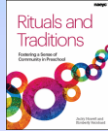


Beyond the Shelves and Manipulatives: Learning Environments That Nurture Young Children

Presented by Jacky Howell, MA
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<https://www.azspire.com>



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Author



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<https://www.azspire.com>

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WAITING FOR YOU
--Bev Bos

*We've been waiting for you to come to
this place,
Waiting for you to come to this place,
Wherever you're from,
We're glad that you've come.
We've been waiting for you to come to
this place.*



3



4

TODAY'S SESSION

**** Listen with curiosity, an open mind and heart, and a willingness to experience some discomfort.**

**** Consider the world we want our children to grow up in, live in, and contribute to in a caring, positive way.**

**** Today I hope some idea, quote, resource, story...will touch your heart and mind and you will take it back to your program and try it! Want to do MORE!**

5

"Children are miracles. Believing that every child is a miracle can transform the way we design for children's care.

When we invite a miracle into our lives, we prepare ourselves and the environment around us.

We may set out flowers or special offerings. We clean ourselves, the space, or our thoughts of everything but the love inside us. We make it our job to create, with reverence and gratitude, a space that is worthy of a miracle! Action follows thought.

We can choose to change.

We can choose to design spaces for miracles, not minimums."

--Anita Rui Olds

6

WONDER
DREAM
CHOOSE
PLAN
CREATE

7

KFGCC's Front Yard

Some of you may remember that just a few years ago our front yard was just an uninvited expanse of grass.



The front yard (BEFORE)

Then we decided we wanted to fence it in and create a "schoolyard habitat"—a place where the children could explore and learn about nature.

CHILDHOOD



Front yard, October 2005

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“Perhaps if we thought more about childhoods and less about needs, some of our programs would look less like schools and more like homes and children’s museums, or like fields and parks. We might develop varied places with a genuine sense of place—of beauty, variety, and elements of surprise and mystery; places where adults and children delight at times in simply being together, messing about, and working at the tasks that daily living requires.”

--Jim Greenman

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BELIEFS...
INTO
PRACTICE

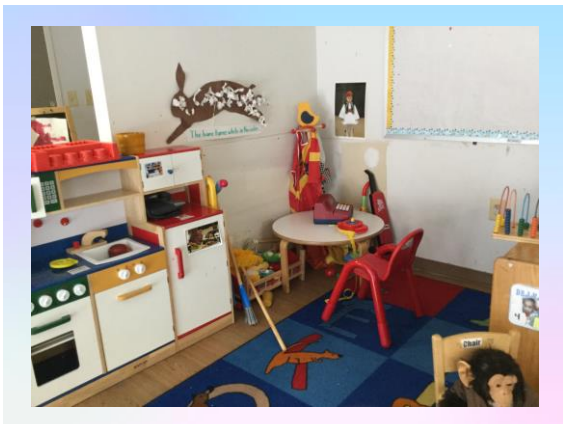
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CONTRAST...

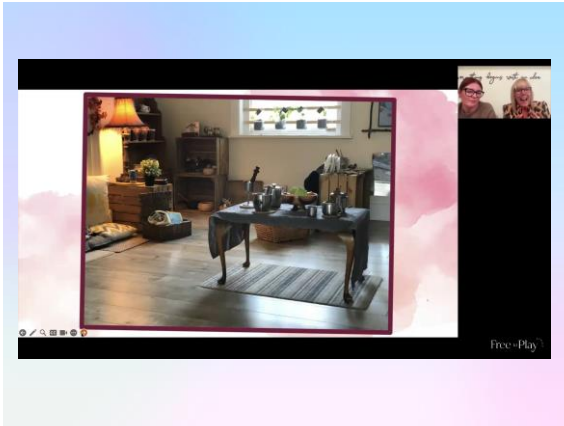
Where would you have experiences and learn more?

What would childhood feel like in the different spaces?

