



The Ela Murray International School

Play Based Learning

The Ela Murray International School Early Learning Centre offers a play-based curriculum for children from 18 months to 5 years of age. A play-based approach involves informed educators observing children in play, interacting sensitively with them and using their professional knowledge to promote and extend every child's well-being and learning.

We provide a high-quality, play-based learning program which incorporates;

- a daily schedule that includes active indoor and outdoor physical play
- the integration of music, movement and creative expression
- adult-child interactions that model moderate to high levels of physical activity where educators are at times as physically engaged in active play as the children
- an environment which is intentionally planned to optimise play experiences
- a wide range of open-ended materials and equipment

Play is a child's way of learning and understanding the world around them. It is an important medium for all aspects of children's growth and development.

Play provides children with the opportunity to;

- practise skills
- develop positive social behaviour
- learn about themselves and others
- build self-esteem
- learn and practise language
- develop and refine creativity and problem-solving skills
- pursue and develop their own interests
- express feelings
- explore their environment
- develop independence and autonomy

Play can be described as:

- pleasurable – play is an enjoyable and pleasurable activity. While it sometimes includes frustrations, challenges and fears, enjoyment is a key feature.
- symbolic – play is often pretend, it has a 'what if?' quality. The play has meaning to the player that is often not evident to the observer.
- active – play requires action, either physical, verbal or mental engagement with materials, people, ideas or the environment.
- Voluntary – play is freely chosen. However, players can also be invited or prompted to play.
- process oriented – play is a means unto itself and players may not have an end or goal in sight
- self motivating—play is considered its own reward to the player.

Research and evidence all point to the role of play in children's development and learning across cultures and many researchers believe that it is impossible to disentangle children's play, learning and development.

Play is associated with the development of intellectual skills and understandings. In play experiences, children integrate emotions, thinking and motivation that establish neural connections critical to effective brain functioning.

When children play they use imagination and imitation which requires complex cognitive or intellectual processes. The development of cognitive skills, including dispositions for learning (such as curiosity and persistence), memory and thinking skills, and language and literacy skills, have strong links to play.

Play assists children in building social skills that support positive relationships and also helps to teach children how to regulate their behaviour, and understand others' feelings. Through collaborating and cooperating in play, children learn how to negotiate and problem-solve their personal dilemmas.

The pleasure and satisfaction associated with play and the freedom from pressure to perform in play supports the development of a strong sense of wellbeing.

Physically active play is related to the development of physical skills and the increased health benefits of improved metabolism and energy expenditure. It allows children to test and develop all types of motor skills and promotes significant health benefits.

Consequently, The Ela Murray International School Early Learning Centre follows the increasing international focus on the power of play in promoting optimal child development by providing daily programs that allow each child the opportunity to reach their potential and reap the advantages associated with play.