

The LEGO Foundation

The Power of Play

2nd International Conference on Early
Childhood Education and Care

Batumi, Georgia
June 8, 2023

Dr. Bo Stjerne Thomsen
Chair of Learning through Play
The LEGO Foundation



Children are not being set-up to thrive



Less than
50% of youth
are on track to attain
the range of skills
needed to thrive in
school, work and life¹

The Education Commission & UNICEF 2022

**Only 74.8% of the
world's children are
developmentally on track.**

UNESCO 2022

**More than 40% of young
children do not have
access to early care**

World Bank 2020

**Growing
Inequities and
lack of access**

World Bank 2021

Crisis in well-being

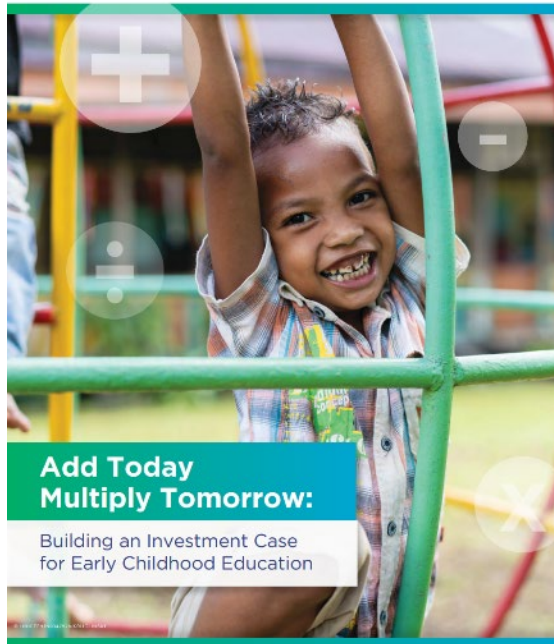
*Global prevalence of clinically
depressive and anxiety symptoms in
children and adolescents doubled
compared to pre-pandemic states.*

JAMA Pediatr. 2021
Lebrun-Harris et.al. 2022

**Educational systems
don't meet needs**

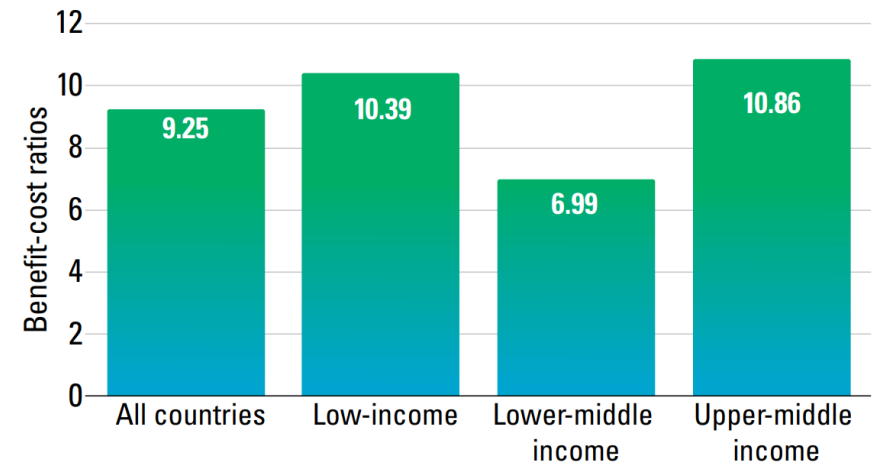
McKinsey 2021

Add Today, Multiply Tomorrow



- Investing in ECE is good for children, their families, communities, and societies at large.
- Comprehensive cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness of ECE programmes.
- Case studies from eight countries.

FIGURE 4:
Benefit-Cost Ratios of Expanding Access to Pre-primary Education by Income Group