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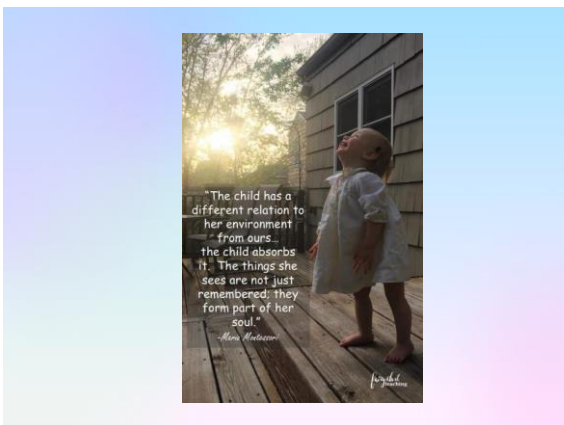


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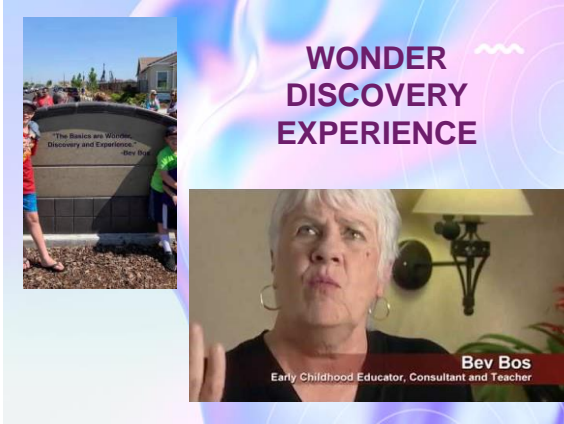
**ENVIRONMENTS
CONVEY OUR
VALUES**

**CREATING EXPERIENCES
CONVEY OUR
BELIEF ON CHILDREN'S
LEARNING**

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WHAT KIND OF PLACE DO WE WANT FOR OUR CHILDREN?

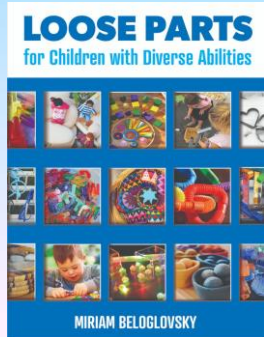
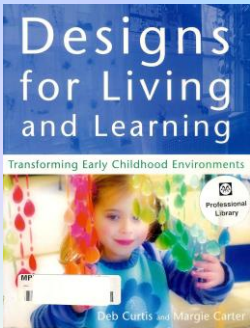


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PLACES FOR EXPERIENCING CHILDREN'S INTERESTS

“LEARNING CENTERS/SPACES”

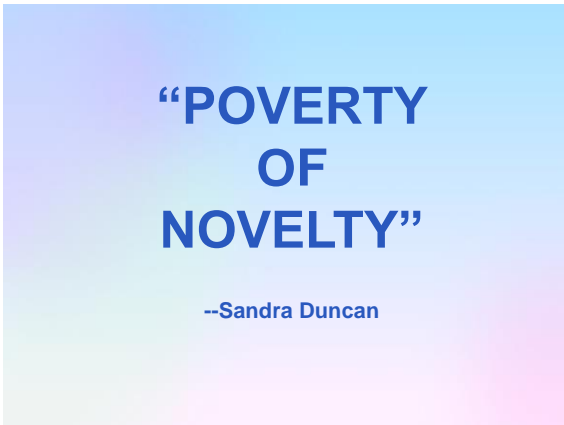
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**CHOOSE ONE AREA
TO START!!!**

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“ART”

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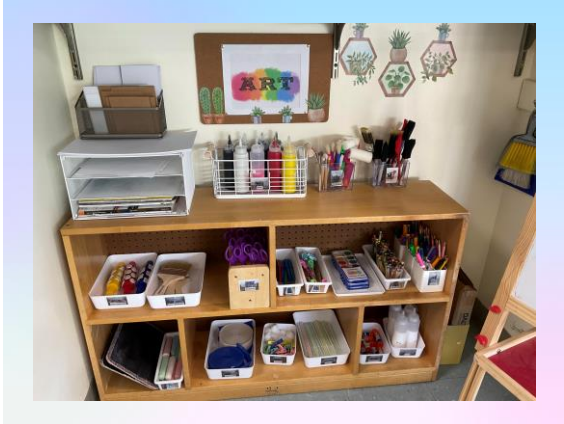
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Tree Branches
Inspiration

