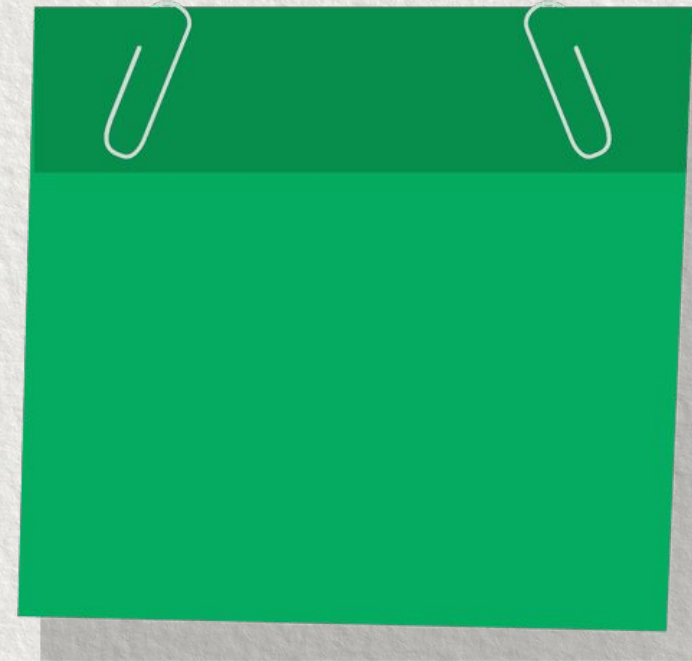
Honoring boundaries



PAUSE

THINK

WRITE



- Expression of innermost thoughts and deepest emotions.
- A way of processing strong emotions in a safe context.
- Develops perspective thinking.

Children need rich life experiences to have things to imitate. This is how they make sense of the world.

