



St. Elizabeth Parent's Day Out's educational philosophy stems from the belief that all children should be able to grow through accomplishment and with a strong sense of self-worth.

We believe children learn best through play.

When I Play I Am Learning...

When I play with blocks, I am learning...

- Sizes and shapes and how to create and repeat patterns: essential math skills
- Spatial awareness, stacking and balancing: the basics of physics
- Problem solving and logical consequences

When I play with puzzles, shape sorters, and stacking cups, I am learning...

- About the relationships of parts to the whole: basic math concept
- Concepts of shape, relative sizes (big, bigger, smaller) and color
- Eye-hand coordination, fine motor skills
- Vocabulary related to the subject of the puzzle
- Problem solving

When I play with water (and other materials in the sensory table), I am learning...

- To use tools to accomplish – funnels, cups, scoops
- Eye-hand coordination as I learn to pour, fill, scoop
- Concepts of empty and full, volume and weight: all relevant to mathematics
- Properties of solids & liquids in motion & that some things sink & some things float (science!)

When I play with dolls or stuffed animals, I am learning...

- To use my imagination
- To treat others with tender, loving care
- To imitate the parenting behaviors I see in my life
- Interpersonal skills

When I look at books and when they are read to me, I am learning...

- That reading is important and enjoyable
- That letters on a page represent words: talk that is written down
- To interpret pictures to represent ideas
- To follow the development of thoughts and ideas in the plot of a story
- To express my own thoughts, feelings and ideas better
- To exercise my own imagination

When I play on the playground I am learning...

- Physical strength, coordination and balance (gross motor skills)
- To jump, slide, run, roll and climb
- To take some risks and to be cautious if needed
- To watch out for other people before moving, to move around others carefully
- To use my imagination

When I play in the kitchen area, I am learning...

- To use my imagination and try on adult roles
- To express myself in sentences
- To solve problems, especially socially, through negotiation with friends. To cooperate.
- To improvise and use things in a symbolic way to represent other things...abstract thinking.

When I play when my parent has left the room, I learn...

- Independence and Self-Confidence
- That my parent can leave for a while to tend to his/her own needs but always comes back
- That I can ask other adults for help

When I play with cars and trains, I am learning...

- To exercise my imagination
- The concept of scale
- How wheeled vehicles move through the world
- How things need to be pushed up hills, but going down hill, they go fast on their own (physics!)

When I play with play-dough, I am learning...

- To think about things in 3 dimensions, as I try to re-create what I see
- That the amount of a substance remains the same, even when the shape changes
- To express feelings, squeezing and pounding
- When I cut out a shape with a cookie cutter, I learn about negative & positive space, seeing something against its background (helps with reading)

When I sort things, I am learning...

- To notice details and assess the similarities and differences between objects
- Concepts of color, size and shape
- To form categories, essential concepts for science and mathematics
- Logical reasoning

When I wash hands before playing, I am learning...

- School Routines
- Good Hygiene Practices
- Fine Motor Skills
- How not to make a splashy mess

When I paint, scribble, or draw, I am learning...

- To develop my imagination and creativity
- To hold a paintbrush or pencil
- The names of colors and how to make new colors
- To distinguish shapes and purposely create shapes
- To express my feelings and ideas
- Concepts of symmetry, balance and design

When I have a snack, I am learning...

- To choose and try new foods
- How to sit at a table with others
- Fine motor skills

When I participate in circle time activities, I am learning...

- The names of others in the group: an essential skill for building relationships
- To listen, sit still and understand spoken language: important for school readiness
- To wait when others are talking, to cooperate and be considerate of the needs of others
- To add my ideas to the discussion, my ideas have value
- New vocabulary connected with the topic of discussion
- To remember the words of songs and poems: helps to build memory skills
- To help plan what we will do and what items we will need to do it

Original concept and text by Karen Miller. Additional concepts by Janelle Durham.

Articles that support play-based learning for preschoolers:

Want to get your kids into college? Let them play - by Erika Christakis and Nicholas Christakis
www.cnn.com/2010/OPINION/12/29/christakis.play.children.learning

The Decline of Play in Preschoolers and the Rise in Sensory-Issues - by Valerie Strauss
www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2015/09/01/the-decline-of-play-in-preschoolers-and-the-rise-in-sensory-issues/?utm_term=.dc51c15d9294

10 Things Every Parent Should Know about Play - by Laurel Bongiorno
<https://families.naeyc.org/learning-and-development/child-development/10-things-every-parent-should-know-about-play>