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Benefits of Play for the Social and Emotional Development of Children in Kindergarten

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Abstract

There is an increasing push to focus on academics at a young age and take play out of learning. Research shows that play is beneficial for the social and emotional development of children. Play helps children to learn self-control, emotion-regulation, communication, conflict resolution, and so much more. This senior capstone project explored how play is beneficial for the social and emotional development of children in kindergarten. Through a literature review and surveys conducted with fourteen kindergarten teachers in Monterey County, results showed how beneficial play is for kindergarten students. The results from surveys also revealed how teachers in Monterey County implement play in their classrooms. Ultimately, play provides kindergarten students with many social and emotional skills, however, the current curriculum calls for less play and more academics.

Keywords: play, social and emotional development, kindergarten
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Introduction and Background

When I first learned about kindergarten in Finland and how it is all about play, I wondered why children in kindergarten in the U.S are expected to learn how to read and write at such an early age. In Finland, children begin to learn math and literacy when they enter first grade at the age of seven. For children in Finland, kindergarten is more comparable to a preschool, where children are free to play and explore with their peers and have no expectation of learning to read or write by the end of the school year. Our current educational system is expecting young children to learn how to read and write too quickly. Having kindergarten focus on playing or having more time for play-can be more beneficial for children to develop social and emotional skills. Educators should be finding ways to incorporate social and emotional learning into the classroom through play because it is one way that these skills are developed.

The way the current kindergarten curricula are set up has its main focus on preparing kindergarteners for state testing. Children are spending less time learning through play, being active, and being creative, and more time learning math, reading, writing, and taking tests (Miller & Almon, 2009). Childhood is a time that should be spent on developing skills that can help them be successful in the future, not solely on high academic achievement. As Knee et al. (2006) points out, “The early childhood years are a crucial time for the development of self-regulation — an array of complex mental capacities that includes impulse and emotion control, self-guidance of thought and behavior, planning, self-reliance, and socially responsible behavior” (p.74). So, why do children in kindergarten have a curriculum that focuses on high academic achievement when play is the most developmentally appropriate way for children ages 4-7 to learn (Van Oers & Duijkers, 2013)? Knee et al. (2006) has pointed out a possible reason that
academics have taken over in kindergarten rather than play is because people felt that

“Americans were falling behind in education” (p. 9). Because of this line of thinking and regardless of the evidence that has proven how powerful play is, kindergartens are left to feel the immense pressure to succeed and experience less joy. Furthermore, Knee et al. (2006) says:

> From the living room to the classroom, children are being increasingly programmed and structured—as are the teachers who teach them. There is little time for play; the focus is on memorization of the “facts.” Indeed, play is viewed as a waste of time when more important “work,” the work of memorizing and parroting, could be done. As the pressure on children in school increases, paradoxically their ability to relax and just have fun through play is being restricted. (p. 3)

Even though many teachers know that play is beneficial for children, they often must ditch what they know is best, in order to follow the curriculum that has been given to them.

> The research about play makes it even more critical that young children in schools engage in play; rather than just educational activities. Research has shown that children “who engage in complex forms of socio-dramatic play have… better social skills, more empathy, more imagination, and more of the subtle capacity to know what others mean. They are less aggressive and show more self-control and higher levels of thinking” (Miller & Almon, 2009, p. 7).

Furthermore, research shows that teaching phonics and mathematics at a young age does not lead to better educational or long-term results for children (Miller & Almon, 2009). Not only this, but, through play children learn how to work together (Knee et al., 2006). Often, early childhood teachers are pressured to take play out of learning due to a strict curriculum and by parents who believe that play does not benefit their child’s learning (Broadhead, Howard, & Wood, 2010). Learning about the benefits of play, especially regarding a child’s social and emotional development will help early childhood educators—specifically, kindergarten teachers—bring play back into the classroom as a form of learning and to develop social and emotional skills.

This research will be of interest to school districts, specifically for early childhood teachers, and for parents. In addition, this paper will provide information for curriculum
developers, so they can see what research says about implementing more play in early childhood classrooms, specifically kindergarten. Parents will also benefit from this research because oftentimes, parents feel that play is not beneficial for their children in school settings. This research will be of interest to parents to show that play can be more beneficial than purely academics for the development of young children, specifically regarding a child’s social and emotional development.

**Primary and Secondary Research Questions**

The primary research question that this paper seeks to answer is: *How does play benefit kindergarteners in their social and emotional development?* Additionally, some secondary or related research questions are: (1) *What does research say about the benefits of play for the social and emotional development of children in kindergarten?* (2) *How does social and emotional development affect learning with respect to play?* (3) *What types of play are most beneficial for their social and emotional skills?* (4) *How is play implemented in the curriculum for early childhood programs in the school districts in Salinas and Monterey County?* (5) *Are there resources for teachers to promote healthy social and emotional development for kindergarteners in the classrooms?* (6) *Does play benefit the social and emotional development of children in kindergarten? If it does, how does it benefit them socially and emotionally?* The purpose of this paper is to find out how play benefits kindergartners socially and emotionally to show the benefits of implementing more play into early childhood classes, specifically kindergarten.

**Literature Review**

To understand the subject at hand, a literature review was conducted to summarize and synthesize relevant research that is related to the development of social and emotional skills
through play. In this literature review, play will be defined for the purposes of this research and social and emotional development will also be defined. Next, a brief history of the creation of kindergarten and its founder Friedrich Froebel will be provided. After that, some opposing viewpoints for this research topic will be brought up to show how other people view this issue.

What is play? There are numerous definitions and theories of what play is but for the purposes of this paper play will be defined by the following definitions. The National Playing Fields Association (NPFA), Children’s Play Council (CPC), and PLAYLINK (2000) defined play by saying, “Play is freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated behavior that actively engages the child” (p. 6). Furthermore, Garvey (1977) provides a definition of what play is based on its characteristics, “[p]lay is pleasurable, enjoyable...its motivations are intrinsic...[p]lay is spontaneous and voluntary… [and involves] active participation” (p. 4). The theorist Lev Vygotsky (1978) also noted the importance of play in his research on child development. Vygotsky’s research has concluded that play is essential for a child’s development in the early years and that a child learns through play and develops social, emotional, and cognitive skills. In short, for the purposes of this research play will be defined as activities that are freely chosen, child-directed, and are intrinsically motivated.

What is social and emotional development? According to Cohen (2005), social and emotional development “refers to a child’s developing capacity to: experience, manage and express the full range of positive and negative emotions; develop close, satisfying relationships with other children and adults; and actively explore their environment and learn” (p. 2). Social and emotional development is important in early childhood in order for children to develop skills necessary for self-regulation—managing emotions, impulses, and disruptive behaviors—and healthy attachment—an emotional bond between child and caregiver. Developing positive social
and emotional skills early on helps children to be more successful in academics, peer/family relationship, and emotion regulation as they get older. These social and emotional skills will help children to deal with stress, have confidence, be happy, resolve conflict, persevere, communicate, and connect with people they meet throughout their lives (Martin et al, 2014). Jones and Doolittle (2017) provide more information on the importance of social and emotional development by saying:

Research increasingly suggests that social and emotional learning (SEL) matters a great deal for important life outcomes...This research also tells us that SEL can be taught and nurtured in schools so that students increase their ability to integrate thinking, emotions, and behavior in ways that lead to positive school and life outcome...At its core, SEL involves children's ability to learn about and manage their own emotions and interactions in ways that benefit themselves and others, and that help children and youth succeed in schooling, the workplace, relationships, and citizenship. To effectively manage emotions and social interactions requires a complex interplay of cognitive skills, such as attention and the ability to solve problems; beliefs about the self, such as perceptions of competence and autonomy; and social awareness, including empathy for others and the ability to resolve conflict (pp. 1-2).

The skills mentioned above, such as managing emotions, solving problems/conflict, and having empathy are all skills that can be developed through play. This is why it is essential for play to be integrated into kindergarten so that children can learn these valuable social and emotional skills.

