

Graduates In Bloom



Play Based Learning
March 25, 2025



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Director of School Improvement*

*Samantha Straker
Principal, Wintonbury Early Childhood Magnet School*

*Jennifer Dwyer,
Principal, Laurel Literacy Academy*

School Teams



Play-Based Learning

[BPS Play-Based Learning Policy](#)

“Play is a fundamental aspect of childhood and a powerful tool for learning, development, and well-being. The Bloomfield Board of Education recognizes the importance of play in the educational process and is committed to supporting and promoting play as an integral component for engaging students in all areas of the district’s curricula. Strategically aligning play-based learning with curriculum standards can help meet the Board’s goal to realize increased academic gains while improving executive function or self-regulation among all students.”



Play-Based Learning

What is “Play-Based Learning”?

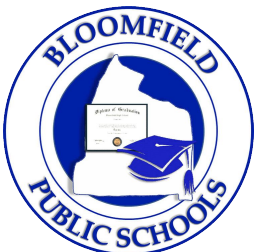
A pedagogical approach that emphasizes play in promoting learning and includes developmentally appropriate strategies that can be integrated with existing learning standards. “Play-based learning” does not mean time spent in recess or as part of a physical education course or instruction.

Guidance for Pre-K and Kindergarten

- Play-based learning during the instructional time of each regular school day for all students in kindergarten and PK
- Must be incorporated and integrated into daily practice, allow for the needs of such students to be met through free play, guided play and games, and be predominantly free of the use of mobile electronics.

Guidance for Grades 1-5

- Teachers are permitted to utilize play-based learning during the instructional time of a regular school day for all students in grades one to five
- Such play-based learning may be incorporated and integrated into daily practice, shall allow for the needs of such students to be met through free play, guided play and games, and shall be predominantly free of the use of mobile electronic devices.
- Any play-based learning utilized under this policy must comply with the individualized educational program (IEP) or plan pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended from time to time, for any student.
- Beginning in the 2024-25 school year, play-based learning must be incorporated into annual professional development programming for pre-K through grade five teachers.



Professional Learning

District: March 20, 2024

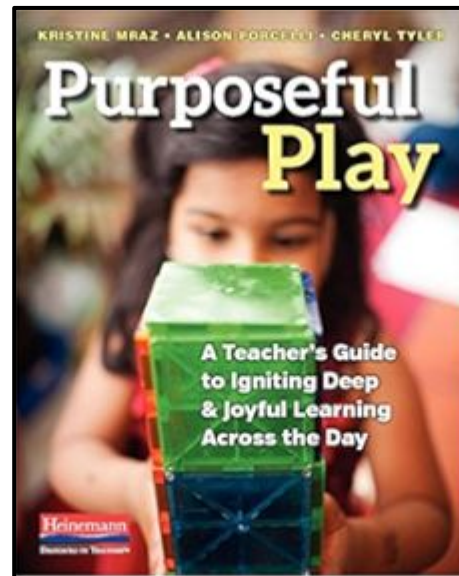
Play-Based Learning 101

Audience: All Laurel Staff PK-2 required, Open to All PK-5 Staff

Presenters: Jennifer Dwyer, Principal of Laurel Literacy Academy, and Lisa Smith-Horn, Instructional Coach, Wintonbury

Wintonbury: 2022-2025

- Process Art & Inquiry
- Big Body Movement (Spark Curriculum & Rock Climbing Wall)
- Tiered Vocab
- Executive Functioning
- NAEYC preparation
- Collaborative Play Conversations (Wintonbury hosts Laurel Literacy Academy)
- Auerfarm Lesson Writing
- Reaching All Learners
- (2021-22) Lisa Daly “Loose Part Play”