Free-Play™

46

Camouflage Netting
Inspiration

Free-Play™

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Metalworks
Inspiration

Free-Play™

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**“BOOKS
EVERYWHERE YET FUN
HERE!”**

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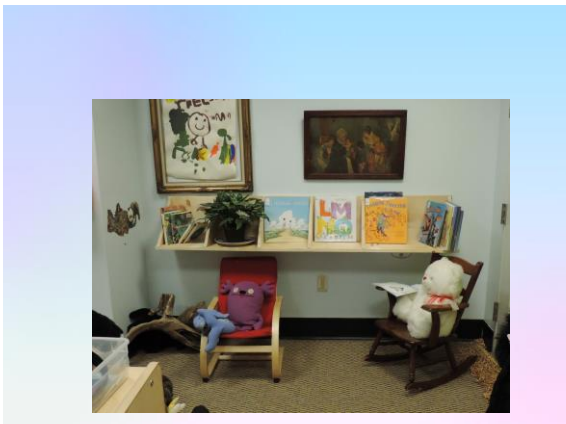
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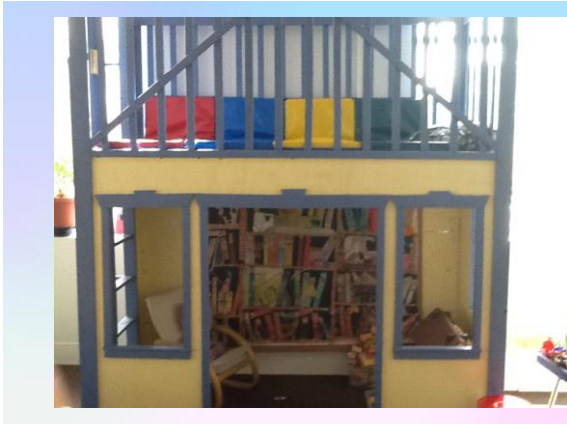
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“DRAMATIC PLAY”

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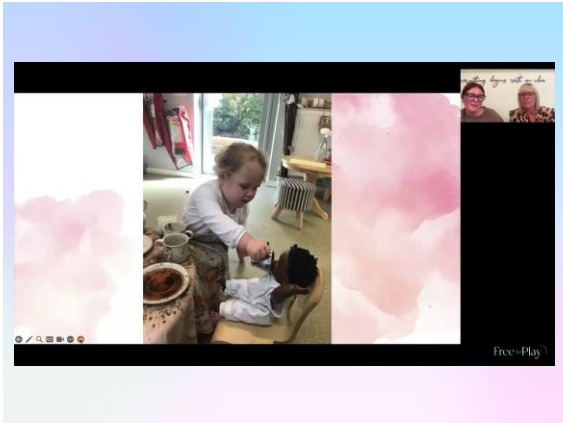
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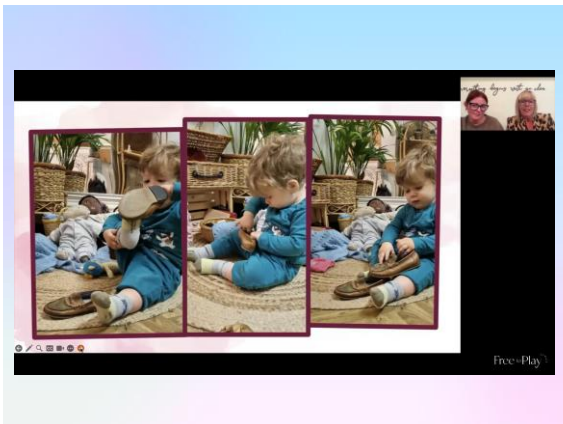
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“MANIPULATIVES”

