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Perspectives of Childrens' Play in Three Countries: A Comparative Study of Play in China,
Australia, and The United States of America

ALEXANDRIA MARION MILLS
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Reviewed and approved* by the following:

Allison Henward
Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction
Thesis Supervisor

Amy Crosson
Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction
Thesis Honors Adviser

* Electronic approvals are on file.

ABSTRACT

Many countries have enacted measures from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the age-appropriate play rights found in Article 31. This paper will focus specifically on China, Australia, and the United States. The three countries differ on types of appropriate play and level of adult involvement, but all agree that age-appropriate play in education is vital to a child's wellbeing.

Have all three countries ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child? How do the three countries view childhood play and is it a necessity? What role do adults serve regarding childhood play? How much supervision is necessary? Should technology be incorporated in childhood play? Do play guidelines differ for children with disabilities? Prior to 1989 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, how was play viewed regarding education? This comprehensive study aims to compare and contrast childhood play in the three respective countries.

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Chapter 1

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

According to Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, "every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts... member governments shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity" (IPA, 2012). While rest, leisure, culture, and the arts are important and deserve a prominent place in children's lives, this paper will solely focus on play and recreational activities. In doing so, this paper will discuss three countries and their views on childhood play. Two of the countries, Australia and China, have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child agreement. The agreement has been ratified by most countries, but not the United States of America (IPA, 2021). Part of the reason for this is because U.S. courts may sentence "children to live in prison without the possibility of parole," which is prohibited under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Mehta, 2015).

Article 31 has become known as "the forgotten article," as very few reports to the United Nations Committee have included the article in their reports (IPA, 2012). This is due to the lack of deep understanding globally on the benefits of play in education and at the home (Colucci & Wright, 2015). Therefore, this paper draws from multiple sources about childhood play.

Chapter 2

Views on Play as a Necessity

It has been proven that "play is the key to giving children skills they need to succeed - creativity, innovation, teamwork, focus, resilience, expressive concentration, and executive function" (Sahlberg & Doyle, 2019). The Centers for Disease Control as well as other established expert organizations "agree that play and physical activity are critical foundations of childhood, academics, and future skills." Yet, some governments are destroying play in childhood education and replacing it with standardization, [and] stress," which are damaging to learning and corrosive to society (Sahlberg & Doyle, 2019). Discussed below are the positions of China, Australia, and the United States regarding the proposition outlined in Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Though differing styles, all three countries promote some form of age-appropriate play in schools.

China

Views are shifting in China from traditionalist views of play, which will be discussed later, to an accepting and welcoming environment for childhood play. However, although play is becoming more tolerated in China for young children, it is essential to note that play is viewed positively for their development, not for their academic preparation (Lin et. al., 2018). While Chinese early childhood educators have recently accepted play-based teaching and learning, it is "incompatible with Chinese tradition, which highly values diligence, persistence, discipline, conformity, and academic achievement" (Lin et. al., 2018). Play-based teaching and learning has clashed with many Chinese parents. Eduplay, an approach to education that uses play and

academic learning "rather than a division between them," has been practiced by parents in China (Lin et. al., 2018). Many Chinese parents view structured play as superior to free play, with many only allowing their children to partake in structured play at home (Lin et. al., 2018). This is because structured play is more aligned with academic learning.

Australia

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), Australia's first national early childhood curriculum framework, supports child-initiated free play (Sumsion et. al., 2014). Free play has long been valued in early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Australia (Sumsion et. al., 2014). However, free play's emphasis on play-based learning and teaching is a departure from tradition (Sumsion et. al., 2014). The ELYF aims to enrich young childrens' minds from birth through their transition to school, with an intense urgency for play-based learning, "which it defines as a context for learning through which children organize and make sense of their social worlds, as they engage actively with people, objects and representations" (Sumsion et. al., 2014). The ELYF requires all educators to make purposeful decisions and actions (Sumsion et. al., 2014).

