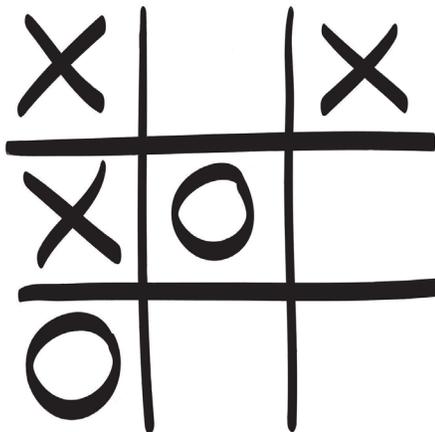


The Games Our Children Like: They're Not Just Child's Play

We've all been there: listening to an extended monologue about the virtues of Candyland, immersing ourselves in a cutthroat game of checkers or just playing a pick-up game of basketball.

But the games our children play not only are a recreational diversion but also have an impact on their neurologic development.



responsibility. These skills can build the confidence they need as they mature and pursue independence.

Games do not have to be a physical entity. They can be an imaginary, spontaneous undertaking of children on a playground. The AAP says this undirected play allows children to learn how to work in groups, to share, to negotiate, to resolve conflicts and to learn self-advocacy skills.

When this sort of play is adult-driven, children tend to follow the adult-stipulated rules, often losing the chance to be creative, to be leaders and to learn social interaction skills. When play is child-driven, they learn how to cooperate in groups, to share, to negotiate and resolve conflict.

Probably the most important thing to remember about childhood games is they are some of the most blissful pleasures of childhood and something that many adults try to retain as they grow older.

Games are essential academically. The

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Why are games so essential to our children's development? They teach our children the importance of taking turns. They teach them the necessity of rules. Of course, they also teach them the joy of winning and how losing doesn't have that same feeling.

A clinical report from the *American Academy of Pediatrics* (AAP) titled "The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development" says games do much more.

Playing games offers parents an opportunity to fully engage with their children. It contributes to their cognitive, emotional and physical development. The report states games allow children to use their creativity while developing their imagination and fine motor skills. It is through playing games, whether physical or imaginative, that allows children to engage the world around them.

Games give children the opportunity to explore the world around them where they start learning to control that world, engage their fears about what they find there and practice skills that they can use to navigate that world as they take on adult

FDA Looking at Dangers of E-cigarettes

Ads for e-cigarettes seem to be everywhere. You see them in magazines and newspapers, highlighted in film, advertised on the Internet and promoted at retail stores. E-cigarettes are found in over 12 percent of households. One survey found about 2.4 million middle and high school students had been users in the past 30 days.

Advertised as a "safe" alternative to conventional cigarettes they are probably anything but safe. Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which causes addiction, may harm brain development and could lead to continued tobacco product use among youth. Most troubling is the potential for acute nicotine poisoning through the accidental ingestion of concentrated nicotine in the "e-liquid" used in the cigarettes.

Many parents don't realize that the e-liquid used in e-cigarettes is a potential health risk for children. According to a recent study at the Washington University School of Medicine in St.

Louis, many parents who use e-cigarettes were unaware of the danger to their children.

E-cig devices are used like conventional cigarettes but instead of tobacco, they use a vaporized liquid mixture of nicotine, glycerin and glycol ethers. The liquid form is often flavored, which appeals to most children. If ingested accidentally, a teaspoon can be lethal to a child. Smaller amounts can cause nausea and vomiting. Exposure to skin also can cause sickness.

In the study, most adults knew that the e-liquid was toxic if swallowed but few understood that it could be absorbed through the skin.

Researchers found that over one-third of people did not lock up the e-cigarette "liquid" nor was it stored in childproof containers. In Europe, e-cigarette liquid has to be stored in a container with a childproof cap. This is not the case in the United States.

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Play Safe, Play Often

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school environment develops cognitive skills of children but also promotes the social and emotional development of children.

Play has been shown to help children adjust to the school setting. It even enhances children's school readiness, their learning behaviors and their problem solving skills.

Imaginative and interactive play is to be promoted. In order to enhance the life skills that games and play promote, the AAP recommends:

All children should be given ample, unscheduled, independent, non-screen time to be creative, to reflect and to decompress.

Though parents can certainly monitor play for safety, a large proportion of play should be child driven rather than adult directed.

Do not overuse passive entertainment (such as television and computer games).

Active, child-centered play is a time-tested way of producing healthy, fit young bodies.

There are benefits of using "true toys" such as blocks and dolls, with which children use their imagination fully, rather than using passive toys.

Children learn to be resilient through free play and some unscheduled time.

Parents who share unscheduled, spontaneous time with their children are supportive, nurturing and productive.

These same recommendations can be applied to parents. Although our games become more complex and involved, they can still bring us the same happiness and thrill that they did as we were growing up.



New E-cigarette Dangers Come to Light

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Last year, a toddler in New York died after ingesting liquid nicotine intended for use in an e-cigarette.

E-cigarette shops buy commercial grade nicotine and dilute it to get the right strength. Then they add flavoring. Then it's given a name like *Berry Splash* or *Banana Dessert*. It's the flavoring that makes the e-liquid appealing for ingestion by young children.

Because of concerns of e-cigarette safety, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has proposed new regulations that will address these concerns. The proposed regulations are as follows:

- Manufacturers of e-cigarettes must register with the FDA and report product and ingredient listings
- New tobacco products will only come to market after FDA review
- E-cigarette companies can only make claims of reduced risk of their products compared with regular cigarettes if these claims are confirmed by the FDA, that the scientific evidence supports the claim, and that marketing the product will benefit public health as a whole
- No free samples will be distributed
- Minimum age and identification restrictions will be implemented to prevent sales to underage youth
- Health warnings will be required; and
- A prohibition of vending machine sales where underage buyers have access.

Here is a case of what is old is new again and with that we need to pay attention to lessons of the past; we do not want our children exposed to potentially dangerous products that may harm them in multiple ways.

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