UNSCRIPTED MATERIALS

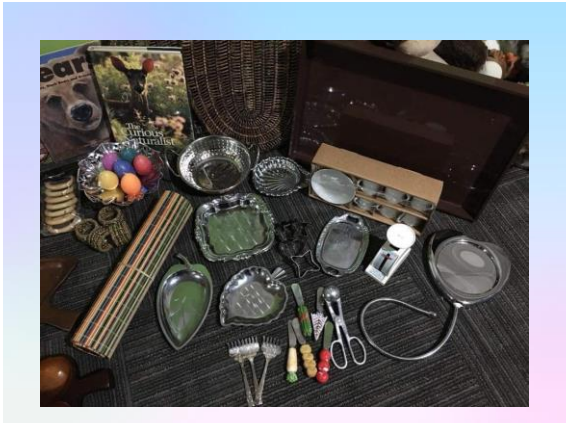
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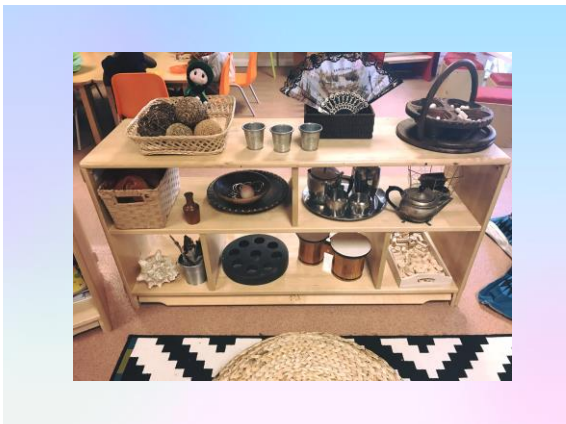
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Places for materials

- Garage Sales
- Clear plastic yogurt jars with lids/talenti jars
- Vintage resources
- What neighborhood store, company, people could you link up with for donations?
- Thrift Stores
- <http://www.reuseresources.org/>
- Families and friends!
- Donations and giveaways

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“OUTDOORS”

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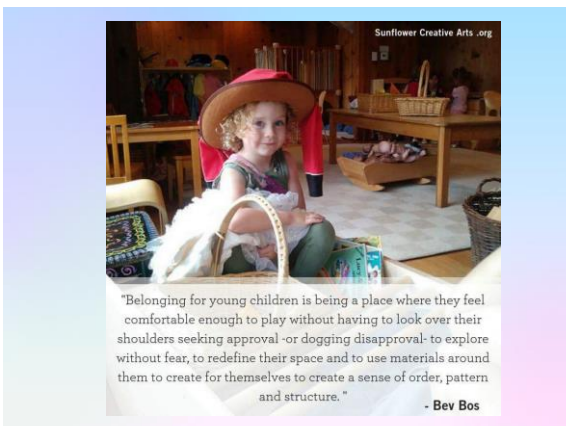
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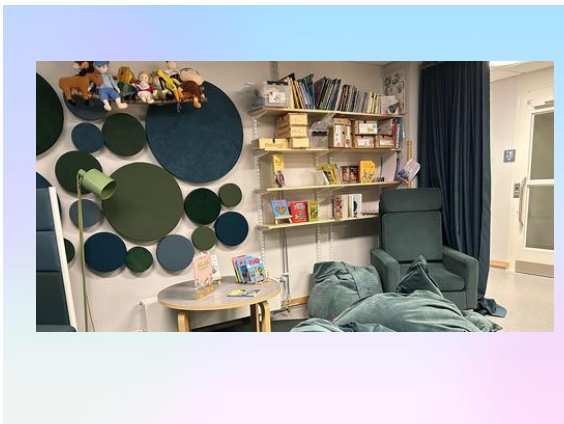
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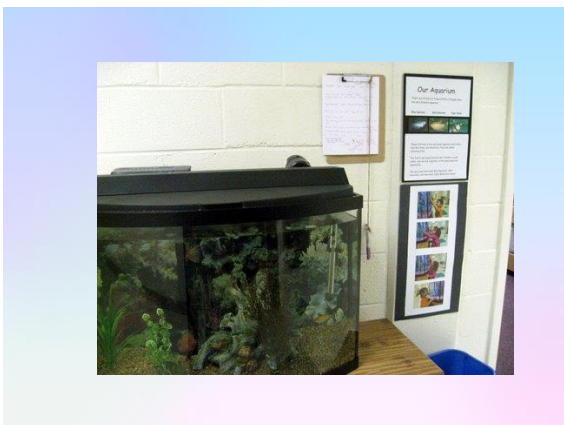
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“SCIENCE/MATH/ DISCOVERY”