America

The American Academy of Pediatrics recognizes the importance of play in America by stating that play contributes to the physical, social, cognitive, and emotional well-being of children (Ginsburg, 2007). Play allows children to develop their creativity strength and fosters

collaboration (Ginsburg, 2007 & O'Conner, 2017). Different forms of play have also been proven to be linked to healthy brain development (Ginsburg, 2007). In addition, the American Academy of Pediatrics has found that play helps in fostering a safe, nurturing, and stable relationship with parents, guardians, or caregivers in the child's home (Yogman et. al., 2018). This is because the shared joy that children and parents alike experience when playing together helps to regulate the body's stress response and can allow for harmonious interactions (Yogman et. al., 2018).

If students are not given time during the school day to play on the playground or play in the classroom, they will build up stress and may lash out with antisocial behavior (Tampio, 2021). A lack of play in children can lead to depression and anxiety (Tampio, 2021). It is also important that students have time to play outside of school as well. Many kids are often busy with many extracurriculars outside of school that prohibits them from playing (Dowshen, 2015). If this is the case, the guardians should consider taking their child out of a few extracurricular activities to promote different forms of play at home, Dr. Steven Dowshen points out (Dowshen, 2015).

Chapter 3

Views on Supervision of Play

A large factor in many cultures that affects childrens' play is what is considered safe for children. Different cultures and nations believe that play should be limited, with adult supervision being a necessity. In contrast, other cultures believe in allowing young children to learn from their mistakes through play. In many places worldwide, lack of adult supervision on childhood play has caused injuries and hospitalizations in children (Petrass et. al., 2009). All three countries' education systems support surveillance in some regard. While sometimes dangerous, all three countries recognize that childhood play is essential (Sharpe et. al., 2019). Below is an analysis of play supervision between China, Australia, and the United States of America.

China

In China, children have much freedom when directing their play in kindergarten (Gill, 2019). Adults rarely intervene during educational playtime, even if there are arguments or disputes between young children (Gill, 2019). The adults let the children work amongst themselves to come to reach a consensus about how to move on. When a Chinese early education educator was asked why educators stand back and allow children to have complete control of their playing, she responded: "Educators are observers and don't get involved unless there is something extremely dangerous" (Gill, 2019).

Many parents in China view themselves both as a teacher and a playmate when their child is playing. When being a teacher during play, a parent engages and inserts basic cognitive

knowledge and skills into the child's play. This can include recognizing Chinese characters on license plates when walking or recognizing numbers, letters, and Chinese characters on billboards (Li et. al., 2018). During these times, many Chinese parents joke and display silliness and provide some support to encourage their child(ren) to learn independently (Li et. al., 2018).

Australia

Educators' approaches in Australia are similar to China's approaches, as they both allow children to solve issues without having adults get involved. "Younger ones will work in smaller groups from a young age, so they learn to work with each other. If arguments happen, the educator's role is to let them have an argument and solve the problems by themselves, and help them to reflect on what has happened" (Gill, 2019). When asked about fear of safety concerns, the educator explained that all parents she has encountered have agreed with the philosophy and understand about risk and the need to learn. She added that parents do not blame teachers for a slight accident (Gill, 2019).

While many educators in Australia try to stay out of the way of childrens' play, the U.S.'s fear of safety has begun to integrate its way into Australia's education systems. The Department of Education in Australia encourages play-based learning. Early childhood education, however, is starting to see a significant loss in freedom in play activities, as children are being advised to walk, so they do not fall, and not to argue with one another; adults are beginning to take control, Australian author Karen Williams writes (Williams, 2015).

America

In America, experts have continually argued that play is an essential component of children's lives. However, unlike China and Australia, American parents' concern for their children's safety stands in the way of children's uninterrupted play. Experts found that parents' fear for their children's safety is greater than that of their own parents' when they were their children's age (Schulman et. al., 2017). Children are only spending about half as much time outdoors as their parents one generation ago did (Schulman et. al., 2017). These safety fears include 'stranger danger' and possible injuries through unsupervised play (Sharpe et. al., 2019).