**History of the development of kindergarten.** Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852) was a German educator and founder of kindergarten. Froebel was influenced by many people such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi. His idea of kindergarten came to fruition in 1837 when the first kindergarten was established in Blankenburg, Germany. Interestingly, “kinder” is the German word for children and “garten” is the German word for garden. Froebel wanted kindergarten to be a “garden of children, “a place where “children [could grow] like flowers and plants, nurtured by a positive environment with good soil, rain, and sun, as well as an attentive gardener” (Passe, 2010, p. 42). In Froebel’s kindergarten, the main emphasis was creative play, singing/dancing, and nature. Froebel believed that play is a way for children to express what is in their soul. The current model of kindergarten in the U.S no longer follows that
of Froebel. Kindergarten now has its sole focus on academics rather than creative play, singing, dancing, and nature.

Kindergarten was brought to the United States by Margarethe Schurz. Schurz “opened the first kindergarten in Watertown, Wisconsin, in 1856 for her immigrant German community” (Passe, 2010, p. 43). The next prominent figure in the history of kindergarten was Elizabeth Peabody. Peabody opened the first American kindergarten in Boston in 1860 that was English-speaking (Passe, 2010, p.43). For these kindergartens, “the goal was not so much to teach reading and writing but to develop overall cognitive and social-emotional skills—the beginning of considering the whole child” (Passe, 2010, p. 43). After this, a public kindergarten was opened in Saint Louis, Missouri in 1873. “By 1914, the beginning of World War I, all the major American urban school systems had publicly funded kindergartens that were open for five-year-olds” (Passe, 2010, p. 43). The opening of these kindergartens was fundamental in the field of early childhood education.

Our current kindergartens look a lot different from the way Froebel envisioned kindergarten to be. “Froebel might be concerned if he continued to visit schools and noticed that some kindergarten classrooms do not have toys, dramatic play areas, or blocks. Passe (2010) asserted that children sit in circle time but do much of their learning with worksheets” (p. 50). Over time, kindergarten has become a place where teachers are pressured to prepare their students for high levels of math and reading and no longer find time for children to play in the classroom.

Opposing view of play in regard to young children. Even though there is research that shows the advantages of play, there are parents and teachers that oppose having too much playtime in kindergarten classrooms. One reason that some parents and teachers see a
disadvantage to focusing on play more than academics in kindergarten is because they worry that the children will not be able to keep up with academics in years to follow. Myck-Wayne (2010) shares that, “Parents are concerned about how their child will compete academically. The prevailing attitude appears to subscribe to pushing teacher directed scripted curricula and prescriptive interventions at a very early age” (p. 21). This is one of the main reasons that parents would be against play in regards to using play in kindergarten. Some parents would rather have the teachers reduce the amount of play, where they see no academic benefit, and focus on helping their children excel in academics at an early age. In addition, Knee et al. (2006) states that “many teachers feel compelled to homogenize and narrow their offerings to be responsive to the testing movement” (p. 9). Some teachers are also unable to implement play into their curriculum because of the push for testing so the teachers have to follow a challenging academic curriculum in order to prepare their students for testing.

Methods and Procedures

In order to find out more about how play benefits the social and emotional development of children in kindergarten, individual research was conducted. Data was collected from a review of literature and current kindergarten teachers in Monterey County to see their perspective about how play is a benefit to students and if they can implement play into their current curriculum.

Participants

An anonymous survey was sent out to current kindergarten teachers throughout the Salinas City Elementary School District (SCESD) and the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District (MPUSD). There were 14 responses received for this survey; 7 from kindergarten teachers in the SCESD and 7 from kindergarten teachers in the MPUSD. The teachers that were surveyed have been teachers anywhere from one to 23 years. The teachers have been labeled as
“Teacher 1” through “Teacher 14” for the purpose of sharing survey responses throughout the results section.

Materials & Procedures

A Google survey was used to collect data from teachers, it was sent out via email to principals to distribute to their kindergarten teachers in order to keep anonymity. The survey that was sent out had eleven questions, see Appendix A for a list of the full questions. The full responses from the survey participants can be found in Appendix B.

Results and Findings

Through an extensive review of academic literature and through collecting survey responses, all the secondary research questions presented in this paper were answered. The answers provide insight into how play benefits kindergarteners and how local teachers use play in their classrooms.

(1) What does research say about the benefits of play for the social and emotional development of children in kindergarten?

From the genesis of kindergarten, its sole purpose was for children to play and explore. As time has passed, kindergarten has morphed into a place where a rigorous curriculum has replaced play. However, “play is the main and developmentally most productive context for learning of children at the age of 4 to about 7” (Van Oers & Duijkers, 2013, p. 514). This information provides evidence that children who are in kindergarten need play to learn because that is what is developmentally appropriate at that age. Yogman et al. (2018) writes, “Play is fundamentally important for learning 21st century skills, such as problem-solving, collaboration, and creativity, which require the executive functioning skills that are critical for adult success” (p. 2). This shows that taking play out of kindergarten is not in the best interest of the children.
Children learn the necessary skills that it takes to be successful in the 21st century through play. Play has shown to be beneficial to a child’s development, and especially in the development of social and emotional skills. Myck-Wayne (2010) researched the power of play and found that “within the dramatic play center, children are learning social skills, such as cooperation, turn taking, and following directions” (p. 18). This research is important because it shows how play in kindergarten relates to social and emotional development. Skills, such as cooperation and following directions, are all skills that children need to learn that will benefit them throughout schooling and throughout their lives.

Kindergarten is a critical time for children to learn social and emotional skills—skills that research shows are developed through play. Additionally, the “[r]esearchers Bodrova and Leong (2003) indicate that play enhances learning through the development of comprehension, attention span, curiosity, empathy, concentration, and group participation” (Myck-Wayne, 2010, p. 18). This is more evidence that shows how play relates to the social and emotional development of children. Empathy is another very powerful skill that needs to be learned in childhood, and it can be developed through play. The importance of play for a child’s social and emotional development is critical to understand to show how crucial it is for play to be brought back into kindergarten classrooms. All these social and emotional skills that children learn through play help children to be successful learners throughout their lives. Without these skills, children will be at a disadvantage when it comes to academics.

(2) How does social and emotional development affect learning with respect to play?

There are many advantages to play regarding kindergartners. Play has been shown to help children develop cognitive, social, and emotional skills. Yogman et al. (2018) provides more advantages to play by saying:
The benefits of play are extensive and well documented and include improvements in executive functioning, language, early math skills (numerosity and spatial concepts), social development, peer relations, physical development and health, and enhanced sense of agency. (p. 6)

Through play, children can be better equipped for learning later in life. Children develop language skills and math skills through play, “[P]lay enhances language development through the child’s verbalizations and use of vocabulary… Furthermore, pretend play has been connected to academic content in literacy and numeracy” (Myck-Wayne, 2010, p. 21). Additionally, children can learn problem-solving through play because it requires collaboration and discussion; through this collaboration and discussion “children learn to use more sophisticated language when playing with peers” (Yogman et al., 2018, p. 6). These skills are important for academic success throughout schooling and can be learned and developed through play. Yogman et al. sums up the advantages of play nicely by saying:

By promoting the learning of social and emotional skills, the development of emotional intelligence, and the enjoyment of active learning, protected time for free play and guided play can be used to help children improve their social skills, literacy, and school readiness. Children can then enter school with a stronger foundation for attentional disposition based on the skills and attitudes that are critical for academic success and the long-term enjoyment of learning and love of school. (Yogman et al., 2018, p. 8)

The use of play in schools would be very beneficial regarding young children’s development and later academic success. Without the development of social and emotional skills through play, children are at a disadvantage for their future academic success.

(3) What types of play are most beneficial for their social and emotional skills?