DRAMATIC PLAY





PAUSE
THINK
WRITE





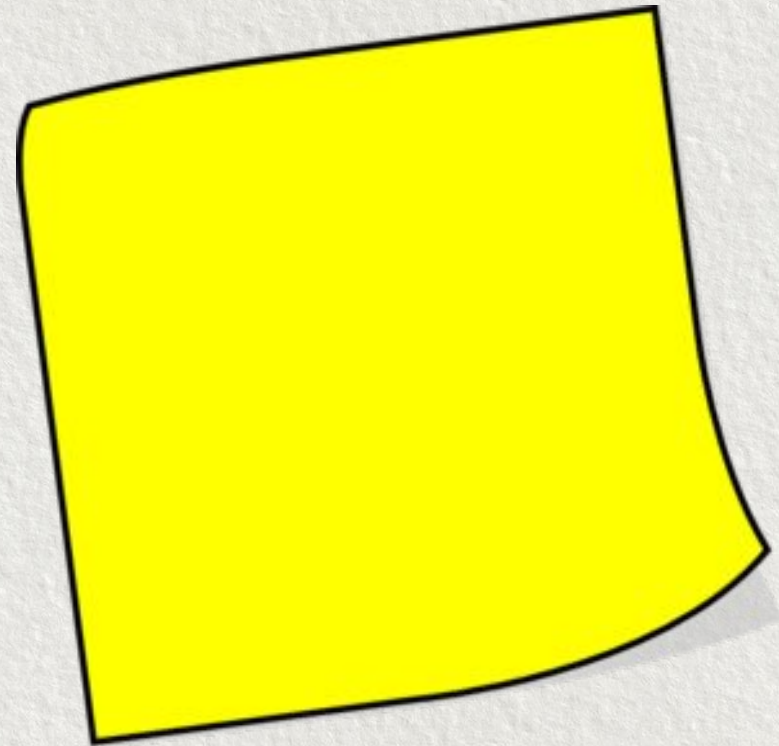
LANGUAGE PLAY



Gives children lots to talk
about and restores the
inevitable language delay



PAUSE
THINK
WRITE



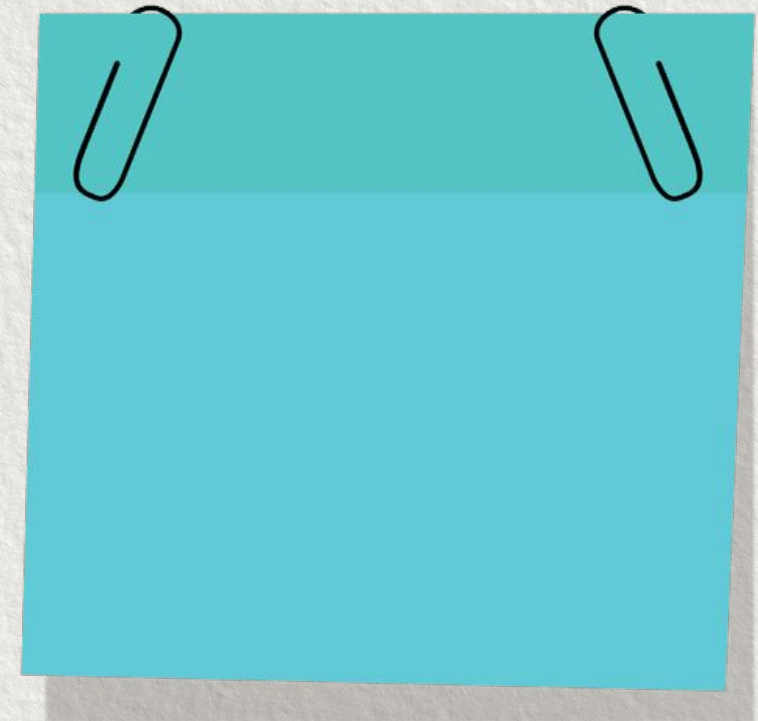


MANIPULATIVE PLAY

- Builds fine motor skills and the Pincer Grip
- Learning how to grab things (rattles & Cheerios)
- Can add simple math concepts
- Moving beans/sorting



PAUSE
THINK
WRITE



- Children learn about the properties of materials and how things work.
- They learn “big ideas”
 - Form and function
 - Cause and effect
 - Alike and different

SENSORY PLAY





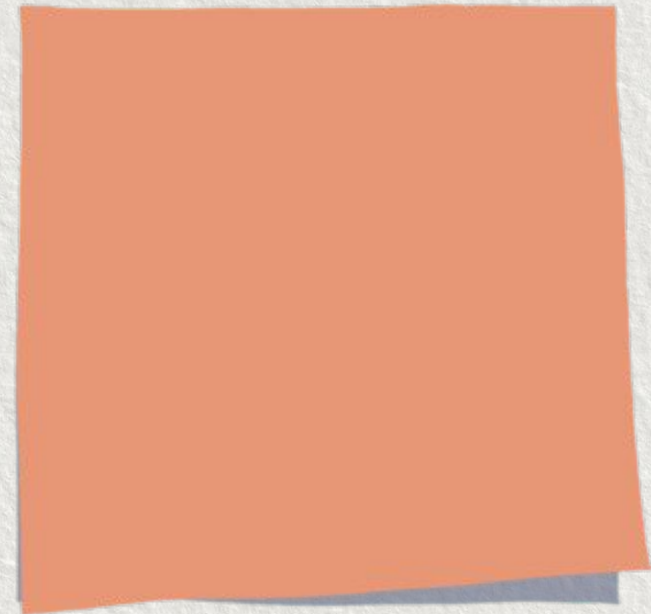
VARIETY OF MATERIALS



VARIETY OF TEXTURES
AND ELEVATIONS



PAUSE
THINK
WRITE





RHYTHMIC PLAY



- Organizes the brain stem
- Impact dopamine, serotonin and norepinephrine
- Calms the regulatory system

RHYTHMIC
PLAY

METRONOME
060 BPM



METRONOME
080 BPM

RHYTHMIC PLAY



- Rocking chairs
- Rocking horses
- Rocking hammocks
- Rocking boats
- Glider rockers



