

University of California, Davis  
Human & Community Development  
HDE 140: Observations of Young Children  
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### Introduction:

Children spend a great deal of their time playing with peers. Indeed, play is the business of children. Children's play has been a topic of interest since the Ancient civilizations in Egypt, Greece, and Rome. There is even archeological evidence of children's spaces and toys that pop up across the continents of Africa and Asia from civilizations pre-dating modern civilization. For our purposes here, we can safely say that children's activities and play have been an interest to humans for a long time.

In contemporary societies, the *science* of understanding child behavior has shed new light on the important functions play serves in development. We will discuss those in detail, but what should validate our focus on play as a context for development is time-budget analyses suggest children spend a *majority* of their time awake and alert in some form of playful activity. Whether alone, with peers, with parents, or with other adults children spend a good deal of their time in playful activities in every society, every culture, and every strata. Despite this, however, variation exists.

In the West, a greater portion of children's days are spent in formal adult-structured settings of day care, preschool, or school settings, or in the less formal parental and family structures of the home. Sometimes, children construct spaces within the adult structures and schedules to create their own rules, their own fantasies, and their own norms with each other. They often do this in the context of play—something I am sure we can all remember doing as children. Because children spend such a great deal of their time playing, we can use the study of play as a context to understand how children develop across affective, behavioral, cognitive, moral, and social domains.

This class will serve mostly as a refresher from previous theory laden classes like HDE 100A and HDE 100B. Indeed, there are prerequisites you must have to succeed in this class that should have prepared you to think of the developmental milestones of young children. But, this class will frame your refresher in the context of children's activities with their peers, and specifically, children's play—something that should prove to be new and different.

The lecture topics in class will cover most theories of why children play from evolutionary, sociological, cultural, and psychological perspectives. We will discuss the function or multiple functions play serves in orienting development. Providing incremental positive gains when play is present and potential decremental negative losses when play is absent. We will discuss how play may serve as a context for enriching development for typical and atypical developing children. We will discuss how children form groups, whether girls and boys play similarly or if there are sex differences, and how play serves as an important context to make friends. We will spend some time comparing children's play with mammals and social animals, which taken together with evidence from neuroscience, suggest play is a fundamental need, hard-wired in all social species (read as: play with peers is as important as attachment with parents and the brain and physiology of all humans is prepared more or less to do it).

As such, *I will* take the narrow and firm perspective that play is important for children's development into productive adults; but, *we will* constantly remind ourselves that some children who do not play, or do not play as much as others, still develop into typical productive adults: *so what gives?* We will end thinking about these deeper philosophical questions of the nature and function of play and ask ourselves: *is play a right to be nourished and protected for all children with the same earnestness as food, water, safety, health, and shelter?*

Because this class coincides with a lab, you will have some overlap in lecture material. You will be expected to make observations for lecture and discuss them in lecture, hence, attendance in lecture is mandatory. But, I understand life happens, so please communicate with your TA or me if you have an unforeseen emergency or a planned event away from class. You will be able to turn in missed assignments, but you will not be able to make up for missing discussion—makes sense right? (But, I'm open to you FaceTiming in if you're on vacation).

You should know, the lecture work will be separate from work you will be expected to complete in lab—try not to confuse these assignments. There will be a lot of out-of-class required reading for lecture (perhaps more than you're used too; we will discuss this day 1), but no text book is required. We will make sure to do our best to make this clear each week in class; in the end it is your responsibility to avoid confusion. A majority of your grade will come from weekly writing assignments, and a final position paper. There will be no test and no quizzes. But, participation is mandatory and missing class for any reason will be counted against your final participation grade, so you are expected to come each week to maximize that portion of class.

The following pages will have a general, tentative timeline of reading, lecture, assignments, and observations, the academic honesty policy, and the grade layouts. This can change for unforeseen circumstantial changes.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Lecture</b>	<b>Observation</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
1 Tuesday October 2, 4:10- 6pm	None	Introduction	None	None
2 Tuesday October 9, 4:10- 6pm	1) Taking Play Seriously 2) All Work and No Play 3) The Poverty of Play 4) The Importance of Play	Theories of Play	Observe Attachment and Separation Episode with Parents write up	Start a tally of all the types of play you see at the CCFS, or different activities you see journal entry
3 Tuesday October 16, 4:10- 6pm	1) Emotion in the Perspective of an Integrated Nervous System, <i>Damasio</i> 2) The Seventh Annual John Bowlby Memorial Lecture: Minds in the Making: Attachment, the Self-Organizing Brain, and Developmentally-Oriented Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, <i>Schore</i>	Emotional Attunement Play and Attachment	Observe all spaces and structures children have at the CCFS lab write up	Find Pictures, Poems, Movies, Art that depict Emotional Attunement Play discussed in class journal entry
4 Tuesday October 23, 4:10- 6pm	1) Movement and Thought, <i>Iso</i> 2) Rough-and Tumble Play and the Development of the Social Brain, <i>Pellis &amp; Pellis</i> 3) Rough and Tumble Play: A fundamental brain process, <i>Panksepp</i> 4) A longitudinal study of boys' rough-and-tumble play and dominance during early adolescence, <i>Pelligrini</i>	Exuberance, Body Play & Movement	Observe the types of exuberant play you see your child playing, how much time did they spend in this type of play? Write up.	Find examples of behaviors you've seen your child exhibit and an adult in the world (e.g., football, dance, etc.) Journal entry.
5 Tuesday October 30, 4:10- 6pm	1) Workforce Readiness, the Boeing Corporation, <i>Stephens &amp; Scott</i>	Object Play, Cognition, and Innovation	Observe the types of objects children play with, the types of structures	Find evidence in whatever medium possible of animals playing with objects, pictures, movies, stories, books, poems. Journal entry.

