

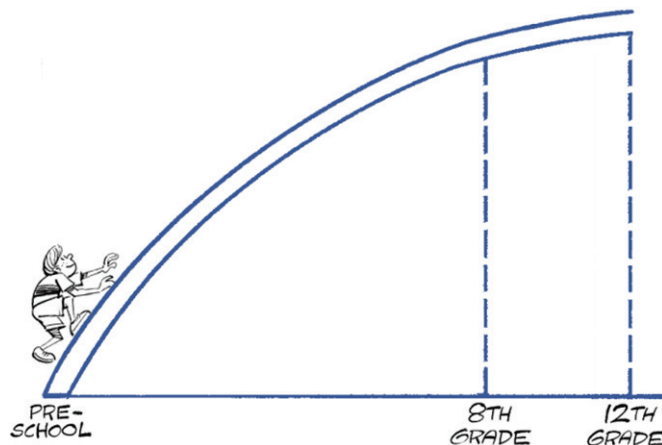
# Our Primary School: The Foundational Skills That Matter Most

## *A Deep Dive Into the Importance of Play*

### Why Play Matters

There is endless research to support the foundational skills that are developed based on play. Here are just a few excerpts:

- A growing body of behavioral research establishes relationships between children’s play and development in several areas, including language (Toub et al. 2016), executive functions (Tominey & McClelland 2011), mathematics and spatial skills (Fisher et al. 2013), scientific thinking (Schulz & Bonawitz 2007), and social and emotional development (Dore, Smith, & Lillard 2015). -NAEYC, May 2017
- “Play is not frivolous: it enhances brain structure and function and promotes executive function (i.e., the process of learning, rather than the content) which allows us to pursue goals and ignore distractions.” -The American Academy of Pediatrics



### Purposeful Play at Langley

At Langley, we know that play is a critical component of an early childhood classroom. We create and facilitate play environments that lead to exploration, relationship building, student ownership, and emergent skill practice. Purposeful play maintains the joyful, child-directed aspects of free play, but adds an additional focus on learning goals through light adult scaffolding. It is intentional in adult support, materials, and observation. And, purposeful play increases children’s knowledge through immediate meaningful adult feedback.

### Play at Home vs. Play at School

At school, students experience a play environment set up for specific learning targets for a number of students, while home is a place to practice the skills they have learned at school. We can observe play skills in a range of environments and support those skills both at home and at school.



### Parent Takeaways

- Take time to watch and listen. Before joining your child’s play with your words or actions, take time to observe how your child is playing and experimenting.
- Say what you see. Instead of saying “good job,” give your child specific feedback about what he or she did or what happened.
- Extend play. Offering other materials or modeling a new skill based on your child’s interests is a way to initiate interaction and suggest additional possibilities, extending your child’s learning while he or she continues to play.
- Play and learn alongside your child. Our children are always watching us. When they see you making new discoveries, you are sharing a valuable lesson – that learning is a lifelong process.