

World Play Day

2021

Play and toy libraries... keys to health promotion

Play promotes physical, mental and social health - for infants, children, people with disabilities, adults and the elderly.

Toy libraries not only support health promotion, but also our planet's health by reducing our impact on the Earth.

In 2021, ITLA wants to share these messages:

WPD Theme 2021:
Playing is healthy!

Toy libraries promote
healthy living!

In Pandemic,
Play and Toy Libraries
are health promoters
for all!



An initiative from the International
Toy Library Association (ITLA)



28th May...

THIS IS WORLD PLAY DAY!

Initiated by the International Toy Libraries Association (ITLA), World Play Day is a day to celebrate child's right to play across the world.

In Freda Kim's words, founder of World Play Day (WPD):

“The reason for promoting World Play Day is to emphasize the importance of play in all our lives and particularly in the lives of our children. Children learn to talk through play, they learn to make friends through play, they get exercise through play; they also acquire the basic skills for formal education such as concentration, imagination, self-expression and the retention of useful facts.

Let a child play today and ensure their happy, meaningful and healthy future.”



In 2021...

Play is key to health

How can toy libraries and other entities committed to play promote World Play Day? What changes should be done considering COVID-19 reality in each country?

Aware than in 2021 the pandemic will still imply in most countries restrictions to WPD celebrations, you'll find in the next pages the original ideas we had prior to pandemic and that might be done in countries where the restrictions are few, but we also created different options for countries that might be in lockdown or soft lockdown still. Either way, PLAY IS HEALTH is the message to state!

Message from World Play Day founder Freda Kim

Dear Everyone,

Please acknowledge and celebrate the value of PLAY in the lives of all of us!

Never has it been more important than now – the year 2021 – to take a look at the part PLAY has, can and should take in our well-being.

I pose these questions:

- Did you ever play with “dirt” making “mud pies”?
- Do you remember being told to go out to play?
- Would you now tell a child who is a bit lethargic to go out and get a breath of fresh air?

In this 21st century these healthy habits are deterred by advances (changes) in technology, chemistry, and speed that have curtailed the time, energy, ability and opportunity for play.



2021 WPD Message

from World Play Day founder Freda Kim

(continued)

So what is this thing called PLAY? Perhaps this can be understood by watching how children play (or maybe better still - animals!) There are many things about play that are not, cannot and should not be taught.

For an activity to qualify as play there has to be a freedom, a desire, a happiness and abandonment. Children will display concentration, urgency, control, intensity and in some cases involvement. Animals will enjoy all these with an essence of approach and withdrawal, connection and disconnection, joyfulness and sadness, anger and renewal. The play is often accompanied by sounds such as screams or barking. For this play to happen adults need to promote, observe, allow, encourage, tolerate, and see the fun. If these skills don't come easily, we need to learn them!

What about adults? These days "stress" is common so how do we cope? This is where it is imperative to realise that play is different for each person. For me horse riding was an excellent way to cope with stress. Once you are on the horse you are in a relationship, you have to concentrate! YOU must be in control and the horse is stronger than you. Many elements of play mentioned earlier in this message come into force as you "fly" through the fields in partnership with your steed!

Finally to return to small children - their business is play! To a child anything that can be touched is good for play! Therefore remove all dangerous objects in reach so that they can experiment and experience as they please. Toys? Anything can be a toy, including clean things found in your rubbish bin! Boxes, tubes, scarves, balls, "threaders" with blunt ends (even a piece of string dipped into some old fashioned glue) and large beads; anything that can be stacked, plastic containers, wooden spoons and a tin with a firm lid that cannot be easily removed - anything good for banging.

2021 WPD Message

from World Play Day founder Freda Kim

(continued)

Before the 2nd World War I remember playing with my father using fire-lighting wood and a frying pan to drum around the house (that dates me!). My twin granddaughters are now in university, but when they were young they worked their way through my button box and then my jewellery. We now have a 4 year old grandson with 3 month old twin siblings so I still have piles of “instant toys” in my living room and well meaning guests still offer to throw away my “rubbish”, while lingering toy librarians have fun taking pictures of it! Yes, PLAY is the key to our health.

Make time for play in your life, in your children’s lives and in your grandchildren’s lives. Make the space in your day for your children and always remember that PLAY is a necessity. You don’t have to be rich, anywhere will do.

Spread the word...
you need to be healthy, so PLAY!

Freda Kim, MBE, Ph.D
Founder of World Play Day for ITLA and the world



Play is the key to our health

Play to be...

- physically healthy
- mentally healthy
- socially healthy

Play to be...

Physically Healthy

Play has an impact in children's overall development and is a key component of physical development and well-being.

But what is childhood facing nowadays? The World Health Organization (WHO) has found that most children do not reach the required minimum of 60 minutes per day of physical activity. Poor motor skills and obesity are among the consequences children face from physical inactivity. These are serious health issues in many communities.

For children and young people, to play is to be active: running, crawling, jumping, throwing, grabbing.. all fundamental motor skills for healthy growth. All competencies that can be learnt for free through games, toys and playful interactions.

Below are some suggestions toy libraries and others committed to play can develop to promote an active and physical way of playing.

PROPOSALS

Moving Outside

Look at your surroundings and identify parks and other outdoor spaces. Can you bring your toy library outside? Grab some boxes, put games and toys that promote movement inside it (e.g. jumping ropes, hula-hoops) and make a play space in the open air. Develop some stay-and-play spaces (if you don't already do this), using picnic blankets for children and families to sit, move and play on.

Schools Moving

Schools are often eager to receive toy librarians in their playgrounds - recess is an under-used treasure for children's quality of life. See in your play materials what could be brought to schools to get children moving and physically active in recess.



Play to be Physically Healthy even in Lockdown!

It is widely known that physical activity either for children, adults or elderly, could have been reduced during the pandemic for a series of reasons. This matter is specially important since we know that active play contributes not also for physical activity and health but for overall well-being.

Below are some suggestions toy libraries and others committed to play can develop to promote an active and physical way of playing, even in lockdown or with constraints regarding gatherings, going outdoors or even having services freely opened to public.

PROPOSALS

Moving Indoors

Do your users have access to internet, laptops, tables or others likewise? Can your toy librarians organize an online play session for active play? Let's send online invites to everyone we know and turn their house into a loudy and active toy library! Make people move: jump the highest number they can, be the first to go to the kitchen and return or even a treasure hunt@home. Any idea that has play and movement joined together is a great one!

(Small) Moving Outdoors

Gatherings might be possible in you country in smaller groups than before. If this is the case take this change to organize small groups and take children outside to stretch, run and also relax! You can adapt the proposals from the previous page and don't forget masks and cleaning play material prior and after each use!

If children can only get out with their families, send these activities to parents and caregivers and ask them to share photos and videos of their experience! Maybe you can even do a family active play contest!