While this may be how many American parents view play for their children, the American Academy of Pediatrics encourages American doctors to 'prescribe play' to American children (Sharpe et. al., 2019). Benefits of engaged play include, for example, increased physical health and cognitive functioning (Sharpe et. al., 2019).

Chapter 4

Play-Based Education

After viewing different views of supervision on play, it is time to focus on play-based learning and education in curriculum and schools amongst the three respective countries. Play-based learning is best defined as learning that brings together play and educational pedagogy. It includes learning environments where play is placed in classroom contexts that allow children to choose activities while also nurtures learning (Miller, 2018). It is a cornerstone of early childhood education (Edwards, 2017).

Play-based learning is child-centered and helps children develop social skills, take initiative, and builds upon their creativity. Children are innately motivated to play. Play-based learning elaborates on this motivation while using play as an environment for learning (Robertson et. al., 2018). Play-based learning is most advantageous when it directs children to approach a specific task, such as mathematics or literacy concepts (McInnes et. al., 2013 & Robertson et. al., 2018).

There are two main types of play-based learning: free play and guided play. Free play is directed by the child, thus being spontaneous, while guided play involves the teacher acting as a 'co-leader' (Robertson et. al., 2018). Guided play is most commonly used in the classroom during instructional time, as it allows for intentional teaching.

Research has proven that guided play is more effective than free play. This rests on the fact that guided play includes a balanced amount of child independence and adult support (Weisberg & Zosh, 2018). Children are given autonomy so that they are maximally engaged,

while adults ensure that the exploration is appropriately constrained so children learn the targeted material (Weisberg & Zosh, 2018).

The following two chapters will discuss the differences between the three countries regarding play-based education and curriculum in regards to ever-changing technology and children with disabilities.

Chapter 5

Technology in Play-Based Education

Technology is a modern everyday resource, which has changed greatly since the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Today, many children globally have access to technology and observe the uses of technologies by others on a near-daily basis. This paper will not touch on the digital divide many children face around the world. Schools and education curriculums with access to technology will be highlighted and discussed within the three respective countries. Many teachers believe the school and educational leaders should provide them with a range of "conceptual tools necessary for promoting the explicit mediation of play-based learning in early childhood education" (Edwards, 2015). In doing so, this will allow teaching to "effectively integrate technologies, digital media and popular culture into the play-based learning experiences they offer to the children of a post-industrialized age" (Edwards, 2015). Technology is a vast part of everyday life, careers, and the workforce in the twenty-first century. Integrating technology into early education is only logical. For children to be successful in the modern-day world, they must be acclimated to the use of technology.

There are many obstacles when integrating technology with play-based learning. Two of these obstacles include teacher confidence levels and individual beliefs (Edwards, 2015). The first is to consider each teacher's confidence and comfortability with using technology in the classroom. Second is a teacher's belief about using technology in the classroom. Children's play with integrated technologies in schools should be driven by research and foundational concepts, not on each teacher's own beliefs. If each teacher were to make his or her criteria on technologies in play-based education, children in the same nation and across the world would be receiving

varying educations, which would result in some children coming out more knowledgeable than others, simply based on their own teacher's theories about technology in education.

China

As noted earlier, play in China is viewed positively for the development of a child, but not for the success of their academics. Technology is largely focused on classroom work, not play in older children. Primary schools in China are filled with technological advancements in hopes to become the world's leader in artificial intelligence (AI) (Weng & Li, 2018 & Wang et al., 2019). Kindergarten classrooms, however, in China have little technology access. Many of China's kindergartens are not entirely well-equipped with technology because many Chinese kindergarten teachers and principals are not fully literate in technology. In addition, the children's development levels at such a young age are a big obstacle with regard to technology education (Weng & Li, 2018).