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Kisha Reid, Play Empowers

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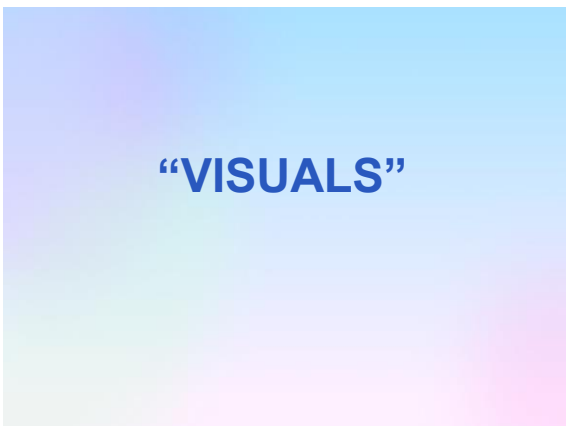
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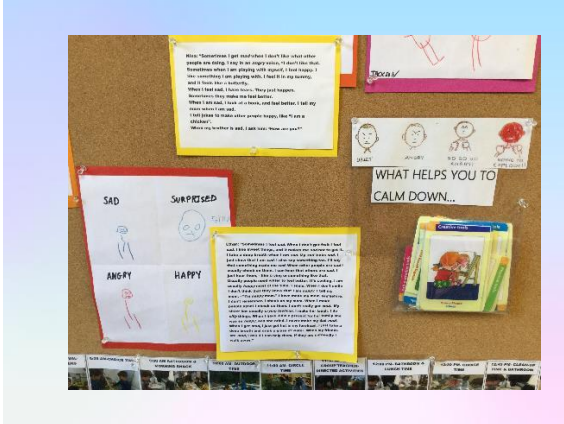
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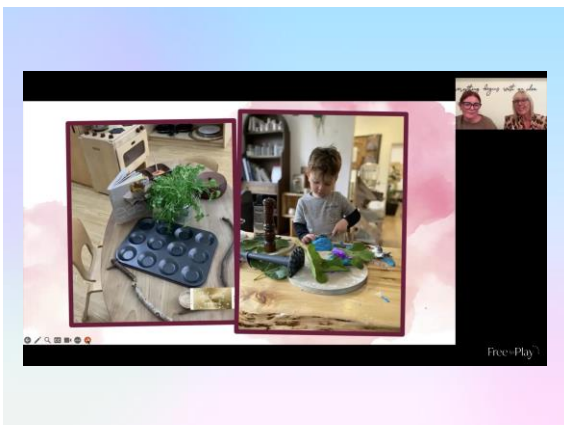
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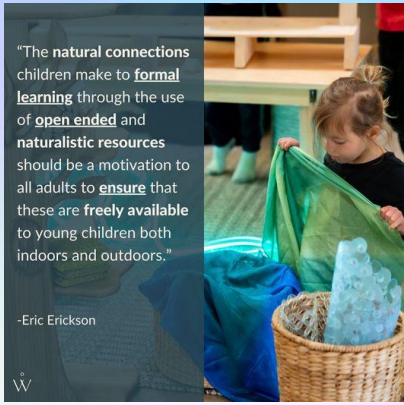
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“CONSIDERING TOOLS MATERIALS LOOSE PARTS”

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“The natural connections children make to **formal learning** through the use of **open ended** and **naturalistic resources** should be a motivation to all adults to **ensure** that these are **freely available** to young children both indoors and outdoors.”

-Eric Erickson



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LOOSE PARTS PLAY

Unscripted
They do not have prescribed or predetermined instructions.


Unconventional
Not bound by rules. Instead, they are extraordinary.

Unpredictable
We never know what the materials will inspire us to create.