Circle Games



Beth's Notes





PAUSE
THINK
WRITE





CONSTRUCTION PLAY

- Builds mathematical concepts
- Builds physical knowledge
- Adds dramatic play

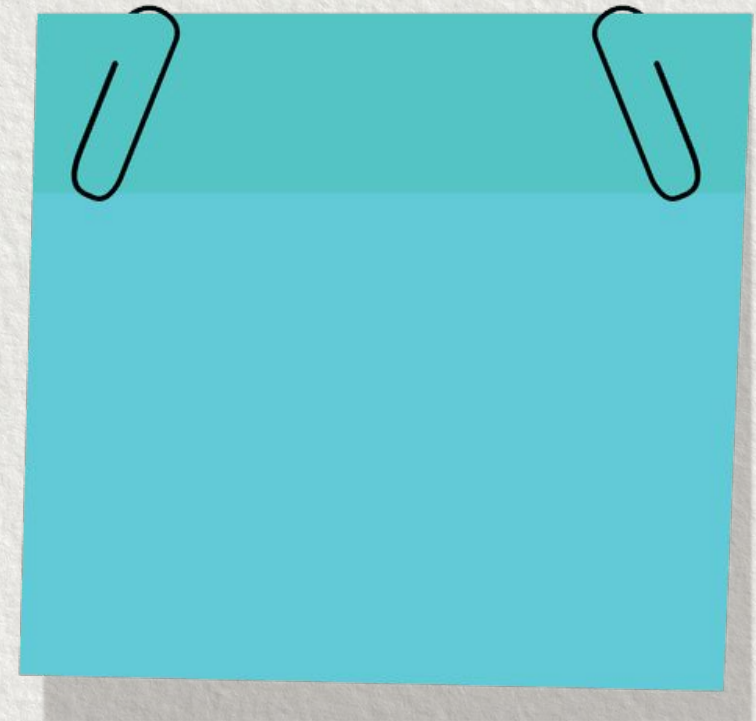




PAUSE

THINK

WRITE



- The ability to use an object or metaphor to represent another object or idea
- Foundational to understanding the symbol system of the alphabet

Symbols are the precursor to writing.

