

# Facilitating Play or Play in the Learning Domains

# Gameplan

Today is all about learning how to scaffold and facilitate play, ensuring that learners explore and learn concepts in specific learning domains (e.g., literacy, mathematics, science) through play.

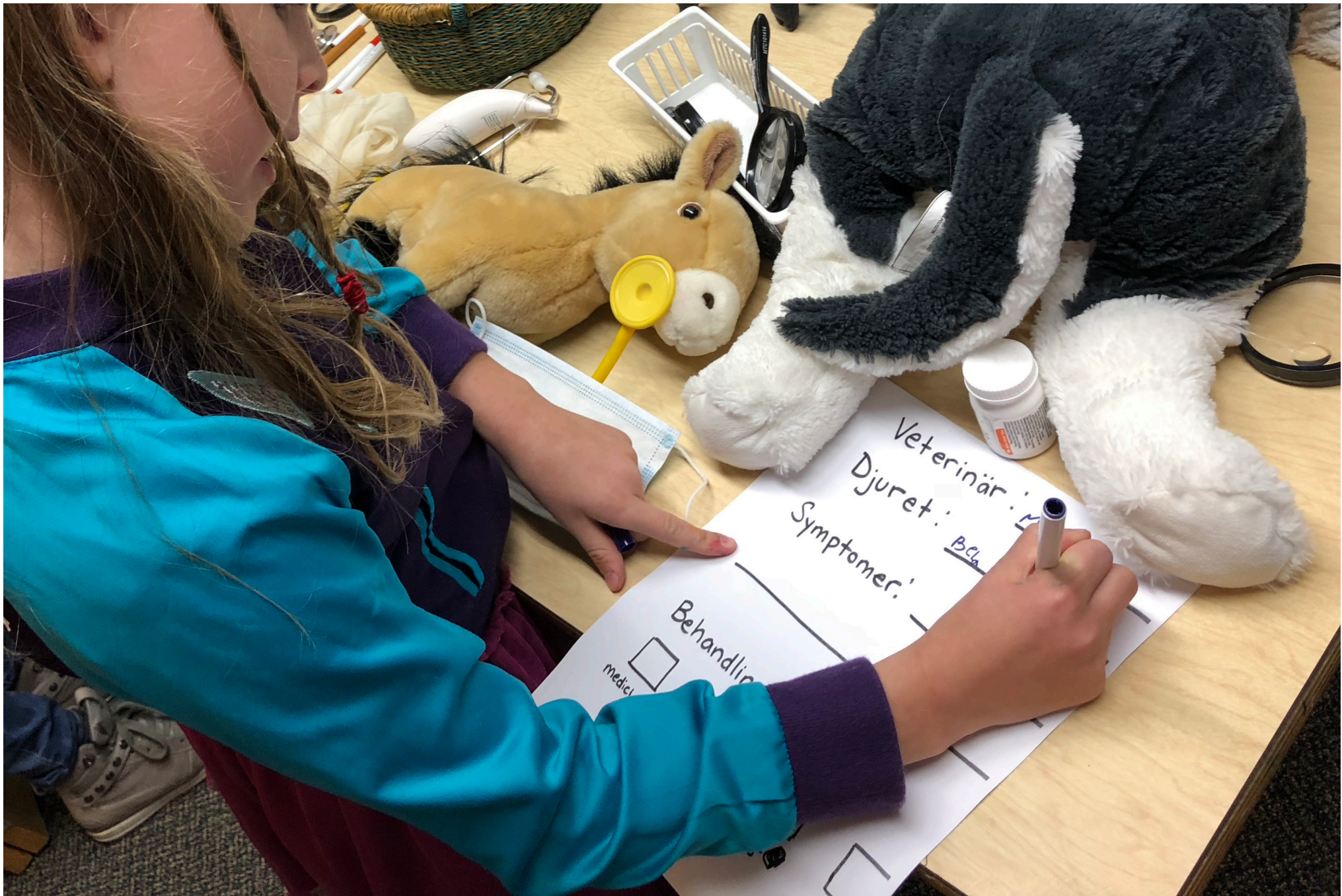
## Note to instructors:

