The Importance of Play in Kindergarten

Five articles worth sharing with parents, teachers, or administrators

1. The Importance of Learning Through Play

U.S. News & World Report

Features Harvard's Stephanie Jones on how play builds executive function and self-regulation, and explains why play-based learning matters through kindergarten and beyond.

https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/the-importance-of-learning-through-play

2. Play-Based Learning in Kindergarten Is Making a Comeback

Education Week

A 2026 piece on the resurgence of play-based kindergarten, distinguishing guided play from free play and summarizing research on academic gains.

https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/play-based-learning-in-kindergarten-is-making-a-comeback-heres-what-it-means/2025/10

3. The Importance of Play in Kindergarten

Illinois State Board of Education

A concise state-education-agency brief explaining why play supports academic, social, emotional, and physical development in kindergartners.

https://www.isbe.net/Documents_KIDSWebsiteResources/Importance_of_Play.pdf

4. More Play, Please: The Perspective of Kindergarten Teachers on Play in the Classroom

ERIC (files.eric.ed.gov)

A study of kindergarten teachers' own views on play, showing they largely value it but feel pressure from academic mandates to limit it.

https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1070249.pdf

5. Kindergarten Teachers' Facilitation of Social and Emotional Learning in Classroom Play Contexts

Taylor & Francis Online

A peer-reviewed observational study of 20 play-based kindergarten classrooms examining how play supports social-emotional learning.

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/20004508.2023.2192900