



## Functional Types of Play

**Physical Play:** Develops strong bodies, coordination, balance and endurance. Encourages risk-taking and resiliency, assessment of dangers and a self-awareness as to the body's limits.

**Language Play:** From 'baby' language (eg cooing, babbling) through to understandable sounds and words, playing with language is a developmental process that needs time to occur. Playing with phrases, puns, rhymes, alliteration is play with linguistic construction. As adults, language play is known as poetry.

**Exploratory Play:** Much if not all play children engage in is exploratory. As skills develop, their curiosity and motivation lead to further discoveries and the need for new or refined skills. When imagination and creativity combine with exploration in adulthood, science occurs.

**Constructive Play:** The intent in constructive play is to produce something created from the imagination. Constructive play can also be with words and sounds, as well as with substances. In modern day play, constructive play includes computer programs, written stories, secret codes – it can be intellectual as well as manual.

**Fantasy Play:** Rules are recreated and imagination is extended in fantasy play. Ideas are played out logically and consequences are explored. Hypotheses can be formulated and what might be possible is considered. In pretend play, children exercise imaginative capacities that allow consideration for things not immediately present. This forms the basis for executive functioning, a higher order cognitive skill.

**Social Play:** When children engage in imaginative play with others, they learn to manage their behaviour and interaction in order to meet a shared understanding of what is or is not acceptable. Children learn to not only agree but also to concede, a valuable life skill.

*(From "Free to Learn", Peter Gray, 2013)*