While Shanghai is undoubtedly the national leader in educational innovation, and has launched a program to implement STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education and technology into kindergarten classrooms, many challenges have been underestimated (Weng & Li, 2018). Currently, there are no guidelines for kindergarten teachers teaching STEM (Weng & Li, 2018). However, the main goal for the introduction of technology and STEM-related curriculum in kindergarten and younger grades is to begin teaching skills for problem-solving and scientific inquiry (Weng & Li, 2018). This goal is succeeded by introducing number sense, decision-making, and critical thinking in STEM education (Weng & Li, 2018). The more STEM is taught to children at a younger age, the more likely it is that they will go into

a related field (Weng & Li, 2018). Chinese kindergarteners are introduced to tablets for technological learning, which has proven more successful in terms of learning outcomes when compared to standard teaching methods (Weng & Li, 2018). In addition, robots are introduced in many Chinese kindergarten classrooms as a way for children to begin learning about programming in a tangible and fun way (Weng & Li, 2018).

China's vast lead in AI is due in large part to teaching it in the classroom. Beginning in primary school, play-based learning with technology is replaced with using technology for mainly academic purposes. Close to two hundred million Chinese students are currently individually monitored by AI software (Wang et. al., 2019). Digital cameras scan students to take attendance; wristbands record heartrates to show if a student is studying or playing (Wang et. al., 2019). This information provides educators with learning progress of each student to make learning more individualized (Wang et. al., 2019). On the other hand, this type of 'infringement of rights' is ultimately viewed negatively by the western world (Wang et. al., 2019).

Australia

Unlike China, play is heavily incorporated in all facets of education and development in Australia. When it comes to play-based education using technology in Australia, there is ample evidence to suggest that when play reflects a child's home culture(s) and experiences, the child learns best (Johnston et. al., 2018). In a study asking Australian educator's opinions on using technology to support and enhance play-based learning, many educators highlighted technology's importance in supporting children's inquiry (Johnston et. al., 2018). Separating learning and technology is nearly impossible in the modern world, one Australian educator points out

(Johnston et. al., 2018). Another Australian educator seconds the importance of technology in play-based education by stating that technology has progressed society forward and is built on constant change (Johnston et. al., 2018).

An educator must embrace technology's advantages and integrate it into her classroom to best serve her students. Some Australian educators argue that playing should not be merged with technology, but rather by going outside and being active (Johnston et. al., 2018). When integrated correctly, technology can enhance play-based learning by allowing students to explore, investigate, and find answers themselves (Johnston et. al., 2018)—playing not only consists of technology but rather of multi-modal activities that will result in a well-rounded child ready to be integrated into society.

America

Research has proven that technology fosters a collaborative learning environment. This collaboration can help children in all facets of learning, including mathematics (Miller, 2018). Other factors that influence children's use of technology include ability, maturity, but most importantly, a teacher's skill level (Miller, 2018). When selecting apps in academic settings, educators are reminded to choose apps that are aligned with the curriculum that are also creative and fun (Miller, 2018).

Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students who have access to technology show advanced verbal and nonverbal skills, problem solving, and conceptual skills, than the students without access (Scoter & Ellis, 2001). Open-ended software allows for creativity, encourages exploration, and imagination, while also shifting students to learn a targeted behavior or skill

(Scoter & Ellis, 2001). The use of technology in education and play-based learning should not be done entirely alone. Students should have the opportunity to work with their peers when using technology (Scoter & Ellis, 2001). This will further enhance social skills and will promote empathy when listening to one-another's ideas. Similarly to Australia, America uses technology to enhance play-based education in the classroom. It is used to foster academic learning as well as the healthy development of children.

Chapter 6

Play-Based Education for Children with Disabilities

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child does not distinguish between children with or without disabilities. Under the agreement, the rights outlined apply to all children, including appropriate-age play in Article 31. Before looking at how children with disabilities play similarly or differently compared to their peers without disabilities, it is first essential to note the history of discrimination, obstacles, and unfairness students with disabilities faced or may continue to face in early childhood education. All three countries took the first steps to end discrimination of students with disabilities in childhood education roughly half-a-century ago.

