

It's not just fun...

I'M LEARNING

At first glance there are so many things in the early childhood classroom that must look silly to an observer. It might just seem like singing a song or reading a story, but to the children in our care, it is so much more than that. Personally, as the music teacher for LifeSpan School and Daycare, I can attest that the songs I sing aren't just silly ear worms that the children think are fun. I use them to teach musical concepts. It's so important in the field of early childhood education that we make learning fun. When teaching is made fun, it is when children remember the experience and the concept they are learning. When we dance in music class, we aren't just dancing to have fun. We are using our bodies in a way to develop our gross motor skills. A parent walking by might think we are singing a silly song about an animal, but the tapping we are doing is teaching us how to keep an independent beat and internalize rhythm. All of the activities in an early childhood program are multifaceted. Yes, they are fun and keep the children active, but these activities are so much more. They are helping develop skills, providing teachable moments, and social emotional exposure.

NAEYC (The National Association for the Education of Young Children) has posted an article *The Power of Playful Learning in the Early Childhood Setting*. In this article, we learn not only why "Playful Learning" is important, but also how teachers can utilize this strategy effectively.

"While educators of younger children are already well versed in creating playful and joyful experiences to support social goals (e.g., taking turns and resolving conflicts), they can use this same skill set to support more content-focused curricular goals (e.g., mathematics and literacy). Similarly, while teachers of older children have plenty of experience determining concrete content-based learning goals (e.g., attaining Common Core Standards), they can build upon this set of skills and use playful learning as a pedagogy to meet those goals."

~Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth Through Age 8

For the full article, please click the link below, and remember; through the eyes of a child, if I'm having fun, I'm learning!

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/summer2022/power-playful-learning>

~Ms. Kunter