



Goosehill Primary School

Weekly Notes- January 30, 2015



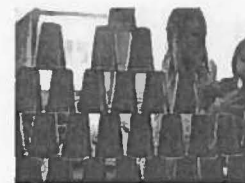
Dear Parents,

I hope your family's snow experience this week was manageable and that everyone stayed safe and comfortable. I also hope your children enjoyed some time to play in the snow! Snow days are perfect days for children to spend uninterrupted time simply *playing*, whether indoors or out.

A report from the American Academy of Pediatrics says, "*Free and unstructured play is healthy and, in fact, essential for helping children reach important social, emotional, and cognitive developmental milestones.*"

Unstructured playtime involves creativity, thinking, and problem-solving. When children engage in imaginative play, they have to generate ideas, take initiative, negotiate with each other, ask questions, and come up with a plan. They have to decide on props, objectives, and rules. Open-ended materials, such as blocks, dolls, figures, clay, sand, and water encourage this process. During indoor recess, we find that the children have the most fun with the simplest materials-- blocks, tiles, and even big, plastic cups!

As children play, they have to cooperate, take turns, and share. And if they don't, they have to find a way to compromise, solve problems, and manage conflict. There will be inevitable "bumps in the road," but each experience will help them navigate future social interactions and build resilience.



As parents, it is important to limit the amount of screen play (computer, iPad) children have. While children can learn a great deal through their use of technology, most screen play can be considered *passive* play. It doesn't involve the whole child's body, brain, and senses. The activities themselves and how to do them are already prescribed by a programmer and children play according to someone else's rules and design. This is very different from children generating their own ideas to make or do something.

Hopefully, your children will enjoy plenty of time outdoors playing and building in the snow in the coming days. And when it's just too cold to stay outdoors for long, let them play on their own for a while --- with some blocks, dolls, play-dough... or even some plastic cups!

Enjoy the weekend!



Lynn Herschlein

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