



Context and Implications Document for

A scoping review of research on play-based
pedagogies in kindergarten education

Article Summary

Across a growing number of countries around the world, early years' curricula have shifted towards following a play-based learning framework. However, there appears to be a lack of consensus both in research and in practice regarding the exact role and value of play for different types of student learning. This scoping literature review aimed to examine all relevant published articles on the subject of play-based learning in kindergarten/early years' education (4–5 year-old students). Although there is growing empirical support for the use of play-based learning strategies in early years' settings, a bifurcated stance towards play is evident in the field. The majority of articles focused on the role of play for developmental learning (e.g. social/emotional development, self-regulation) recommend child-directed play and a passive teacher role, while the majority of articles focused on the role of play for academic learning (e.g. mathematics, literacy skills) recommend much more active teacher involvement in play. Similarly, articles focused on teacher beliefs and practices have revealed divergent views on play and preferred classroom practices. This scoping review highlights the binary stance towards play and the need to move towards an integration of perspectives and practices, in order to ensure that all areas of developmental and academic learning can be supported within play-based early years' education.

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