China

Bringing awareness to the unfairness of education and play for students with disabilities in China is ongoing. Low scores are given to Chinese early education classrooms due to the lack of wheelchair accessible spaces, including bathrooms (Hu & Szente, 2009). This may be understandable, considering many kindergartens in China do not enroll children with disabilities (Hu & Szente, 2009). This is because China places obstacles, deemed discriminatory, for children with disabilities to be placed in schools alongside their peers without disabilities, even though the nation is home to many children with disabilities (Penafuerte, 2019 & Chavez, 2019).

In 1993, International China Concern (ICC) was founded by David Gotts after he witnessed firsthand the suffering of Chinese children with disabilities (Chavez, 2019). The ICC works to train and mentor Chinese caregivers of students with disabilities (Chavez, 2019). To

assist those fighting for education for students with disabilities, The World Bank signed the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to support the Sustainable Development Goal 4, which ensures equal access to all education for persons with disabilities by 2030 (Chavez, 2019).

The Special Education Network in Beijing (SENIB), founded in 2009, holds gatherings of exceptional education professionals and parents to discuss subjects, including play therapy for children with disabilities (Penafuerte, 2019). Play therapy makes use of play so children can express what is troubling them if they do not have the means of verbal communication to express their feelings or thoughts (Gil, 1991). Play therapy can be useful to all children experiencing life stressors, abuse, or disasters at home or in life and is equally effective across problems, age, or gender ("Play Therapy Makes a Difference," n.d.).

The Chinese government released the Regulations of Education of Persons with Disabilities act in 2017 that replaced the 1994 regulations (Chavez, 2019). This emphasized that inclusive education should be the first choice for children with disabilities (Dan, 2017). The "regulation examined teacher training, evaluation and required schools to develop individualized educational plans for students with a disability" (Chavez, 2019). Before the passing of this law, researchers found that close to one-third of children with disabilities do not attend early education schooling or play with their peers who are non-disabled. In contrast, nearly all children without disabilities attend school and play with one-another (Dan, 2017). A big reason for implementing this law was because the Chinese government signed the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which articulated that countries should recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education (Dan, 2017).

The revised regulations will surely benefit many children; however, there is much work to be done to stop negative stigmas associated with disabilities in Chinese schools (Dan, 2017). In addition to negative stigmas, many schools still do not follow protocol in allowing children with disabilities to attend their schools or play with their peers who are non-disabled. There are many public primary schools in the country, and enforcing the newer regulations is downright difficult (Penafuerte, 2019). More recently, China has made an effort to promote disability awareness, by deeming August 25 as the "Disability Awareness and Prevention Day" from the State Council of China (Penafuerte, 2019).

Australia

The first schools for children with special needs in Australia opened in the 1860s ("Special Needs Education in Australia", 2020). Similarly to America, it was not until around the early 1980s that special education changes began (Jenkinson, 2006). The Victorian integration policy required class teachers to become knowledgeable and cope with children with learning disabilities (Jenkinson, 2006).

The Disability Services Act 1986 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) recognized disability rights advocacy ("History of Disability Rights Movement in Australia," 2018). It was not until The Disability Standards for Education 2005 that students with disabilities were permitted the same rights to education and play as students without disabilities ("Special Needs Education in Australia," 2020).

America

In 1975, President Gerald Ford enacted the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) of 1975, also known as Public law 94-142 at the time. This law gave American students with disabilities a right to a public education that was correct for their needs (Crockett, 2015). Children with disabilities were given an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that would provide them with the skills they needed on the playground or classroom (Crockett, 2015). Before this law, almost two million children with disabilities were left out of public schools and play with their peers nor received any appropriate education for their needs (Crockett, 2015). In the 1970s, it was not uncommon for children with disabilities to be institutionalized (Crockett, 2015). It was not until 1986 that the EAHCA came to include that it be mandatory for services to be provided to children under six years old (Crockett, 2015).

