

steel magnate and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie created the Carnegie unit used in high schools, based on his belief that an hour provides an objective measure of labor as employed in his factories.

Elkind concludes by citing a number of studies linking play to academic achievement (most of these were two decades old; I would have liked to see some that were more current) and by providing a few playful activities for breaking the cycle of boredom that is all too prevalent in schools today (including a game called The Dumb Books Caper, where children try to find all the mistakes made in a typical school textbook!). All in all, readers will find this book a cornucopia of ideas about play, leading to new thoughts and questions. For example, I was wondering by the end of the book whether children have created lore incorporating elements of the high-tech world—is there an iPod jump rope rhyme out there? Whether you are an educator, parent, psychologist, therapist, sociologist, or museum professional, there is something in this book for you and much to be learned from an individual who has been a major advocate over the past half century for the developmental needs of all children.

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—Thomas Armstrong, *author of The Human Odyssey: Navigating the Twelve Stages of Life (2007)*

### **Play and Child Development (Third Edition)**

*Joe L. Frost, Sue C. Wortham, and  
Stuart Reifel*

Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall, 2007. Photographs, diagrams, charts, maps. 460 pp. \$64.67 paper. ISBN: 9780131573123.

I must say that my first impression of the third edition of *Play and Child Development* was: They did it AGAIN! Frost, Wortham, and Reifel again impressed me with the depth and breadth of their understanding of play in this book with significant updates related to research and practice. As I finished each chapter, I was left with the same tranquil satisfaction as if I had eaten a fine full-course meal. This book can be used in any child development course, early childhood education introductory courses, or early childhood curriculum courses, in addition to courses focusing on play. This new edition reminds me of David Elkind's *The Hurried Child* (1981), for it cautions us against the current educational trend of minimizing play and neglecting to consider the whole child in our instruction. The authors provide historical, developmental, and clinical aspects of play and also address the social and political issues that are inherent to any discussion of play. The authors ask us to reflect upon the current educational environment, the empirical evidences related to play and development, and the many theoretical points of view regarding play.

One of the new additions to the book is the authors' deep concern about current issues such as the loss of recess and free play in schools. Despite the vast evidence of the contribution of play to childhood learning and development—from Jean Piaget's *Play, Dreams, and Imitation* (1932) to Singer, Golinkoff, and Hirsh-Pasek's *Play=Learning* (2006)—play has recently been shunted aside in early childhood programs in favor of more teacher-directed instruction in order to address early learning standards. Administrators, policy makers, and some teachers increasingly regard play as a waste of instructional time with no clear benefits

for academic outcomes. National policies reflected in such legislation as No Child Left Behind have also contributed to this view by minimizing the status of play at school. Many preschools and elementary schools have reduced or even eliminated play and recess from their schedules. As a result, dramatic play and block play areas have been disappearing from kindergarten classrooms. In the introduction to this new edition, the authors alert us to these dangers to children's play as an ever-growing threat to children's health and development.

The authors take a look at play from historical, developmental, clinical, and political perspectives in thirteen chapters. The first and second chapters provide in-depth information about the history and theories of play, satisfying one's intellectual desire to know about the foundation of play within the current political context of the status of play in education. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 address children's play from a developmental perspective through infancy, preschool, and school age; these chapters also include new information about solitary play and recess. Chapter 8, written by Jeffrey Trawick-Smith, introduces various approaches to the play curriculum with information especially useful for practitioners. Chapter 10 introduces clinical aspects of play with information about play therapy and expands the use of play in a range of settings. Chapters 11 and 12 address play environments and child safety with many practical examples.

Each chapter of the book provides a direct link between play and children's development. The authors also emphasize that play is not only a means to learning and the healthy development of children but also an outcome of development that can be used to assess children's skills.

In one of my undergraduate teaching courses, I give students an assignment to set up a rich dramatic play area in their kindergarten field placements. This year, more than half of the students returned to me and said, "There is no dramatic play center in the classroom. What should I do?" More and more teachers, administrators, and education professionals overlook the direct link between play and learning. In times like these, the significance of *Play and Child Development* is great, and the demand for this careful, studied approach is even more important than when past editions have been published. This book helps us to refocus our attention on the promise of play and provides a tool to instruct new early childhood education students in the importance of play in our schools.

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—Myae Han, *University of Delaware, Newark, DE*

**Last Child in the Woods:  
Saving Our Children from  
Nature-Deficit Disorder**

*Richard Louv*

Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 2006. Notes, suggested reading, index. 334 pp. \$13.95 paper. ISBN: 9781565125223.

**The Dangerous Book for Boys**

*Conn and Hal Iggulden*

New York: HarperCollins, 2007. Drawings, photographs, charts. 270 pp. \$24.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780061243585.

The tradition of making claims about threats to American children began in the late nineteenth century, when a group

The Importance of Play in Child Development. Play is universal throughout the animal kingdom - whether it's a puppy chasing its tail, or young birds swooping through the air. The importance of play to youngsters should not be underestimated. Play is an essential part of growing up and researchers believe it's critical to ensure children reach their full potential in life. Play helps children learn about the world in which they live. They can investigate and discover, test their theories, spatial relationships, explore cause and effect, societal roles and family values. Such is the importance of play, that there's virtually no area of life about which it can't teach a child something. Play builds self-esteem. Children will often play at something they know they can do well, at which they can be successful.