

# LET THE CHILDREN **PLAY**:

How play can improve education and help everyone thrive?

2020 Early Learning Leadership Conference (NSW DoE)

SYDNEY

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020

# Childcare price rises leave Felicity working for almost no money

By [Pallavi Singhal](#)

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## TODAY'S TOP STORIES

### RUGBY WORLD CUP

'Super Typhoon' could wreak havoc on World Cup: Wallabies, Ireland in eye of the storm



### BUSHFIRES

'Everthing's gone': Up to 20 properties destroyed in out-of-control bushfires in NSW



### BREXIT CHAOS

'Stupid blame game': Donald Tusk berates Boris Johnson as hopes of a deal fade



### SYRIA



Fee rises of 20 per cent or more at childcare centres in NSW have prompted calls for the government to "name and shame" some of Sydney's most expensive centres.

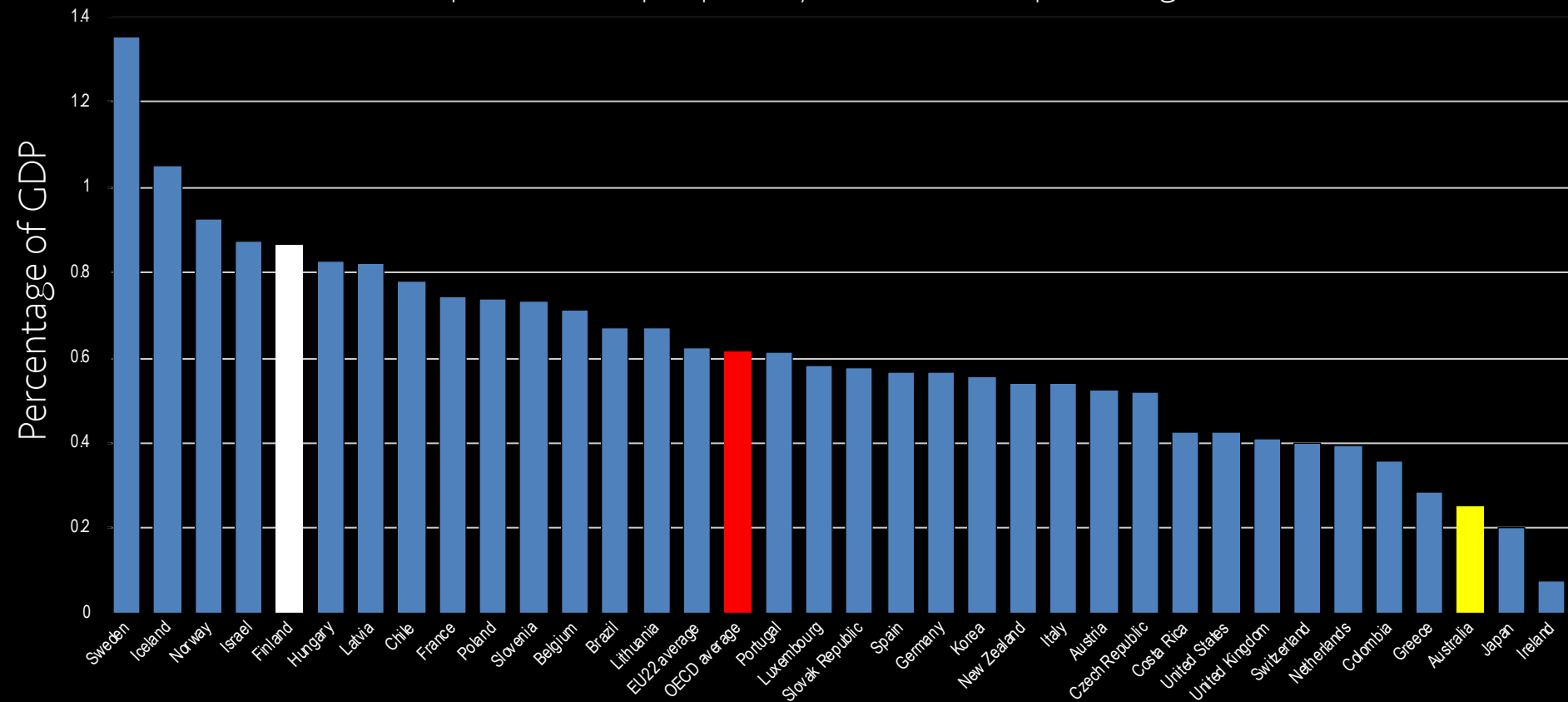
Childcare centres in some parts of the city, including the CBD, the north shore and northern beaches are charging up to \$200 a day.