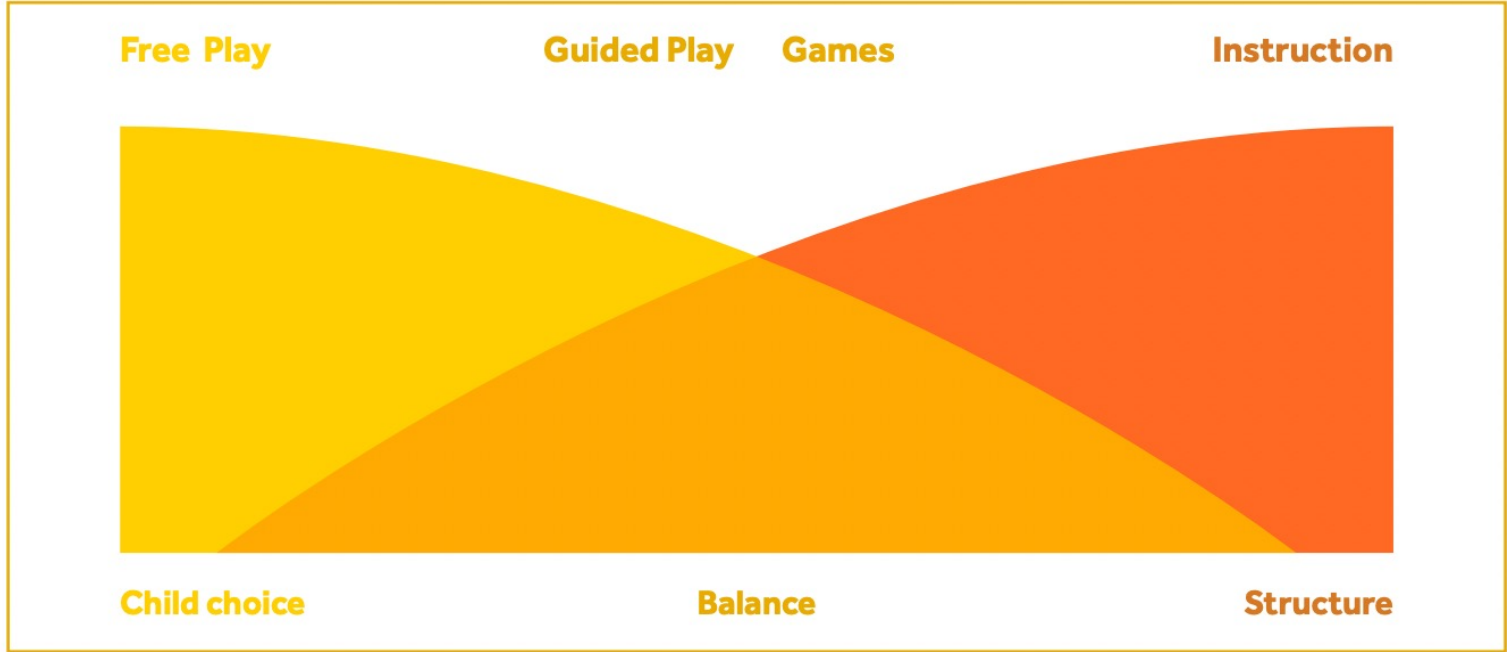
- The following slides focus mainly on scaffolding and facilitating play, and may be more appropriate for teachers of younger learners
- If you are working with older learners or in a context in which learning domains are taught as separate subjects in school, use this session as a time to think specifically about your domain and ways in which you could teach that particular content (e.g. math, science, literacy) through play

