



THE POWER OF PLAY

PROMOTING PLAY IN PRESCHOOL

Researching play- Challenges and
Opportunities
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Playing



παιζοντας



Non-profit
organisation for
the promotion
of play in
childhood.



The aim of Playing



- * To raise awareness and educate the parents, teachers and the community regarding the promotion of play in childhood.
- * To change the culture around play in Greece.
- * To provide ideas and solutions for the support of children's play.



Programmes by **Playing**

- ✱ 'The power of play'
- ✱ 'Playing in the schoolyard'
- ✱ 'Play in the city'
- ✱ 'Working together'



‘The power of play’

Promoting play in preschool, through targeting the parents and educators

ΙΣΝ/SNF

ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ ΝΙΑΡΧΟΣ
STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION

δημιουργικότητα
φαντασία
κοινωνικοποίηση
κοινωνικές δεξιότητες
απόκτηση γνώσεων
ψυχική ανθεκτικότητα
χαρά
ανάπτυξη
συναίσθημα

ΠΑΙΧΝΙΔΙΑ

Η Δύναμη του Παιχνιδιού

“Το παιχνίδι δεν είναι πολυτέλεια, είναι αναγκαίο για την υγιή ανάπτυξη των παιδιών”

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Το πρόγραμμα ‘Η δύναμη του παιδιού’ πραγματοποιήθηκε με τη βοήθεια του Ιδρύματος Σταύρος Νιάρχος
ΙΣΝ/SNF ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ ΝΙΑΡΧΟΣ STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION

Aims of the programme

- * To promote free play for preschool-aged children
- * To raise awareness and educate parents and teachers
- * To provide ideas and solutions for the support of children's play.
- * To produce information and education materials for parents and educators in Greek



Programme implementation

- ▶ Duration of the programme: 7/2014-5/2017 (In two phases)
- ▶ Covered: A total of 23 municipalities, 13 municipalities in Athens and 10 cities across Greece. A total of 320 day care nurseries, catering for around 15.000 children and employing around 1.500 educators
- ▶ Funded by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation

'The power of play' Programme

- ▶ Production and dissemination of play promotion educational material - freely available online
- ▶ Presentations to preschool educators
- ▶ Presentations to parents
- ▶ Research

Developing the educational play-promotion material

- ▶ Literature review
- ▶ Research
 - Questionnaires on educators' perceptions and practice (n=185)
 - In-depth interviews with experts in the field (n=4)

What we didn't do... and why...