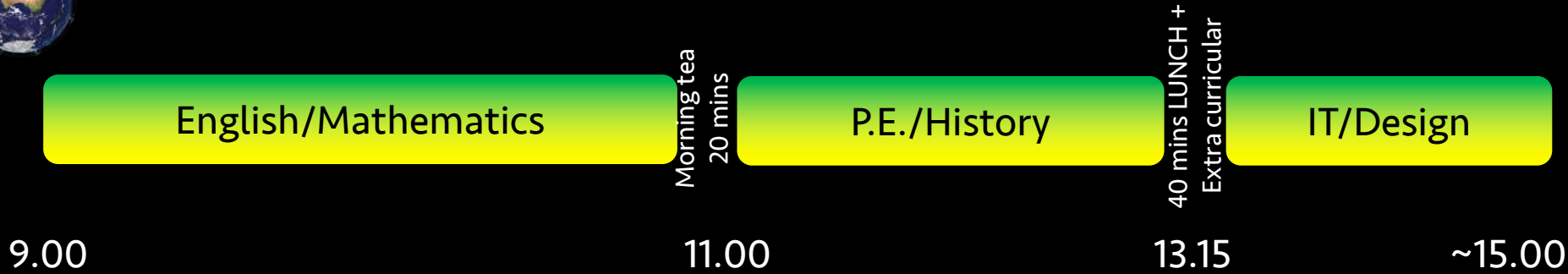


Sydney mother Felicity Frankish, who has just had her third child, says she is now having to choose between working for almost no money or staying home with her children and forgoing the educational benefits of preschool. JAMES ALCOCK

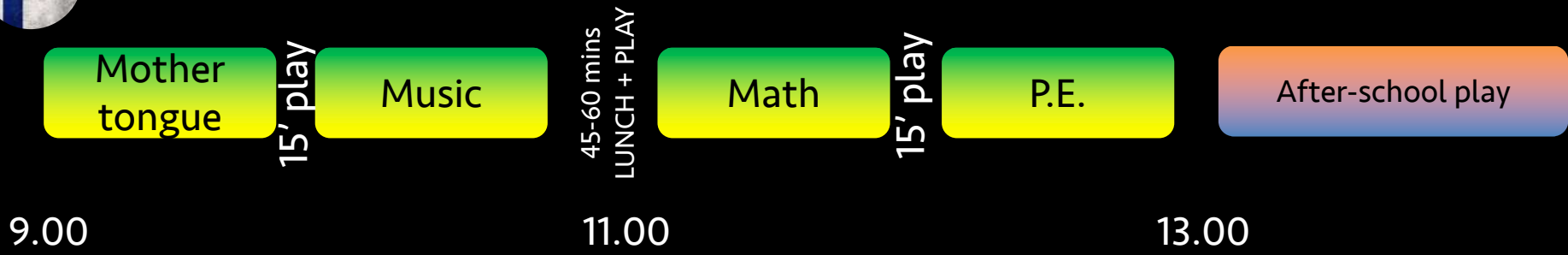
# How much national wealth goes to early childhood education?

