



What is Purposeful Play?

You might think, “I remember how to play!
But what does it mean to be “purposeful”?!”

Purposeful Play is a cognitive engagement strategy that teaches children how to self-regulate using their executive function skills. These skills are the building blocks for ALL the learning that comes after, all the way to grade 12 and beyond.

What is Executive Function?

Inhibitory Control: Can my child pay attention?

Working Memory: Remembering on purpose.

Cognitive Flexibility: Being able to flexibly move from one aspect of a learning task to another.

We teach these skills in a very playful but purposeful way.

Play Planning
Who Goes First

Graphic Practice
Message of the Day
Linear Calendar

Play Scenarios
Freeze Game

Linear Calendar

When: Whole group, teacher led

How: home days, school days depicted on a linear number strip

Why: Math concepts and working memory

Who Chooses First

When: to identify who goes first in an activity

How: all children's names on a vertical list

Why: literacy and inhibitory control

Message of the Day

When: large group, teacher led

How: teacher draws picture of an upcoming activity, teacher draws lines for each word in the sentence which describes the activity always using the same sentence beginning. We are going to _____.

Why: literacy, working memory, and inhibitory control

Play Planning

When: prior to beginning Purposeful Play

How: Children choose a center and either point, verbalize, or draw/write a plan to describe the center they are going to.

Why: Literacy and inhibitory control

Play Scenarios

When: children and staff choose a play scenario (big idea) for their dramatic play area space

How: Staff guide children to choose amongst a few big ideas (fire department, Harvest, Vet office, etc). Children make props

Why: to support mature play, all areas of executive function

Graphic Practice

When: teacher led fine motor activity, quick activity, transitional

How: children draw simple shapes, lines, etc and begin and end making marks when adult says go and stop

Why: Fine motor development and inhibitory control

Freeze Game

When: Teacher led movement activity

How: Teacher starts music, holds up a card of a pose, children recreate the pose once the music stops

Why: Gross motor movement, inhibitory control