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	<p>2) The Role of Play Objects and Object Play in Human Cognitive Evolution and Innovation, <i>Riede</i></p> <p>3) Mother-infant object involvement at 9 and 15 months, <i>Stevens</i></p> <p>4) Bubble ring play of bottlenose dolphins, <i>McCowan</i></p>		<p>they build, the types of fantasy they develop form a toy? Can you draw conclusions as to what their parents do at home? Write-up.</p>	
<p>6 Tuesday November 6, 4:10-6pm</p>	<p>1) Social Play, Structure, Function and the Evolution of Cooperative Social Behavior, <i>Bekoff</i></p> <p>2) Children’s social play sequence, <i>Xu</i></p> <p>3) Social play skill enhancement of children with autism using peers and siblings as therapists</p> <p>4) Current Concepts of Play in in Animals, <i>Beach</i></p>	<p>Social Play</p>	<p>Observe the types of groups your child plays in. Count the number of individuals, are they same sex or mixed? Are they child only, or child and adult? Are they structured or free? Write-up</p>	<p>Look for evidence of social play in other art mediums, try and define what <i>isn't</i> play. Journal entry.</p>
<p>7 Tuesday November 13, 4:10-6pm</p>	<p>1) Child Training and Game Involvement, <i>Sutton-Smith</i></p> <p>2) The Development of Structural Complexity in Children’s Fantasy Narratives, <i>Sutton-Smith</i></p> <p>3) Correlation patterns between pretend play and playfulness in children with autism spectrum disorder, developmental delay, and typical development</p> <p>4) Role of imaginative play in cognitive development, <i>Fink</i></p>	<p>Imaginative and Pretend Play</p>	<p>Describe an imaginative or pretend scenario your child engages. If your child doesn’t speak, look to see if you can find how they use objects for a different “fantastical” way. Write up.</p>	<p>Describe an imaginative scenario or a pretend fantasy play event from your own childhood. You can go into as much detail as you like. Then, describe the last time you played pretend? Did you favorite pretend play scenario shape anything you do now? Journal entry.</p>

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	5) Can TV Stimulate imaginative play? <i>Singer</i>			
8 Tuesday November 20, 4:10- 6pm	1) Play as an Organizing Principle, <i>Brown in Bekoff and Byers</i> 2) Adult play guidance and children's play development in a narrative play world, <i>Hakkarainen</i> 3) The narrative worlds of what is and what if, <i>Engel</i> 4) Meaning in the mud; Yup'ik eskimo girls at play, <i>Bennett DeMarris</i> 5) African children's play and the emergence of the sexual division of labor, <i>Bloch</i>	Storytelling and Narrative Play	Read a book to your child and describe the interaction. What types of questions did they ask? How did you elaborate on the events in the book? Write-up.	Go and checkout <a href="http://playtectonics.com/puppetools">playtectonics.com/puppetools</a> . Then Describe how you can teach someone a complex topic using analogy, or puppets; or, describe a time when you used props or puppets, or analogy to convey a deeper meaning. Journal entry.
9 Tuesday November 27, 4:10- 6pm	1) Transference, metaphor and the poetics of psychoanalysis, <i>Enckell</i> 2) Pretense and representation: the origins of theory of mind, <i>Leslie</i> 3) How is theory of mind useful? <i>Dore</i> 4) Serious Play in the Classroom, <i>Wassermann</i>	Creative Play	Observe your child, or recall your child in an art activity. What objects did they create? Did they create a song, a painting, etc. Write up.	Find song lyrics, books that show or describe creative play with complex ideas. And answer the question: is art a form of adult fantasy play? Journal entry.
10 Tuesday December 4, 4:10- 6pm	1) Children's pastimes and play in sixteen nations, <i>Singer</i> 2) Playing to Grow, <i>Miller</i> 3) What children can tell us about living in danger, <i>Garbarino</i> 4) The Decline of play and the Rise of Psychopathology in	Where has play gone?	Now, after a quarter of observations of your child in play, tally up the types of play you observed your child in and compare them to another student's in class. What do the similarities and differences	Do a "window" assessment of two different neighborhoods one in Davis and one in a different town. Count how many play spaces you can find. You can work in groups and also find a really cool restaurant. From the online census, find how many children live in the neighborhoods where you drove. Then give a basic per child per play ground analysis. Is there a difference? Journal entry.