Laurel: 22-23

Executive Functioning, Brain Development

23-24

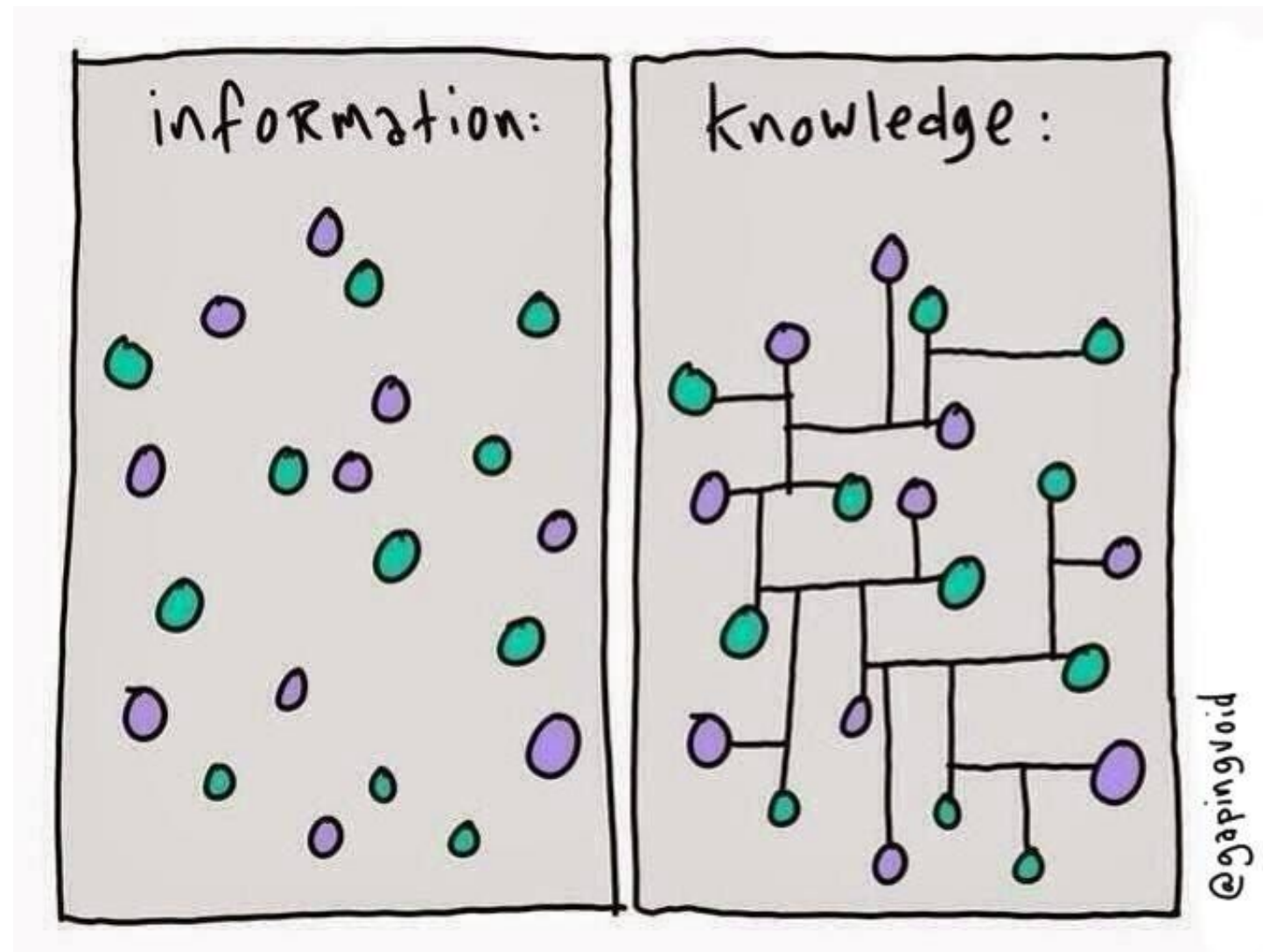
Introduction to Play Based Learning, WECMS Site Visit

24-25

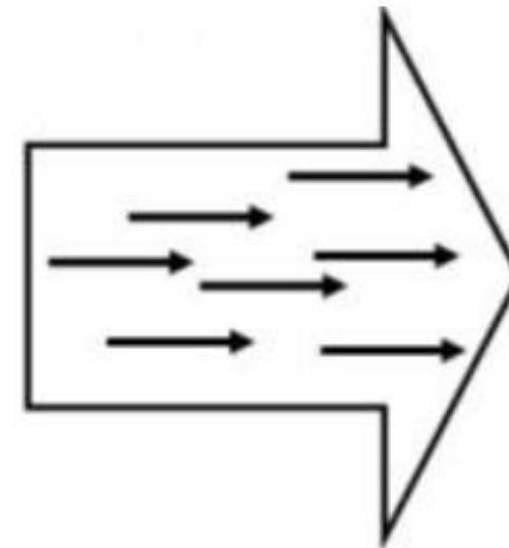
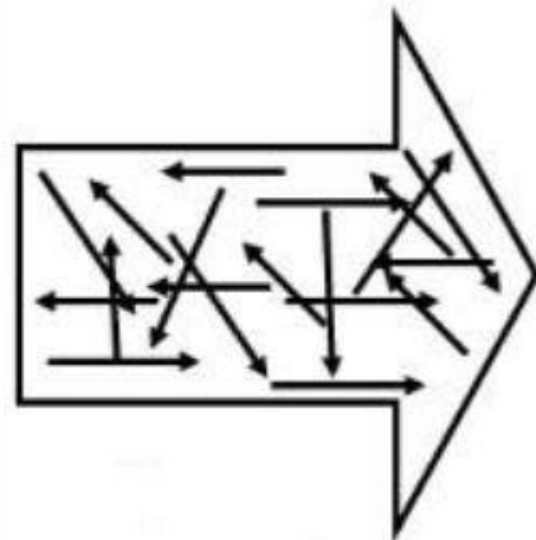
Book Study, Connections to Science of Reading