Around 1990, activism for politically correct ideology concerning students with disabilities came about. At that time, the term "handicapped" became outdated, and the word "individual" was to be put before the word "disabilities," promoting a "person-first" language (Crockett, 2015). The EAHCA was updated in 1990 by Congress with these changes, and came to be known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Crockett, 2015).

Current research has proven that children with disabilities can thrive in an inclusive environment with their peers who are non-disabled through play-based learning. Through Zitomer's findings, it is concluded that a healthy relationship amongst children with disabilities with their teachers and classmates can be created through dance education and play environment that allows children with disabilities to experience success, joy, and a sense of belonging (Zitomer, 2016). Educators hold a vital role in creating inclusion for students with disabilities

through the curriculum, instructional delivery, and play-based learning that promotes social interactions (Prince & Hadwin, 2012). When placed in an inclusion environment, students with disabilities feel less stigmatized and can work and learn from peers who are different from themselves. This is the same for peers who are non-disabled as well. There are many educational, emotional, and social benefits for all children in an inclusive environment (Prince & Hadwin, 2012).

Chapter 7

Philosophies on Play – Montessori Method

The Montessori method of education was developed before the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Dr. Maria Montessori, one of Italy's first woman physicians, developed her method beginning in the early 1900s (Culclasure et. al., 2019, Lillard & Taggart, 2019, & Lillard, 2013). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child agreement does not recognize the Montessori method specifically. However, some of the rights outlined in the agreement align with the Montessori method, including Article 31's right to play.

Montessori classrooms are designed so children can correct their own mistakes and have interactions with others without close adult or teacher supervision (Lillard, 2013). During play in Montessori education, supervising adults will observe the child and ask questions to prompt the child's learning and allow the child to focus on his or her own interests (Lillard, 2013). The Montessori method believes in many aspects of a play-based education, with limited supervision.

Montessori herself advocated against pretend play and fantasy (Lillard & Taggart, 2019). However, Montessori education includes many other different elements of playful learning (Lillard, 2013). From free-play to guided play to didactic instruction, active learning is happening (Lillard, 2013). Didactic materials are instructional materials designed to teach students, allow students to make mistakes, and are a staple piece to all Montessori classrooms (Lillard & Taggart, 2019). The Montessori method believes in the aforementioned types of play, because it is child-focused, positive, and hands-on (Lillard, 2013). It has been noted that some scholars and researchers believe that Montessori education's positive views on playful learning in

education are abundant. In contrast, others say that Montessori was against active learning (Lillard, 2013).

The Montessori method is like playful learning (Lillard, 2013). Playful learning is "structured in some ways but not in others. Teachers guide learning within structures but do so playfully and loosely, with particular focus on the goals they have in mind. By adhering in some ways but not others to a tight, overall structure, Montessori education resembles playful learning" (Lillard, 2013). Playful learning requires the use of objects that children play to learn, which can embody cognition (Lillard, 2013).

Playful learning and Montessori education are interactive. In guided play, a teacher will show or tell students how to handle learning materials and ask questions to prompt students to arrive at an answer, all while students interact with the materials (Lillard, 2013). A Montessori educator will watch children's interactions with materials to decide when they have mastered a lesson and are ready to move on (Lillard, 2013).

Playful learning and Montessori education both include free choice. In playful learning, "children's own interests drive the agenda" (Lillard, 2013). While an adult can guide a child's engagement with materials, a child is not forced to engage if he or she does not want to (Lillard, 2013). Free choice in the Montessori method varies by age level, but the best learning always occurs when students choose to study what interests them (Lillard, 2013).

