

Play-based Learning

§§ 4 & 5 — PLAY-BASED LEARNING DURING PRESCHOOL, KINDERGARTEN, AND GRADES ONE TO FIVE - The Public Act requires each school board to provide play-based learning during the instructional time of each regular school day for students in kindergarten and preschool. The play-based learning must (1) be incorporated and integrated into daily practice; (2) allow for the students' needs to be met through free play, guided play, and games; and (3) not involve, predominantly, using mobile electronic devices. Additionally, it requires each school board to allow a teacher to use play-based learning during the instructional time of a regular school day for students in grades one to five, inclusive. The play-based learning may be incorporated and integrated into daily practice, and, as with kindergarten and 12 preschool, must (1) allow for the students' needs to be met through free play, guided play, and games and (2) predominantly not involve using mobile electronic devices. Under the Public Act "play-based learning" means a teaching approach that emphasizes play in promoting learning and includes developmentally appropriate strategies that can be integrated with existing learning standards. It does not mean time spent in recess or as part of a physical education course or instruction. The Public Act requires that any play-based learning comply with a student's individualized education program under special education law or an accommodation plan under Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973. A school employee may only prevent or otherwise restrict a student's participation in play-based learning if it is in accord with the school board's policy addressing recess restrictions as a form of discipline. Additionally, the Public Act adds play-based learning to educator professional development beginning July 1, 2024. Under current law, educator professional development must include a number of specific topics including refining and improving various effective teaching methods that are shared between and among educators. The Public Act adds that this must include play-based learning, as defined in the Public Act, for those teaching preschool or in grades kindergarten through five.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024, except the professional development provision is effective July 1, 2023.