There are many different types of play that children engage in that are beneficial for social and emotional development. Common types of play that are beneficial are rough-and-tumble play, dramatic play, socio-dramatic play, and imaginative play. Rough and tumble play is when children are in close proximity and includes “touching, tickling, gauging relative strength, discovering physical flexibility and the exhilaration of display” (National Playing Fields
Association [NPFA]) Children's Play Council [CPC], & PLAYLINK, 2000, p. 33). An example of rough and tumble play is when children wrestle or play fight. Rough and tumble play does not include real fighting or the intention of harm. Dramatic play is “Play which dramatizes events in which the child is not a direct participator, for example, presentation of a TV show” (NPFA et al., 2000, p. 33). Sociodramatic play is different than dramatic play in that it is the portrayal of real events that children may experience, such as playing ‘house’ and being ‘mom’ and ‘dad’ (NPFA et al., 2000). Lastly, imaginative play is when children use their imagination for play and the rules of nature do not apply (NPFA et al., 2000). For example, when a child is pretending to be an animal or pretending to drive a car they are engaging in imaginative play. Although these are just a few examples of the different types of play that children engage in, they give a good framework for what play entails.

In the survey that was given to teachers it had the question, How/When is play used in your classroom? The responses to this question helped to answer the secondary research question:

(4) *How is play implemented in the curriculum for early childhood programs in the school districts in Monterey County?*

The responses that I received had about 43% of the teachers incorporating play into their daily lessons or having free play time daily. Teacher 8 wrote that play is used, “All the time. Center activities, brain breaks, academic teaching, etc. Students are excited to learn new things through play” (Teacher 8, personal communication, 23 March 2019). Teacher 11 responded with, “A playtime is incorporated into our daily schedule as it is very important for the development of social skills and collaborative play at this young age. As well, when possible academic centers are built around play as well” (Teacher 11, personal communication, 23 March 2019). These
teachers show that they value play in their classrooms by incorporating it into their daily schedules. Approximately 57% of the teachers I surveyed did not incorporate play into daily activities, but rather only when there was free time or as a reward or on “fun Friday.” Teacher 4 wrote, “Play is used on Fridays as a reward and sometimes on days where there is free time and they have earned it” (Teacher 4, personal communication, 23 March 2019). Teacher 1 wrote, “It is used as a reward, and during free time.” (Teacher 1, personal communication, 23 March 2019). These responses show that there is not as much play time in these kindergarten classes as the other 43% of teachers surveyed and that play is used more as a reward or whenever there is time during the week. These results showed that there are kindergarten classes in Monterey County where play is implemented on a daily basis, however, I found that there are more kindergarten classes that do not have play implemented daily into the curriculum.

Another question that I put on the survey for the kindergarten teachers to answer was: Do you have access to resources on how to integrate play into learning? I used this question to gain insight into if teachers are given materials that they might need to integrate different practices into their curriculum. The answers to this question answered the secondary research question:

(5) Are there resources for teachers to promote healthy social and emotional development for kindergartners in the classroom?

I received 13 responses to this question, as one teacher left it blank. Five out of the thirteen teachers responded with “no/not really” to the question of if they had access to resources on integrating play into learning. Teacher 4 responded with, “Not really. I learned a lot from my mentor teacher about play” (Teacher 4, personal communication, 23 March 2019). Other teachers did have resources or knew how to find information on how to integrate play into learning. Teacher 2 responded with “we can use the internet to find lessons or use our academic
coach’s ideas” (Teacher 2, personal communication, 23 March 2019). Teacher 3 responded with, “yes, took an undergraduate class and graduate class on how playing is essential in Today”s[sic] Educational system” (Teacher 3, personal communication, 23 March 2019). Teacher 8 said, “Yes. Internet is always helpful. Lots of resources at our fingertips” (Teacher 8, personal communication, 23 March 2019). Teacher 10 said, “I have taken many early childhood classes that taught me a lot about play-based learning. I have taught preschool for seven years where I learned even more about the importance of play and I have learned about it in my credential classes. Also, occasionally we get articles to read about this” (Teacher 10, personal communication, 23 March 2019). I found that teachers use the internet or academic coaches the most for resources about integrating play into their learning. Rather than the school providing information, the teachers must find the information for themselves or use what they have learned through their schooling or experiences. Only in one response did the teacher mention that they occasionally got articles to read.

The next secondary question that was answered through teacher survey responses was:

(6) *Does play benefit the social and emotional development of children in kindergarten? If it does, how does it benefit them socially and emotionally?*

To answer this question, four separate questions on the survey were asked. The first question asked was: Do you believe play has a positive or negative impact on your students? Why? This question was asked first to see how teachers felt about the impact of play, before asking about the social and emotional aspect of it. I received the response that 100% of the teachers felt that play had a positive effect on their students. Teacher 10 responded with, “Play is absolutely necessary for this age in a positive way. They are always learning in play- rules, how
to get along with others, how to work out problems, how to share, and more. Kindergarten students cannot just be doing worksheets and books all day, they need this play time as long as it is developmentally appropriate and has to do with what we are learning for that week” (Teacher 10, personal communication, 23 March 2019). Additionally, Teacher 4 wrote, “Positive. It gives my students a chance to socialize and learn how to solve problems. Also, it opens up my students minds to be more creative” (Teacher 4, personal communication, 23 March 2019). These results showed that the teachers all felt that play has a very positive impact on their kindergarten students.

The next two questions that were asked that answered another secondary research question were: Do you believe that play is important for social development of the students in your classroom? And, Do you believe that play is important for emotional development of the students in your classroom? These two questions were asked to find out how play in kindergarten is beneficial for social and emotional development.

To answer the first question, about play in regards to social development, 100% of the teachers responded that play was important for social development. Teacher 8 wrote, “Yes. Students often collaborate with each other during their play such as working together on an art project or building a Lego structure. Social skills, such as negotiating, are definitely needed in cooperative play” (Teacher 8, personal communication, 23 March 2019). Teacher 12 responded with, “Yes. Students are able to (sometimes with teacher involvement) work through issues of sharing or collaborative play. An example might be playing with Legos and there not being enough to go around for students to play separately with them but together they can build something awesome. Or if a student knocks down a structure, the students learn to use proper and effective dialogue to communicate their feelings rather than getting angry” (Teacher 12,
personal communication, 23 March 2019). Teacher 14 wrote, “Yes! They can learn how to disagree and make arguments with each other. It is important for them to problem solve on their own and with other students” (Teacher 14, personal communication, 23 March 2019). These responses gave great insight about how play benefits social development.

The responses to the second question, about play in regard to emotional development, also received similar responses. One hundred percent (100%) of the teachers responded that play benefits emotional development for their kindergarten students. Teacher 14 responded, “As for emotions, they run very high in Kindergarten, so we talk a lot about using our words instead of physical actions like hitting. Play helps them emotionally because they can start to figure out how they are feeling and what choices to make based off of those emotions” (Teacher 14, personal communication, 23 March 2019). Teacher 6 wrote, “Yes. For my shy and reserved students play has allowed them to build self-confidence and self-esteem” (Teacher 6, personal communication, 23 March 2019). Teacher 8 responded with, “Yes. As with above, students learn how to compromise and become empathic with each other, sharing tools and responsibilities. Their emotional tie is in the project, and most of all, even with 5 year olds, they want to see their project succeed” (Teacher 8, personal communication, 23 March 2019). These answers were very beneficial to this research to show that play is beneficial for emotional development.