Unexpected
The materials create a sense of wonder and awe, bringing mystery to play.

Upcycled
A creative reuse, is the process of transforming by-products into new materials or products perceived to be of greater value.

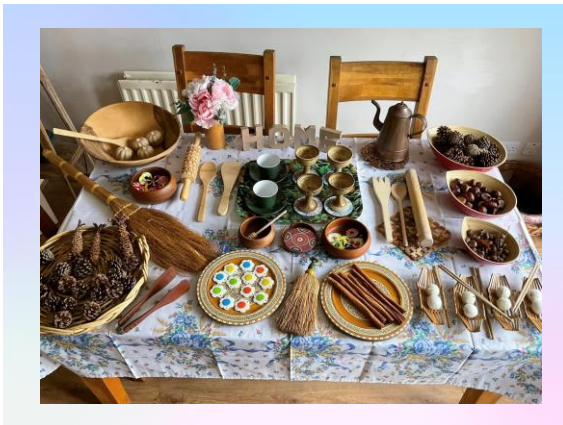
Unique
Each person represents their unique perspectives when they play with the materials.



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Free-Play

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When purchasing new items we need to consider

- how does the part enhance and connect with the things we already have
- how is it made (how much energy, what kind of materials, are they sustainably sourced?)
- where is it made - trying to source as much locally to reduce transportation
- can it be recycled, re-used, upcycled etc?
- do we really need it?

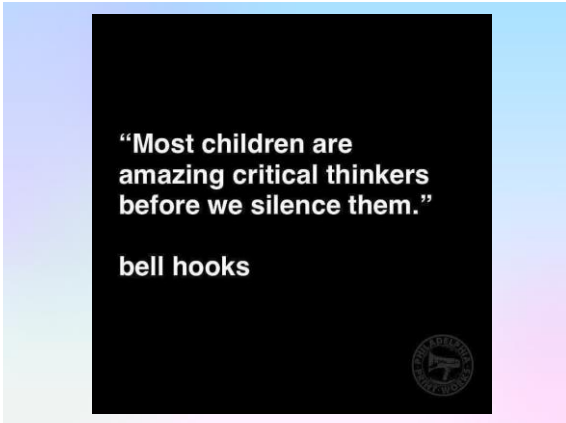
interactionimagination

Free-Play

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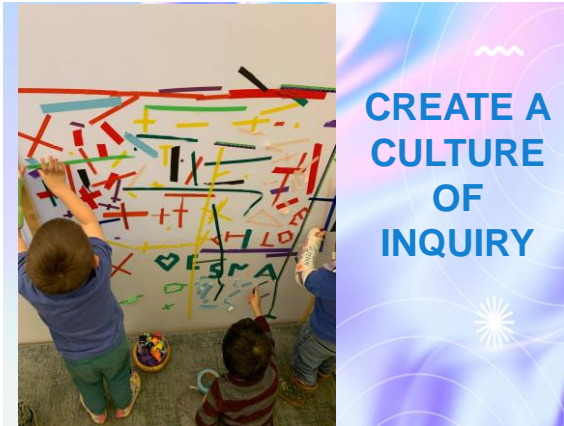
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It remains a mystery exactly how interests develop. But it is certain that they set us aglow. They kindle enthusiasm like tinder catching flame. When pursuing their interests, children know for sure that the world offers adventures perfectly suited to them.