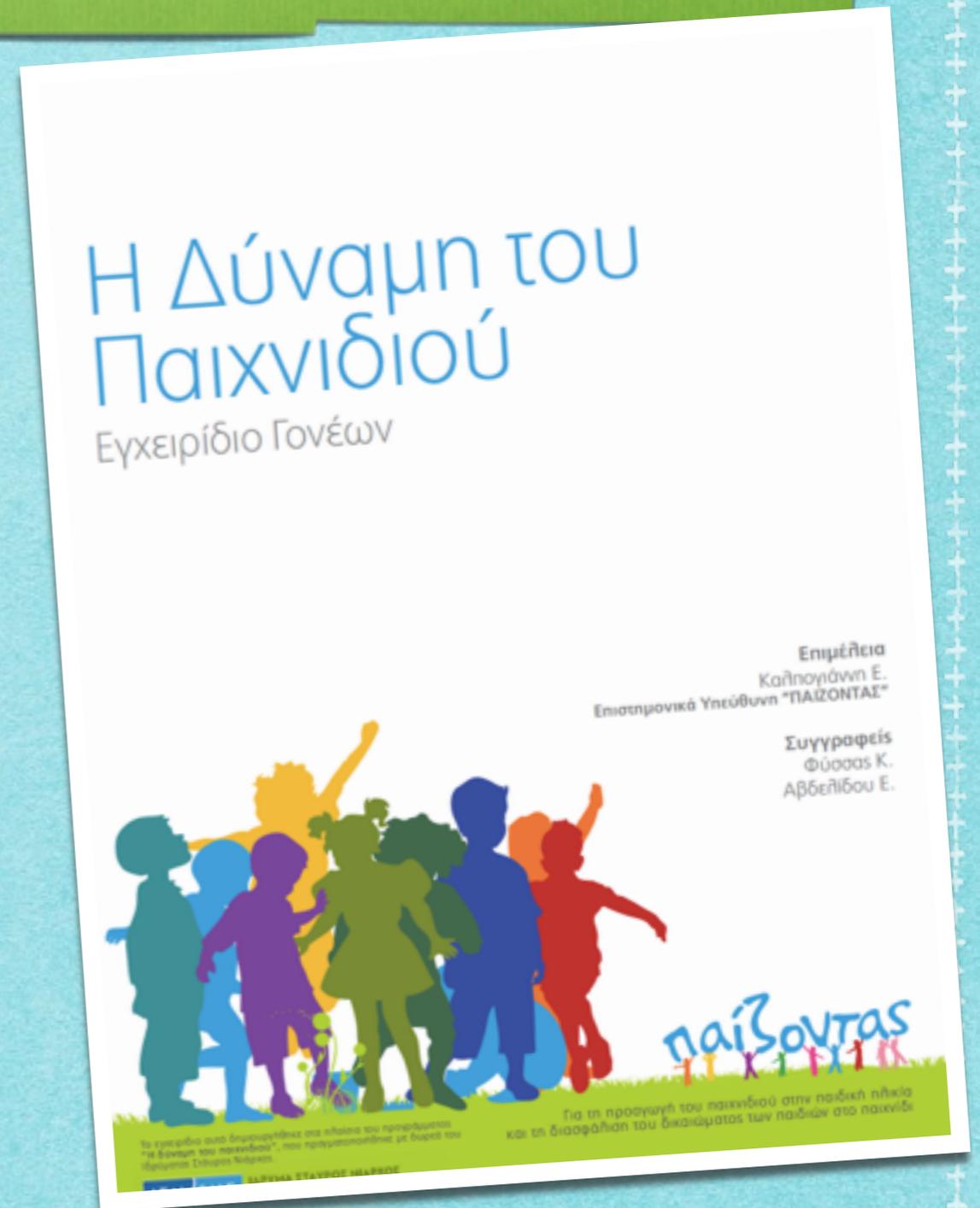
40 Free
(or nearly free)
Summer Activities
For Kids



50 activities
for the
SUMMER

Play promotion educational materials

- * Play promotion manual for parents (15 chapters)
- * Play promotion manual for educators (18 chapters)
- * Video lectures



Chapters in educators' play promotion manual

1. Defining play
2. Play in danger
3. Consequences of play's decline
4. Play: a right for all children
5. Theoretical approaches to play
6. Types of play
7. The role of play in child development
8. Playfulness
9. Play as a goal and as a means

Chapters in educators' play promotion manual

10. The importance of play observation
11. Play outdoors and in contact with nature
12. Play and self-regulation
13. Play and risk
14. Play and resilience
15. Space set-up and materials for promoting play
16. Play and aggressiveness
17. Play and technology
18. Play and the community



Το **ΠΑΙΖΟΝΤΑΣ** είναι μια αστική μη κερδοσκοπική επιστημονική εταιρεία. Ιδρύθηκε για τη προαγωγή του παιχνιδιού κατά τη διάρκεια της παιδικής ηλικίας και τη διασφάλιση του δικαιώματος των παιδιών στο παιχνίδι, για την κινητική, γνωστική, συναισθηματική και κοινωνική τους ανάπτυξη καθώς και την προαγωγή της σωματικής και ψυχικής τους υγείας.

Το παιχνίδι έχει καταλυτική σημασία για τη υγεία, την ανάπτυξη και τη μάθηση των παιδιών. Το 1989 τα Ηνωμένα Έθνη αναγνώρισαν το παιχνίδι ως δικαίωμα όλων των παιδιών, υπογραμμίζοντας το θεμελιώδη του ρόλο στην παιδική ηλικία.

Παρά την ευρεία αναγνωρισμένη σημασία του παιχνιδιού, τα τελευταία χρόνια έχει παρατηρηθεί μια σημαντική μείωση του χρόνου που παίζουν τα παιδιά, καθώς και μια ποιοτική αλλαγή του παιχνιδιού τους. Το ελεύθερο, αδόμητο, αυτοκατευθυνόμενο παιχνίδι των παιδιών και ιδιαίτερα το παιχνίδι σε εξωτερικούς χώρους, έχει περιοριστεί δραστικά.