The last question that was asked on the survey of kindergarten teachers in order to answer the secondary research question, (6) Does play benefit the social and emotional development of children in kindergarten? If it does, how does it benefit them socially and emotionally? Is, are there any social or emotional skills that you have seen your students gain through playing? If so, what are they? This question was asked to find out what social and emotional skills the teachers feel that their kindergarten students gain through play. Teacher 6 wrote, “Students learn safe and
positive ways to communicate, interact, and communicate with their peers” (Teacher 6, personal communication, 23 March 2019). Teacher 7 responded with, “helping each other when one gets hurt, not excluding others, sharing equipment” (Teacher 7, personal communication, 23 March 2029). Another experience that Teacher 5 wrote about was, “Yes. I have a kid whose selectively mute. I have never heard her voice. She faces issues at home. When she's playing with her friends, she laughs. I saw her laugh for the first time this week. Her friends made her laugh” (Teacher 5, personal communication, 23 March 2019). Additionally, Teacher 1 wrote, “Communication, sharing” and Teacher 2 wrote, “How to converse with peers, how to share, take turns, how to express feelings both happy and angry” (Teacher 2, personal communication, 23 March 2019). Teacher 8 wrote, “Yes. Negotiating, Acceptance, empathy, responsibility, respectfulness, kindness, patience, cooperative learning, exploration, bravery, perseverance” (Teacher 8, personal communication, 23 March 2019). Other common answers included empathy, sharing, expressing feelings, solving conflict, communication, acceptance, creativity, and confidence, to name a few. The responses to this survey question gave a lot of insight about how local kindergarten teachers see the impact of play in developing social and emotional skills.

Discussion

The review of academic resources showed that the social and emotional skills that children learn through play are also beneficial in respect to academic learning. Play helps children in kindergarten to develop the necessary social and emotional skills that children will need to be successful in life. Additionally, the kindergarten teacher survey responses were very beneficial to the topic of this research. It was clear that the teachers felt that play had a very positive impact on their students. Even though most teachers are not able to implement play daily, some are able to implement play into their lessons and see the benefit of doing so. All of
the teachers felt that there were numerous social and emotional benefits to using play in a kindergarten classroom.

**Problems and Limitations**

The main limitation that was discovered during this research is that there was a very small sample size. This research only had 14 kindergarten teachers who participated in the survey. This may have made the findings to not be representative of the larger population of kindergarten teachers. Another limitation to this research is that a physical observation of kindergarten classes during instruction time was not conducted. This would have provided a more accurate representation of how much play is used throughout the day or incorporated into academic instruction. Lastly, a limitation to this research is that the teacher survey that was given to fourteen kindergarten teachers did not give a definition of what “play” was. Play may have been interpreted differently for each teacher and this may have affected how they responded to the survey.

**Recommendation**

After doing research about the benefits of play for social and emotional development for kindergartners, more play should be implemented into kindergarten classrooms. Kindergartners should have at least one hour of play per day during class instruction. One of the most effective recommendations would be to make kindergarten have a play-based curriculum. In this, children would still be learning academics, but they would also develop important social and emotional skills in the classroom. Lastly, to improve the current kindergarten classroom, children should not begin learning reading, writing, or math in a structured setting until they begin the first grade and instead focus on social and emotional development through play during kindergarten.
Conclusion

Play has a profound effect on the development of social and emotional skills for children in kindergarten. The research that was conducted through a literature review and individual surveys from kindergarten teachers answered the primary research question of this paper: How does play benefit kindergarteners in their social and emotional development? The benefits of play regarding social and emotional skills are numerous. Through play children learn how to communicate, develop vocabulary, peer negotiation, problem solving, emotion regulation, empathy, and create positive relationships. Rather than focusing solely on academics in kindergarten, more play needs to be implemented into the curriculum. The research that was collected was conclusive that kindergarteners would benefit from play for positive social and emotional development.

In Monterey County, some kindergarten teachers implement play into their daily curriculum. Other teachers use play as a reward or only when they have free time throughout the week. One reason some teachers struggle to implement play into their curriculum is because they do not feel like they have enough time in the day to incorporate more play in the classroom. Many teachers find resources about how to incorporate more play into their kindergarten classrooms from the internet, their academic coaches, or from their previous academic coursework. The findings of this research point towards the indication that play should be implemented into kindergarten classrooms on a daily basis. Play is beneficial for the growth of social and emotional skills which help children throughout their lives, not only in academics, but for their future careers as well.
References


Appendix A

Teacher Survey Questions

1. What grade do you teach?

2. How many years have you been a teacher?

3. What district do you teach in?

4. How/When is play used in your classroom?

5. Do you believe play has a positive or negative impact on your students? Why?

6. Do you believe that play is important for social development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can.

7. Do you believe that play is important for emotional development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can.

8. Are there any social or emotional skills that you have seen your students gain through playing? If so, what are they?

9. Do you have access to resources on how to integrate play into learning?

10. Do you feel that the CA Common Core State Standards make it so that you have to follow strict guidelines and cannot stray from them? Please explain.

11. Please write your daily class schedule. (Ex: 8:30-9:00 Math instruction, 9:00-10:00 unstructured play time, 10:00-10:15 Recess, 10:30-11:00 Literacy, 11:00-11:30 Lunch, etc.)
Appendix B

Teacher Survey Responses

Teacher 1

CSUMB Capstone Survey

Thank you for participating in my capstone survey. My capstone project is about how play affects the social and emotional development of children in kindergarten. I hope to gain information about how play is currently being used in kindergarten classrooms in the Monterey/Salinas area. This survey is anonymous.

What grade do you teach? *

Kinder

How many years have you been a teacher? *

3

What district do you teach in? *

- MPUSD
- SCESD
- Other: __________________________________________

How/When is play used in your classroom? (i.e. is it used as a reward, as a transition between subjects, whenever there is free time, etc.) *

It is used as a reward, and during free time.

Do you believe play has a positive or negative impact on your students? Why? *

positive, students work hard to earn play time
Do you believe that play is important for social development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

Yes, students learn to communicate and work together.

Do you believe that play is important for emotional development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

Yes, students are able to develop an understanding of how to use toys.

Are there any social or emotional skills that you have seen your students gain through playing? If so, what are they? *

Communication, sharing.

Do you have access to resources on how to integrate play into learning? *

no.

Do you feel that the CA Common Core State Standards make it so that you have to follow strict guidelines and cannot stray from them? Please explain. *

yes- there are strict standards to be meet and it is difficult to integrate that into play.

Please write your daily class schedule. (Ex: 8:30-9:00 Math instruction, 9:00-10:00 free play time, 10:00-10:15 Recess, 10:30-11:00 Literacy, 11:05-11:30 Lunch, etc.) *

8:30-9:30 ELA 9:30-10 RECESS 10-10:50 MATH 10:50-11:40 ELA/ELD 11:40-12:30 LUNCH 12:30-12:45 COMPREHENSION 12:45-1:30 WRITING 13:00-14:5 PLAY.
Teacher 2

CSUMB Capstone Survey

Thank you for participating in my capstone survey. My capstone project is about how play affects the social and emotional development of children in kindergarten. I hope to gain information about how play is currently being used in kindergarten classrooms in the Monterey/Salinas area. This survey is anonymous.

What grade do you teach? *

Kindergarten

How many years have you been a teacher? *

2

What district do you teach in? *

- MPUSD
- SCESD
- Other: ________________________________

How/When is play used in your classroom? (i.e. is it used as a reward, as a transition between subjects, whenever there is free time, etc.) *

At recess daily.
Sometimes during fun Fridays. Playdoh, blocks, puzzles, board games, or peg boards.
At least once a week before pick up, we go to the playground for free play or duck-duck-goose, parachutes, foot races etc.
Do you believe play has a positive or negative impact on your students? Why? *

Positive, because they get to work together. Students get to be creative or use their imaginations.

Do you believe that play is important for social development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

A key factor in social development. Students learn how to play with others outside of their family. Learning how to socialize early on will help them interact with peers when they grow up.

Do you believe that play is important for emotional development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

Yes, social-emotional development is achieved through social interactions. If kids do not feel included they will suffer emotionally and not want to go to school.

Are there any social or emotional skills that you have seen your students gain through playing? If so, what are they? *

How to converse with peers, how to share, take turns, how to express feelings both happy and angry.