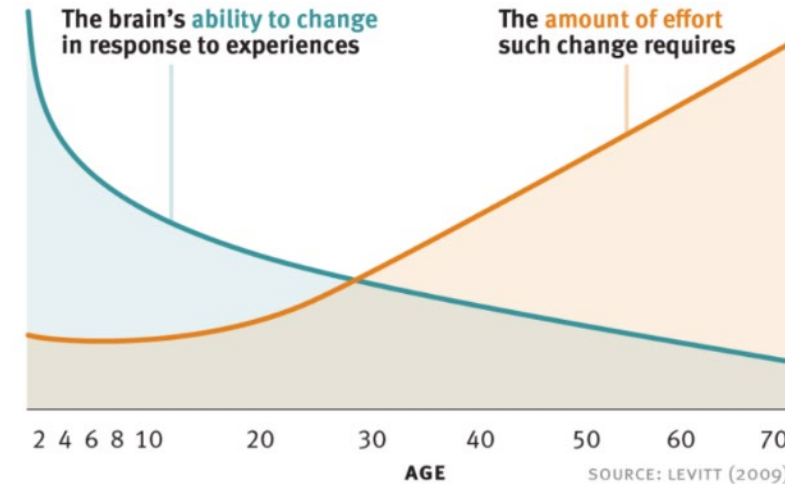
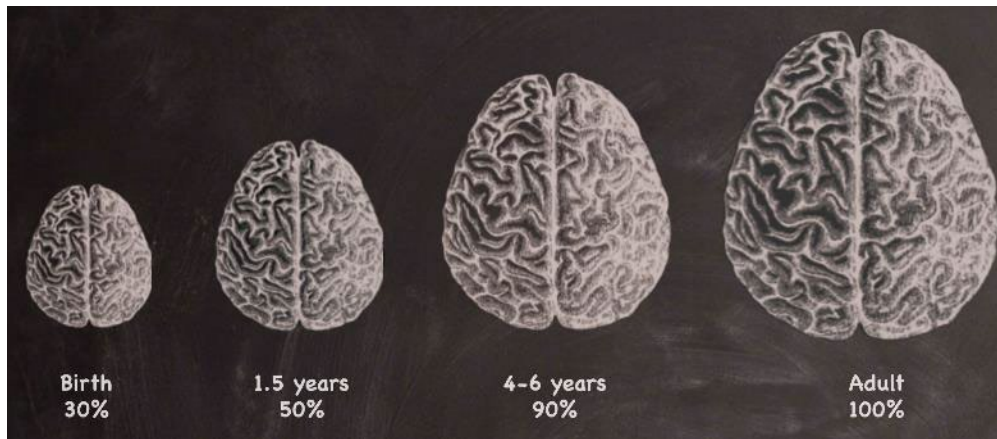


Source: Muroga et al. (2020)