Connecting the Dots



Continuous Improvement



Curriculum Integration

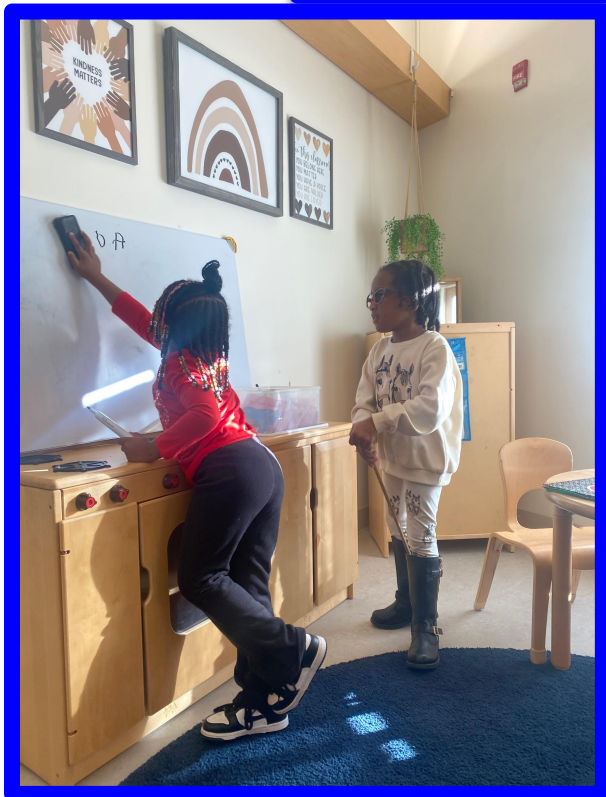


Kindergarten Open Court, Unit 4 - Lesson 1: Pushes and Pulls	Resources: Pocket Chart Picture Cards, lion puppet, Listening Icons, Routine 2, Alphabet Sounds Card Hh, Letter Card Hh, Magnetic Dry Erase Boards, Supply Icons	Resources: lion puppet, Alphabet Sound Card Hh, Letter Card Hh, Alphabet Book, pgs. 10-19, Lesson & Unit Assessment 1	Resources: Pickled Peppers, lion puppet, Routine 2 & 3, Alphabet Sound Card Tt, Letter Card Tt, Magnetic Dry Erase Boards, Supply Icons	Resources: Listening Icons, lion puppet, Routine 3, Alphabet Sound Card Tt, Letter Card Tt, Alphabet Book, pgs. 42-43, eGames	Resources: lion puppet, Alphabet Sound Cards, Letter Cards, Routines 3-5, Magnetic Dry Erase Boards, Supply Icons, High Frequency Flash Cards - at, to, Lesson & Unit Assessment 1
HFV:	at, to	at, to	at, to	at, to	at, to
Unit 4, Lesson 1	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Foundational Skills	Warm Up, Phonemic Awareness, Alphabetic Principle	Warm Up, Phonological Awareness, Alphabetic Principle, Alphabet Book, Guided Practice	Warm Up, Phonological Awareness, Alphabetic Principle, Penmanship/ Handwriting, Guided Practice	Warm Up, Phonological Awareness, Alphabetic Principle, Alphabet Book, Guided Practice	Warm Up, Phonological Awareness, Alphabetic Principle, Penmanship/ Handwriting, Guided Practice, Reading a Decodable
Lesson Target - "I can..."	Recognize and produce rhyming words, match initial sounds, attach the /h/ sound to letter Hh, identify initial /h/ in spoken words, practice printing letter Hh	Segment words and names into syllables, blend initial phonemes to make words, review the one-to-one correspondence of /h/ to letter Hh, identify initial /h/ in spoken words, distinguish between similarly spelled words by identifying the sound of letter Hh, engage in group reading activities, recognize letters make up words & words make up stories and rhymes	Identify word changes in familiar rhyme, blend final phonemes to make words, attach /t/ letter-sound correspondence to letter Tt, identify initial /t/ sound, practice printing letter Tt	Blend word parts with support, blend final phonemes to make words, review the one-to-one correspondence of /t/ to letter Tt, identify words with final phoneme /t/, distinguish between similarly spelled words by identifying the sound of letter Tt, engage in group reading activities, identify the first and last words on printed page	Produce and expand oral sentences, segment compound words into syllables, blend final phonemes to make words, review letter-sound correspondences of /h/ to Hh and /t/ to Tt, practice printing Hh & Tt, read common HFV by sight, read and respond to a decodable, identify the title of a decodable, practice building and reading words
CCSS	RFK.2.A, RFK.1.D, RFK.3.A, LK.1.A, LK.2.C	RFK.2.B, RFK.3.A, RFK.1.D, LK.2.C	RFK.1.D, RFK.3.A, RFK.3.D, LK.1.A, LK.2.C	RFK.2.B, RFK.3.A, RFK.3.D, RFK.1.D, LK.2.C	LK.1.F, RFK.1.D, RFK.3.A, RFK.3.B, LK.2.D, LK.1.A, LK.2.C, RFK.3.C, RFK.4, RLK.2, RLK.10
Skills Practice Book 1	81	82	83-84	86-88	87-88
Orange Decodable	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Practice decodable 2
Reading and Responding	Pushes and Pulls Big Book	Routine 9	Pushes and Pulls Big Book, pgs. 6-19, Routines 8 & 9	Pushes and Pulls Big Book, pgs. 6-19, Routine 9	Pushes and Pulls Big Book, pgs. 6-19, Routine 9, eGames, Lesson & Unit Assessment 1