SYMBOLIC PLAY

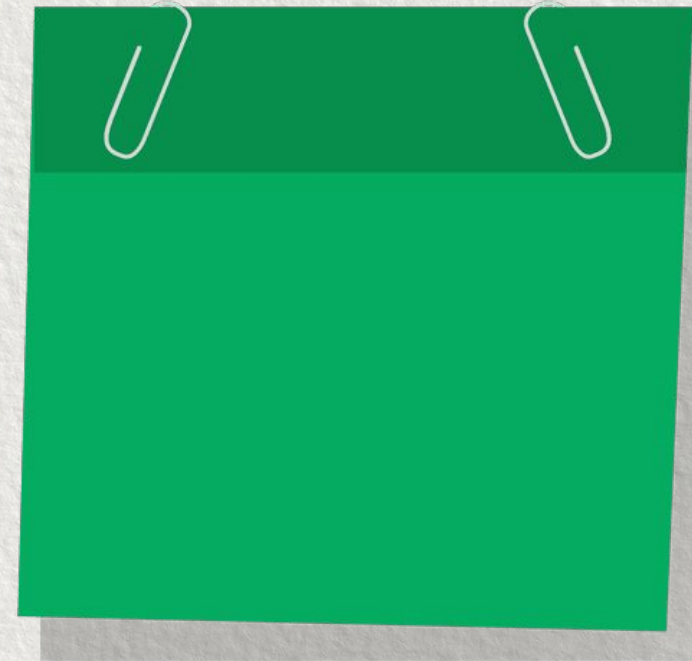




PAUSE

THINK

WRITE



- Gears
- Levers
- Pulleys
- Pendulums
- Ramps

CAUSE AND EFFECT PLAY



Foundation to moral
development &
essential to reading
comprehension

CAUSE AND EFFECT PLAY



- Also includes:
- strategic board games
 - social interaction
 - cooking



PAUSE

THINK

WRITE





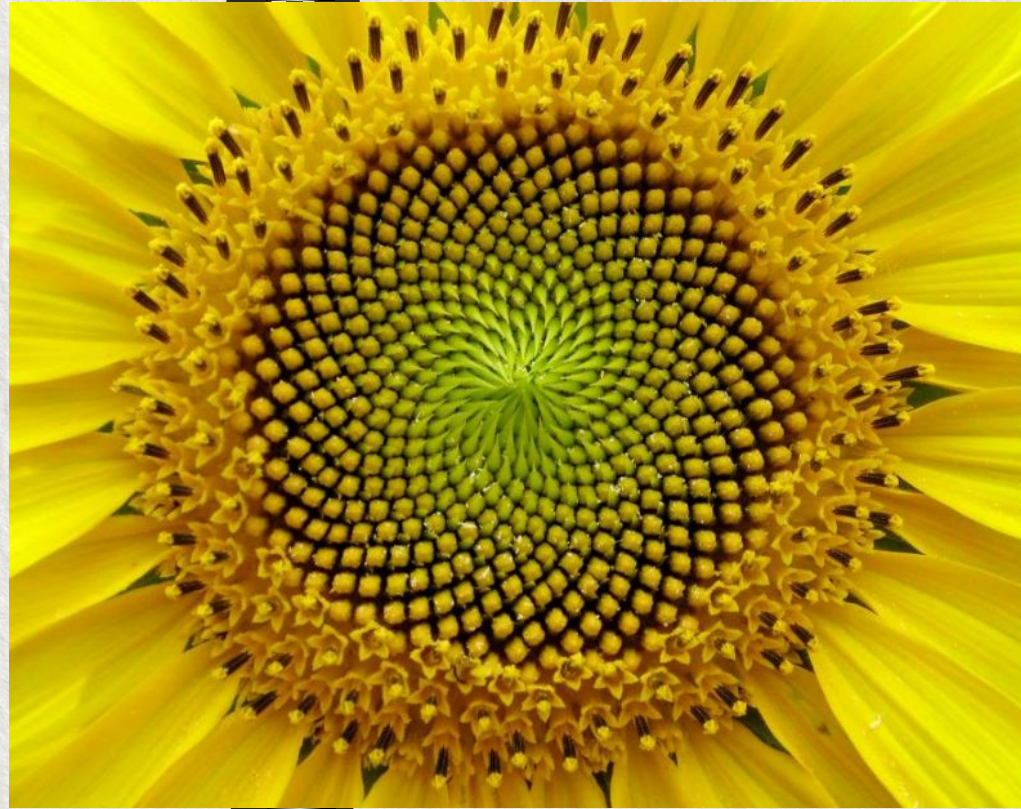
NATURE PLAY

Healing Power of Nature

- Reduces cortisol/stress
- Restores attention
- Sense of connection to the world
- Increases creativity
- Creation of awe and wonder



NATURE PLAY



Patterns

- Seeing the patterns in nature and the universe
- Fibonacci's rule



- Small animals
- Sand dollars
- Pussy willows
- Flowers
- Gourds
- Herbs
- Leaves
- Fruits and Vegetables
- Rollie Pollies

Post Its and Posters!

Gallery Walk



Feel free to take pics!

Children will not feel free to play if they do not feel safe!

Sending Signals of Safety

- Soft eyes
- Facial expression
- Intensity of movement
- Rhythmicity of voice
- Playful engagement
- Touch





4 Core Fears Children Have:

Abandonment

Physical harm

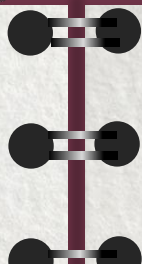
Losing love

Being viewed as a bad child

Definition of "Trauma"

Trauma is defined as "any event that undermines a child's sense of physical or emotional safety or poses a threat to the safety of the child's parents or caregivers (Groves, 2002)

Complex developmental trauma is defined as by Bessel van der Kolk (2005) as "the experiences of multiple, chronic and prolonged, developmentally adverse traumatic events, most often of an interpersonal nature...and early life exposure."



What is the difference between severe stress and trauma?

- Changes the child's view of the world
- Changes the child's view of self
- Individuals develop coping strategies to deal with the internal pain
- Compromises capacity to experience joy, gratitude and pleasure



The ACE Study

Physical neglect

Emotional abuse

Emotional neglect

Sexual abuse

Physical abuse

- Divorce or separation
- Incarcerated parent
- Mentally ill or depressed household member
- Substance abuse
- Domestic violence



Beyond the ACE's

Prenatal exposure to alcohol and drugs

Prematurity

Difficult birth

Early medical trauma

Post partum depression

Deployment

- Surrogacy
- Witnessing violence
- Catastrophic injury
- Immigration
- Adoption/foster care
- Racial Discrimination
- Relational Poverty