Do you have access to resources on how to integrate play into learning? *

We can use the internet to find lessons or use our academic coach’s ideas.
Do you feel that the CA Common Core State Standards make it so that you have to follow strict guidelines and cannot stray from them? Please explain. *

Sometimes. It depends on your school curriculum. Developers forget that these students are kids and we need to teach to the whole child; not just get in all the LA and Math.

Please write your daily class schedule. (Ex: 8:30-9:00 Math instruction, 9:00-10:00 free play time, 10:00-10:15 Recess, 10:30-11:00 Literacy, 11:05-11:30 Lunch, etc.) *

8-9 ELA
9-9:20 Recess
9:20-10 Rotations
10-11 Math
11-11:50 Lunch & recess
11:50-12:30 ELD
12:30-1:25 Science/social studies
1:25 Dismissal
Teacher 3

CSUMB Capstone Survey

Thank you for participating in my capstone survey. My capstone project is about how play affects the social and emotional development of children in kindergarten. I hope to gain information about how play is currently being used in kindergarten classrooms in the Monterey/Salinas area. This survey is anonymous.

What grade do you teach? *

Bilingual K

How many years have you been a teacher? *

23

What district do you teach in? *

- MPUSD
- SCESD
- Other: ____________________________

How/When is play used in your classroom? (i.e. is it used as a reward, as a transition between subjects, whenever there is free time, etc.) *

Play is as a reward on Fridays, as a transitional between subjects with in 90 minutes
Do you believe play has a positive or negative impact on your students? Why? *

Indeed, it has a positive impact because students become more engaged and interactive as they are able to feel free in and out of the classroom.

Do you believe that play is important for social development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

Social development is crucial at this age, to solve problem between them, interact, converse ..... sharing.

Do you believe that play is important for emotional development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

Students are free to express themselves when feel secure and are free to express oneself. students role play many roles and indeed it helps them develop their emotional and psychological minds.

Are there any social or emotional skills that you have seen your students gain through playing? If so, what are they? *

Yes, compassion, protecting, stand up for the weak or the one getting hurt, empathy.... Help students in need and are able to run and tell an adult when one is hurt...

Do you have access to resources on how to integrate play into learning? *

yes, took an undergraduate class and graduate class on how playing is essential in Today's Educational system.
Do you feel that the CA Common Core State Standards make it so that you have to follow strict guidelines and cannot stray from them? Please explain.

* 

No, on the contrary CA common core standards are a guide to our core but implementing play is also essential to build the whole child academically and socially

Please write your daily class schedule. (Ex: 8:30-9:00 Math instruction, 9:00-10:00 free play time, 10:00-10:15 Recess, 10:30-11:00 Literacy, 11:05-11:30 Lunch, etc.) *

7:50-8:10 students come in and choose activities, 8:10-9:15 SLA-LA, 9:15-9:25 read a story and students mimic/role play what they listening...-Free expression of a mind picture 9:30-9:50 Recess, 9:50-10:30 Math, 10:30-11:20 ELD: time to role play setting and express themselves in acquiring Eng. as second language lots of movement 11:20-12:10 Lunch, 12:10-12:40 technology, 12:40-1 free play, 1:00-1:20 p.E 1:25 Dismissal
Teacher 4

CSUMB Capstone Survey

Thank you for participating in my capstone survey. My capstone project is about how play affects the social and emotional development of children in kindergarten. I hope to gain information about how play is currently being used in kindergarten classrooms in the Monterey/Salinas area. This survey is anonymous.

What grade do you teach? *

Kindergarten

How many years have you been a teacher? *

1

What district do you teach in? *

☑ MPUSD

☐ SCESD

☐ Other: __________________________

How/When is play used in your classroom? (i.e. is it used as a reward, as a transition between subjects, whenever there is free time, etc.) *

Play is used on Fridays as a reward and sometimes on days where there is free time and they have earned it.
Do you believe play has a positive or negative impact on your students? Why? *

Positive. It gives my students a chance to socialize and learn how to solve problems. Also, it opens up my students minds to be more creative.

Do you believe that play is important for social development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

Yes. I have noticed that a lot of my shy students “come out of their shell” during play and I get to see them interact with their classmates and see how they communicate with each other.

Do you believe that play is important for emotional development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

Yes. Play is important because they get to talk to each other in a non formal way and it is better to observe in such an environment because it’s so raw and not as structured.

Are there any social or emotional skills that you have seen your students gain through playing? If so, what are they? *

Yes! My students have learned to solve conflicts that arise with play, such as sharing, including each other and recognizing others feelings.

Do you have access to resources on how to integrate play into learning? *

Not really. I learned a lot from my mentor teacher about play.
Do you feel that the CA Common Core State Standards make it so that you have to follow strict guidelines and cannot stray from them? Please explain.

* Not necessarily. There are a lot of different things I can do to accomplish the standards. Sometimes it seems like the curriculums that we are given are restrictive.

Please write your daily class schedule. (Ex: 8:30-9:00 Math instruction, 9:00-10:00 free play time, 10:00-10:15 Recess, 10:30-11:00 Literacy, 11:05-11:30 Lunch, etc.) *

8:00-8:30 Morning Meeting
8:30-9:40 Math
9:40-9:50 snack
9:50-10:05 Recess
10:05-11:00 ELA
11:00-11:40 Lunch
11:40-1:10 ELA/Writing
1:10-1:40 P.E.
1:40-2:20 Social Emotional Learning
2:25 Dismissal
Teacher 5

CSUMB Capstone Survey

Thank you for participating in my capstone survey. My capstone project is about how play affects the social and emotional development of children in kindergarten. I hope to gain information about how play is currently being used in kindergarten classrooms in the Monterey/Salinas area. This survey is anonymous.

What grade do you teach? *

Kindergarten

How many years have you been a teacher? *

7

What district do you teach in? *

☐ MPUSD

☐ SCESD

☐ Other: ____________________________________________________________

How/When is play used in your classroom? (i.e. is it used as a reward, as a transition between subjects, whenever there is free time, etc.) *

It is used in a center so every kid gets to do it almost every day

Do you believe play has a positive or negative impact on your students? Why? *

positive
Do you believe that play is important for social development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

Yes. There are so many academic demands for these kids. They feel stress and need to have fun while learning. Also, kids need to practice social engagement. Many have limited communication skills and play is a great opportunity to develop skills.

Do you believe that play is important for emotional development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

Yes. Just as it is for adults. We need to learn from each other, lean on each other and laugh with each other.

Are there any social or emotional skills that you have seen your students gain through playing? If so, what are they? *

Yes. I have a kid whose selectively mute. I have never heard her voice. She faces issues at home. When she's playing with her friends, she laughs. I saw her laugh for the first time this week. Her friends made her laugh.

Do you have access to resources on how to integrate play into learning? *

Yes.

Do you feel that the CA Common Core State Standards make it so that you have to follow strict guidelines and cannot stray from them? Please explain. *

Yes. The standards for kinder are high for these kids. Perhaps they are appropriate for kids in other areas who speak English and face less burdens or disadvantages. I don't stray from them, but I have to take a step back and determine how to support the 35% of kids that are falling far below standard.
Please write your daily class schedule. (Ex: 8:30-9:00 Math instruction, 9:00-10:00 free play time, 10:00-10:15 Recess, 10:30-11:00 Literacy, 11:05-11:30 Lunch, etc.) *

Language art  11:20-12:10 Lunch  12:10-1:25 centers for which all subjects are integrated.
Also, we take 15 minutes during one of the large chunks of time for additional PE. Kids leave at 1:25

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Google Forms
Teacher 6

CSUMB Capstone Survey

Thank you for participating in my capstone survey. My capstone project is about how play affects the social and emotional development of children in kindergarten. I hope to gain information about how play is currently being used in kindergarten classrooms in the Monterey/Salinas area. This survey is anonymous.