Ο περιορισμός του παιχνιδιού έχει αρνητικές επιπτώσεις στην ανάπτυξη, την υγεία και την κοινωνικότητα των παιδιών. Αυξανόμενα προβλήματα στην παιδική ηλικία, όπως η παχυσαρκία, τα ελλείμματα προσοχής, οι δυσκολίες συμπεριφοράς, η κατάθλιψη και το άγχος, έχουν συνδεθεί με τη μείωση διαφόρων τύπων παιχνιδιού.

Στόχος που **ΠΑΙΖΟΝΤΑΣ** είναι να ευαισθητοποιήσει και να ενημερώσει τους γονείς, τους παιδαγωγούς αλλά και την ευρύτερη κοινότητα για την αξία του παιχνιδιού αλλά και να προσφέρει λύσεις και ιδέες για την υποστήριξη του παιχνιδιού των παιδιών. Θέλουμε να κάνουμε το παιχνίδι ένα κεντρικό θέμα στην σημερινή κοινωνία και να προάγουμε την δικτύωση και τις συνεργασίες.



Υποστηρίξτε
το παιχνίδι



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Play promotion manual chapter structure

- ✱ Introduction
- ✱ Main points, literature and research review
- ✱ Good practices
- ✱ Videos and materials of interest

Ορισμός παιχνιδιού



Όλοι μπορούμε να καταλάβουμε πότε τα παιδιά παίζουν ή να θυμηθούμε ευχάριστες στιγμές παιχνιδιού από τη δική μας παιδική ηλικία. Παρ' όλα αυτά είναι δύσκολο να ορίσουμε το τι είναι παιχνίδι, και παλαιότερες προσπάθειες δεν έχουν καταλήξει σε κάποιον κοινά αποδεκτό και ξεκάθαρο ορισμό, καθώς το παιχνίδι είναι διεργασία σύνθετη και πολύμορφη, με διαφορετικές εκφάνσεις. Γενικά, θα πλέγαμε ότι είναι μια φυσική συμπεριφορά, αυθόρμητη, εσωτερικά υποκινούμενη, που προκαλεί τέρψη και πολλές φορές απαιτεί φαντασία.

Το παιχνίδι έχει ταξινομηθεί σε τρεις διαφορετικές κατηγορίες.

- α) Το παιχνίδι ως σειρά χαρακτηριστικών που προκύπτουν από τις βιολογικές ή ψυχολογικές προδιαθέσεις του παιδιού (play as disposition).
- β) Το παιχνίδι ως παρατηρήσιμη συμπεριφορά (Play as observable behaviour).
- γ) Το παιχνίδι ως συγκεκριμένο πλαίσιο (play as context).

Σύμφωνα με τον Neumann (1971) υπάρχουν 3 στοιχεία τα οποία ορίζουν το παιχνίδι: το εσωτερικό κίνητρο, η εσωτερική πραγματικότητα (η ελευθερία του ατόμου να αναστείλει τους κανόνες της πραγματικότητας) και ο εσωτερικός έλεγχος (το άτομο είναι αυτό που παίρνει τις αποφάσεις) (Morrison & Metzger & Pratt, 1996).

Η Meckley (2002), συνοψίζοντας διάφορες θεωρίες, όρασε το παιχνίδι δίνοντάς του τα ακόλουθα χαρακτηριστικά:

- α) Να είναι ελεύθερη επιλογή των παιδιών.
- β) Να κατευθύνεται από εσωτερικά κίνητρα.
- γ) Να προσφέρει ευχαρίστηση και ικανοποίηση.
- δ) Να εμπλέκονται ενεργά οι παίκτες.
- ε) Να είναι αυτό-κατευθυνόμενο.
- στ) Να έχει νόημα για το παιδί.



Video lectures

1. Defining play
2. Consequences of play's decline
3. When is an activity play?
4. Play and risk
5. Outdoor play
6. The importance of play observation



Play promotion material

✱ Leaflet

✱ Poster



Play promotion video



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7-Bm4ylouc&t=5s>

Research

- ▶ Questionnaires on educators' perceptions and practice regarding play (n=667)
- ▶ Questionnaires on parental perceptions regarding play (n=198)
- ▶ Questionnaire anonymity and confidentiality

Parental needs

- * A 64,6% of parents (n=198) indicated that they want help in order to improve play with their child.
- * Almost half of parents (46%) in a UK survey (n=2000) indicated they wanted help and ideas on how to play with their children (Voce et al, 2012)
- * A 78,7% (n=667) of the educators in our survey stated that they need to advise parents on issues related to children's play.