Lesson Target - "I can..."	Identify the front and back cover, table of contents, and title, discuss and set purpose for reading selections, discuss concept of how things move, generate questions and statements about unit theme	Develop an understanding of vocabulary words, listen attentively to read-aloud selection	Learn elements of a nursery rhyme, listen to and discuss "The Bus," apply the Making Connections and Summarizing comprehension strategies, develop understanding of vocabulary words	Review and practice using selection vocabulary words, reread "The Bus" to identify main ideas and details, classify and categorize information in "The Bus," analyze the author's use of onomatopoeia & the genre of the story, develop understanding of new vocabulary words	Review vocabulary words, review making connections & summarizing comprehension strategies, review main idea, details, and classify & categorize, review writer's use of genre knowledge & language use, generate questions
CCSS	RI.K.5, SLK.1.A, SLK.2, SLK.3, SLK.4	SLK.4, RLK.10, SLK.2, LK.1.F, LK.5	RLK.5, RLK.7, RLK.10, RFK.1.A, RFK.1.C, SLK.1.A, SLK.1.B, SLK.5, LK.1.F, RLK.5, LK.5	LK.5.C, LK.5	RLK.1, LK.5.C, LK.5, RLK.2, RLK.5, RLK.10, SLK.4, WK.7, WK.5, SLK.1.A, SLK.1.B, LK.1.D
Language Arts (Writing)	Pick a topic for writing a news story. Model how action words (verbs) and naming words (nouns) make sentences. Practice forming sentences.	Discuss ways to get ideas for writing. Read an appropriate news article to the class. Review that sentences start with a capital letter and end with a period. Discuss sentence directionality and spacing between words. Explain that some questions ask who, what, when, where, why and how. Practice distinguishing the difference between a sentence and question.	Use graphic organizer to web new story idea. Use story lines to have students identify main character and retell main events. Use thought cloud to ask what main character is thinking/feeling throughout story.	Use idea web to draw or write a news story about traveling to school. Use story lines to introduce setting to students. Review using thought bubble to describe what a character is thinking or feeling.	Write sentences about getting ready in the morning and mix them up. Have students put them in order of what happened first, next, then and finally. Check idea web for specific listed details. Discuss the differences between sentences and questions (who, what, when, where, why).
Lesson Target - "I can..."	Learn about the elements of a news story, discuss ideas for a news story, review the difference between words and sentences, practice creating and expanding sentences	Review using a graphic organizer to generate ideas, use an idea web to analyze details, review elements of a complete sentence, identify the difference between a sentence and a question, learn to use words and sentences that ask questions	Use graphic organizer to plan writing, eliminate irrelevant information from a writing plan, identify the thoughts & feelings of a character, retell events of a story	Learn about the four drawings they will do to create a news story, use a web idea organizer for their ideas, identify the thoughts and feelings of a character, retell events of a story	Practice ordering events in correct sequence, learn about time order words, plan the sequence of 4 drawings, review using questions to ask for things
Skills Practice Book 1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	89
CCSS	WK.8, LK.1.B, LK.1.F	RFK.1.C, LK.1.D, LK.1.F, LK.2.A	RLK.3, SLK.6	WK.2, RLK.3, SLK.6	WK.2, LK.6, LK.1.D, LK.1.F
Play Based Experience	Small Group/Literacy Center: Use wooden blocks or ramps, string, rubber bands, toilet paper or paper towel tubes and small balls, cars or trains to practice using the concepts of push and pull.				
Intended Learning	Hands-on understanding of new unit concept of push and pull				