What grade do you teach? *

Kindergarten

How many years have you been a teacher? *

12

What district do you teach in? *

- MPUSD
- SCESD
- Other: ____________________________

How/When is play used in your classroom?(i.e is it used as a reward, as a transition between subjects, whenever there is free time, etc.) *

It depends how play is defined. For example, my play or free choice academic learning centers consists of ELA activities and math manipulative activities. Students are engaging in play, but learning, communicating, creating/constructing at the same time.
Do you believe play has a positive or negative impact on your students? Why? *

Positive! Students need to play and explore throughout the day.

Do you believe that play is important for social development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

Yes. Students learn to communicate, share, and problem solve while having the autonomy to participate in an academic learning center or “play” that fits their individual learning styles.

Do you believe that play is important for emotional development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

Yes. For my shy and reserved students play has allowed them to build self confidence and self esteem.

Are there any social or emotional skills that you have seen your students gain through playing? If so, what are they? *

Students learn safe and positive ways to communicate, interact and communicate with their peers.

Do you have access to resources on how to integrate play into learning? *

Yes
Do you feel that the CA Common Core State Standards make it so that you have to follow strict guidelines and cannot stray from them? Please explain.

* 

Yes, common core guidelines are very strict. However, part of teaching is being creative. There are many ways to integrate play into the curriculum to make the content fun and engaging for all students.

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Please write your daily class schedule. (Ex: 8:30-9:00 Math instruction, 9:00-10:00 free play time, 10:00-10:15 Recess, 10:30-11:00 Literacy, 11:05-11:30 Lunch, etc.) *

7:50-8:00 Morning Work
8:00-8:30 Language Arts Benchmark Advance Reading Mini-Lessons
8:30-9:00 Small Groups/Rotating Academic Learning Center Teacher Group
  Focus: Language Arts Phonics Mini-Lessons
9:00-9:15 Recess
9:20-10:00 Small Groups/Rotating Academic Learning Center Teacher Group
  Focus: Language Arts Phonics Mini-Lessons
10:00-11:00 Eureka Math
11:00-11:50 Student and Teacher Lunch
11:50-12:20 Designated English Language Development: Benchmark Advance
12:20-12:40 Language Arts Writing Mini-Lesson
12:40-1:05 Science/Social Studies using GLAD units
1:05-1:25 P.E., Music, Visual/Performing Arts, Social Emotional Development
1:25 Dismissal

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Teacher 7

CSUMB Capstone Survey

Thank you for participating in my capstone survey. My capstone project is about how play affects the social and emotional development of children in kindergarten. I hope to gain information about how play is currently being used in kindergarten classrooms in the Monterey/Salinas area. This survey is anonymous.

What grade do you teach? *

Kindergarten

How many years have you been a teacher? *

20

What district do you teach in? *

- MPUSD
- SCESD
- Other: ____________________________

How/When is play used in your classroom? (i.e. is it used as a reward, as a transition between subjects, whenever there is free time, etc.) *

whenever there is free time or on rainy days

Do you believe play has a positive or negative impact on your students? Why? *

positive, they enjoy it and they learn collaboration, sharing, fine and gross motor skills
Do you believe that play is important for social development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can.*

yes, it is the main type of socialization they participate in, they have opportunities to help each other

Do you believe that play is important for emotional development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can.*

yes, they learn about winning and losing, trying your best

Are there any social or emotional skills that you have seen your students gain through playing? If so, what are they?*

helping each other when one gets hurt, not excluding others, sharing equipment

Do you have access to resources on how to integrate play into learning?*

no

Do you feel that the CA Common Core State Standards make it so that you have to follow strict guidelines and cannot stray from them? Please explain.*

no it is not the standards, it's the lack of time that prevents more time for play

Please write your daily class schedule. (Ex: 8:30-9:00 Math instruction, 9:00-10:00 free play time, 10:00-10:15 Recess, 10:30-11:00 Literacy, 11:05-11:30 Lunch, etc.)*

8:30-9:30 math, 9:30-9:45 snack, 9:45-10:00 recess, 10:00-11:00 reading, 11:00-11:50 recess and lunch, 12:00-1:15 language arts, 1:15-1:45 P E, 1:45-2:15 science or social studies. We have music, dance, and art class once a week.
Teacher 8

CSUMB Capstone Survey

Thank you for participating in my capstone survey. My capstone project is about how play affects the social and emotional development of children in kindergarten. I hope to gain information about how play is currently being used in kindergarten classrooms in the Monterey/Salinas area. This survey is anonymous.

What grade do you teach? *
Kindergarten

How many years have you been a teacher? *
6

What district do you teach in? *
- MPUSD
- SCESD
- Other: ________________________________

How/When is play used in your classroom? (i.e. is it used as a reward, as a transition between subjects, whenever there is free time, etc.) *
All the time. Center activities, brain breaks, academic teaching etc. Students are excited to learn new things through play
Do you believe play has a positive or negative impact on your students? Why? *

Positive. What kid doesn’t want to play! Now tie a standard within their play, such as writing the alphabet using playdough, and meeting academic standards becomes built into their everyday play.

Do you believe that play is important for social development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

Yes. Students often collaborate with each other during their play such as working together on an art project or building a lego structure. Social skills, such as negotiating, are definitely needed in cooperative play.

Do you believe that play is important for emotional development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

Yes. As with above, students learn how to compromise and become empathic with each other, sharing tools and responsibilities. Their emotional tie is in the project, and most of all, even with 5 year olds, they want to see their project succeed.

Are there any social or emotional skills that you have seen your students gain through playing? If so, what are they? *

Yes. Negotiating, Acceptance, empathy, responsibility, respectfulness, kindness, patience, cooperative learning, exploration, bravery, perseverance

Do you have access to resources on how to integrate play into learning? *

Yes. Internet is always helpful. Lots of resources at our fingertips
Do you feel that the CA Common Core State Standards make it so that you have to follow strict guidelines and cannot stray from them? Please explain.

* I would not say it is the standards, rather how administration interprets how the standards should be implemented, i.e., does your administration believe in the power of play?

Please write your daily class schedule. (Ex: 8:30-9:00 Math instruction, 9:00-10:00 free play time, 10:00-10:15 Recess, 10:30-11:00 Literacy, 11:05-11:30 Lunch, etc.) *

Regular Tuesday Schedule:
7:50-8:05 Arrival and Morning Work
8:05-8:15 Morning Meeting (Attendance, Calendar)
8:15-9:00 Language Arts
9:00-9:15 Snack/Recess
9:15-9:45 Specials- Music
9:45-10:40 ELA Centers
10:50-11:30 Lunch
11:35-12:00 Read & Rest
12:00-12:30 Math
12:35-1:15 STEM Centers
1:15-1:30 Recess
1:35-1:55 STEM Centers con.
2:00-2:15 Math Review
2:15 Pack Up
2:25 Dismissal
Teacher 9

CSUMB Capstone Survey

Thank you for participating in my capstone survey. My capstone project is about how play affects the social and emotional development of children in kindergarten. I hope to gain information about how play is currently being used in kindergarten classrooms in the Monterey/Salinas area. This survey is anonymous.

What grade do you teach? *

k

How many years have you been a teacher? *

16

What district do you teach in? *

- MPUSD
- SCESD
- Other: ________________________________

How/When is play used in your classroom? (i.e. is it used as a reward, as a transition between subjects, whenever there is free time, etc.) *

I use it on Fridays has a social learning time. I have several didn't toys/games/activities that they can do. It is for about 30 mins. It is time for them to make new friendships, learn to share and get along with others and perhaps do activities that they don't get to do at home.
Do you believe play has a positive or negative impact on your students? Why? *

I believe that social interaction between children is positive. Play for 30 mins a week doesn’t take away learning but helps with the friendship and community of the class.