Parental views (n=198)

- ✱ A 63,6% of parents stated that they played more than their children do now.



Main factors identified by educators as supporting play in preschool (1)

- * **Space**, was mentioned by 69% of educators (n=497). Mostly discussed space set-up/organisation and then size and safety.



Main factors identified by educators as supporting play in preschool (2)

- * **Materials**, was mentioned by 46% of educators (n=497). Quantity and quality/properties of the materials provided was mentioned.



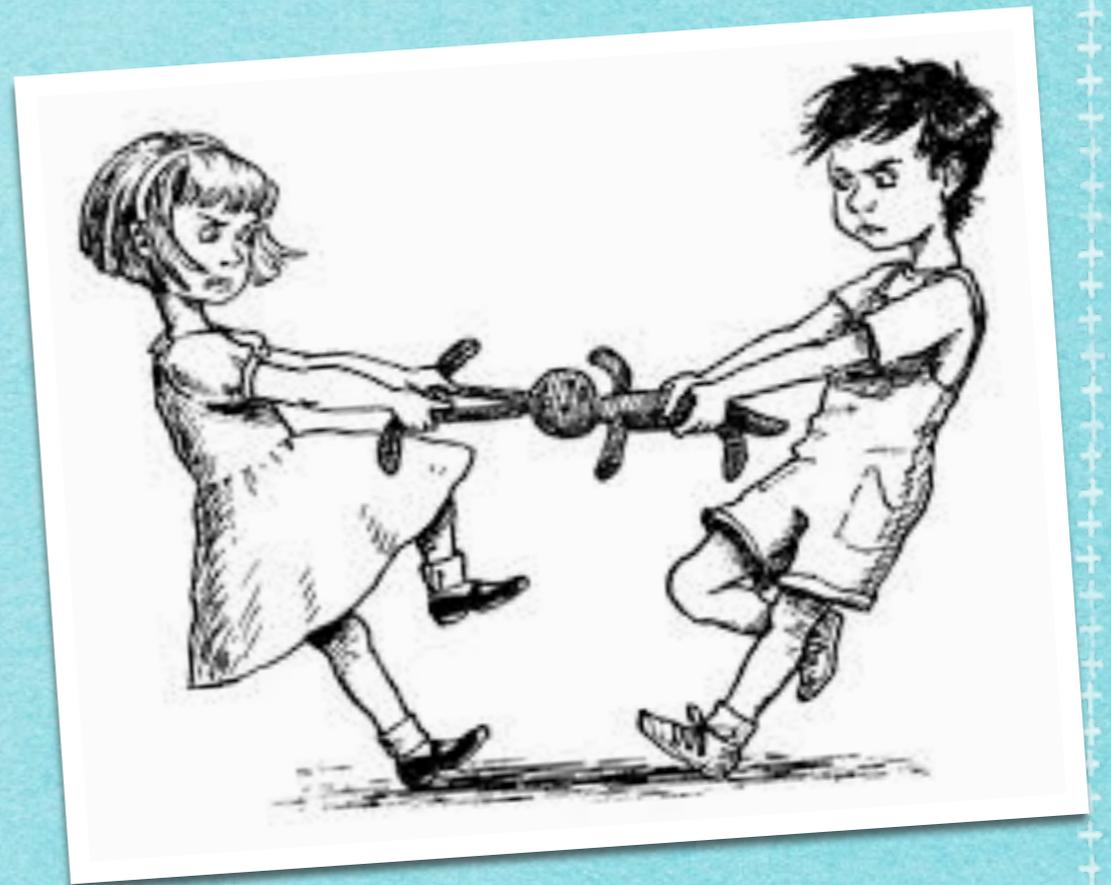
Main factors identified by educators as supporting play in preschool (3)

- ✱ **Educators**, was mentioned by 39% of educators (n=497). Mostly mentioned perceptions and practice and then adult-child ratio and training.



