

The LEGO Foundation: WHY PLAY MATTERS

The LEGO Foundation, endowed by the LEGO Group's founding family, is dedicated to inspiring and developing the builders of tomorrow. Its work is about changing the perception of play and increasing awareness about its transformational role in learning across our lifespan. Through redefining play and reimagining learning, the Foundation is demonstrating the link between play, creativity and learning in the eyes of thought leaders, influencers, educators and parents with a focus to equip, inspire and activate champions for play.

THE CREATIVITY CRISIS

The transformative role of play in learning and its link to creativity has been proven through research, yet remains largely unrecognized. This means that we're not equipped to unleash the creative solutions needed to address the world's most challenging problems.

On average, 98% of three year olds have genius levels of creative thinking. Less than 2% of us retain those skills by the time we've made it to 25¹. Further, teachers and educational systems, driven to improve children's performance on standardized tests, are increasingly pressured to deliver knowledge, rather than fuel learning.

Research shows that while, globally, enrollment in early childhood education and primary school has increased, creative skills in our society have been on the decline since the 1990's².

PLAY TRANSFORMS LEARNING

Play is our brain's favorite way of learning. It has a deep impact on our cognitive, social, developmental and academic skills. Play stimulates children's learning abilities by fostering creativity, which builds critical thinking, sparks intellectual curiosity, and facilitates learning by doing. Learning by doing deepens our engagement and understanding significantly, and strengthens the most important pathways our brains use to learn and develop.

There is a scientific basis for believing in the power of play: in a state of play we relax and it allows us to drop into the state known as "flow". It is in this state that we best learn.

PLAY FUELS INNOVATION

We know through our experience and research that play is how children develop creativity. And without creativity, we lack innovation.

Meaningful play can be transformational. It invites exploration. It enables discovery. Through play we learn how to evaluate our world and create new possibilities. We practice and test how we might encounter similar challenges in the real world, and develop creative and critical thinking along the way.

PLAY AS A SOLUTION

We believe that play is a serious solution. Play strengthens cognitive and social skills, and builds self confidence. People who are curious, creative and imaginative- who have a childlike urge to learn- are best equipped to thrive in a challenging world and be the builders of our common future. This is why we see play as a very serious solution and fundamental to developing the vital skills needed for today's world.

Play unlocks learning and development benefits that last a lifetime, and childhood presents a critical window of opportunity. This is what fuels our vision for a stronger future through play. We aim to empower and equip children to create a better future for themselves and their societies by ensuring the value of play is understood, embraced and acted upon.

¹ Source: "The Creativity Crisis", Newsweek, July 2010

² "Can We Fix The Skills Gap?" Forbes, August 2013 and source: UN Special Envoy for Education.