



Block Play

California Kindergarten Association



I sat at the little Kindergarten tabletop...and played with the cube, the sphere, and the triangle....I soon became susceptible to constructive patterns evolving in everything I saw. I learned to 'see' and when I did I did not care to draw casual incidentals of nature. I wanted to design. ~ Frank Lloyd Wright, architect, 1957.

This month our Curricular Focus is on Block Play. Due to funders' demand for accountability and for "outcomes," or an increased emphasis on cognition and skill learning, Block Play may have disappeared in preschool and kindergarten classrooms. CKA demonstrates that Block Play has a legitimate place in early childhood classrooms. Many thanks to Ronnie Silverstone, retired preschool teacher from Los Angeles USD, who shared so many resources on Block Play. Ronnie, active in Bubble Rock, can be found at info@bubblerock.com.

CKA solicits your comments on Block Play. How do you find time for blocks? How do you extend children's learning in various subjects through block play? How do you record children's progress and/or evaluate their learning? Use the blog box to submit your comments. Feel free to include photos if you have parent authorization to share.

"Blocks are the words we need to tell the story of the world. Without them our hands would be empty". (From the CD "Foundations the Value of Unit Block Play" by Community Playthings.)

- **Summary of children's stages of block development and what block play can teach.** Because young children's development and learning occur in and are influenced by multiple social and cultural contexts, it is important that early childhood educators offer them opportunities to actively learn with other children. Block Play does just that! They manipulate, investigate, explore, test, and change. There is a solid body of evidence that social interaction among children working together to solve problems can help all of them move to higher levels of intellectual functioning (*The Block Book, 3rd edition*, published by NAEYC, p 103).

1. [Stages of Block Play](#)
2. What block play can teach, based on *The Block Book*, edited by Elisabeth S. Hirsch, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), adapted by Ronnie Silverstone ([What Block Play Teaches I](#) and [What Block Play Teaches II](#))

- **Research** (Stayed tuned for additional research articles.)

1. [Review of selected research.](#)
2. [The Child Architect I: Social Studies through Block Playing](#), *TAKE FIVE* Winter 1998

- **Lesson and Activity Plans**

1. [Preschool](#)
2. [Transitional Kindergarten/Kindergarten](#)
3. [First Grade](#)
4. [Clean-Up Procedures](#)
5. [Assessment/Evaluation](#)

- **Resources** – By utilizing quality resources, teachers can choose learning experiences and materials to help children reach outcomes appropriate for their age and developmental stage. Resources include [accessories to stimulate higher-level thinking skills and more engaged play](#); information about [Unit Blocks](#); posters on Block Play ([Preschool](#) and [Kindergarten](#)), a [Letter to Families](#); and [Resources for Teachers](#) (both print & web-based).

- **Video** – Teachers can order a free CD-Rom from Community Playthings which is an excellent professional development offering. The CD discusses the necessity of block play and unlocks the educational possibilities hidden within the block area. To view the CD, [click here](#).

