



# Play-based Learning 2018

"Children learn as they play.  
More importantly, in play,  
children learn how to learn."

-O. Fred Donaldson

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHILD?



# Why play in the first years of school?



[Video](#)

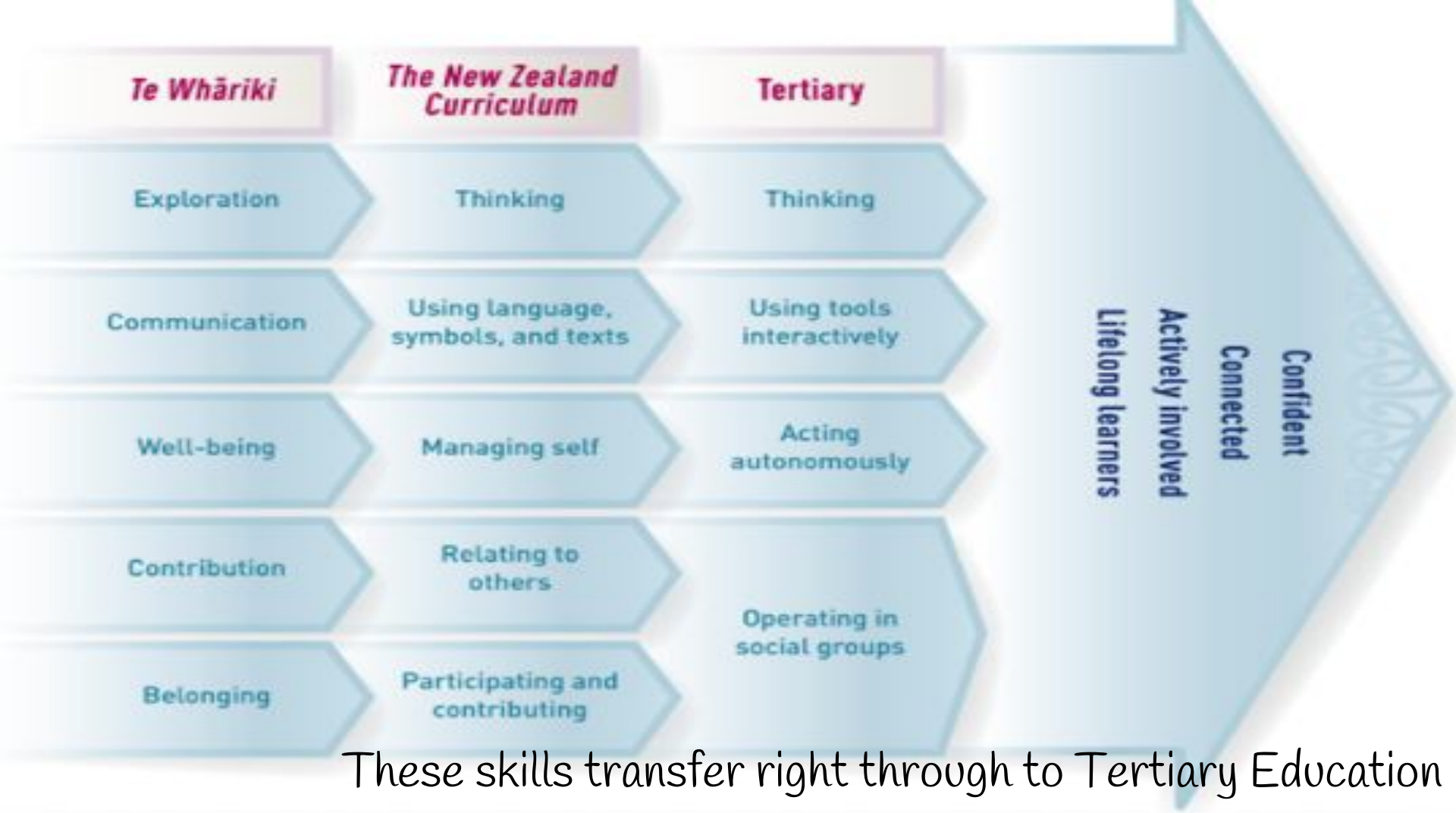
[Podcast](#)



[Video](#)



