



# THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

**IERM CONVENTION - 12 SEPT 2017**

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United Nation's  
Convention on the  
Rights of the Child  
Article 31 -  
Promoting the  
Child's right to play



Commissioned by A Chance to Play Southern Africa  
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researched and written by  
Patricia Martin of Advocacy Aid





**PLAY IS THE WORK  
OF CHILDREN. IT'S  
VERY SERIOUS  
STUFF.**

QUOTEHD.COM

**Bob Keeshan**  
American Entertainer



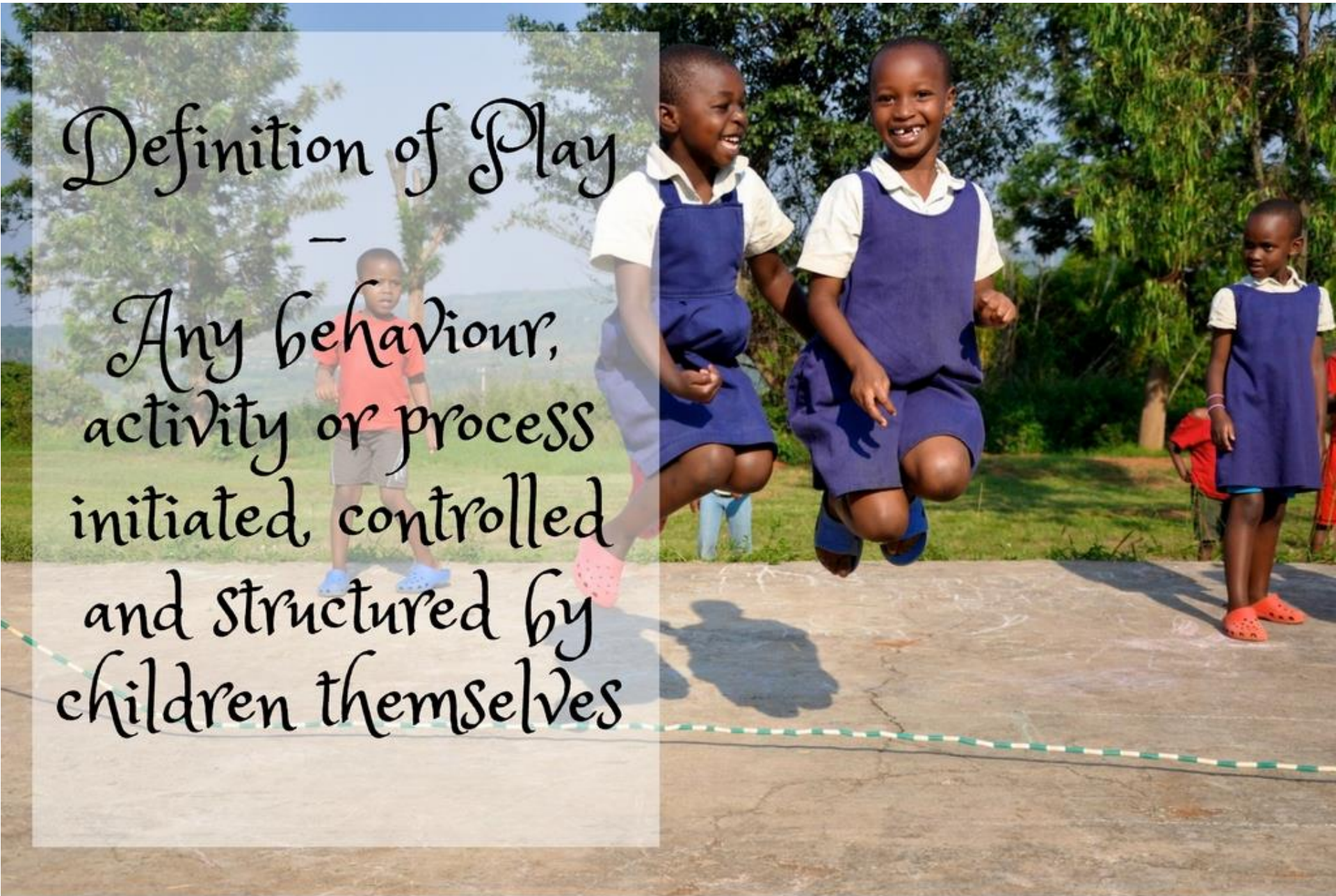
Give me time and space.  
Freedom from rules and structure.  
I need you to... Let me PLAY!