Do you believe that play is important for social development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

Some play is important. I could not do it everyday with the curriculum that we have to cover for the year. The 20 mins outside recess and 30 min lunch recess is where they get to play everyday. That is also important. The 30 min play a week does help with development. I have several students that are only children, they have difficulty sharing and compromising with their peers. This helps them work on that in a nonacademic area. I also have a few homeless children, toys and games are not a part of their home life. They really enjoy this time. They love to play and get a lot of joy in playing with the different toys. They become less sad/more of a 5-6 year old child at this time. It is also good for them to have to play with all the kids. The playground is big, our classroom is not. They also know that the toys belong to me, so if someone wants to play with them or next to them with the same toys they have to let them. Some unexpected friendships have happened because of this.

Do you believe that play is important for emotional development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

For some yes. Some kids who might not be the best student but are really good at building block towers get to shine at this time. It is really good for the homeless kids or the kids who don’t have a lot. They LOVE the toy time. It allows them to be a kid.
Are there any social or emotional skills that you have seen your students gain through playing? If so, what are they? *

I have puppets, it is wonderful and enlightening to see them play with the play with the and hear what they have them say. It is very interesting that mostly my boys play with the puppets. They like to put on puppet shows for each other.

Do you have access to resources on how to integrate play into learning? *

During my small group time (center time) the kids are at different centers. I have 1 center that is bridge building and they have to work together to build them. It is S.T.E.A.M. center- there is a lot of learning and working together but also play.

Do you feel that the CA Common Core State Standards make it so that you have to follow strict guidelines and cannot stray from them? Please explain. *

I have found that if you know what your students need to be able to do at the end of the year and prepared for the next years grade, that if you work hard and make sure that your children are working hard and prepared that if you supplement/use other materials to get them their then it is ok.

Please write your daily class schedule. (Ex: 8:30-9:00 Math instruction, 9:00-10:00 free play time, 10:00-10:15 Recess, 10:30-11:00 Literacy, 11:05-11:30 Lunch, etc.) *

8:10-8:15 Calendar, 8:15-8:30 Sounds, 8:30-8:45- Word Study, 8:45-9:15 Phonics, 9:20-9:40 Recess/PE, 9:45-10:30 Writing, 10:30-11:10 Math, 11:10-11:30 Mentor Read or Shared Reading, 11:30-12:20- Lunch 12:25-1:20 Centers 1:20-1:40 Clean up/Read Aloud 1:40 Dismissal

On Friday's I have social play instead of centers
Teacher 10

CSUMB Capstone Survey

Thank you for participating in my capstone survey. My capstone project is about how play affects the social and emotional development of children in kindergarten. I hope to gain information about how play is currently being used in kindergarten classrooms in the Monterey/Salinas area. This survey is anonymous.

What grade do you teach? *

Kindergarten

How many years have you been a teacher? *

9.5

What district do you teach in? *

- [ ] MPUSD
- [ ] SCESD
- [ ] Other: ____________________________
How/When is play used in your classroom? (i.e. is it used as a reward, as a transition between subjects, whenever there is free time, etc.) *

After we do our Math lesson, they are divided up into Math small groups based on ability levels. Some are at the tables playing with Math manipulatives that has to do with what we learned, others are on computers or tables doing a Math game, and others are working in a small group with me on what they need to practice in Math. For ELA, after we do a quick 10-15 minutes lesson on the carpet, again they are divided up into small ability groups. Some are at the tables playing with manipulatives like puzzles, stamping out high-frequency words into playdough, reading books, playing with alphabet, and more. Another group is at the playhouse, another group is on computers or tables doing a book reading app, and the last group is at my tables practicing words, letters, writing or reading books. At the end of the day after the bus kids have left and we still have about 5-10 minutes until we go home, they get to do free choice which is usually computers, blocks, coloring, or playdough.

Do you believe play has a positive or negative impact on your students? Why? *

Play is absolutely necessary for this age in a positive way. They are always learning in play-rules, how to get along with others, how to work out problems, how to share, and more. Kindergarten students cannot just be doing worksheets and books all day, they need this playtime as long as it is developmentally appropriate and has to do with what we are learning for that week.

Do you believe that play is important for social development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

Yes definitely it is important for social development. They learn as previously stated how to use rules, get along with others, work out problems with others, sharing and more. In the playhouse they are doing all of this. At the tables they have to learn to take turns with different favorite colors of manipulatives, they have to decide what is playing what if they are playing make-believe, they have to learn how to work together if playing blocks, if they are sharing computers they have to agree on the game and how long each person is using the computer.
Do you believe that play is important for emotional development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

Yes this teaches them how to interact with others, how to work out problems, how to ask for intervention from the teacher when necessary, especially at the playhouse and playing outside.

Are there any social or emotional skills that you have seen your students gain through playing? If so, what are they? *

They have become confident, I have seen leaders develop, I have seen students learn how to stick up for themselves, I have seen students playing or working together that would not normally play together.

Do you have access to resources on how to integrate play into learning? *

I have taken many early childhood classes that taught me a lot about play-based learning. I have taught preschool for seven years where I learned even more about the importance of play and I have learned about it in my credential classes. Also occasionally we get articles to read about this.

Do you feel that the CA Common Core State Standards make it so that you have to follow strict guidelines and cannot stray from them? Please explain. *

I believe they are strict enough that I did have to plan out my entire year over the summer before school started so that I knew I would be able to get through everything in time without rushing. But the curriculum we use is easy to learn so that there is time where they do not always have to be at my table or learning in the large group, where they can be playing while also learning.
Please write your daily class schedule. (Ex: 8:30-9:00 Math instruction, 9:00-10:00 free play time, 10:00-10:15 Recess, 10:30-11:00 Literacy, 11:05-11:30 Lunch, etc.) *

Well the schedule varies every day since Tuesdays we have library, Wednesdays we have music, Thursdays we have a different music class, and Thursdays and Fridays we have Science with the other Kindergarten class. But everyday we get in all the areas that we cover on Mondays, so here is a Monday schedule.

8-8:25 calendar/ELA
8:25-9:25 Math large group
9:25-9:40 Math small group
9:45-10:00 recess
10:00-10:20 Phonics
10:20-10:35 ELA small group #1
10:40-11:00 Shared Reading
11:00-11:40 Lunch
11:40-12:00 P.E.
12:00-12:15 Read Aloud
12:15-12:30 ELA Small group #2
12:30-12:50 Reading Writing
12:50-1:05 ELA Small group #3
1:05-1:30 Speciality (social studies)
1:30-1:40 Mini Recess
1:40-2:00 Second Step or VAPA (visual and performing arts)
2:00-2:25 Read aloud/ELA
2:25 out

This form was created inside of Cal State Monterey Bay.
Teacher 11

CSUMB Capstone Survey

Thank you for participating in my capstone survey. My capstone project is about how play affects the social and emotional development of children in kindergarten. I hope to gain information about how play is currently being used in kindergarten classrooms in the Monterey/Salinas area. This survey is anonymous.

What grade do you teach? *

Kindergarten

How many years have you been a teacher? *

23

What district do you teach in? *

- MPUSD
- SCESD
- Other: ___________________________

How/When is play used in your classroom? (i.e. is it used as a reward, as a transition between subjects, whenever there is free time, etc.) *

A playtime is incorporated into our daily schedule as it is very important for the development of social skills and collaborative play at this young age. As well, when possible academic centers are built around play as well.
Do you believe play has a positive or negative impact on your students? Why? *

Absolutely positive, as it develops social and emotional skills and collaborative play with peers.

Do you believe that play is important for social development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

Yes. Students are able to (sometimes with teacher involvement) work through issues of sharing or collaborative play. An example might be playing with legos and there not being enough to go around for students to play separately with them but together they can build something awesome. Or if a student knocks down a structure, the students learn to use proper and effective dialogue to communicate their feelings rather than getting angry.

Do you believe that play is important for emotional development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

Yes. Emotionally if a child is able to use their words they learn to gain control of their emotions and use a positive means to resolve issues.