How it relates to the NZ Curriculum



# THE 6 Cs

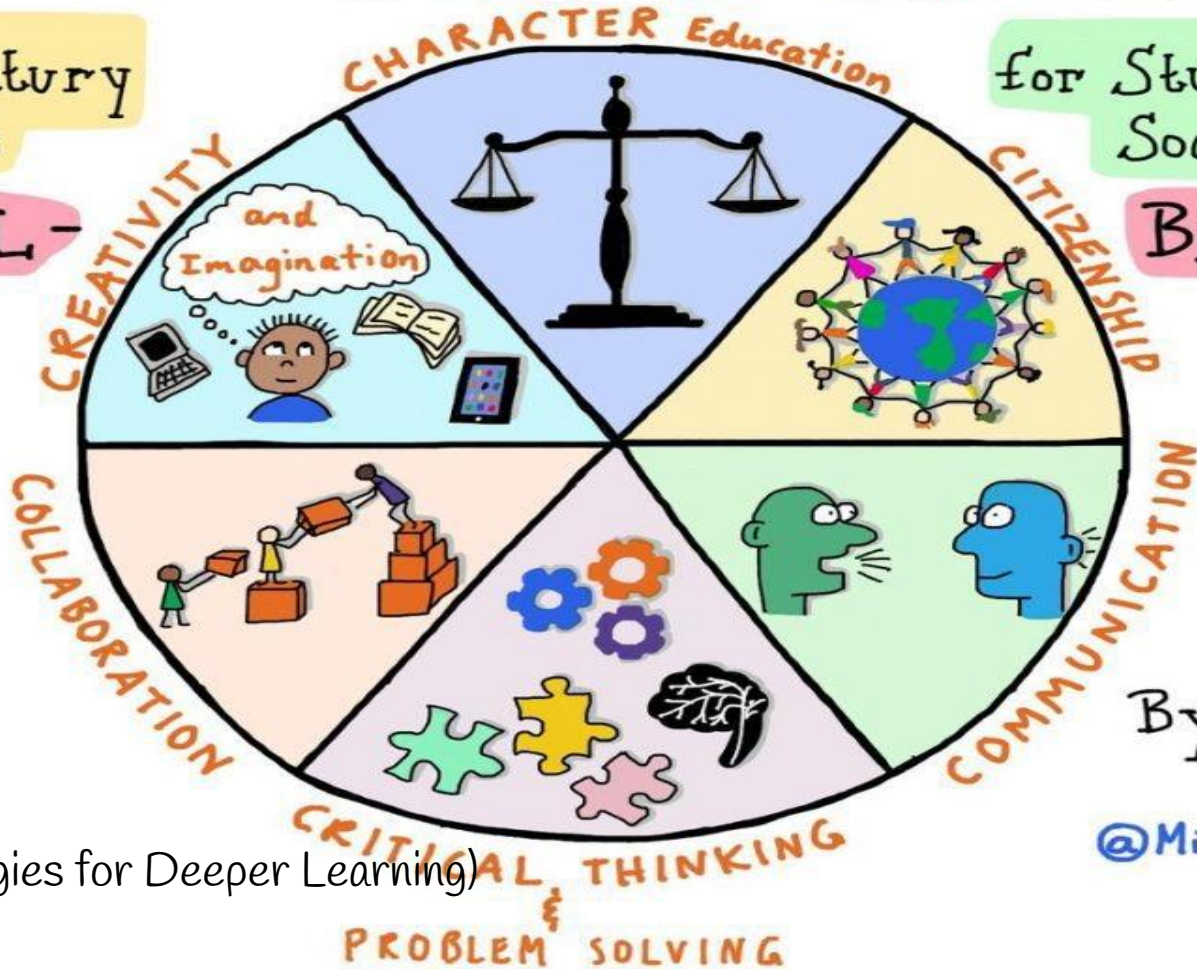
of Education

21<sup>st</sup> Century  
skills

for Student and  
Society

WELL-

BEING



By Michael  
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NPDL

(New Pedagogies for Deeper Learning)

# Findings from our Teacher Research ...

Gray (2015) suggested that our current model of school which features compulsory lessons and standardised tests is designed to crush a **child's innate drive for learning and curiosity**. He went on to say that traditionally 'school' was developed to indoctrinate and not to promote intellectual growth and creativity.

Walsh, Sproule, McGuinness, Trew, Rafferty, & Sheehy, (2006) suggest that teaching reading, writing and maths skills at an early age not only **detract from children's enjoyment of school** but may also can take away the enjoyment of their experience of childhood.

Johnson, Christie, & Wardle, (2005) suggested that children were able to **improve their conversation skills** while engaging in play, while Aras, (2016) believed play is a way of **enhancing social and emotional development**.