The main problems identified as occurring during play in preschool day-care

- * The main problem identified by **90%** of the preschool educators (n=576), was **children's conflicts**, mostly in relation to fighting over the same toy, disputes and competitive behaviour



The main problems identified as occurring during play in preschool day-care

- * Safety was mentioned by 13% of the educators (n=576). The concerns mostly had to do with minor injuries. In 18% of these, children's conflicts were stated as the cause of the minor injuries.



The educators' views on what is most important in children's play

- ▶ **Not to get hurt** **29.2%**
- ▶ **To have fun** **23.7%**
- ▶ **To play in a group** **8.5%**
- ▶ Not to get dirty 5.4%
- ▶ To learn 5.1%
- ▶ To follow their own ideas 4.8%
- ▶ To explore 4.3%
- ▶ To follow the rules 3.1%
- ▶ To resolve their conflicts 0.9% (n=571)

The educators' roles in children's play

- ▶ **Facilitator 24.4%**
- ▶ **Observer 21.1%**
- ▶ **Prevents accidents 13.6%**
- ▶ **Educational 12%**
- ▶ **Directive 9%**
- ▶ **Entertaining 7.9%**
- ▶ **Resolves conflicts 7.2% (n=610)**

Main factors identified by educators as hindering play in preschool

- * **Lack of appropriate space (45.6%)**
- * **Health and safety (9%)**
- * **Parental views and fears (5.4%)**
- * **Staff perceptions and fears (4.5%)**
- * **Space supervision (4.1%)**
- * **Need to transport away from day-care (3.9%)**
- * **Financial constraints (3%)**
- * **Legal issues (2.4%)**
- * **Lack of relevant training (1%) (n=552)**



Findings on play in Preschool Day-care Centres in Greece (n=667)

Outdoor play space existed in 92,5% of day-care centres and there was no outdoor space in 7,5%.



Findings on play in Preschool Day-care Centres in Greece (n=667)

The teachers rated the existing outdoor space as:

- Not at all appropriate: 12,7%
- A little appropriate: 23,5%
- Appropriate enough: 46,4%
- Very appropriate: 16,6%



Time the children spend outdoors

- * The maximum time the children spend at the Day Care Centres is 8 hours per day.
- * The time that the children spend outdoors was outlined as following:
 - ▶ **0-30 mins** **39,4%**
 - ▶ 30-60 mins 47,5%
 - ▶ 60-90 mins 5,8%
 - ▶ 90-120 mins 5,8%
 - ▶ Over 120 mins 1,5%



Physical activity recommendations for preschool-aged children

Chief Medical Officers in the UK recommending 180 minutes of physical activity spread throughout the day for preschool aged children (Davies, Burns, Jewell, McBride, 2011).



Physical activity recommendations for preschool-aged children

The US Institute of Medicine report for 'Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Policies' recommended "providing opportunities for light, moderate, and vigorous physical activity for at least 15 minutes per hour while children are in care" for toddlers and preschool aged children (Birch, Parker, Burns, 2011, p.59).



Childhood obesity in Greece

* World lead in childhood obesity for Greece according to the OECD (2014) report.

- 7 years olds:

Boys: 48,9%

Girls: 44,8 overweight

- 9 years olds

Boys: 57,2%,

Girls: 50% overweight

(Greek Medical Obesity Society, 2014)



Time spent outdoors in preschool day-care centres

- ▶ The perception of outdoor space unsuitability was significantly correlated with educators identifying 'Lack of appropriate space' as the main factor affecting play in preschool day-care.
- ▶ **Very** weak positive correlation between the statement that the outdoor space is appropriate for playing and the time the children were allowed to play outdoors ($p=0,049$).

Findings on play in Preschool Day-care Centres in Greece (n=667)

- * An **86,8%** of the preschool educators stated that the children should play out more in preschool day-care.
- * Philosophy-reality conflict (Hatch & Freeman, 1988; McClintic & Petty, 2015; McLane, 2003)



Conclusions

- ▶ Children spend very limited time outdoors while in pre-school day-care
- ▶ Children's conflicts presented as main problem during play
- ▶ Space organisation, appropriate materials and educators' perceptions and practice, identified as the main factors supporting play in preschool day-care.
- ▶ Parents need support for their children's play
- ▶ The educators' role is key, both for promoting play in preschool day-care and supporting the parents
- ▶ Development of more play promotion programmes supporting the identified needs
- ▶ Need for informed policy in Greece in relation to play