



# Playful Policies or Policies that Affect Playful Learning?

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# Types of Policies that Affect Play

- Program Standards
- Learning Standards
- Curricular Options/Adoptions
- Monitoring and Evaluation Procedures (QRS)



# Program Standards Impact Play

- Class size/ Ratio
- Length of day
- Teacher qualifications
- Resources (materials and equipment, playgrounds, classroom space)
- Expectations for transition and continuity
- Teacher Support (coaches, intensive PD)
- Assessment requirements



# Do Learning Standards Include?

- Guidance on the teacher's role in play
- Comprehensive/whole child coverage
- Benchmarks for play development (mature socio-dramatic play, ability to cooperate in play, initiative and perseverance in cooperative play and problem-solving, etc.)
- Outcomes written with play as the context for demonstrating learning? (e.g. "identifies some letters" vs. "uses scribbles or letter-like symbols to communicate in play")



# Curricular policy mandates should be evaluated to consider:

- Are there inappropriate goals of learning:
  - Completing the task is the goal communicated
  - Focus is discrete academics, instructions and completion but not on understanding, learning or constructing knowledge.
- “Work disguised as play” – DeVries and Zan
- Play is superficially central BUT teachers pull children out of play to “teach”
  - What is the message to children about their choices?
  - What is the message to teachers about their role in play? (play as “busy work”)



# Monitoring and Evaluation Procedures (e.g. QRS)

How do monitoring, evaluation and QRS policies and practices influence play?

- Instrumentation (e.g. ECERS requirements for “substantial portion of the day” and 1 hour of free play)
- Child assessment for program exclusion or teacher evaluation
- Funding research with play in mind