Walsh et. al, (2006) stated that some of the benefits for children partaking in play were that they were able to **act independently, they could take part in more challenging activities, they were more ready to learn and higher levels of emotional, social and physical well-being were observed**. Constructivist theorists place a lot of value on the importance of play as it aids in the development of **literacy, concentration, memory skills, physical skills and the ability to connect socially with peers** that build relationships with others which enable them to co-operate.

# Misconceptions about Play

'Play' is sometimes contrasted with 'work' and characterised as a type of activity which is essentially unimportant, trivial and lacking in any serious purpose. As such, it is seen as something that children do because they are immature, and as something they will grow out of as they become adults. However, this view is mistaken. Play in all its rich variety is one of the highest achievements of the human species, alongside language, culture and technology. Indeed, without play, none of these other achievements would be possible. The value of play is increasingly recognised, by researchers and within the policy arena, for adults as well as children, as the evidence mounts of its relationship with intellectual achievement and emotional well-being. (Whitebread 2015)



# Why WE play .....

When we play our students;

- are creative
- are problem-solvers
- can manage themselves
- use their imagination
- work with others
- are thinkers and innovators
- are leading their own learning
- are teachers

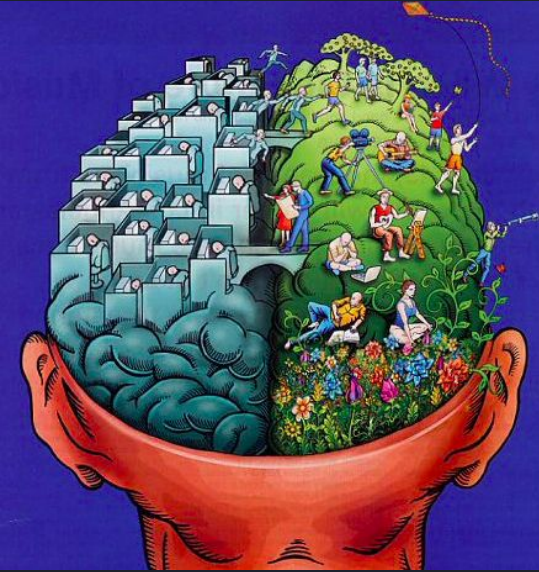
Research tells us that children who spend their time in conversation-rich environments become better speakers, readers, writers, and thinkers than their peers not exposed to effective use of language. Research also confirms that classrooms are dominated by teacher talk and that most of that talk takes the form of directives rather than invitations to verbal inquiry or complex discussion.



**Carol Garhart Mooney**

Use Your Words: How Teacher Talk Helps Children Learn

# Right Brain vs Left Brain



- Right brain develops first (between 3–4 years of age)
- Left brain doesn't fully come online until approximately 7 years old
- Left brain functionality is one of language, analysis and time; it's logical, calculating and keeps us anchored in the pragmatic world
- The right brain is responsible for empathy, imagination and creativity. It's where we wonder, dream, connect and come alive
- The right brain connects us to our boundless sense of *being*
- This is why play is so important in child learning and development
- Pushing literacy and numeracy on children before they are developmentally ready may not be as helpful as we think. This can cause children to believe themselves to be incapable and lose their natural desire to learn
- Let's remember that life is less about the tools the left brain excels in and what we accomplish in this world. Rather, life is about being present and connecting with those you love, or those you don't even know as children do so freely

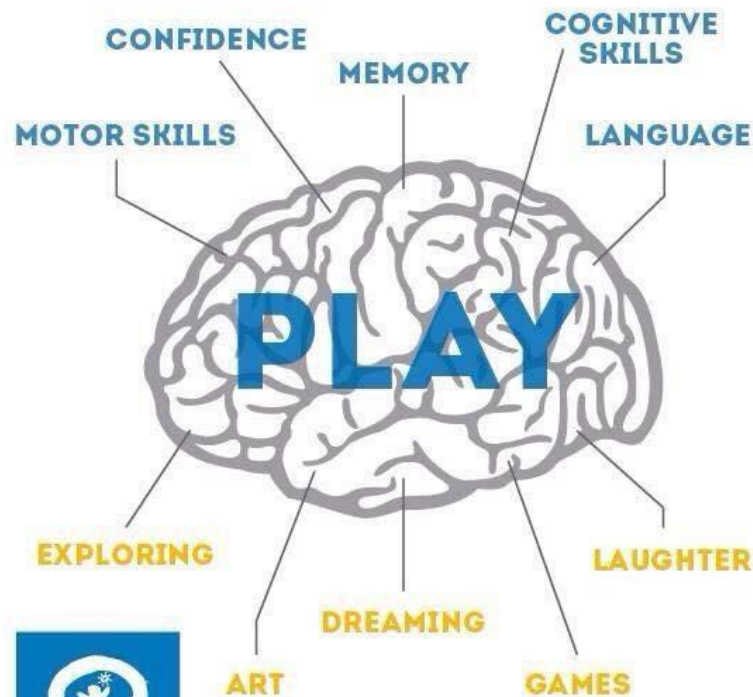
"Please give me time to experience my world.