# Definition of Play

—  
Any behaviour,  
activity or process  
initiated, controlled  
and structured by  
children themselves





# HOW ARE WE INHIBITING PLAY?

01. Organised sport
02. Full schedules
03. Academic performance
04. Concerns about safety
05. Adult intervention and control
06. Risk management
07. Limited recess/ free play time in  
Schools





# BENEFITS

01. Builds creativity and innovation
02. Develops motor and planning skills
03. Decision making skills
04. Independence
05. Social skills
06. Risk management
07. Self discovery
08. Happiness (prevents depression)

*Children who play*  
**ARE HAPPIER AND PERFORM BETTER IN CLASS**

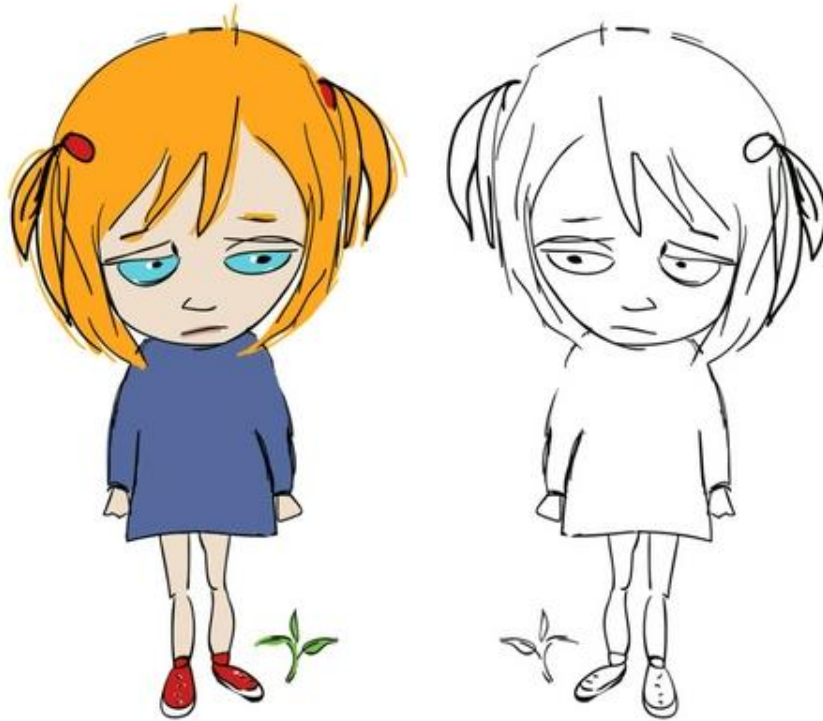


**VS.**





# EFFECT OF DECLINE IN PLAY



01. Anxiety and depression
02. Increase suicide rates
03. Social and psychological disorders
04. ADHD
05. Lack of creative thinking
06. Sensory, motor and cognitive issues
07. Decline in empathy
08. Rise in narcissism



## **OUR ROLE AS PLAY SPACE PROVIDERS**

Designers, parents, teachers, municipalities, schools, etc.  
need to understand what exactly children and teenagers need in order to  
provide them with this critical requirement