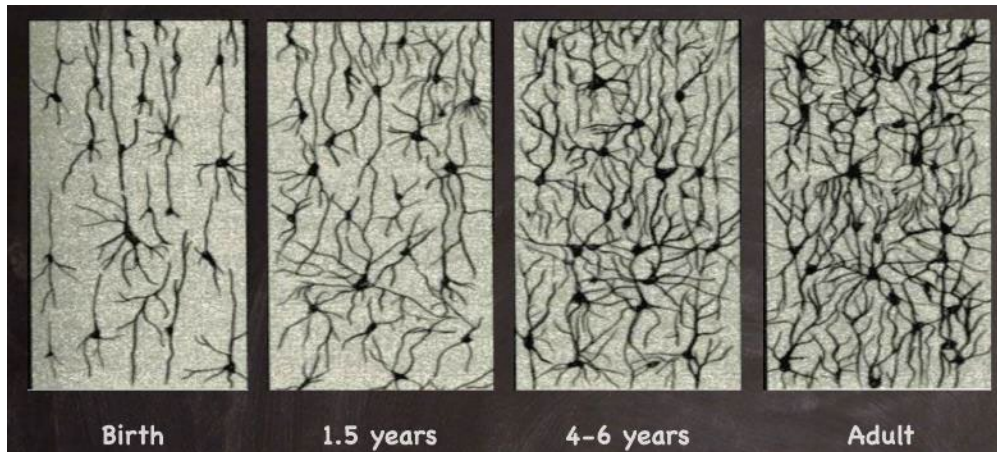




Early childhood and the evolving brain architecture

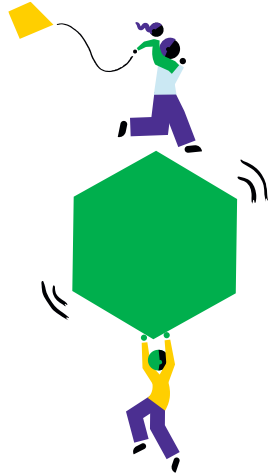


<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/brain-architecture/>



www.learningthroughplay.com

Play activities are the main mechanism for children to develop and learning



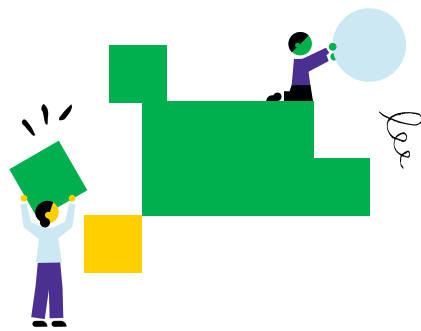
Physical Play



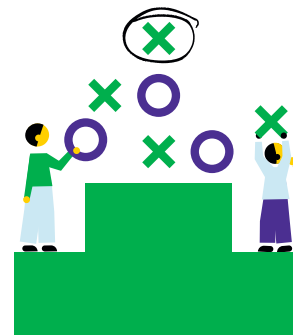
Symbolic Play



Pretend Play



Play with objects



Games with rules

“Play is not frivolous: it enhances brain structure and function and promotes a process of learning, which allow us to pursue goals and ignore distractions.”

American Academy of Pediatrics

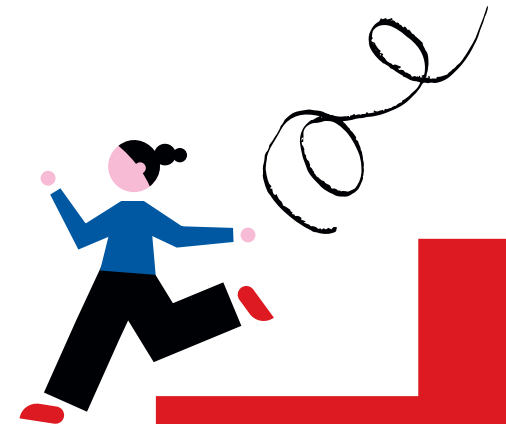
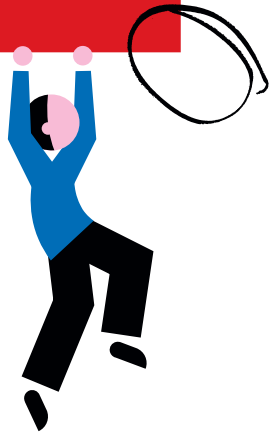
PEDIATRICS[®]

The Power of Play: A Pediatric Role in Enhancing Development in Young Children

Michael Yogman, Andrew Garner, Jeffrey Hutchinson, Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, Roberta Michnick Golinkoff, COMMITTEE ON PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS OF CHILD AND FAMILY HEALTH and COUNCIL ON COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA

Pediatrics September 2018, 142 (3) e20182058; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2018-2058>

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Pedagogy at the core of achieving quality

Broaden the spectrum of facilitating children's development and learning.



Play facilitation: the science behind engaging young children
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AeioTU Reggio Emilia Approach in Colombia

- Social enterprise that provides Early Childhood Education to 13,300 children from vulnerable backgrounds in 25 cities in Colombia.
- Eight months into the program Nores et al. (2018) found substantive positive effects on language, cognitive development and overall development.



Teacher: And what did you use to make that tire?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOb3NuRRcJs&feature=youtu.be>



aeiotü

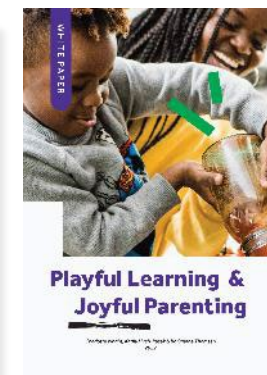
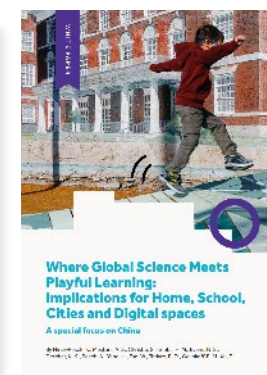
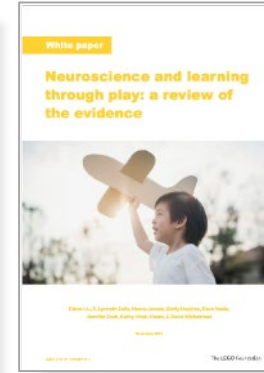
Five priorities to support early childhood development

1. Support policy and pedagogical practice that responds to young **children's holistic development.**
2. Prioritize, recognize and reward the professionalisation of the workforce as highly **motivated early years practitioners.**
3. Improve systems' ability to monitor and **adapt delivery to local contexts.**
4. **Engage parents and caregivers** as the most important foundations in a child's early years.
5. **Include play** as an integrated part of policy and programmes.



Evidence on Learning through Play

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