Let me touch a tree and smell the rain,  
see the sunset and hear the birds.

Then, when I  
read and  
write those  
words, I will  
understand  
what they  
truly mean."



# *Children who play* **ARE HAPPIER AND PERFORM BETTER IN CLASS**



We have forgotten that children are designed by nature to learn through self-directed play and exploration, and so, more and more, we deprive them of freedom to learn, subjecting them instead to the tedious and painfully slow learning methods devised by those who run the schools.

**Peter Gray**  
*(Free To Learn)*

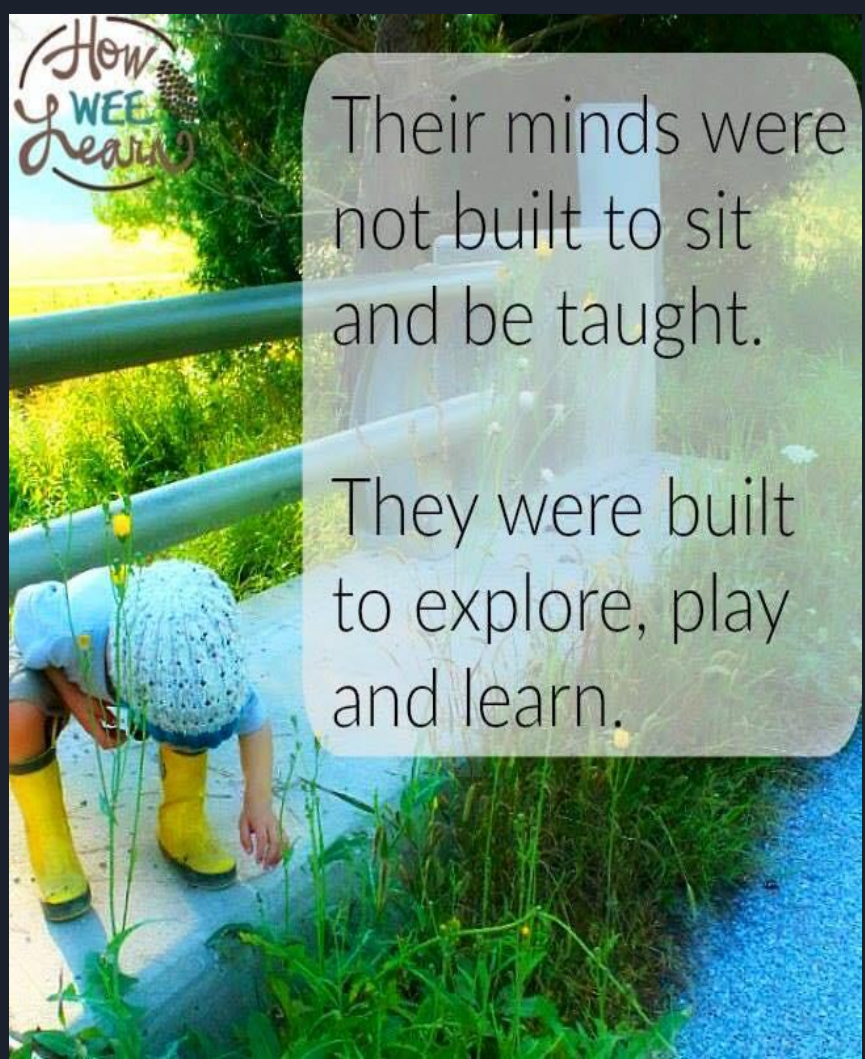
Childhood isn't meant to replicate  
adult life—  
sitting at little cubicles and desks  
day after day.

Moving, exploring, running,  
and activity  
are what children need to thrive.  
That is where they learn how the  
world works and their place in it.

Let them move!

~Karen DeBeus  
Simply Living for Him

How  
WEE  
Learn



Their minds were  
not built to sit  
and be taught.

They were built  
to explore, play  
and learn.

# it's not "just play"

Play is an essential part of early learning.

It is the lifeblood of the learning process.