Expenditure on pre-primary education as a percentage of GDP

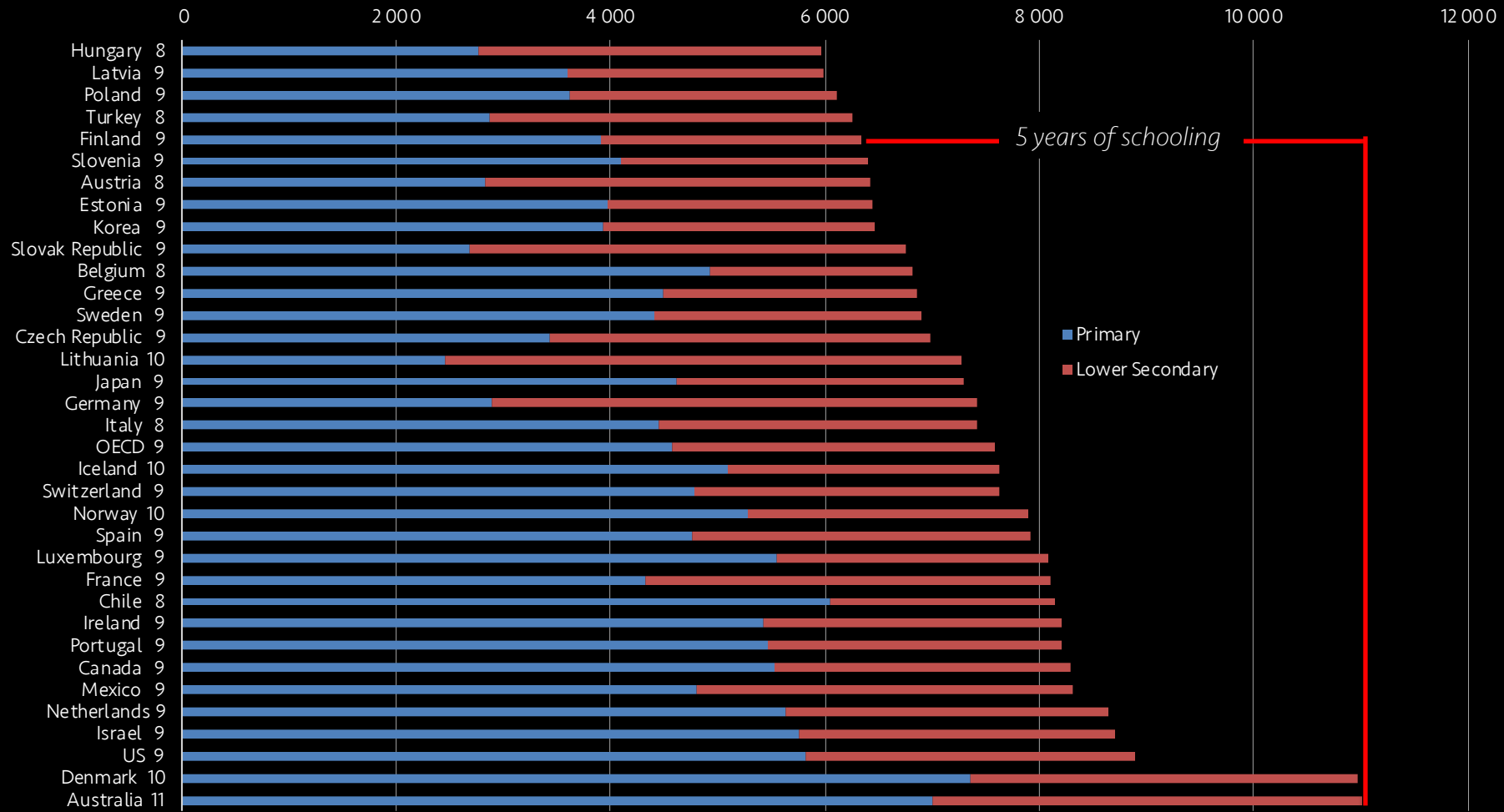




# A typical Year K-2 school day



# Total number of compulsory instruction hours in primary and lower secondary schools



**THE STATE OF PLAY**

Children play less than before.

United States: Only 13 states has laws that mandate recess time during the school day, and 8 has recommendations for physical activity in schools.

England: “Nurseries not preparing children for school”, says Ofsted.

Mexico: Many parents don't want to pay for the time their children play or sleep in Early Childhood Centers.

Australia: "The word 'play' has become problematic in Australian schools.”

*Let the Children Play, 2019*



# LEGO Play Well Report 2018

**38%**

of parents say they don't feel they play enough



**30%**

of Families spend less than five hours playing together every week

**10%**

of Families spend less than two hours playing together every week

**61%**

of parents get distracted when they do play



**1 in 5 (17%)**

children say they are too busy to play



# 85%

of parents say kids today spend less time playing than they did when they were their children's age.

Prepubescent children in Australia spend about 11 hours sitting each day, half of it on screens.

- One third of pre-schoolers own a screen-based device
- Two thirds of primary school children have smartphone

## When Australians\* are asked about children's access to opportunities for free play...



acknowledge the benefits of play.



however, 51 per cent want less break time at school.



think the first few years of schooling should focus more on learning through play than they do now.

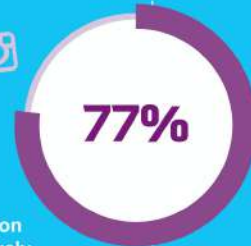


\*1700 respondents nationwide

## When Australians\* are asked about the affect of smartphones and social media...



think smartphones and social media have reduced time that children have for daily physical activity and active outdoor play.



say social media is a distraction in their child's life that negatively impacts their wellbeing and family relationships.



