

## AUTHENTIC PLAY

**A**uthentic play has the following characteristics:

### Play is natural and instinctive

- All children play, no matter the environment or culture. However, it is tragic that for some children in the world, play is replaced by work to meet basic needs of survival. Play is as much a part of the landscape of childhood as nurturing. No one has to teach a baby how to play with her toes, or provide instruction to a toddler on how to play with blocks. Older children too retain the play instinct as they construct a clubhouse, make up a new ball game, or explore musical instruments.

The teacher in the classroom creates the environment for play and provides the opportunities for children take the play in their own direction.

### Play is interactive

- Vygotsky (1976) argued decades ago that all play is social. Even a baby wants a play partner, not to show him how to play, but simply to have someone with whom to interact. Play is the way children learn to take their place in a social context. This cannot be learned any other way.

### Play is repetitive

- Repetition is an important aspect of play at any level. It is through repetitive actions that children integrate new learning into existing frameworks of understanding. They need to see the predictability that comes through repeating something over and over. This is the process that solidifies learning.

### Play is inventive

- Play sets the imagination in motion. It provides opportunities for the creative power to grow and strengthen over time and with experience.

