



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