



## **IPA/USA Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles**

### **Vision Statement:**

A world where all children can play

### **Purpose/Mission Statement (from Bylaws):**

The purpose of IPA/USA is to protect, preserve, and promote the child's right to play.

### **What is Play?**

Play is the work of childhood. Play is a biologically driven. There are many types of play. The highest, purest form of play is spontaneous, freely chosen, intrinsically motivated, pleasurable, purposeless, and free from conflicts. For younger children it also contains symbolism and/or elements of pretend.

### **Guiding Principles**

- Play, along with the basic needs of nutrition, health, shelter, and education, is vital for development for all children, birth to 18 years.
- Play is integral and necessary for social, emotional, cognitive, language, and physical development.
- Play facilitates brain growth especially in the frontal cortex where essential cognitive functions reside; including attention, self-regulation, working memory, and cognitive flexibility, all of which are known as executive functioning.
- Some knowledge can *only* be learned through play and thus justifies the essential need of recess for younger children and breaks for older children.
- Play opportunities are needed both indoors and outdoors for all children, all ages.
- Play needs are different among the age groups: birth to age 2, PreK, early elementary, upper elementary, middle school, and high school.
- Schools, especially preK and elementary, need help understanding that young children learn best through play. Schools need help and support on how to provide meaningful and appropriate play/learning opportunities, including the project approach for older children

- Families need help recognizing that play is learning; and that family-play also bonds the family and helps build happy childhoods.
- Community services and regulators; such as parks and recreation, city planning, and housing developments; need help understanding why and how to include play in their plans.
- All types of play are important (e.g., physical play, such as, running, climbing, swinging, etc.; block and construction play; play within art and music; games with rules; rough and tumble; risky; nature; role-playing; etc.), but child-directed, spontaneous play is the most important during the early years of birth through age eight.
- Children have the right to play as guaranteed by the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.