\*1700 respondents nationwide

# 80%

of parents believe that children are under pressure to grow up too quickly.

Continuous improvement and innovation

**IMPROVEMENT:**  
**Make time for play**

# DOCTOR'S ORDER: The Children Must Play

*“Play is integral to a child’s education. The importance of playtime for children cannot be overemphasized to parents, schools, and community organizations.”*



## Let the Children Play

HOW MORE PLAY WILL  
SAVE OUR SCHOOLS AND  
HELP CHILDREN THRIVE

**PASI SAHLBERG & WILLIAM DOYLE**

foreword by **SIR KEN ROBINSON**



# DOCTOR'S ORDER:

## The Children Must Play

*“The lifelong success of children is based on their ability to be creative and to apply the lessons learned from playing.”*



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# DOCTOR'S ORDER: The Children Must Play

*“Recess is fundamental to the school experience and develops lifelong skills of communication, negotiation, cooperation, sharing, and problem-solving.”*



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**Michael Rich: “Make time for play”**

**IMPROVEMENT:**  
**Raise the quality of play**

*Executive  
functions*

**Imagination**

**Curiosity**

**Collaboration**

**PLAY**

**Risk-taking**

**Joy**

**Creativity**

**Problem-solving**

# FREE PLAY

Self-directedness

*Self-directed play* means that we let children to decide their own play in a safe and rich environment where they are comfortable to explore their own mind and potential through play. Children should have the opportunity to choose, manage, and reflect on their play activities. The key condition of self-directed play is that child is free to choose what to do, how to do it, and what are the rules of play.

10  
9  
8  
7  
6  
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3  
2

Shallow play

Intrinsic motivation

In *intrinsically motivated play*, children behave or perform an action because they enjoy it and find inspiration in the action itself. Intrinsic motivation is rooted in three fundamental psychological needs in children's development: **autonomy**, or having the ability to initiate and direct one's own behaviours and actions; **competence**, or having the sense of ability to accomplish tasks; and **relatedness**, or the ability to create stable relationships with other people in play situations.

*Play should be pleasurable.* When children play, they should have a deep sense of enjoyment and fun, and may also feel joy, gratitude, inspiration, hope, love, and a sense of flow, or the full absorption in the process. Parents and teachers should do everything they can to make sure that children's play environment is psychologically, physically, and socially safe enough for positive emotions to flourish.