Are there any social or emotional skills that you have seen your students gain through playing? If so, what are they? *

Students have the ability to learn how to use their voices to calmly work through both positive and negative situations. They learn to work together and share.

Do you have access to resources on how to integrate play into learning? *

Yes
Do you feel that the CA Common Core State Standards make it so that you have to follow strict guidelines and cannot stray from them? Please explain.

Yes. I am able to meet the CCSS and incorporate time for play into the daily routine.

Please write your daily class schedule. (Ex: 8:30-9:00 Math instruction, 9:00-10:00 free play time, 10:00-10:15 Recess, 10:30-11:00 Literacy, 11:05-11:30 Lunch, etc.)

Daily schedule changes dependent on the day, however in general 8-9:15 we have morning meeting and ELA/Math are both addressed during this time, then at 9:30-10:50 ELA centers, 11:30-12:30 Math, 12:30-120 Science, 135-205 Playtime.
Teacher 12

CSUMB Capstone Survey

Thank you for participating in my capstone survey. My capstone project is about how play affects the social and emotional development of children in kindergarten. I hope to gain information about how play is currently being used in kindergarten classrooms in the Monterey/Salinas area. This survey is anonymous.

What grade do you teach? *

Kindergarten

How many years have you been a teacher? *

5

What district do you teach in? *

- [ ] MPUSD
- [x] SCESD
- [ ] Other: ________________________________

How/When is play used in your classroom? (i.e. is it used as a reward, as a transition between subjects, whenever there is free time, etc.) *

Fun Friday
Do you believe play has a positive or negative impact on your students?
Why? *

I believe it is a good way for students to learn social skills. They need to learn how to share and get along with different personalities.

Do you believe that play is important for social development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

Yes, for many students this is their first experience in school and they need this time to learn how to get along with others.

Do you believe that play is important for emotional development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

Yes, some students are only children and are not familiar with interacting with their peers. They need this time to learn how to play with children and not just adults.

Are there any social or emotional skills that you have seen your students gain through playing? If so, what are they? *


Do you have access to resources on how to integrate play into learning? *


Do you feel that the CA Common Core State Standards make it so that you have to follow strict guidelines and cannot stray from them? Please explain.

Please write your daily class schedule. (Ex: 8:30-9:00 Math instruction, 9:00-10:00 free play time, 10:00-10:15 Recess, 10:30-11:00 Literacy, 11:05-11:30 Lunch, etc.)

8:20 - 9:20 Math
9:20-9:40 - PE
9:40 - 10:40 - Writing
10:40 - 11:10 - Shared reading, word study
11:10 - 11:30 - Phonics
11:30 - 12:20 - Lunch
12:20 - 1:30 - Small group rotation
Teacher 13

CSUMB Capstone Survey

Thank you for participating in my capstone survey. My capstone project is about how play affects the social and emotional development of children in kindergarten. I hope to gain information about how play is currently being used in kindergarten classrooms in the Monterey/Salinas area. This survey is anonymous.

What grade do you teach? *

Kinder

How many years have you been a teacher? *

6

What district do you teach in? *

☐ MPUSD

☐ SCESD

☐ Other: ____________________________________________________________

How/When is play used in your classroom? (i.e. is it used as a reward, as a transition between subjects, whenever there is free time, etc.) *

It is embedded into one (sometimes more) of my centers daily

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________
Do you believe play has a positive or negative impact on your students? Why? *

POSITIVE because it gives them an opportunity to participate in positive, age appropriate peer interactions while using their own imaginations to build off of each other’s creativity. It also allows them to have a mental break from academics.

Do you believe that play is important for social development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

I believe it is extremely important because there is only so much information their absorbent brains can soak in at one time.

Do you believe that play is important for emotional development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

Absolutely, it gives them chances to practice sharing with others, taking turns, using their words to ask for what they want, using their words to ask to join a conversation around something that they are building or playing with.

Are there any social or emotional skills that you have seen your students gain through playing? If so, what are they? *

Turn taking, sharing, using words to express wants / needs, positive peer conversations and interactions, imaginative and creative ideas

Do you have access to resources on how to integrate play into learning? *

No
Do you feel that the CA Common Core State Standards make it so that you have to follow strict guidelines and cannot stray from them? Please explain.

I think that varies from school to school. Our principal allows us to be creative in how we cover the standards and encourages play and themed /unit planning rather than a more structured and explicit approach that designates certain times of the day for certain learning areas.

Please write your daily class schedule. (Ex: 8:30-9:00 Math instruction, 9:00-10:00 free play time, 10:00-10:15 Recess, 10:30-11:00 Literacy, 11:05-11:30 Lunch, etc.)

7:55-8:15 Morning Work
8:15-8:45 Morning Meeting
8:45-9:25 Phonics / HFW review
9:25-9:30 Snack
9:30-9:45 Recess
9:45-9:50 Mindfulness
9:50-10:00 Read Aloud
10:00-10:30 Whole Group Math
10:30-10:50 Independent Math Lesson Worksheet / Pulling Small Group(s) to revisit math concepts
10:50-11:30 Lunch
11:30-11:35 Mindfulness
11:35-11:40 Explain ELA Center Rotations
11:40-12:40 ELA Centers
12:40-12:45 Center Clean up
12:45-1:20 STEAM / Thematic Unit
1:20-1:35 Recess
1:35-2:15 STEAM / Thematic Unit Cont.
2:15-2:25 Clean up / Pack up
2:25 Dismissal

This form was created inside of Cal State Monterey Bay.
Teacher 14

CSUMB Capstone Survey

Thank you for participating in my capstone survey. My capstone project is about how play affects the social and emotional development of children in kindergarten. I hope to gain information about how play is currently being used in kindergarten classrooms in the Monterey/Salinas area. This survey is anonymous.

What grade do you teach? *

Kindergarten

How many years have you been a teacher? *

2 years

What district do you teach in? *

- MPUSD
- SCESD
- Other: ____________________________

How/When is play used in your classroom? (i.e. is it used as a reward, as a transition between subjects, whenever there is free time, etc.) *

We use play mostly for when we have periods of free time. They can choose how they would like to play.
Do you believe play has a positive or negative impact on your students? Why? *

I believe play has a positive impact on students because they are able to explore and communicate with each other freely. This helps them grow in their social and emotional skills as a student in the classroom and outside of the classroom.

Do you believe that play is important for social development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

Yes! They can learn how to disagree and make arguments with each other. It is important for them to problem solve on their own and with other students.

Do you believe that play is important for emotional development of the students in your classroom? Please explain and provide examples if you can. *

As for emotions, they run very high in Kindergarten, so we talk a lot about using our words instead of physical actions like hitting. Play helps them emotionally because they can start to figure out how they are feeling and what choices to make based off of those emotions.

Are there any social or emotional skills that you have seen your students gain through playing? If so, what are they? *

Yes, I would say communication is the biggest skill they have gained through play.

Do you have access to resources on how to integrate play into learning? *

No, however, we have a program called Second Step and it allows us to have a discussion around what the students would do in social and emotional situations.
Do you feel that the CA Common Core State Standards make it so that you have to follow strict guidelines and cannot stray from them? Please explain.

Yes, I feel like the guidelines are strict and we can not stray too much. With that being said, I do feel like we are able to take opportunities in our own classroom to incorporate play.

Please write your daily class schedule. (Ex: 8:30-9:00 Math instruction, 9:00-10:00 free play time, 10:00-10:15 Recess, 10:30-11:00 Literacy, 11:05-11:30 Lunch, etc.) *

8:00-9:45 ELA Instruction
9:45-10:00 Recess
10:00-11:00 Phonics/Writing Work
11:00-11:40 Lunch
11:40-12:30 Math Instruction
12:30-12:50 P.E.
12:50-1:35 Science/Art
1:35-1:45 Recess
1:45-2:25 Science/Art/Pack up
2:25 Dismissal