Power of Play

- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends play for children to buffer toxic stress, build parental relationships and improve executive functioning.

- According to pediatrician Michael Yogman, MD, FAAP, play with parents and peers is fundamentally important for developing a suite of 21st century skills, including social, emotional, language and cognitive skills.

- In a study, 3- to 4-year-old children, anxious about entering preschool, were twice as relieved of their stress when allowed to play with teachers or peers for 15 minutes, compared to peers who listened to a teacher reading a story.

- Research found that preschool children with disruptive behaviors were less stressed and less disruptive when the teacher played with them regularly one-to-one over the course of a year, compared with peers who had routine interactions.

- According to research published in Advances in Life Course Research, from 1981 to 1997, children's playtime decreased by 25 percent, and 30 percent of kindergarten children no longer have recess, which has been replaced by academic lessons.

- A national survey of 8,950 preschool children and parents found that only 51 percent of children went outside to walk or play once a day with a parent.
    - 94 percent of parents have safety concerns about outdoor play.

- According to media research, the typical preschooler watches 4.5 hours of television per day.

- The AAP recommends that learning is better fueled by facilitating the child's natural urge to play rather than through external motivations such as test scores.

- Tips for parents, pediatricians and educators by AAP:
    - Doctors should write a "prescription for play" at every well-child visit in the first two years of life.
    - Educators, pediatricians and families should advocate for and protect unstructured play and playful learning in preschools and schools because of its numerous benefits.
    - Teachers should focus on playful rather than didactic learning by letting children take the lead and follow their own curiosity.
    - Promote recess and physical activity for children every day.

From The Power of Play: A Pediatric Role in Enhancing Development in Young Children: A report by American Academy of Pediatrics.

http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2018/08/16/peds.2018-2058.full