<p>11 Final, TBD</p>	<p>Children and Adolescents, <i>Gray</i> 5) Play Deprivation: A Factor in Juvenile Violence, <i>Jacobs</i> 6) Nowhere to play? The Relationships between the location of outdoor play areas and deprivation in Glasgow, <i>Ellaway</i></p> <p>Answer the Question: Is play a fundamental motivation for development? Is it a right that should be protected by governments? Support your answer with at least 10 citations <i>not</i> from class. 2 pages max.</p>	<p>tell you given your knowledge of child development? Write up.</p>	<p>Turn in your journal!</p>
	<p><b>15% +10%</b></p>	<p><b>10%</b></p>	<p><b>50%</b></p>
			<p><b>15%</b></p>

**Academic Honesty**

Lack of awareness of the University of California Academic Honesty policy is not sufficient grounds for or excuse for cheating or dishonesty. If you're feeling that much pressure or anxiety about your grade, come talk to me before you feel the pressure to break any of the academic honesty policies. Please go to the following link, <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/files/cac.pdf>, to make yourself aware of the policies we follow to ensure your academic work is protected.

**Grade Scale**

100-90 A; 89-80 B; 79-70 C; 69-60 D; < 59 F

I do not round up or round down—you get what you get.

**Office hours**

My office hours will be in TB 123 after class on Tuesdays from 6-7pm, or by appointment.

The TAs will announce their hours in class, and they will be posted on CANVAS, and the syllabus will be updated once they provide their information.

**Email policy**

All emails must be submitted to all TAs and me. The subject heading should have "HDE140" to ensure we do not lose your email in the many hundreds of emails we receive daily. We will do our best to respond to emails within a 24-hour period during the business week, this

does not include weekends. If you send an email regarding an assignment within 2 hours of its due date, we cannot guarantee a response—so plan ahead.

### **Late policy**

If you're late to class, that's fine, don't disrupt anyone. If you miss class, you missed it and there's no going back. You can't participate if you're not there. If you miss an assignment for a health or family emergency or a sanctioned academic event, we will work with you to ensure you have a fair and reasonable time to complete your assignment.

### **Assignments and Gradebook**

**Reading (15%).** You will sit with folks at a table in class. Each week all reading assignments are required, but you don't individually have to read each article, you can share or divide the workload among your tablemates. To ensure the reading is being completed, you must provide an "annotated summary" of each article (approximately one paragraph for each article, two pages max for all articles). Only one annotated summary needs to be submitted per table (so you can put all your names on it).

**Final Paper (10%).** You will receive the prompt for the final paper the second day of class. You can start working on it immediately. For those of you who are precrastinators this is good news, for those of you who are procrastinators you are probably ignoring this information—individual differences are wonderful! You should use the sources of information from class, and some extra academic peer reviewed sources you find on your own outside of class to complete the assignment (although this isn't required). If you have questions on any of this, please contact your TAs on how to find an academically peer reviewed article.

**Participation (10%).** Your presence in class is worth 10%. This doesn't mean you have to raise your hand and speak up, but it does mean you have to cooperate with your class group you work with from week to week. This is the portion of class you **cannot** make up if you miss. But, if you miss for emergencies or other sanctioned reasons, we will provide means to make up that grade.

**Weekly Observational Write-ups (50%).** Because the class is about observing young children, you will have a weekly assignment to observe children, doing child-like things, in a childcare setting. You must turn in your own write-up assignment online before class the following week. This will be explained more in class, and if you have questions or concerns please notify your TA. These assignments are > 500 < 1000 words. If your assignment is late, it's late.

**Weekly Arts Journal (15%).** This part of the class should be fun! Each week you will be given an "artistic" assignment to find some cultural piece of information that coincides, represents, or replicates a discussion we are having in class. For instance, if we are discussing mother-infant emotional attunement play (i.e., peak-a-boo) find a painting, a song, or poem about peak-a-boo and describe it, its origins its history, etc. I stress: this should be fun! You will get full credit for a reasonable effort and no credit for no effort. We will share some of these in class if you want. The reason we do this is being an expert in child behavior or child development means we should embrace other forms of information not just empirical.