

Fall Registration Guide 2003

Play, recreation enhance children's school attitude

If you think school and play don't mix, think again. Certainly, the start of school is a sure sign that summertime activities — baseball games, the beach,

and the pool — are coming to a close. However, a child's general play activities should not stop simply because it is time to hit the books. In fact, your child should continue to play year-round, since valuable play experiences can help prepare him or her for school, making friends and learning.

Spontaneous play may offer more benefits than doing structured activities like computer games or phonics workbooks. One mom learned this through a conversation with her son's teacher. Like many parents, Elizabeth was concerned about sending her son Sam to kindergarten because he was not keeping up with writing the alphabet like most of the other children from pre-

school. She asked Sam's teacher if she should get Sam workbooks so he would not be behind in class. To her surprise, she was told that Sam would most likely develop the skills needed for kindergarten by playing with his favourite toys.

The teacher explained that when Sam pulls his trains around a track, he practices the hand-eye coordination needed to move a pencil across paper. Or, if he sorts his engines by colour, he understands that objects can be classified — a basic math concept. This conversation relieved Elizabeth's concerns, and as a result Elizabeth began to encourage Sam's play and is able to recognize his learning through play first hand.

Through play and recreation activities, your child learns to form meaningful relationships with other people. "There is no better way for a child to learn how to communicate, get along with others and make friends than by playing with other children," says a U.S. expert. Whenever children interact, whether they are testing each other, arguing about rules, deciding on roles, or taking turns, they are practising the rules of social behaviour. Repeated involvement in social play teaches kids to consider the feelings of others, how to share and how to be a friend.

Participating in fun and interesting recreational activities also help a child's cognitive development, or ability to reason, perceive

and understand. After learning her ABCs and basic counting at school, 4-year old Lisa comes home and plays restaurant in her "make-believe" kitchen. She pretends to go grocery shopping and cook, and uses notepads from her parents' office to have her customers spell their orders, which she writes down.

When they finish their meals, she writes numbers on the paper and hands them a bill. Through her pretend restaurant, she experiments with language and numbers in a fun and entertaining way.

The lesson for parents is this: since meaningful play enhances learning both in and out of the classroom, let your children play.



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CVC trailer useful in watershed

Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) is delighted with its new "Stewardship on the Go Trailer."

The trailer is complete and fully operational, thanks to the generous do-

nations from the Halton Hills, Orangeville Brampton and Mississauga chapters of the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation.

CVC and its volunteer

partners use the "Stewardship on the Go" trailer for workshops in communities throughout the 1,000 square kilometres of the Credit River watershed. Staff and volunteers, which include scouts and guides, naturalist clubs hiking groups and local businesses, participate in projects to improve trails, enhance conservation areas, plant trees, restore streams, install cattle fencing, naturalize shorelines and other work.

The trailer, clad in eye catching nature images, safely and easily transports tools, literature, potable water, safety equipment and other necessities to work sites. In addition to the housing and transportation of equipment, the trailer's inside is fitted with a whiteboard and educational panels to provide staff and volunteers with any information and materials they may require.

Demand for the trailer regularly exceeds availability.

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