# WE TYPICALLY FOCUS ON:

- ROBUSTNESS
- VISUALLY ATTRACTIVENESS
- MAINTENANCE EFFICIENCY
- SAFETY
- PROVISION TO SMALL KIDS

# WHAT WE GET:

- STERILE / TOO SAFE ENVIRONMENT
- LACK OF EXCITEMENT AND THRILL
- LACK OF PROVISION TO OLDER KIDS
- BOREDOM

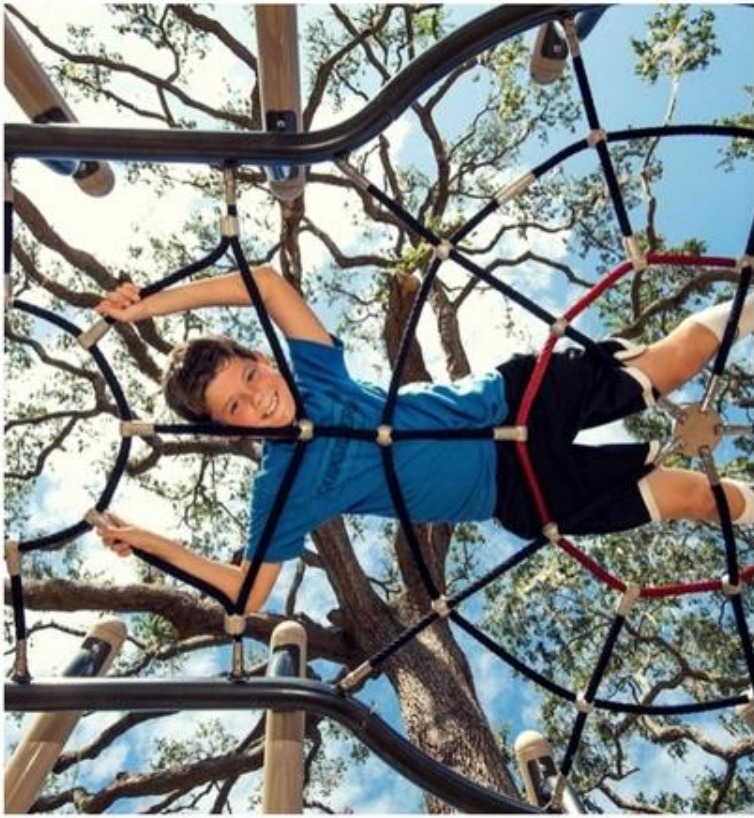


# SUCCESSFUL PLAY SPACES



**THE PRIMARY AIM OF DESIGNING A PLAY SPACE MUST BE TO OFFER CHILDREN A RICH PLAY ENVIRONMENT WHERE THEY CAN HAVE A WIDE VARIETY OF PLAY EXPERIENCES AND WHERE POSSIBLE, LEARN ABOUT THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**





## ACTIVE

Successful play spaces offer movement and physical activity with space and features that allow a range of energetic and strength building play experiences.





## SENSORY

Successful play spaces stimulate the five senses, maybe providing access to music and sound, different smells made by plants and leaves and different textures to touch.







## INCLUSIVE

Successful play spaces are inclusive and are designed to provide opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.





## **SOCIAL INTERACTION**

Successful play spaces are good places for social interactions allowing children to choose when to play alone or with others, to negotiate, cooperate, compete and resolve conflicts.







## LOOSE ITEMS

Successful play spaces allow children to manipulate natural and fabricated materials, use tools, and have access to bits and pieces of all kinds.





## CHALLENGING

Successful play spaces offer children challenge and activities that test the limits of their capabilities, including rough and tumble, sports and games, and opportunities to climb.



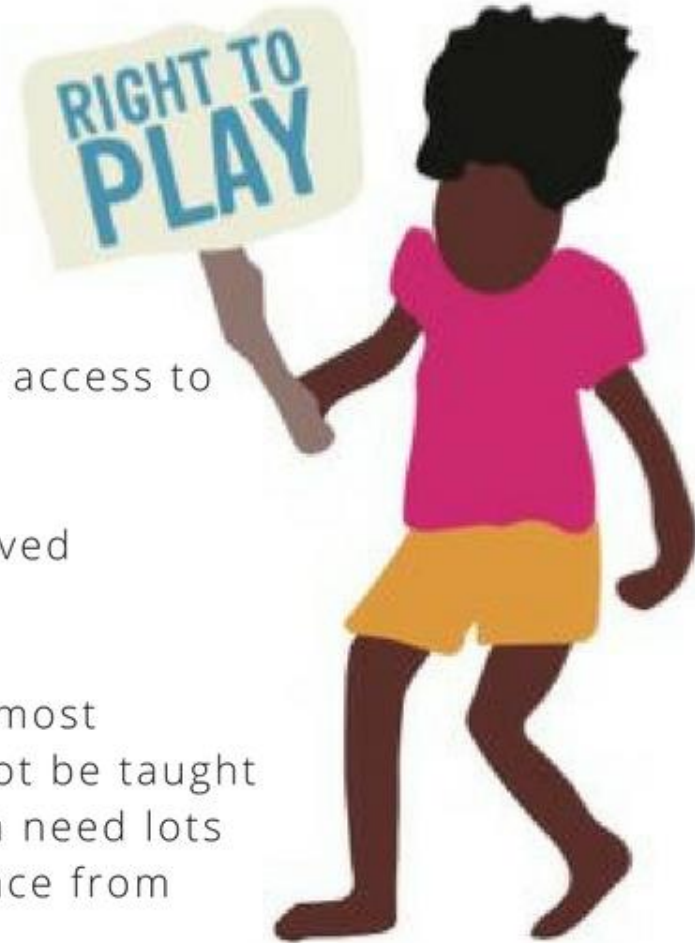


# A CASE FOR PLAY

Access to education is often at the expense of access to play.

More play, and less "school" will lead to improved academic performance.

Playing is learning. At play, children learn the most important of life's lessons, the ones that cannot be taught in school. To learn these lessons well, children need lots of play — lots and lots of it, without interference from adults. - Prof Peter Gray



# OUR CHALLENGE AS PLAY PROVIDERS

## WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND WHAT CHILDREN NEED

- longer play periods
- outside play
- unstructured play
- risky play
- learning through play
- hanging upside down
- swinging movements
- imaginative play
- free play without scheduling and supervision
- less screen time, more hands-on play







**THANK YOU!**

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