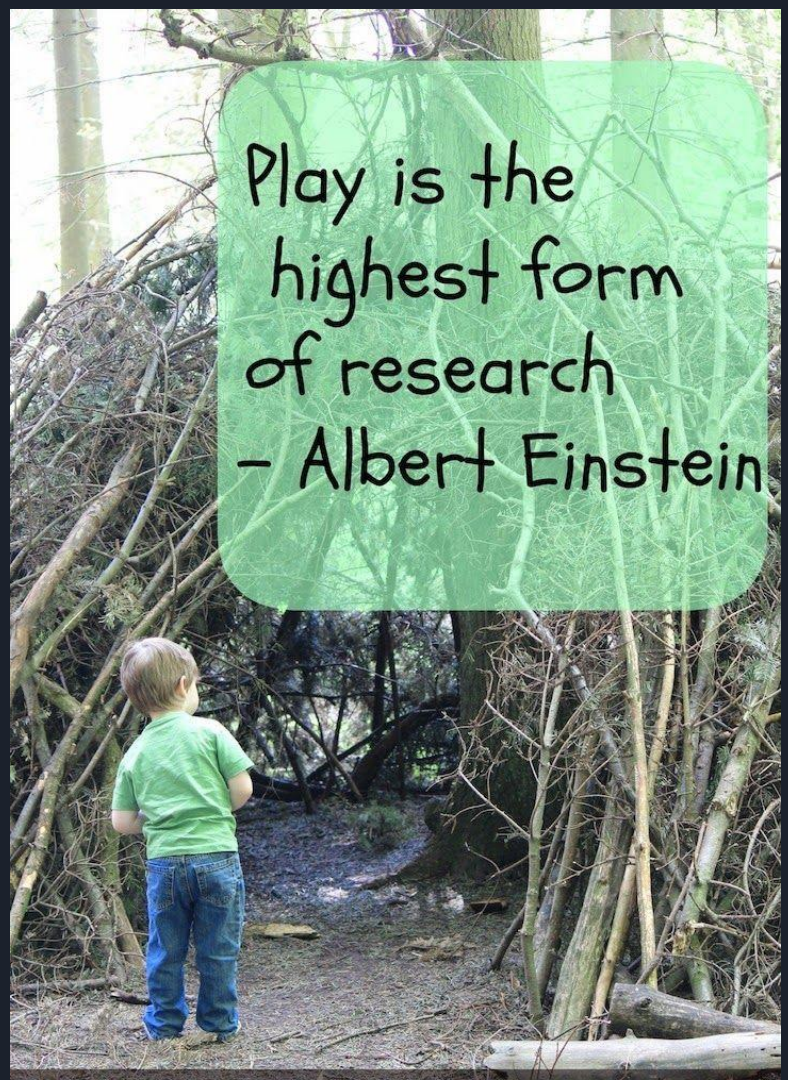
As children play they are developing the cognitive, socio-emotional and physical skills they will need to take them into a successful adulthood.

They are developing their curiosity, problem solving, intentionality, flexibility, and verbal & non verbal skills.

Socio-emotionally they are developing their emotional intelligence - learning confidence, cooperation, negotiation, sharing, empathy and how to communicate appropriately.

Physically their fine motor and gross motor skills are being practised and developed.

It's not "just play" they are skills for life!



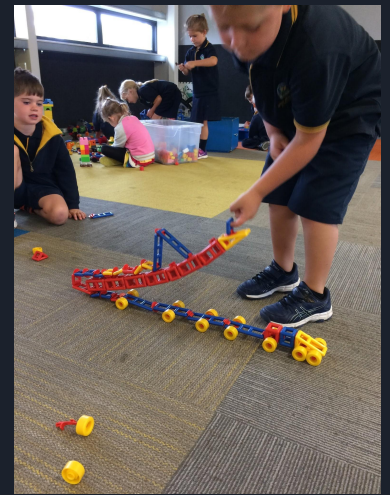
Play is the highest form of research  
- Albert Einstein

Times have changed. But children haven't. Young kids are on the same evolutionary path they've always been on. It's our expectations that are off. We're trying to make children ready for the next stage of life before natural development allows them to be ready. It's like expecting 10-year-olds to drive a car safely, or expecting a 4-month-old to walk.

HEATHER SHUMAKER

# How we play ....

- As a literacy activity while direct instructional groups are taking place
- As a way of teaching mathematical concepts and language
- As a way to spark interest in Inquiry and extend our key competency skills





Now it's your turn to play .....

Have a look around the room at  
some of the activities and most  
importantly have FUN!