Trauma is a Multi-System Failure



Brain Development



Attachment



Sensory processing



Self Regulation

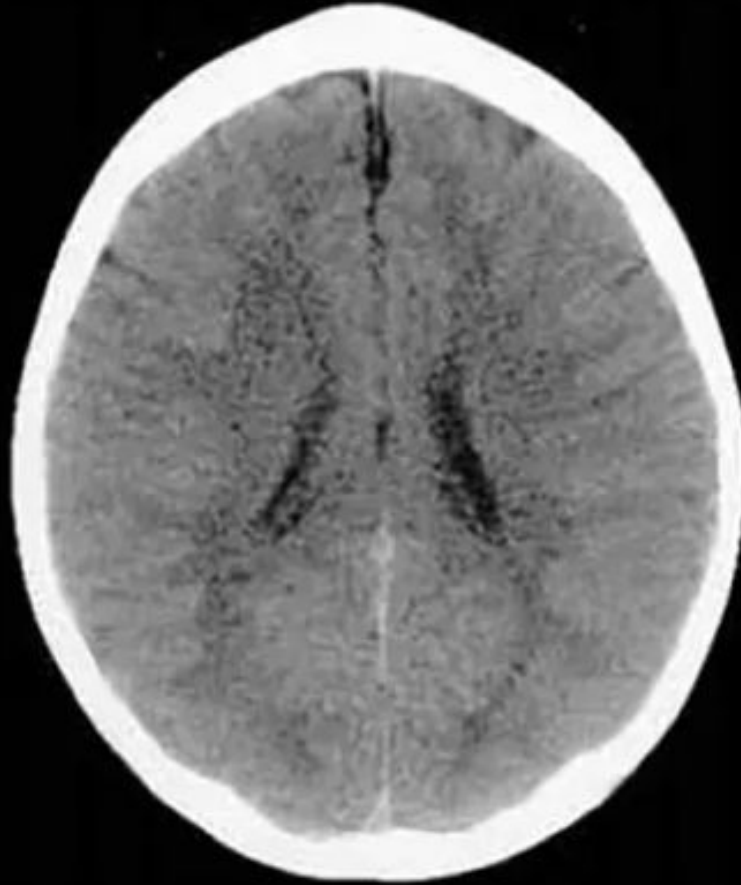


Social Skills

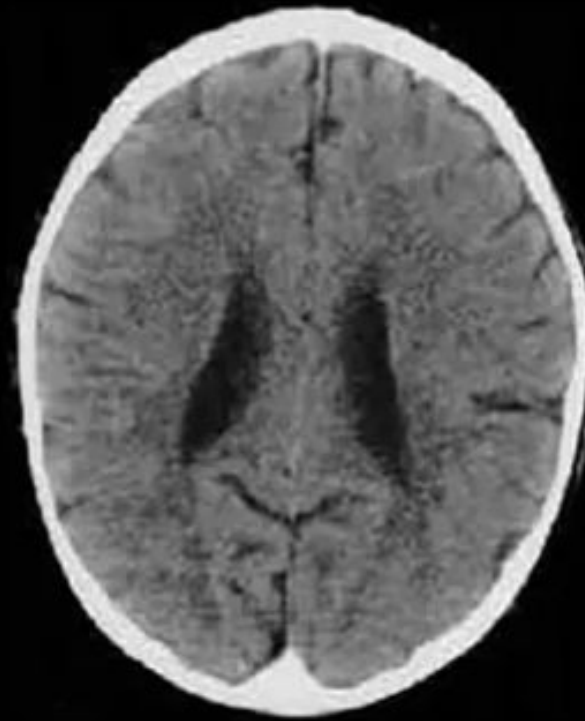


Cognitive Development

3 Year Old Children



Normal



Extreme Neglect

Key Principles

- The younger the child the more vulnerable the brain
- Trauma during the prenatal period and in the first three years compromises the foundational architecture of the brain.





How does trauma impact play?



- Trauma and stress is restrictive, focused on self protection and confining; play is imaginative, expressive and expanding by nature.
 - Children can become focused on winning and losing.
 - Can become very repetitive and unimaginative.
 - Control can become critical.
 - Can become focused on rules.
 - Struggle to get along with others.
- 

Positive news though:

Healing environments
are play-based
environments!



Play is treatment in its purist form.



Pod Swing-- the Favorite Place

isin

The Playing Field/ Madison, Wisconsin

SUMMARY



TYPES OF PLAY



WHY PLAY IS IMPORTANT



PLAY TIME SHOULD BE AT LEAST AN HOUR



HOW TRAUMA AFFECTS THE BRAIN



Thank You!