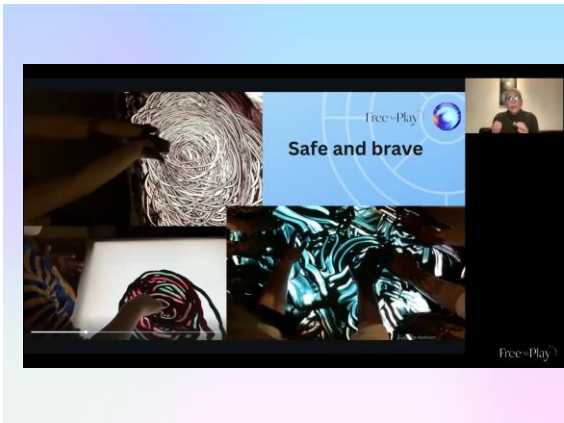
Free Range Learning
Laura Grace Weldon



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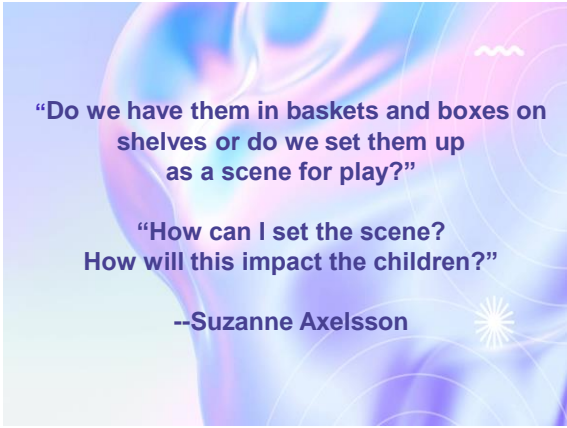
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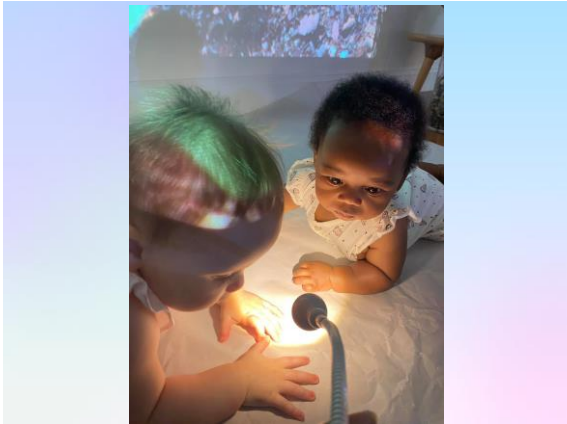
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—

“We underestimate the contribution children have to the actual environment itself.”

--Sally Haughey

—

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“Children see more, hear more, feel more, experience more than adults do. They are far better learners than we are. These remarkable learning abilities reflect special features of children’s brains, features that may actually make young children more conscious than adults.”

—Alison Gopnik from *Children’s Lively Minds: Making Schema Theory Made Visible* by Deb Curtis and Nadia Jaboneta

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Who are we in a child's exploration?

- We are observers!
- We are curious
- We look to find the yes in play
- We listen carefully to discover the action in a child's exploration as opposed to the topic
- We discover what schemas/big ideas may be in a child's play
- We facilitate additional experiences

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CULTIVATING A DISPOSITION OF CURIOSITY AND DELIGHT....



131

"Children learn more and more deeply from self-directed exploration than from being 'taught' "
 -- Alison Gopnik



132

What are they trying to figure out about being alive?

How are they becoming more fully themselves as human beings?

133



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CREDIT FOR PHOTOS GOES TO THE FOLLOWING:

--Kisha Reid—PLAY EMPOWERS, Discovery Learning Center

--School for Friends

--Curiosity Approach

--Rukia Monique Rogers—The Highlander School

--Bev Bos—Roseville Community Preschool

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CREDIT FOR PHOTOS GOES TO THE FOLLOWING:

- Temple Sinai Nursery School
 - Sandra Duncan's work and ideas
 - Ann Moore
 - Roseville Child Care
 - Suzanne Axelsson—Interactive Imagination
 - Miriam Beloglovsky –Loose Parts books
- AND MORE I WANT TO HONOR AND CREDIT!

136

**THE MESS?!?!?!
TIDY UP**

Can we put them back where they belong?

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WABI SABI

-In traditional Japanese aesthetics, wabi-sabi (侘び寂び) is a **world view centered on the acceptance of transience and imperfection**. The aesthetic is sometimes described as one of appreciating beauty that is "imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete" in nature"

*--shared in webinar by Sandra Duncan
Free to Play*

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**"Every child needs a place that is furnished with hope."
--Maya Angelou**



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WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

WHERE WILL YOU START!?!

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**JOIN THE MAILING LIST!
CONTACT ME!**

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