# Revisiting: PoP Practices and Strategies

- **Empower learners to lead their own learning**
  - Get to know your learners
  - Involve learners in decision-making
  - Co-construct rules
  - Say yes to students' spontaneous ideas
  - Reflect on learning with learners
- **Build a culture of collaborative learning**
  - Use play to build relationships
  - Facilitate purposeful conversations to build knowledge
  - Nurture a culture of feedback
  - Document learning through play
  - Foster peer-to-peer teaching
- **Promote experimentation and risk-taking**
  - Design open-ended investigations
  - Value risk-taking as a strategy for learning
  - Focus on process as well as product
  - Model risk-taking and experimentation
- **Encourage imaginative thinking**
  - Share stories to engage and enhance learning
  - Ask questions that invite curiosity
  - Use role play and pretend scenarios
  - Provide materials that encourage hands-on learning
- **Welcome all emotions generated through play**
  - Design for joy
  - Make learning meaningful and relevant
  - Use play to explore complicated issues
  - Support learners in working through frustration









**During play you can...**

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# Questions to extend play and deepen thinking

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- How did you create this?
- What part did you do first?  
What could you add?
- What else could you try?
- Tell us more about your (painting, structure, game...)
- What do you notice about (that structure, object, etc...)?
- What do you wonder?
- What do you think is going on?
- Why do you think that?
- What might happen if....?
- What is the problem? What ideas do you have to solve that problem?
- Can you teach me/us how to...?



# Play Facilitation Tool

During play you can...



**Be a player.**

*Take on a role in the play and follow the children's lead.*



**Be a connector.**

*Scaffold children to connect with each other around a common goal or play theme.*



**Be a rubber band.**

*Stretch and extend the play through open-ended questions, embedding vocabulary and reinforcing teaching of concepts. Try the question stems to the right.*



**Be a documenter.**

*Record learning processes in order to deepen and extend learning*



**Be a mirror.**

*Describe in detail what children are doing, using rich vocabulary. E.g. "you're drawing a curved yellow line using the thin paintbrush..."*



**Be a steering wheel.**

*When play becomes unproductive, repetitive, or unsafe, steer it back in a positive direction.*

Questions to extend play and deepen thinking:

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- What part did you do first?  
What could you add?
- What else could you try?
- Tell us more about your (painting, structure, game...)
- What do you notice about (that structure, object, etc...)?
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- What is the problem? What ideas do you have to solve that problem?
- Can you teach me/us how to...?

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# The Play's the Thing

Second  
Edition

Teachers'  
Roles in  
Children's  
Play



ELIZABETH JONES & GRETCHEN REYNOLDS

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# Jones & Reynolds – Roles for Supporting Play

- Observer
- Stage Manager
- Mediator
- Player
- Interrupter
- Scribe
- Assessor & Communicator
- Planner

# Observer

- Carefully watching and listening to children at play
- Documenting
  - To understand the learning taking place
  - To share back with learners to relaunch and deepen learning
  - To share more widely (with other educators, with families...)

# Stage Manager

- Prepares the environment for play
- Organizes and reorganizes materials
- Prepares provocations to spark children's thinking and interest
- Creates and provides physical scaffolds (e.g. graphic organizers, templates) to scaffold play

# Mediator

- Teaching conflict resolution skills
- Keeping play safe

# Player – NOT Interrupter

- Joining children in play, following their lead
- Taking on a role
- Using and modeling materials
- Takes care not to interrupt or take over children's play!  
Watches first to be sure the children need a player



# Scribe

- Recording children's ideas, to share back with them and further the play
  - E.g. writing down a storyline for dramatic play

# Assessor and Communicator

- Using documentation gathered during play to assess children's learning and plan next steps
- Using documentation to communicate to others about the power of learning through play

# Planner

- Planning emergent curriculum based on children's interests
- Planning for embedding curriculum content and skills in children's play themes
  - Literacy
  - Mathematics
  - Science
  - Arts
  - Social and emotional opportunities

# PoP Practices

- Empower learners to lead their own learning
- Build a culture of collaborative learning
- Promote experimentation and risk-taking
- Encourage imaginative thinking
- Welcome all emotions generated through play

# Principles Guiding Play Orchestration

1. Taking the child's view
2. Being a keen observer
3. Seeing meaning as it is constructed
4. Being a stage manager

From Van Hoorn et al. (2015) p.81-83

**Figure 4.1**  
Continuum of Play  
Orchestration Strategies

