



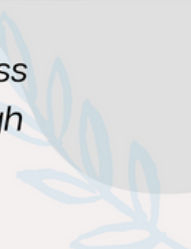
# Finding Joy in the Ordinary Through Creative Play

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*Prioritizing the holistic wellness of our next generation through mindset, community and resilience.*



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School's out and summer is here! For students - those words are sweet music to their ears. For parents? Well, let's just say there's a lot more on their minds now. Children are eager to spend their days in the hot sun, spend quality time with friends and family and create lasting memories. During these moments away from the rigor of the academic school year, parents and caretakers ought to encourage relaxation, fun, and creative play.

## What is Creative Play?

Creative play involves participating in a game, activity, or exercise that is inspired by ordinary objects or ideas. Examples of creative play include:

- Creating a pirate ship out of an empty cardboard box.
- Creating an elaborate work of art using sidewalk chalk.
- Creating a play or story and acting it out.
- Creating new "rules" or "ideas" for games like tag, hide-and-go-seek, or catch.

I'm sure the list above registered with great nostalgia. All the more reason to not lose sight of creative play as our children (and our world) evolve. Aside from its nostalgia and simplicity, what is distinct about creative play?

Creative play doesn't involve technology or formal, clear-cut directions. No television shows, social media, or instructions guide to influence or dictate the outcome. The act of creative play occurs simply by way of becoming bored! Think about it this way – if your children are left with a few household items and their own imagination...they could conjure up something to keep them occupied. In some cases, the children may complain about being bored or “not having anything to do”. However, it's important for these ambitious young ones to embrace that feeling of “boredom” and find something to do on their own accord. And at the end of the day? The children will have a more enjoyable and fulfilling experience because they created something out of nothing, and there was no one to tell them what was “right” or “wrong”. They made the rules and brought something to fruition. It just goes to show that you don't always have to be stimulated by way of technology.

### **What are the Benefits of Creative Play?**

Our brains need rest to grow and develop - creative play acts as a 'reset' button for exactly that! For example, you may find that mundane tasks lead to reflections and insights. Perhaps you have a great idea while doing the dishes or find the solution to a problem at work while in the shower. Repetitive or simple tasks give our brains a break from excessive stimuli and help us mindfully reconnect with ourselves. The result? Novel ideas and feeling accomplished.

Divergent thinking and process orientation are also positive outcomes of creative play. Divergent thinking occurs when the mind generates ideas in a free-flowing or unprescribed manner. Within divergent thinking, process orientation is born as the children are emerged and invested in the process of whatever it is they are experiencing. It's not so much about the end goal - the beautiful painting or the huge Lego building - it's the hard work, thoughtfulness, and dedication that went into the process of creating it.

