

Kaye Bennett Dotson. The Value of Games: Putting Play Back into Practice for Children. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2020. 165 pp. \$50.00. ISBN 978-1-4758-4639-3. Paperback ISBN 978-1-4758-4640-9. E-book ISBN 978-1-4758-4641-6 [Book review]

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Abstract:

How do children learn? How can they grow in experience and establish friendships and relationships? Games in childhood are a fun way to introduce young people to the world and others. Child development involves physical, intellectual, social, and emotional changes. Games can give children opportunities for communicating with peers, interacting socially with others, learning to deal with frustration, making new friends and enjoying time with friends, gaining skills in reasoning and decision making, and understanding outcomes and results. Play and games are an integral part of that growth process.

Keywords: book review | games | child development

Article:

How do children learn? How can they grow in experience and establish friendships and relationships? Games in childhood are a fun way to introduce young people to the world and others. Child development involves physical, intellectual, social, and emotional changes. Games can give children opportunities for communicating with peers, interacting socially with others, learning to deal with frustration, making new friends and enjoying time with friends, gaining skills in reasoning and decision making, and understanding outcomes and results. Play and games are an integral part of that growth process.

Children today have daily exposure to electronic games and technology. Author Dr. Kaye Bennett Dotson, associate professor in the Department of Interdisciplinary Professions at East Carolina University, intends for this book to provide adults with a collection of games and instructions that they can introduce to children to encourage active play away from devices. In

the digital age spontaneous free play is not as likely to occur, so it may require adults to intentionally plan such opportunities.

Active, physical games detailed in the text fall under categories such as games of chase and tag; games of song and dance, rhyme and rhythm; string games; blindfold games; and jumping, skipping games. It could be helpful to view online videos of children demonstrating games to supplement the book's written instructions. Games can be adapted in support of the curriculum as with Sight Word Bingo, and the author provides ideas and templates for such variations. Dotson's explanation of Creative Commons copyright licenses will help guide teachers to appropriately select and attribute online resources related to games that they intend to use in their curriculum.

Dotson encourages adults and educators to support outdoor, active play, but she also shares ideas for indoor or rainy day activities. More sedentary options are included in the chapter on board games, which describes many popular classic board games, such as Clue, Trivial Pursuit, and Operation. Whether played indoors or outdoors, games that encourage a child to use their imagination can help children understand more about the world. A number are included in the chapter, "Pretend and Make-Believe Games."

The age range for participation is primarily preschool through fifth grade, but the most basic game, Pat-a-Cake, would interest toddlers. The chapter, "National Ball Games and Informal Game Adaptations," includes the basic rules for baseball, basketball and related games, football, and soccer, along with several other games that can be played by older children (and adults).

A sample assignment describes how a teacher could help children join in preserving games by writing instructions for games that they play or interviewing an adult by asking about games they have played and documenting the explanations in writing, perhaps in the style of a graphic novel, with a video of the game being played.

Appendices offer a resource list, a sample field day schedule, and a bibliography. The index includes games alphabetically by name. The text does not include variations to the games that could address inclusion for children with disabilities or special needs, but a number of the illustrations depict children in a wheelchair or using pediatric walking aids for mobility.

Teachers, camp counselors, and parents will find this compilation of games useful in expanding the range of games they can introduce to their students and children.