Positive emotions

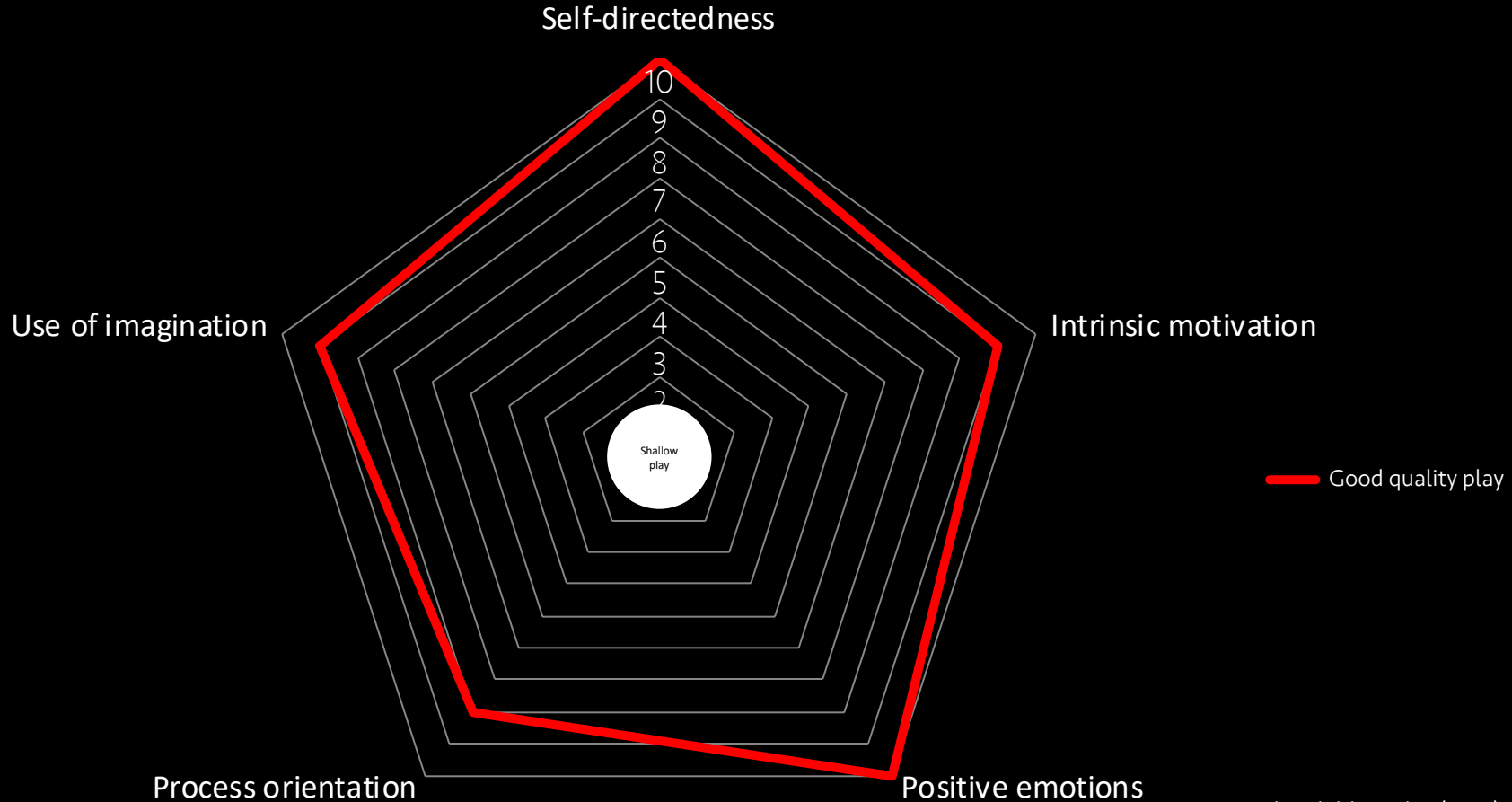
Process orientation

Use of imagination

Use of imagination is closely attached to learning and can greatly enhance cognitive development. Creativity, problem-solving, and being able to come up with new ideas that have value are among the most important qualities of well-educated people. They have become equally as important as the basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics. Creative problem-solving becomes easier when we play and use our imagination and see beyond reality.

*Process-oriented play* is enjoyable for the sake of the activity itself and is not concerned with an end result or product. It is important that adults don't over-direct children in play. The purpose of play is for children to enjoy the process, and not be judged on the outcomes.

# FREE PLAY



**INNOVATION:**  
**The whole system approach**



# Scotland: Active Play

1. **Active Play** developed by *Inspiring Scotland* with University of Strathclyde:
  - Play-based intervention to support health & wellbeing in early to primary years
  - Research-based approach that specifically aims at enhancing equity
2. **Active Play** is being tested in Dundee, Highlands, North Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire and expanding
3. **National Position Statement on Outdoor Play and Learning:** *“Playing and learning outdoors is essential for our children and young people to understand, value, enjoy and protect our natural world. It connects them to their environment, enhancing their appreciation and understanding of its physical properties and diversity.”*

# China: Anji Play

1. **True Play** is developed in Anji County in China's northern Zhejiang Province:
  - Based on love, risk-taking, joy, engagement and reflection (self-determination)
  - Almost 20 years of experimentation and innovation of 3-6-year-olds curriculum and self-initiated play
2. **Anji Play** is showcased by the Chinese Ministry of Education as a model for its new national guidelines for kindergarten play materials.
3. **Anji Play philosophy and key principles:** *"Children in the Anji Play environment interact with simple objects made of natural materials to create their own playground govern by their own rules. Inherently through Anji Play, children collaborate develop social and motor skills in order to play."*

# Finland: Playful learning

1. **Play is children's right in Finland.** It is protected by international agreements and national legislation and directives. For example,
  - every child has right to high-quality early learning
  - every child must have an Individual Learning Plan in early childhood centers
2. **Learning through play** has a significant role in promoting children's well-being, interaction with others, and learning essential skills.
3. **National Framework Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care:**  
"Early childhood is a phase of intense development and learning. The mission of ECEC is to promote children's holistic growth, development and learning in collaboration with their guardians. Learning through play is essential. Understanding the importance and pedagogical possibilities of play for the child in the promotion of wellbeing and learning is essential for ECEC."

Let's talk!

**THANK YOU!**