Montessori education and playful learning differ in just a few ways. For one, the "kinds of materials used in playful learning... do not have the depth of structure that Montessori materials have" (Lillard, 2013). For example, many preschool classrooms contain "plastic blocks for construction play," but Montessori classrooms only use three sets of blocks that Montessori herself developed to "teach the concepts of dimension" (Lillard, 2013). Secondly, Montessori

educators describe playful learning as "work," while "educators engaged in playful learning label the children's activities as play" (Lillard, 2013). Thirdly, Montessori education has a limit on choice, while playful learning does not. A large reason for such a restriction is classroom order. Research suggests that "children thrive when their environments are more orderly," so a limitation on choice in the Montessori method can be viewed as beneficial (Lillard, 2013). Another reason for the restriction is that children in the Montessori education excel in self-discipline compared to children in conventional classrooms (Lillard, 2013).

The most significant way that playful learning and Montessori education disagree is with pretend play. "Pretending has no place in Montessori education, and this strikes many educators as odd given the popular belief that pretending helps children's development (Lillard, 2013). Pretend or fantasy play is not permitted in Montessori education because "Montessorians are entrenched in the time-honored position that a young child['s] imagination develops from a sensory base and from [real-world] experience" (Soundy, 2009).

Chapter 8

Conclusion

Much has changed since 1989. The drafters of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child may not have been able to envision the growth of technology in modern classrooms. However, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child did highlight that play was a necessity for all children, including children with disabilities. Although the Convention did not offer much guidance regarding age-appropriate play, education pioneers such as Dr. Maria Montessori developed methods or theories of educational age-appropriate play. As such, countries around the world have integrated play as a part of a child's development and education over the years. Though different in terms of the types of play, the use of technology in play, or the level of supervision, play is recognized as a vital part of development in China, Australia, and the United States.

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<https://doi-org.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/10.1080/14647893.2016.1223028>

ACADEMIC VITA

EDUCATION

The Pennsylvania State University

Schreyer Honors College

Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood and Elementary Education

Minor in Early Development and Education

Class of 2021

University Park, PA

AWARDS

Golden Key International Honor Society

The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi

The National Society of Leadership and Success

Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society

Alpha Lambda Delta National Honor Society

The National Society of Collegiate Scholars

WORK EXPERIENCE

United States House of Representatives – Intern

June – July 2020

Washington, D.C.

Congressional Intern for Representative Virginia Foxx (NC)

- Constituent Services, Clerical Duties, Reception, and Phones

Congressional Intern for the House Committee on Education and Labor

- Crafted Committee Publications, Attended Briefings, and Helped Prepare Leadership for Hearings

Randy Marion Automotive

2003 – Present

Advertising Personality

Mooresville, NC

- Create and perform television, radio, and print advertisements
- Spokeswoman and public face for automotive dealership group
- Dealer ranked #1 volume dealer in Southeast, USA
- Dealer ranked #1 volume GM commercial truck dealer in USA

OIC Cambodia Speech Therapy

June – July 2019

Intern

Sydney, Australia

- Marketing and social media intern for social enterprise
- Attended briefings, law meetings, and weekly team meetings

Umbo Speech and Occupational Therapy

June – July 2019

Intern

Sydney, Australia

- Attended preschool/elementary school in Dubbo, Australia to observe and aide in speech and occupational therapy sessions
- Marketing and social media intern for social enterprise
- Attended briefings and weekly team meetings

TEACHING EXPERIENCES

Luzhou Tianli International School

June 2015 & June 2017
SiChuan, China

- Taught English to middle school students and learned from Chinese classrooms
- Traveled across China's rural and urban areas to study culture

Dubbo West Preschool

July 2019
Dubbo, Australia

- Observed and aided speech and occupational therapists working with preschool-aged children
- Observed recess and educational time in the classrooms

Port Matilda Elementary School

January – December 2020
Port Matilda, PA

- Penn State student teaching experience

Philadelphia Urban Seminar

May – June 2018
Philadelphia, PA

- Early student teaching experience with Penn State faculty and students in local elementary schools

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Give Soap for Hope

Founder

2005 – Present
Mooresville, NC

- Founder of 501(c)(3) serving thousands of people locally and abroad in need of toiletries, soaps, and other necessary items.