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Play-Based in Action



Laurel Literacy Academy

The pictures below are from Mrs. Wenner's class. Students read a story about various aspects of their community. The three pictured groups each built a different area- home, school and town- then discussed the importance of their area's role within the community. They even represented themselves! This is a example of how we use play to learn!

Play-Based in Action

Laurel Literacy Academy

Below is a picture of Eniyah Jenkins and Damira Davids from Mrs. Wenner's second grade. They are engaging in a play based center to facilitate learning about glaciers. They read A River of Ice, a nonfiction text about glaciers. Students then used playdough, ice and sand to mimic the effects of that frozen water has over the landscape. Look how intently they observe so they can write about their observations. Great learning!



Play-Based in Action

Principal's Message

Good afternoon Laurel Village!

This year we are incorporating more play based learning opportunities into our daily practice. There are two ways that we have incorporated play. One is called soft start. In soft start, students start their day with play based activities that evoke creativity, self-expression, and development of other social emotional skills. The other is through play based centers in ELA and Math. In centers, teachers set up play activities that reinforce or develop academic skills. In the picture below, Ayla Harrington, Valerie Maldonado, and Mia Stanford created their own math center to practice math facts, place value and telling time!

Reminders:

- With that cold air approaching, we recommend layers with a light jacket or sweater for recess. As we get closer to winter weather, a thick coat, gloves, scarf and hat are needed.
- Toys are not allowed at school and should be kept at home. Electronics, including smart watches, should never be in the school.
- Please be sure that NO candy comes into the school, even for lunch time.

Enjoy the weekend! ~Mrs. Dwyer



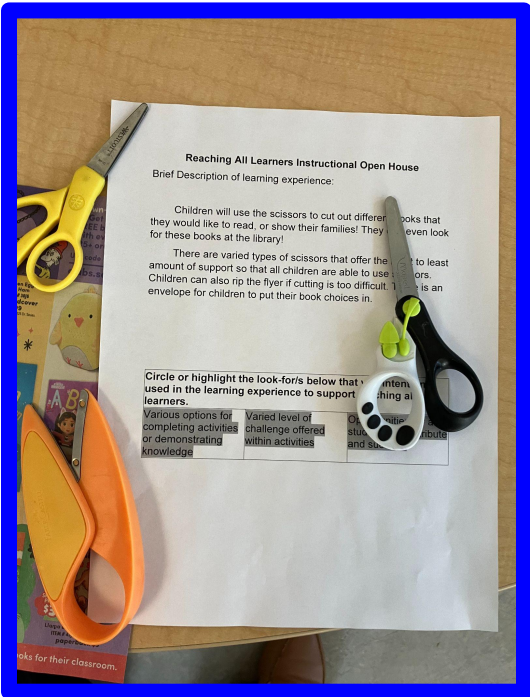
Parent Corner- Play Based Learning

This year we have a heightened focus on play based learning. Play based learning is an educational approach where instruction happened through play. Our teachers will layer into instruction explicit teaching, play based learning and cooperative learning experiences. Mrs. DeLisa's class enjoyed a play based activity where they used objects to recreate a scene from their story. They then used details from the story to explain what they created to classmates. They had a great time learning through play!



Play-Based in Action

March 12th- Wintonbury
Instructional Open House



Reaching All Learners: PreK Instructional Rounds

Observer: _____ Date: _____

Look for:

Various options for completing activities or demonstrating knowledge.	Varied level of challenge offered within activities.	Opportunities for all students to contribute and succeed.
Describe how the activity meets some of the listed criteria.		
Room: _____	Center: _____	
Takeaway/ideas: _____		
Room: _____	Center: _____	
Takeaway/ideas: _____		
Room: _____	Center: _____	
Takeaway/ideas: _____		



Next Steps

- May 21st- Play-Based Site Visit
- Continue Curriculum Development
- Continue Focus Walks



Thank you

